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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON TZAV – SHABBOS HAGADOL - 5772

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Tsav
Blood, Idolatry or War

Today's sedra, speaking about sacrifices, prohibits the eating of blood: Wherever you live, you must not eat the blood of any bird or animal. If anyone eats blood, that person must be cut off from his people. (Lev. 7: 26-27)
However, it is clear that this is more than one prohibition among others. The ban on eating blood is fundamental to the Torah. So, for example, it occupies a central place in the covenant G-d makes with Noah - and through him, all humanity - after the Flood:
But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. (Gen. 9: 4)
So too, Moses returns to the subject in his great closing addresses in the book of Devarim/Deuteronomy:

But be sure you do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat. You must not eat the blood; pour it out on the ground like water. Do not eat it, so that it may go well with

you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord. (Deut. 12: 23-25)

What is wrong with of eating blood? Maimonides and Nahmanides offer conflicting interpretations. For Maimonides - consistent with his programme throughout *The Guide for the Perplexed* - it is part of the Torah's extended battle against idolatry. He notes that the Torah uses identical language about idolatry and eating blood:

I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. (Leviticus 17:10)

I will set my face against that man [who engages in Moloch worship] and his family and will cut him off from his people. (Leviticus 20:5)

In no context other than blood and idolatry is the expression 'set my face against' used. Idolators, said Maimonides, believed that blood was the food of the spirits, and that by eating it, they would have 'something in common with the spirits' (Guide, III, 46). Eating blood is forbidden because of its association with idolatry.

Nahmanides says, contrariwise, that the ban has to do with human nature. We are affected by what we eat.

If one were to eat the life of all flesh, and it would then attach itself to one's own blood, and they would become united in one's heart, and the result would be a thickening and coarseness of the human soul so that it would closely approach the nature of the animal soul which resided in what he ate . . . (Ramban, Commentary to Lev. 17: 13)

Eating blood, implies Nahmanides, makes us cruel, bestial, animal-like.

Which explanation is correct? We now have copious evidence, through archaeology and anthropology, that both are. Maimonides was quite right to see the eating of blood as an idolatrous rite. Human sacrifice was widespread in the ancient world.

Among the Greeks, for example, the god Kronos required human victims. The Maenads, female worshippers of Dionysus, were said to tear living victims apart with their hands and eat them. The Aztecs of South America practised human sacrifice on vast scale, believing that without its meals of human blood, the sun would die: 'Convinced that in order to avoid the final cataclysm it was necessary to fortify the sun, they undertook for themselves the mission of furnishing it with the vital energy found only in the precious liquid which keeps man alive.'

Barbara Ehrenreich, from whose book *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War*, these facts come, offers a fascinating speculation on the birth of blood sacrifice. Quoting Walter Burkert, she argues that one of the most formative experiences of the first human beings must have been the terror of being attacked by an animal predator:

The utmost danger is met with excitement and anxiety. Usually there will be but one way of salvation: one member of the group must fall prey to the hungry carnivores, then the rest will be safe for the time being. An outsider, an invalid, or a young animal will be most liable to become the victim. This situation of pursuit by predators must have played a momentous role in the evolution of civilization, while man, as a hunter, became a predator himself.

Ehrenreich suggests that 'the sacrificial ritual in many ways mimics the crisis of a predator's attack. An animal or perhaps a human member of the group is singled out for slaughter, often in a spectacularly bloody manner.' The eating of the victim and his or its blood temporarily occupies the predator, allowing the rest of the group to escape in safety. That is why blood is offered to the gods. As Mircea Eliade noted, 'the divine beings who play a part in initiation ceremonies are usually imagined as beasts of prey - lions and leopards (initiatory animals par excellence) in Africa, jaguars in South America, crocodiles and marine monsters in Oceania.' Blood sacrifice appears when human beings are

sufficiently well organized in groups to make the transition from prey to predator. They then relive their fears of being attacked and eaten.

Ehrenreich does not end there, however. Her view is that this emotional reaction - fear and guilt - survives to the present as part of our genetic endowment from earlier times. It leaves two legacies: one, the human tendency to band together in the face of an external threat; the other, the willingness to risk self-sacrifice for the sake of the group. These emotions appear at times of war. They are not the cause of war, but they invest it with 'the profound feelings - dread, awe, and the willingness to sacrifice - that make it "sacred" to us.' They help explain why it is so easy to mobilize people by conjuring up the spectre of an external enemy.

War is a destructive and self-destructive activity. Why then does it persist? Ehrenreich's insight suggests an answer. It is the dysfunctional survival of instincts, profoundly necessary in an age of hunter-gatherers, into an era in which such responses are no longer necessary. Human beings still thrill at the prospect of shedding blood.

