

# MOOR LANE MORE TORAH

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## Come to Life!

*Rabbi M Stamler*

### The King who desires Life מלך חפץ בחיים

Rabbi Yehudah ben Yakar [12th century, the teacher of the Ramban] writes that this means that G-d wants people who are alive more than when they are dead before their time,' because His will is for people who will serve Him, 'and it is the living who serve Him and not the dead, and evil people even in their lifetimes are as if they were dead'.

In a crowd of people – all physically alive – there are some who are more spiritually alive, some less so.

Three times a day we say the beautiful passage 'Modim' of thanks and acknowledgement: that He is our G-d, for our lives, for our souls, for His constant kindnesses, for His miracles. The חפץ חיים tried to avoid keeping people waiting for him when praying, but he said that when it comes to this passage, it is impossible for him to hurry it: he is thanking his Creator for his very existence and for all of His kindnesses.

In the middle of this passage we say 'וכל החיים יודוך סלה' 'all living people will thank you.' Rabbi Yehudah ben Yakar brings this phrase to life: he

writes that this is based on the words of King Chizkiyahu.

King Chizkiyahu had been deathly ill, even told by the navi ישעיה he was going to die, but he was given a new lease of life, and for this he composed a song of thanks. In it he wrote:

'The dead cannot praise You ..... a living person, a living person he will thank You.' The same idea occurs in Hallel: 'לא המתים יהללו יה' 'the dead will not praise G-d'.

Three times a day we echo the words of King Chizkiyahu: 'all living people will thank you.'

King Chizkiyahu's experience enabled him to convey the deeper meaning of being alive. 'Alive' and 'dead' here are meant in the spiritual sense: a person who is really alive sees that life is a gift from G-d and such a person notices all His חסדים. The חפץ חיים was very much alive. Rushing those thanks was impossible for him. Someone who is oblivious to all this kindness is not fully alive. 'The living, the living will thank you,' not people who have stopped 'living' before their time.



The last thing G-d wants is for people to remain in that state of non-living life. כי לא אחפץ במות המת. גאם ה. 'I do not want the death of the dead,' meaning He does not wish that someone who has 'died before their time' should also die physically. 'Return to Me and live!' He wants people who are alive, who have a living relationship with Him. We echo this in the phrase זכרו לחיים מלך חפץ בחיים, describing G-d as a King who desires life. His greatest desire is that all of humanity will recognise Him and be worthy of the ultimate good which a life of holding on to Him brings – חיים – a life for Your sake – and He calls every one of us back to that type of life.

At the start of the year, when the world – the granting of life itself – is renewed, and we ask again and again for life itself, these additions focus the mind on re-evaluating what true life is, and the picture of King Chizkiyahu thanking G-d for His renewed gift of life is a powerful image. חי יהי 'The dead cannot praise You ..... a living person, a living person he will thank You.'



# Contact Lenses: A Solution?

*R' Yishai Lister*

Is there a problem of Melaben/ Kibbus (laundering) if I put my soft contact lenses into a cleaning-agent lens solution? To answer this Shaila, we first need some information about the melacha of Melaben.

Melaben is the act of whitening/bleaching the sheep's wool once it had been sheared from the animal. This wool was used to create the Yeriot (draperies) for the Mishkan. Kibbus (a toldah/ subcategory of Melaben) is the cleaning of any other coloured material.

There are three actions which cause one to transgress the issur Melacha of Melaben –soaking, scrubbing and wringing:

1) Shriyah– Soaking (Zevachim 94b, Rambam Shabbat 22:18, Shulchan Aruch 302:9, Mishna Berura 44) Any wetting of any fabric is considered shriyah, whether the clothing is dipped into water or whether water is sprinkled onto it. (Shulchan Aruch Ibid.) One may not have a water fight on Shabbat if his clothes will get wet. This first category does not apply to things made of firm leather, as merely dripping water onto a firm leather object such as shoes does not properly cleanse it, as the water is not absorbed. (Shulchan Aruch Ibid.) The same applies to other firm objects such as plastic that do not absorb the water (Igras Moshe end of Yoreh Deah 2:76). It is worth pointing out that there is a view that holds that soaking leather in a detergent is problematic even though it will not absorb the water, as detergent will clean it effectively (Rav Elyashiv Orchos Shabbos 1 Berurei Halacha 5).

There is a view cited by the Rema (302:9) that one may sprinkle a little bit of water on a completely clean garment, but not too much as one may come to squeeze it (see action 3). This is because shriyah only cleans when there is dirt onto which water is placed. (Mishna Berura 320:46)

2) Shifshuf– Scrubbing (Zevachim ibid., Shulchan Aruch ibid.) Rubbing a garment causes it to become clean even if done without liquid involvement (Rashi Shabbat 147a). It is forbidden whether one does it with his hand, a brush or even with another part of the garment itself.

3) Sechitah– Wringing (Rambam Shabbat 9:11) Squeezing material releases the water held within, and the released water which comes away carries dirt with it, cleaning the material. Even if the water and garment is completely clean and there is no dirt on the garment which will

be carried away, the moisture is still now unwanted in the garment, and the act of squeezing it out improves the appearance and comfort of the garment and is still considered melaben. This third category does not apply to non- absorbent material. (Igras Moshe ibid.)

We have seen that one may soak firm leather, or other similar materials. Do soft contact lenses fit the description of the Igras Moshe – something which is truly non-absorbent?

Contact lenses are made of a material called silicone hydrogel – a material that combines the water-absorbing plastic of soft lenses with silicone. Adding silicone to the hydrogel plastic creates a lens that stays moist and allows more oxygen to pass through the contact lens into the eye. Therefore, it would be difficult to say that contact lenses are similar to leather, which would mean soaking them in a lens solution on Shabbat to clean them may be problematic.

Rav Elyashiv (Orchos Shabbos Ibid.) writes that since they absorb more than regular leather, it would be forbidden to soak them in any lens solution, or even water in order to clean the lenses (shriyah) or to wipe them clean (shifshuf). However, if the lenses are completely clean (i.e. cleaned from Erev Shabbat), since it is unclear whether or not they are like leather as opposed to a garment, he holds one may leave them in saline (not a solution or detergent-like solution which cleans/ sterilises them which is forbidden even for leather) as the Rema (quoted above) brought an opinion that there is no shriyah on a completely clean item of clothing.

The Migdanos Eliyahu (Chelek 3:Teshuva 54) [Rav Alter Eliyahu Rubenstein 1946–2005] disagrees with the idea that it is a problem to soak soft lenses on Shabbat, and permits this even in a proper solution mainly due to the fact that the dirt on the lenses is not visible. People mostly tend to sterilise their lenses for fear of bacteria build up, which may cause harm to the eye. This “dirt” cannot be truly considered dirt in a halachic sense, and it is therefore permitted to soak them even in a cleansing liquid if they are clean to the naked eye, even if on a microscopic level they are dirty.

It is worth pointing out that if one's lenses have hardened, one may not soak and rub them to soften them up again as this may be an issue of makeh b'patish, (fixing a broken item).◆