

A PARASHA THOUGHT

Novocain

Anyone who has ever been to the dentist knows that Novocain is a wonderful invention, without which dentist appointments would be a miserable experience.

There are some unfortunate people who suffer from hyper-retention, because of which they remember EVERYTHING, with all the emotion of the original incident. Those people know how painful it is not to have any numbing capacity for their painful memories. Hashem gave us Novocain for our difficult occurrences and memories, without which life would be a miserable experience.

That said, it is not difficult to understand why Sarah, who was one of the greatest personalities the world has ever seen, died from shock and horror upon hearing about the near-death experience of her son Yitzchak, as related by the Targum Yonasan in the beginning of this weeks' *parasha*. Many people are bothered by this. Avraham, who Rashi says (21:12) was not as great in prophecy as Sarah, was able to process the command from Hashem to bind his son, and did indeed bind him with the intent to bring him as a sacrifice. Why was Avraham able to withstand the pain of the loss of his precious son, while Sarah couldn't?

Says Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, it was because of Hashem's Novocain. Hashem gave Avraham time to process that he would have to lose a child before commanding him to actually CAUSE this loss. That time to process, although it was short and insignificant, acted as a numbing agent for the pain. Sarah, however, was informed of what happened in an immediate and terrifying way, with no time to comprehend and assimilate the information. That was too much for her, notwithstanding her unconquerable faith, and she died.

This Novocain is wonderful, and many people have pointed out this great kindness of Hashem (see *Chovos Halavos*, *Shaar Habchina* chapter 5).

Here's the thing.

An incredible miracle happened in the city of Radin in the early 1900s; a miracle with no natural explanation for. Dozens of witnesses attested to the fact that the Chafetz Chaim had been able to bring about a cure through clearly miraculous intervention. The entire town was in an uproar; it was all anyone could talk about for days! People were extremely inspired. But time passed, and life went back to normal, business as usual.

Said Rabbi Yechezkel Levinstein: Novocain! It's not only the difficult happenings that get numbed with time, inspiration also gets numbed. Everything gets numbed with time! If someone is inspired, but doesn't

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360 of the Kollel

A Taste of THE Kollel Annual Event

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At 18 Dining at the top of the Radisson
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5:30PM Sunday, Dec. 4

LEARNING WITH THE KOLLEL

WITH
RABBI CHAIM HEINEMAN

Q: Kashrus questions come up quite frequently in a kosher kitchen, whether they arise in the form of mix ups or mistakes. What information is crucial to clarify in order to correctly ask the question?

A: First of all, though your instinct may tell you otherwise, the reality is that everybody messes up from time to time, despite trying very hard to be on top of things. When children are added to the equation, it becomes nothing short of miraculous to go a short period without having some sort of kitchen mix-up. I can assure you that these issues crop up with all demographics and walks of life and there is no reason to be embarrassed to pick up the phone and ask.

1) The first thing to do is segregate all the food items and utensils that were part of the mix-up and whose status is unknown, by placing them in an unusual place that will remind everybody that these utensils should not be used until further notice. Often after a question has been created, there are additional complications when the doubtful foods and utensils are further used as if they are kosher.

2) If the utensil is dirty from non-compatible foods, it should be washed off in a non-food sink or bathtub in cold water. Warm water counts as cold water as long as one can hold one's hand there comfortably

Unless one is confident that they will remember, they should jot down:

3) Whether this utensil was used in the last 24 hours for hot kosher food or not. If that cannot be determined because

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LEARNING WITH THE KOLLEL

CONTINUED

nobody remembers, that should also be told to the Rav, since sometimes these vague doubts can act as contributing factors to justify the Rav being lenient.

4) Did the mix-up happen in hot or cold usage.

5) If any *davar charif* (sharp items) such as onions, garlic, radishes etc. were part of the mix-up, that should be noted and communicated to the Rav.

6) If one finds themselves in a potentially desperate situation, such as, they will experience a loss, be embarrassed by the lack of food, or their *Seudas Shabbos/Seudas Mitzvah* will be compromised, this should also be mentioned to the Rav. Especially in *Yoreh Deah*, many cases which would be otherwise prohibited are actually permitted in extenuating circumstances or cases of great need.

