

## A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

### Time to Disinfect

“And he shall return the robbed item that he robbed, or the proceeds of his fraud (5:23).”

Peninim Meshulchan Gavoha quotes the *Beis Halevi's* novel idea. A sinner who sullied himself with sins is similar to a kosher pot which became *treif* by cooking forbidden items in it. First, he must wash it and wipe away any visible part of the forbidden food; without this step, the *kashering* process will not help. Only when he first cleans the external dirt will *kashering* help to remove the non-kosher absorptions.

Similarly, one who sinned and wants to repent must first remove the actual sin. That is, one who stole must return the stolen object, or one who owns faulty weights must

first remove them from his house.

The same is true with other sins, since the impurity of the sin hovers over him. Firstly, remove the sin itself by the steps to repentance: Regret for the sin, resolve to do better, and verbal confession. This removes the impurity of the sin. He is now like the *treif* pot which was externally cleaned. He now must remove the absorptions (that is, his nature of being accustomed to the sin he had been performing, which to some extent becomes second-nature to him). This can be done with more repentance, in accordance with the sin he performed.

Regarding the *kashering* of vessels, *halacha* dictates that the way *chometz* or prohibited

food is absorbed, is the way they expel it; namely, a utensil used directly with fire must be *kashered* with fire, and if it was used with boiling water, it must be *kashered* with boiling water. So, too, in regard to repentance; the more severe the sin is, the more severe the cleansing (repentance) needs to be.

Studying Torah, however, is the best method of cleansing, as it is compared to fire, provided that he removed the actual transgression.

As we approach Pesach and learn about *kashering* utensils, let us remember this lesson from the *parasha*, namely, *kashering* ourselves from our sins. As the commentaries put it, the Evil Inclination is analogous to *chometz*, and part of our job of ridding our homes from *chometz* is to rid ourselves of the Yetzer Hara's grip on us. 🙏



RABBI  
 DOVID TZVI  
 MEISSNER

## A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

Both men and women are commanded by the Torah to eat matzah at the Seder (MB 472:44). The first night of Pesach is a Torah obligation, while the second night is only Rabbinic (MB 475:44). A child who has reached the age of *chinuch* should also be given matzah to eat at the Seder (MB 343:2-3).

Some have the custom of only using hand matzah, while others use machine matzos. Everybody agrees that the matzos being used for this *mitzvah* should be *shemurah* matzos. This is matzah that has been watched (ideally) since the harvesting of the wheat to ensure that nothing has happened that cause it to become *chometz* (OC 553:4).

A person must eat one *kezayis* of matzah at the Seder (*Rambam Chometz Umatzah* 6:1). Rav Moshe Heinemann, Sh'lita, upon experimentation, found that half a machine matzah or 1/3 of a round matzah contains the volume of matzah necessary for a *kezayis*. (The *Shulchan Aruch* brings an opinion that one should eat two *k'zeisim*, one from the top and one from the broken middle matzah. One who eats a half of a matzah has actually eaten two *k'zeisim* when calculated according to the more lenient measurements of a *kezayis* and has therefore sufficiently complied with both opinions.)

A person who has difficulty chewing may crush the *kezayis* of matzah before eating it (BH 461:4). If necessary, he may also soak the matzah in water to facilitate eating the *kezayis* (MB 461:17-18).

The *kezayis* should be eaten within the span of *kdei achilas pras* (MB 475:9),

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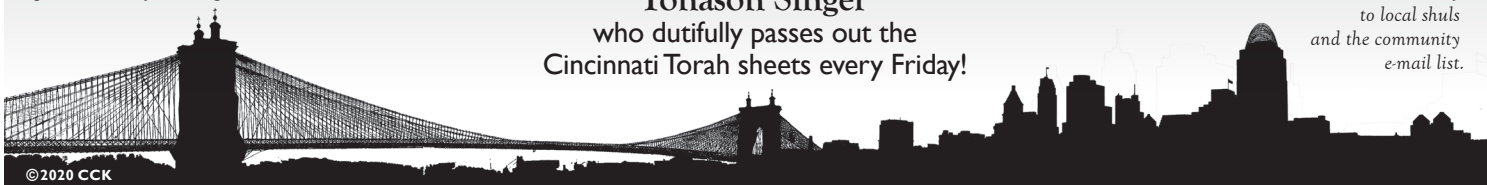
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## A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

which is preferably four minutes (*Halichos Shlomo, Perek 9 and Emes L'yaakov, Siman 475*). In a case of illness or extenuating circumstances, one can be lenient up to nine minutes (R' S Kammenetzky, *Kovetz Halochos*, p. 409).

