SHABBAT UNPACKED

OLAMI MENTORSHIP

Session 11

Creation through Tzovea/Dyeing
(Category 9 of 39)

Gozez/Shearing
(Category 10 of 39)

BURST OF INSPIRATION

Shabbat Shalom, Dave (shared originally by R. Hanoch Teller)

Clermont, Florida, wasn't known for its Jewish life. In fact, most Jews in the area had little connection to their heritage, and there wasn't even a synagogue nearby.

Eric and Melanie Brenner had left Judaism behind long ago. Their Jewish observance ended with their childhood ceremonies, and they were happy to raise their sons, Cliff and Dave, in a home without any religious expectations.

That's why it came as a total shock when Dave, their younger son, suddenly became interested in Judaism.

It started during a biking trip he took after his first year of college. He set out to ride across the world—like so many other young people looking for adventure. With no clear plan and a credit card from his father, he followed the road wherever it led.

When Dave reached Turkey, he had to decide where to go next. North to Russia? South to Africa? East to Asia? Somehow, he chose to head toward Israel.

Israel was different from the other countries he had visited. The roads were in good shape, the people were friendly, and there was something else—something spiritual. He found himself drawn to places like Jerusalem, Tiberias, and Hebron. One day, he visited the Western Wall and met someone who invited him to a Torah class.

Dave had never heard of a yeshiva, and he barely knew what Torah was. But he was curious, and he figured it couldn't hurt to try. The class was unlike anything he had ever experienced. He stayed for another, then stayed for Shabbat, and eventually, he stayed for months.

BURST OF INSPIRATION

Dave discovered a part of himself he never knew existed. He studied Hebrew, learned Jewish philosophy, and started to feel connected to his roots. After five months, his parents insisted he come home, and with a heavy heart, he returned to Florida.

Back in Clermont, Dave's excitement about Judaism met with strong resistance. His parents were upset and didn't understand his choices. They mocked the idea of keeping kosher, praying, and especially observing Shabbat. In their view, it was all outdated and unnecessary.

Dave tried to hold on to his new lifestyle, but it was hard. He had no one to support him, and the pressure from his parents was constant. They even forbade him from keeping Shabbat. Alone and discouraged, he began to wonder if it was all worth it. Maybe he had made a mistake.

One Friday night, after another difficult dinner, Dave felt totally drained. In a moment of weakness, Dave sat in the family room and turned on the TV. It was The David Letterman Show. He hadn't watched it in a long time, and he just needed a break from everything.

Letterman's first guest that night was a journalist who had just come back from Israel. Letterman asked him what stood out most from his trip.

The journalist said, "It's Friday night in Israel—Shabbat. Not everyone keeps it, but the whole country feels peaceful. People say 'Shabbat Shalom' to each other, even strangers."

BURST OF INSPIRATION

Then the journalist turned to Letterman and said, “Shabbat Shalom, Dave.”

Letterman smiled and answered, “Shabbat Shalom.”

Dave Brenner sat up straight.

Was this a coincidence? Or was it a message?

As each new guest came out, they also said “Shabbat Shalom.” Then, during the final moments of the show, the camera focused—not on the audience or the host—but on David Letterman’s mouth.

And as the show ended, the last words spoken were:

“Shabbat Shalom, Dave.”

It felt like the words were spoken just for him.

Dave couldn’t hear anything else. Not the applause, not his mother calling from the kitchen, not even the credits. All he heard was: “Shabbat Shalom, Dave.”

That was the sign he had been waiting for. Three days later, he flew back to Israel.

Dave knew then that he wasn’t alone—and he never wanted to forget that moment again.

Although some of the details are changed, we did find Tom Hanks wishing David Letterman Shabbat Shalom on this 1987 episode:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5a7KIdf6C2c

CREATION THROUGH TZOVEA/DYEING (CATEGORY 9 OF 39)

In the construction of the Mishkan, wool and animal hides were dyed for various items including curtains, screens, gates, etc. What follows is the creative category of Tzovea/ Dyeing.

The parameters:

a. Tzovea is defined as coloring, painting or dyeing an object in order to beautify it.

b. Biblically, tzovea is only prohibited if the dyeing/coloring is permanent.

c. Rabbinically however, any form of coloring or dyeing is prohibited even if it only endures for a short time.

Items that fall under the category of dyeing that are prohibited:

1. Painting:
    a. Applying paint to any surface i.e. a ceiling or wall is prohibited even if the surface is already painted in that color and one is applying a second coating.
    b. Painting a picture: One may not paint a picture on Shabbat. One may not add color to a pre-existing painting.
2. Dyeing: One may not dye any object. Included in this prohibition is cloth, leather and hair.
3. Producing paint or dye, even by mixing pre-existing colors.

CREATION THROUGH TZOVEA/DYEING (CATEGORY 9 OF 39)

Food for Thought

There is a discussion amongst halachic decision makers whether dyeing applies to food and drink i.e. adding iced-tea powder to water or coffee to milk. The prevailing opinion permits adding color to food and drink.

Here are a number of interesting practical applications to the concept of tzovea:

1. Included in the prohibition of tzovea is applying makeup or cover up i.e. mascara, lip gloss, blush, or nail polish on Shabbat. Consequently, one should apply all make-up right before Shabbat. There are products on the market specifically designed to adhere to these categories. For more details, see: https://www.7thdayshine.com/about

   Please note: It is permissible to remove makeup on Shabbat with a dry disposable cloth such as a tissue or napkin.

2. One may spend time outdoors in the sun, even if the result will be tanning one's skin. Sitting in the sun strictly for the purpose of tanning is not recommended.

3. It is preferable to wipe up a color liquid spill with a disposable napkin or paper towel to avoid dyeing a real cloth on Shabbat.

4. One may not polish shoes on Shabbat.

5. One may wear transition lenses aka light-responsive eye-glasses on Shabbat even though the lenses change colors when exposed to sunlight.

CREATION THROUGH GOZEZ/SHEARING (CATEGORY 10 OF 39)

In the construction of the mishkan, it was necessary to shear sheep to obtain wool for the curtains that covered the sanctuary as well as for the garments of the kohanim (priests).

The Parameters:

1. The definition of gozez is detaching something that grows on a living thing - person, animal or bird (i.e. hair, skin, nails).
2. Gozez typically utilizes tools such as shears or scissors. It is however also prohibited even when shearing in an unusual manner (i.e. biting vs. cutting one's nails).
3. The prohibition applies to cutting hair, nails, loose or dead skin, and plucking feathers from a bird.

CREATION THROUGH GOZEZ/SHEARING (CATEGORY 10 OF 39)

Practical Applications of Gozez:

1. Brushing one's hair on Shabbat with a brush that has hard bristles will inevitably pull out hair and therefore falls under the prohibition of gozez.
2. One may use a soft bristled brush if these three conditions are met:
    a. The bristles must be soft enough that they give way if they encounter knots or tangles.
    b. One may not brush with force; only light strokes are permitted.
    c. One must designate a soft brush exclusively for Shabbat use.
3. One may not pull off a band aid on Shabbat if doing so will pull hairs out.
4. One may not cut or bite their nails on Shabbat.
5. One should not cut away dead skin, warts or pimples on Shabbat.

Note: In a case where a nail becomes detached more than halfway and it is painful, one may remove it in an unusual fashion.

Please Note: We have provided the above general categories. There are many additional details and exceptions within these categories. For practical inquiries, please contact your LOR (local Olami rabbi).

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