



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

1. Prophet Organizations
2. Royal Snails
3. Answer to Yiddle Riddle



Yechezkel Goldberg from <ygoldberg1@netmedia.co.il> wrote:

If a product is known to be owned by a group that would be considered halachically as "Idol Worship", is it forbidden to use this product even if it has a hechsher (kosher certification)? Case in point: (name withheld) health food which is said to be owned by Scientology; (name withheld) tea which is said to be owned by the Moonies?

Dear Yechezkel,

The Torah does not prohibit using a product simply because it was produced by an idol-worshiper.

However, if you know that the profits go exclusively for 'sacramental' purposes, it then becomes a question of 'lifnei eaver' -- 'putting a stumbling block before the blind.' Just as it is forbidden to give shrimp cocktail to a Jew, so it is forbidden to give 'idol-worship paraphernalia' (sacramental wine, statues, etc.) to an idol-worshiper. The question is: Is giving someone money which will be used to buy a statue the same as giving him the statue itself? Or, since money is **one step removed** — that is, they don't use the money directly in the worship — is it therefore permitted?

In any case, it is a mitzva not to support 'cult' activities. Therefore, if you are **absolutely certain** that they are owned wholly or greatly by one of these groups, it would be a good idea to discourage people from buying these products.

A word of caution: If it is not absolutely certain that they are owned by these groups, a vary grave sin of harming someone's livelihood could result.

Speaking of cults: At an introductory session of the 'Reincarnated Society of Born-Yesterday Cenobites' a certain Mrs. Finklefarb sits in the back knitting. After the meeting, however, she volunteers for the next level of training. She continues from level to level until she's finally allowed to travel to Tibet, meet the Grand Cenobite, and say three words to him. While waiting in the long line, she patiently knits. Finally she is brought before the leader, looks him in the eye and says "Moishe! Come home!"

Sources:

- Talmud Avoda Zorah2a (Tosafot); and 6a.
- Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah148:12.

Paul Goldstein

<JX12%UTEP.bitnet@vms.huji.ac.il> wrote:

Do you know the source of the dye that was used to dye the techeilat of the tzitsit the color blue. I thought it was from the snail "Chilazon" but my daughter told me that her Hebrew School teacher said it was from a fish.

Dear Paul,

You're both right! The commentators call the *Chilazon* a 'fish' since it lives in the water. It appears, though, that the *Chilazon* is not a normal 'fish,' but has a shell and is actually a type of snail. It ascends to the land very rarely, only once every 70 years.

Over time, the exact identity of *Chilazon* became obscure for various reasons: One reason was its extreme rarity. Because of this, its cost was prohibitive — 10 to 20 times its weight in gold. Another reason: In the 4th century Rome decreed that only 'blue-blooded' royalty could wear *Techelet*. Although some modern-day Torah scholars maintain that they have re-discovered the *Chilazon*, their opinion is not universally accepted.

Sources:

- Rabbi Y.M. Tuchashinski, "The Holy City & Temple" 5:5-6.
- Rabbi Y.H. Hertzog, 'Royal Purple & Biblical Blue' ch.11.

<p>Answer to Yiddle Riddle</p>	<p>Last week we asked: "B'yomo titen scharo" — "pay him on that day" — is the Torah command to pay your worker on time (<i>Deut. 24:15</i>). Is this one of the "time bound" mitzvot — like <i>Sukka</i> and <i>Tefillin</i> — from which women are exempt? If not, why not?</p>	<p>Paying a worker on time is not considered a "time-bound" mitzvah. Here are 2 explanations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sukka</i> and <i>Tefillin</i> are 'mitzvot aseil sh'hazman gramma' — 'positive mitzvot which the time initiates': You go into the <i>Sukka</i> because it's the 15th of Tishrei; you put on <i>Tefillin</i> because it's daytime. The mitzvah to pay your worker, on the other hand, is not time-initiated.' Rather, you chose when to hire the worker, an act independent of any time frame. (First sent in by Yoel Polsky <POLSKY@hagiga.jct.ac.il>) • True, each time the mitzvah is performed, it is performed during a specific 12-hour period. But the mitzvah in general applies any time of day or night. (Rabbi Mordecai Isbee, <i>shlita</i>)
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Ask The Rabbi is written by Rabbi Moshe Lazerus, Rabbi Benzion Bamberger, Rabbi Reuven Subar, Rabbi Avrohom Lefkowitz and other Rabbis at Ohr Somayach Institutions / Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, Israel.

General Editor: **Rabbi Moshe Newman**
Production Design: **Lev Seltzer**

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<p>22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel 38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA 613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada</p>	<p>972-2-810-315 fax: 972-2-812-890 1-212-213-3100 fax: 1-212-213-8717 1-905-886-5730 fax: 1-905-886-6065</p>
<p>ohr@jer1.co.il RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Gramercy.ios.com avram.rothman@canrem.com</p>	

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