

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Lessons From Davening

RABBI
YITZCHOK
PREIS



The famed *Chofetz Chayim* was challenged by a group of despondent Jews. At his behest they had put great effort and expense into providing kosher food to Jewish soldiers, only to discover that it was to no avail. The soldiers ate all of the kosher meals, and then joined their comrades in the non-kosher military mess hall. Those who had provided the kosher dinners felt cheated and deflated.

There are two, subtly different, versions as to the *Chofetz Chayim's* response. It is hard to know if one or the other is more historically accurate, or if perhaps they were both expressed by the *Chofetz Chayim*. But both are messages worth contemplating and both may have precedent in a lesson from our *parasha*.

Version 1:

The *Chofetz chayim* replied, "But now the soldiers ate LESS non-kosher."

Ostensibly, having already consumed the kosher food, the soldiers would have eaten less for their "second" dinner.

True, the gestures of the community had not been life-altering. True, the soldiers weren't even inspired to skip the next non-kosher meal. But Judaism and its *mitzvos* are not "all-or-nothing" endeavors. Total avoidance of sin is of infinite value. So is avoidance of even the smallest measure of sin, because a slice of "infinite" is "infinite." Each reduction in consumption of non-kosher is therefore of immeasurable value and the townsfolk could feel proud in having facilitated that spiritual reality.

In our *parasha*, after ten spies speak ill of the Land of Israel and ultimately, of G-d Himself, the Torah describes that "Vayahas Kaleiv..." Kaleiv hushed the people and restored calm, for which he was praised and rewarded by Hashem. The calm didn't last. Moments later the evil spies again had their sway over the populace. Yet, Kaleiv

is deemed a hero and is rewarded as such. Kaleiv was not successful in eliminating the challenge against G-d, but it is quite likely that his intercession made *some* impact on *some* of his audience. Even upon rejecting Kaleiv's overtures and once again doubting Hashem, if even one individual was even slightly less distanced from Hashem, that is an infinite success.

Version 2:

The *Chofetz Chayim* replied, "But in the moment, they were avoiding the non-kosher food."

True, the gestures of the community had not transformed the dietary habits of the soldiers. As stated above, Judaism is not an "all-or-nothing" package. Each and every *mitzvah* fulfillment, and each and every avoidance of sin, is of powerful spiritual benefit. A *mitzvah* is a *mitzvah* and is of infinite value even if followed immediately by sin.

In addressing the nature of Kaleiv's "success," Rav Moshe Feinstein, ז"ל, suggests that it was the temporary *teshuvah* of his audience. For a few short moments, they reconnected with Hashem and had restored trust in Him. True, the *teshuvah* was quickly abandoned. But the sinful attitude that followed so quickly did nothing vis-a-vis the spiritual effects of the short-lived *mitzvah*-state achieved by his speech.

The common denominator in both of these approaches is the infinite value of *mitzvah*. No matter how small or fleeting, each is of value beyond our comprehension. 🕒

A RIDDLE FOR YOU

Name a *non-time-bound mitzvah* that women are not obligated in. (There are at least two.) 🕒

See reverse side for the answer

A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

We live in a time in which keeping a kosher home is relatively easy. However, when travel plans interrupt our regular routine, we frequently encounter situations we do not normally experience at home. Considering that many families will be going on vacation this summer, let us discuss how to deal with some of the *kashrus* challenges facing Jewish hotel guests.

Obviously if the hotel is certified kosher by a *kashrus* agency, most *kashrus* problems are alleviated. Assuming that you are staying at a regular non-kosher hotel/motel, here are some of the guidelines, based on R' Moshe Heinemann and the Star-K, that one should be aware of.

Continental Breakfast – Many hotels offer a variety of foods for breakfast. Prepared foods (e.g. pancakes, waffles, or bakery items) may not be eaten due to the ingredients and preparation utensils used; however, fresh whole fruit (providing that they do not need to be inspected for insects), or any sealed item bearing a reliable kosher symbol may be eaten. Plastic cutlery may be available upon request for guests to cut their produce. Pre-cut fruits or vegetables should be avoided, since they may have been cut with a knife that was used for non-kosher food. [If it is a large hotel or store where a lot of fruit is being cut up, there is room to be lenient (*Rema* Y.D. 96:4).] Cooked eggs, even in their shells (hard/medium/soft boiled), are forbidden due to *Bishul Akum*—certain foods cooked by a non-Jew (Y.D. 113:14). Unflavored coffee is

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A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

acceptable, as is milk (for those who drink milk that is not *Cholov Yisroel*). Hot water from an urn may be used. (At hotels in New York City, one should be aware that unfiltered water may contain copepods – small but visible crustaceans which many *Poskim* require one to be stringent about). Waffle mixes, even with a reliable certification, may not be used because the griddle may have been used with other mixes and rendered non-kosher.

