

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Our Essence

The famous *Midrash* states that Hashem originally offered the Torah to the other nations of the world, but they refused after inquiring what the Torah contains. The *Ohr Hachaim* explains the *Midrash* the following way: a person's essence is defined by his actions, whether for good or evil. Thus, the nations of Eisav and Yishmael were ones whose essences were built on the actions of their patriarchs, Eisav being that of murder and Yishmael being that of robbery. When the nations of Eisav and Yishmael inquired what is contained in the Torah, Hashem responded "do not murder" and "do not steal," respectively. They couldn't accept the Torah, the *Ohr Hachaim* explains, because they felt that by adhering to these *mitzvos* they would blot themselves out of existence since the Torah goes against their very essence; there would be nothing left to define them. What they failed to realize is that Torah does not work against one's essence, but in tandem with it, elevating the good and weeding out the bad. This is specifically why Hashem challenged them with these very *mitzvos*. They would no longer need to be defined by what is currently their essence, but rather would become new, elevated nations. They, however, could not cope with this idea, choosing to rather stay in their current, less-than-stellar status.

Going along these lines, what was the essence of the Jewish people? Is there something in the Torah that might have gone against their essence, causing them to take pause and reflect about accepting the Torah? Based on this *Ohr Hachaim*, we can perhaps say that the essence of the Jewish people, initiated by Avraham *Avinu*, is to ask, question, and investigate. Nothing we do is without purpose, and our essence drives us to ensure we're doing the proper

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR
 RABBI ADI ROLAND

things for the right reasons. However, this can sometimes be a detriment, as there are times when as a nation, and especially on an individual level, we may lack the tools to comprehend something in its entirety. This lack of comprehension may hinder us from achieving what we are here to accomplish. But it cannot. At times, we must move forward despite our lack of understanding, but with full faith that our path is correct.

The Jewish people did have a challenge set before them: when Hashem asked us if we wanted to accept the Torah, had the Jewish people even questioned what it contained, we would have failed our test and been unable to receive the Torah. We know Who Hashem is, and if He is offering us something we must believe and know it is good, without questioning what it contains or even fully comprehending it. One can and should ask, question, and investigate, but if we fail to understand something in its entirety, that cannot interfere with our forward movement in doing His will. That's exactly what the Jewish people intended when they uttered those hallowed words of *Na'aseh V'Nishmah*. We will do and we will listen; we will move forward no matter the obstacle, be it physical or intellectual. And our Father in Heaven's pride and joy in us that day knew no bounds! 🕊️

A RIDDLE FOR YOU

When is testimony of one person good enough in a court of Jewish law to award money from one to another? 🕊️

See reverse side for the answer

A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

A question that is frequently asked is: How does one make a cup of instant coffee on Shabbos?

The *Poskim* advise that one first fill the coffee cup with water from the urn, and then put the instant coffee into the cup; this way the instant coffee is being put into a *keli sheini* (a "second vessel"), which does not have the power to recook liquids which have cooled off (Harav S.Z. Auerbach SSK 1, note 135). Some *Poskim* (Harav Y.S. Elyashiv, *Meor Hashabbos*, vol. 1, 5:25 and *Shevet Halevi* 8:63) go even further and advise that one pour the water from the first cup into another cup and then put the instant coffee in. This way, the instant coffee is being put into a *keli shelishi* (a "third vessel"), which has even less cooking power than a *keli sheini*. Harav M. Feinstein (*Igros Moshe O.C. 4:74, Bishul 16*) writes that though the *halacha* permits pouring hot water directly over instant coffee, he himself is particular to put the coffee in a *keli shelishi*.

A deeper understanding of the above *halacha*:

There is a *halachic* principle that is cited when discussing if and how food can be "cooked" or warmed up on Shabbos: *Ein bishul achar bishul*, which means that once a food has been cooked before Shabbos, it cannot – in *halachic* terms – be "cooked" again. In other words, a food which has already been cooked cannot be subject to the prohibition of cooking on Shabbos.

One could reason that since coffee beans are first roasted and then cooked while being processed into instant coffee, it would be permissible to pour boiling water from an urn directly onto the [already cooked] instant coffee powder. But there are two reasons why this is not a simple matter:

1. Generally, coffee beans are cooked before they are made into instant coffee.

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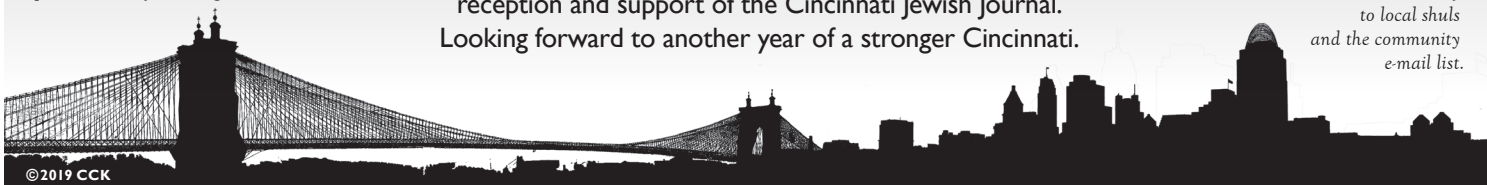
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A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

However, it is possible that a method other than cooking was used in the manufacturing process. If another process was used, it would be prohibited to pour water from the urn over the coffee, since then the coffee would become cooked for the first time.