A person should preferably chew the matzah without swallowing until he has a *kezayis* of matzah in his mouth, and then swallow the *kezayis* at one time (MB 475:9). These days with our matzos, it is difficult and highly unusual to eat like that, and it is enough to eat quickly without interrupting (R' S Kammenetzky, p. 406).

A man should eat the matzah while leaning on his left side (OC 475:1). If he did not do so, he should eat another *kezayis* without another *bracha* while leaning on his left side (with the exception of a left handed person, where we say after the fact he is *yotzei*) (B.H.).

Before eating, one should have in mind that he is about to perform the *mitzvah* of eating matzah (OC 475:4). When reciting or hearing the *brachos* of *Al Achilas Matzah*, he should also have in mind the eating of the *afikomen* (*Shar Hatziyon OC 477:4*). 🕒

## POWER OF PRAYER

Paul Blitz taught English classes for Talmudical Academy of Baltimore. He also was a career officer in the Army reserve. As the War on Terror escalated, he knew his turn would come soon, and before long he was being shipped out to Iraq. Staff Sergeant Blitz was a beloved member of the faculty, and the realization that he may never come back was a sobering thought to all his students. The students and faculty let him know that they would be praying for his success and safety until he would return. While in Iraq one day, two of the men under him came to talk to him in the officer's tent. Neither of them was yet twenty years old. It was striking to Blitz that he was addressing two soldiers approximately the same age as boys he had recently been teaching in Baltimore. The two young soldiers looked up at him with fright in their eyes. "We're scared, Staff Sergeant," they said simply. Staff Sergeant Blitz looked them back in the eyes and told them, "Private, in Baltimore there are 800 children praying for my safety and for your safety. G-d is looking out for



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us right now." They thanked him for his reassuring words and went back to their posts. On May 5th, 2005, Staff Sgt. Blitz came home, and the first chance he had, he returned to Talmudical Academy of Baltimore and told all the assembled children there, "There were 208 men in my unit, and 38 were my responsibility, and they've all come home. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your prayers!" 🕒

## A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

Where do we find in this week's *parasha* that when one has sinned he brings less of an offering than usual?

*Bring this question to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answer!* 🕒

## BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On the evening before Yom Kippur, Sunday, September 22nd, 1928, in the town of Massena, New York, a four-year-old gentile girl, Barbara Griffiths, wandered from her home into nearby woods. Search parties were quickly assembled, but to no avail. When night came, she was still missing. The town of Massena had experienced incredible growth within the past ten years because of factories that had opened and employed many recent European immigrants. As the search for Barbara Griffiths continued, some of the immigrant population recalled tales from their youth about the Jews. Wasn't a Jewish holiday about to begin? Didn't the Jews use the blood of children for holiday celebrations? Rumors began to circulate that the small Jewish community of Massena was behind the child being missing, and members of the local fire station who were members of the Ku Klux Klan were willing listeners. State police were given a lead to find the missing girl: Search the Jews! The police began to knock on doors of Jewish storekeepers, ordering them to open their stores. Townspeople began to walk by Jewish stores and peered in the windows, hoping to catch a glimpse of the little girl, and issuing accusatory remarks. One storekeeper was terrified that they would find his homemade wine used for Shabbos Kiddush, as this was still during Prohibition. On Sunday at around noon, while the rabbi of the town, Rabbi Berel Brennglass, was preparing for the onset of Yom Kippur, two state troopers summoned him for questioning. Rabbi Brennglass immediately scolded the troopers for even insinuating such an accusation and for interrupting him so close to *Kol Nidrei*. He refused to submit for questioning, and stated that he would deliver a voluntary statement at town hall when he was ready. Within a short time, he appeared at town hall and, ignoring questions put to him by the mayor and state troopers, he denounced all who dared in the 20th century to accuse Jews of such things as using the blood of a child for ritual purposes, chided that they should all "hang their heads in shame," and abruptly left. The mayor and troopers were reportedly ashamed after the rabbi's outburst. Several hours later, the whole matter was put to rest when Barbara Griffiths wandered out of the woods less than half a mile from her home alongside a highway and was spotted and brought home. There never was an official apology issued by the Massena mayor's office or police and fire station for the false accusations. 🕒

SOURCES: Levine, Dr. Yitzchok. "An American Blood Libel – It Did Happen!" *Hamodia*, 2008, pp. C6–C7. Vernick, Shirley Reva. "Letter from Massena: Blood Libel on Main Street." *Hadassah*, 2013.

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