Ice Maker – One is allowed to use the ice in the hotel, as the ice machines are dedicated to making ice. (However, one may not remove ice on Shabbos if this requires activation of the machine.)

Refrigerator – One may use a clean refrigerator in which to store kosher food. Meat, fish, and non-*mevushal* wine require a proper seal if they are left alone while the guest is away and the room is to be cleaned. Otherwise, one can get into issues of *basar shenisalem min ha'ayin and stam yeinam* (meat or wine that has been left unwatched by a Jew which a non-Jew had access to).

Coffee Maker in Room – Hotel rooms provide a coffee maker and kosher coffee. Many of the coffeemakers use individual hot cups into which the coffee drips. The machine is used for coffee only and, therefore, one may make coffee in this type of machine.

Kosher Meals – Hotels may be able





The Kollel will be off this coming week and look for our next Cincinnati Torah on Parshas Chukas-Balak

POWER OF PRAYER


Yaakov at 13 was orphaned from both of his parents and, by himself, had arranged admission to the Yeshiva of Lomza, which was near his hometown. He threw himself into his learning, but he longed for his mother and father terribly, and his longing was most intense on mail day. While many of the boys that were learning in the Yeshiva who came from other towns would receive packages with letters, clothes, food, and other goodies, Yaakov knew no one would be sending him that expression of love. It got to a point that, with eyes filled with tears, he turned inwardly to Hashem and said, "I am not complaining that I don't get presents, Hashem, I can make do without them. But I have no father to send me his love in this world except for

to order kosher frozen "airline meals" upon request. Some hotels keep them in their inventory, should the need arise. The hotel must leave the wrapping intact for the guest.

To be continued... 

You. Hashem please send me a package too. Send me a package that contains Your help in learning Your holy Torah and help in concentrating while I learn and help coming closer to You Hashem!" From then on, on mail day, Yaakov would always feel an extra level of energy while he learned and davened. Rav Yaakov Neiman would grow to be the Rosh Yeshiva of the Ohr Yisrael Yeshiva in Petach Tikvah, Israel, and would always remember those "packages" he received in his young Yeshiva days in Lomza. 


RIDDLE ANSWER

 *הנהגת חסד ורחמים*

BEYOND ELLIS ISLAND

THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

During the mining boom, as towns sprung up in the western United States by those who hoped to hit it big, many entrepreneurial Jews jumped at the chance to make a better living than what was available on the East Coast. One couple who became known for their adherence to Torah law even in the rough and tumble boomtown life was Abraham and Miriam Kubeski. Originally from Poland, the Kubeskis attempted to find a better life in Manchester, England, before Miriam's brother wrote to her from Central City, Colorado, known at one point as the "Richest Square Mile on Earth." He was a successful clothier and invited her family to join. Going to the mikvah before they built one themselves meant a trip to the mineral baths in Idaho Springs (still a popular tourist spot), and lack of kosher meat required them to live as vegetarians. The Kubeski family moved to Denver in 1888 and became instrumental in the growth and establishment of the Denver Jewish community, centered around West Colfax and now known as the "West Side." Miriam had become a midwife while still in England and continued in Denver. Her reputation grew to the point that she was once introduced at a medical convention in Denver by Dr. Henry Buchtel, a local obstetrician, as the most famous midwife in Denver. The care she gave mothers, especially Denver's Jewish immigrant population, did not stop at birth. Miriam would regularly collect money and clothing for families in need, as well as deliver fresh chicken soup. Her daughter would also become known as a philanthropist in Denver. She and her husband started the Denver Shwayder Trunk Factory company. Today it is known as the Samsonite Luggage Corporation. 

SOURCE: Abrams, Jeane. "Orthodox Women in the "Wild West."" *Jewish Action Magazine*. 2008.

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