7) The materials that utensils are made from should also be told to the Rav. This can affect the question itself and also the method of *kashering*.

8) In a scenario where the food(s) are ruled to be prohibited, one should still ask the Rav if the food may be given away to a non-Jew or it must be disposed of. Sometimes the food is just prohibited from being eaten but can be gifted to a gentile. Other times the food becomes prohibited to benefit from, which would then make it forbidden to give as a present, since *halacha* considers that *hana'ah* (benefit). 🕒

A PARASHA THOUGHT

CONTINUED

make a practical, tangible plan to hang on to it as a stimulus for future betterment, within a short time it will be like nothing happened.

What does this mean for us?

Have you ever been inspired? Encouraged? Stimulated? Don't things happen daily that could possibly motivate you to do something, anything, better, if you would only be able to hang on to them? The Baal Shem Tov is reported to have said that things like that happen daily.

We can hold on to them – if we make a practical plan to hold on to them, and to grow from them.

Try it. It works. 🕒



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given by Rabbi Binyamin Kanowitz.
Meeting daily in the Kollel Annex at 6:40, ending in time for the 7:00 Shacharis

HAFTORAH HAPPENINGS

RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUK

Our Haftorah begins at the beginning of *Sefer Melachim* at the end of Dovid *Hamelech's* life. The *Navi* retells how when Dovid aged he was cold no matter how well he was covered. The reason for this punishment was that many years earlier, when King Shaul was concerned that Dovid was trying to overthrow him, he attempted on more than one occasion to kill Dovid. At one point Shaul entered a cave to relieve himself. Unbeknownst to Shaul, Dovid and his men were sitting in the cave and could have easily killed Shaul. Dovid's men tried to convince him to kill Shaul, but Dovid wouldn't listen and instead cut the corner of Shaul's garment, to show Shaul that he was not out to hurt him. *Chazal* (the Sages) say that because Dovid had disrespected clothing, he was punished and was unable to enjoy the benefit and the warmth of clothing.

Why was Dovid punished for doing an act of great righteousness? The *Balei Mussar* explain that, true, Dovid's sparing Shaul's life was a great deed. However, no matter what Dovid's intention was, since he treated clothing in a disrespectful manner Hashem took away his ability to benefit from them. If this applies by physical items, then all the more so it is true by Torah and *mitzvos*. If we do not treat them with the proper respect Hashem will, G-d forbid, not give us the spiritual goodness that comes from them. 🕒

TRACING OUR MINHAGIM

RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUK

In *Sefer Bereishis* the Torah records many different marriages. Interestingly, many of the customs we do to this day come from these weddings.

1) The custom of the *badeken*, the *chosson* covering the face of the *kallah* with a veil, comes from the marriage of Yitzchak and Rivkah. The Torah records that when Rivka saw Yitzchak for the first time, she covered her face. Interestingly, we do the opposite, in that the *chosson* covers the *kallah's* face. [Some halachic authorities maintain that the *badeken* is called *chupa* and is part of the wedding ceremony and that it needs *eidem* (witnesses) as well.]

2) There is a widespread *minhag* that both the *chosson* and *kallah* fast on their wedding day. The source for this comes from Talmud Yerushalmi (*Bikurim* 3:3) which says that a *chosson's* sins are forgiven. The Gemara learns this from next week's *parasha*, when Eisav marries Mochlas bas Yishmael. The Gemara says that really, her name was Bismas, but she is called Mochlas because all of Esav's sins were forgiven when he married her. For this reason, a wedding day is a "mini Yom Kippur." Therefore, both *chosson* and *kallah* fast, say *Mincha* with *viduy* as on Yom Kippur, and the *chosson* wears a *kittel*.

3) Many have the custom that when the *chosson* covers the *kallah* with a veil he says the blessing that Lavan gave Rivka as she left to marry Yitzchak, "Our sister, may you come to be thousands of myriads." 🕒