



# Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

## This Issue Contains:

1. Blazing Sukkahs
2. Answer to Yiddle Riddle



*This issue is dedicated in memory of R' Avraham Yitzchak ben Yaakov zt'l and Rachel bas Nassen Nota z'l by their family*

Jeff Marder <jeff@godzilla.quotron.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Recently I cleaned out the garage, and I found lumber that was once used to build our Sukkah. I no longer use this wood for creating such a 'Sacred Space.' May I burn these boards in our fireplace?

Dear Jeff,

In general, 'mitzvah objects' may be disposed of when you're done with them. Nevertheless, they should be treated with dignity — they shouldn't be stepped on or thrown in the garbage.

Burning, however, is not considered a disgrace to a mitzvah. So burning sukkah wood — the walls and the roof — is a perfect way to dispose of it. Just be careful.

There are a number of exceptions to this rule — e.g., Torah scrolls, *tefillin* and *mezuzot*. They have special sanctity and should not be burned. Rather they should be buried (*geniza*).

Ideally, once you use an object for a mitzvah you should try to use it for another mitzvah. For example, you should use a torn *tzitzit* string as a bookmark when you study Torah!

So use your sukkah wood to burn your *chametz*, or burn it in your fireplace for *oneg Shabbat* (Shabbat enjoyment).

Here's a true story that's hard to imagine happening anywhere else but here in Israel. I was once walking to Yeshiva when I passed a garbage truck moving slowly down the street. The garbage man standing in back of the truck was trying to get my attention. Then I noticed he was holding something long and black in his outstretched arm, and he was motioning for me to take it. "Burnt spaghetti?" I wondered. I reached out and took it. It was a *tefillin* strap. "This shouldn't be in the garbage," said the garbage man. "You'll know what to do with it..."

Sources:

- Tractate Megillah 26b
- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 21:1
- Mishna Berurah *ibid.* 6, 8 & 9 and 638:24
- Aruch Hashulchan 638:12, Bekurei Yaakov 638:18

## Yiddle Riddle

Last week we asked: Triplets and their cousin are born within a 2 hour period, yet the *brit milah* for each of the four takes place on four consecutive days. They are all healthy -- i.e., no jaundice or other health problems. How can this be?

Answer:

1. One baby is born before sunset. His *brit* is 8 days later, which happens to be the day before Yom Tov.
2. His brother is born after dark — halachically a new day. His *brit* is a full day later, the day of Yom Tov itself. A *brit* performed on the 8th day supersedes Yom Tov.
3. The third triplet was born between the other two. He was born in the halachic 'gray area' after sunset but before dark. It is unclear if this is considered night or day. He can't have his *brit* the day before Yom Tov because that might be the 7th day, which is too early. He can't have his *brit* on Yom Tov, because that might be the 9th day, and only a *brit* done on the 8th day supersedes Yom Tov. Therefore, his *brit* is the day after Yom Tov.
4. So much for the triplets who, by the way, were born in Israel. Their cousin in Johannesburg, South Africa was born at the same time as the baby in paragraph #3. His *brit*, however, is postponed yet another day, due to the extra day of Yom Tov observed outside of Israel! (Johannesburg is in the same time zone as Israel.)

Thanks to Shlomo Steinhart for the riddle idea.

Also thanks to Carl & Adina Sherer, Robert Vasl and Baruch Bar-Alon for sending in correct answers; their answers were basically the same as the answer we proposed with an additional twist that the \*triplets\* were born outside of Israel and the cousin was born in Israel. A particularly ingenious answer involved the International Date Line. Thank you!

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