2. Some authorities maintain that instant coffee is not considered a solid food since it disintegrates completely and melts upon contact with hot water. Thus, it would be classified *halachically* as a liquid. The *halacha* regarding liquids is that even if they were fully cooked, if they are no longer warm it is prohibited to recook them (*Rama O.C. 318:15*). If so, then water may not be poured directly from the urn over the instant coffee, since cooled-off liquids are subject to *bishul*.

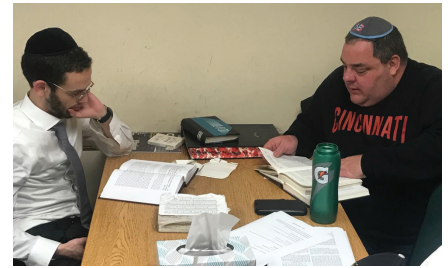
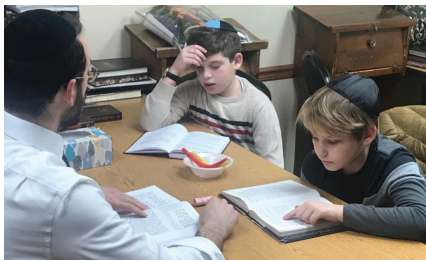
While there are dissenting opinions (See *Yechaveh Da'as 2:44*), the general consensus among contemporary *Poskim* is that it is proper to be stringent and to conduct oneself as prescribed above. 

IT HAD TO BE HASHEM


The Jewish refugees that have found their way to Kobe, Japan are relocated to Shanghai, China, because of Nazi pressure...

The city of Shanghai had already been designated an international city by the Chinese government before the Japanese conquest of the city. This meant that different sections of the city were governed by different foreign nations, including France, England, and America. Therefore, the Japanese viewed placing Jews there as somewhat complying with Nazi demands not to harbor Jews in Japan. The destination of Shanghai had been found as a possible refuge before the Lithuanian refugees arrived and there were estimates of 20,000 Jewish refugees in total in Shanghai, many of them from Germany and Austria. Kobe had been a beautiful

GLIMPSES OF THE KOLLEL



and enjoyable climate, while Shanghai was very hot and oppressively humid, to such an extent that at night the streets were lined with people sleeping because it was cooler there than in their houses. Indoors it was possible to reach temperatures of 100 degrees! Mosquitos were a fact of life as well. Japan had also been a much cleaner environment and, due to these factors, there were many outbreaks of disease amongst the refugees which did claim several lives. There were several renowned physicians among the German and Austrian refugees who helped with these outbreaks. Amongst the 500 students of the Mir Yeshiva who had in their entirety been transplanted from Mir to Shanghai, amazingly, every student who had contracted any of these diseases recovered entirely. A group of refugees with relatives or connections in America visited the American consulate in Shanghai to again request visas to America and eventually a number of visas were received on Thursday, December 3, 1941. The visas still needed to be approved and stamped at the American

consulate. The consulate, though, would be closed on Friday and they would not be able to visit until Monday December 7. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the consulate was immediately closed and the window of opportunity with it. (There were three *yeshiva* students, one of them Rabbi Mechael Soroka's grandfather, who had received their visas earlier and began their first leg on the journey to America by taking a ship to the Philippines, only to pull into the harbor on December 7 under fire from Japanese fighter planes. They would spend the remainder of the war in a Japanese prison camp.) Japan's war with America would present the refugees with many new challenges. To be continued... 


RIDDLE ANSWER

A תורה אשר תעשיה לא תהיה לך כעבודת עבודה זרה
 כי תעשה אותה באהבה ותירא ה' אלהיך
 כי ה' אלהיך הוא ה' אחד
 ואת כל המצוות אשר אומר ה' אלהיך
 תעשה בלבבך תשבת בלבבך
 ואת כל המצוות אשר אומר ה' אלהיך
 תעשה בלבבך תשבת בלבבך

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

Even more troubling than the issue of Jewish immigrants assimilating into American culture was the fact that their children completely acculturated to the melting pot of America, at the expense of their Jewish observance. Having been raised in America, these children could fit in much more seamlessly than their parents. One of the leaders in attempting to hold on to the "second generation" was Rabbi Bernard Drachman. Rabbi Drachman's life story itself is fascinating, as he was not raised in an observant home and, in fact, attended a Reform Jewish Preparatory School through high school and college. He received a scholarship to study in Germany for the Reform rabbinate. While in Germany, he earned his PhD from the University of Heidelberg, but his experiences in Europe convinced him to become fully observant and join the Orthodox rabbinate. In his memoirs, he writes of his travels to several communities and of inspiring episodes that led to this change in his life. One was of a Shabbos he spent in Frankfurt in the shul of Rabbi Shmshon Rafael Hirsch, and another was seeing a simple Jew in Poland say the Grace after Meals with great concentration. Upon returning to America, Rabbi Drachman was determined to stem the tide of assimilation. One of his major efforts was creating the Jewish Sabbath Alliance of America to champion the cause of Shabbos. Activities included inspiring Jews to keep their businesses closed on Shabbos and finding jobs for Shabbos observers. One of his personal projects, inspired by his affinity for Rav Hirsch's teachings, was to translate Rav Hirsch's work, *Nineteen Letters*, into English. 

SOURCES: Levine, Dr. Yitzchak. "A Forgotten Champion of American Orthodoxy." 2005. Gurock, Jeffrey S. "From Exception to Role Model: Bernard Drachman and the Evolution of Jewish Religious Life in America, 1880-1920." *American Jewish History*, vol. 76, no. 4, 1987, pp. 456-484.