Maimonides was right to see in the blood-sacrifice a central idolatrous practice. Nahmanides was equally correct to see it as a symptom of human cruelty. We now sense the profound wisdom of the law forbidding the eating of blood. Only thus could human beings be gradually cured of the deeply ingrained instinct, deriving from a world of predators and prey, in which the key choice is to kill or be killed. Evolutionary psychology has taught us about these genetic residues from earlier times which - because they are not rational - cannot be cured by reason alone, but only by ritual, strict prohibition and habituation. The contemporary world continues to be scarred by violence and terror. Sadly, the ban against blood sacrifice is still relevant. The instinct against which it is a protest - sacrificing life to exorcise fear - still lives on.

From: kby-parsha-owner@kby.org on behalf of Kerem B'Yavneh Online [feedback@kby.org]

Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2006 11:28 AM

To: KBY Parsha

Subject: Parshat Tzav

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Parshat Tzav

The Tamid and the Wood

Rosh Hayeshiva Rav Mordechai Greenberg shlita

Our parsha opens with the korban tamid, which has a special mitzvah: "The priest shall kindle wood upon it every morning." (Vayikra 6:5) The Gemara (Yoma 26b) derives from the pesukim that the morning tamid requires two blocks of wood in the hands of one kohen, whereas the evening tamid requires two blocks of wood in the hands of two kohanim. The Gemara does not explain, though, the distinction between the morning tamid and that of the evening.

There is another difference between the two temidim. In Yechezkel it says: "You shall prepare a sheep ... as a daily burnt-offering for Hashem; you shall make it every morning." (46:13) Radak notes that the evening tamid is not mentioned there, and writes that in the future the tamid will only be offered in the morning and not in the evening.

I heard from Rav Shlomo Fisher shlita a wonderful explanation of this. Chazal disclosed that the morning offering comes to remind the merit of akeidat Yitzchak. It says in the Mishna Tamid (ch. 4): "They would not tie the lamb, but rather bind [its fore and back legs]," and the Gemara explains, "like the binding of Yitzchak, son of Avraham." It further says in Parshat Tzav, "he shall prepare the burnt-offering upon it, and burn

the fats of the peace-offering on it." This teaches that the morning tamid precedes all the other sacrifices; i.e., all of the sacrifices should follow the morning tamid, in order to mention the merit of Yitzchak in all of them.

The evening tamid, on the other hand, comes to atone for the sin of the golden calf. Therefore, its time is from six hours (midday) and on, just as it says about the golden calf, "The people saw that Moshe delayed (boshesh) in coming," (Shemot 32:34) as Chazal comment: "boshesh – ba shesh," the sixth hour came and Moshe did not arrive. In every generation there is something of the sin of the egel, as Chazal explain the verse: "On the day of My reckoning, I will reckon." (Shemot 32:34) Thus, in the future, the sin of the golden calf will be atoned for, and there will no longer be a need for the evening tamid.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin (102a) says that until the time of Yerovam, Bnei Yisrael "nursed" from one calf, and from Yerovam's time and on they "nursed" from two or three calves. Rashi explains that at first they were punished for the sin of one calf, and from Yerovam and on they were punished for three calves, i.e., also for the two that Yerovam made. Yerovam's calves are something not understandable, one of G-d's secrets. When Rechavam King of Yehuda came to fight against Yerovam, and to reunite the kingdom, the prophet Shemaya says to him: "Thus says Hashem: "Do not go up and do not battle your brethren Bnei Yisrael. Return each man to his house, for this matter was from Me." (Melachim I 12: 24) Immediately afterwards, Yerovam makes the two golden calves. This was revealed and known to G-d, and even so He told Rechavam that he should not go fight against Yerovam. This must also have been included in, "this matter was from Me," and apparently this was part of the punishment of the golden calf.

Based on this, Rav Fisher explained why the morning tamid was offered with two blocks of wood in the hand of one priest, whereas the evening tamid was offered with two blocks in the hands of two priests. The division of the kingdom is alluded to by the two pieces of wood, as it says in Yechezkel: "Take for yourself one piece of wood and write upon it, 'for Judah' ... and take one piece of wood and write upon it, 'For Joseph' ... Then bring them close to yourself, one to the other ... and they will become united in your hands." (37:16-17) Thus, for the morning tamid, which indicates the perfected world of the future, one priest unites the two pieces of wood. The evening tamid, on the other hand – which comes to atone for the sin of the golden calf – alludes to the imperfect state, that the two pieces of wood are separate, and therefore two priests bring the two pieces of wood.

In the future, the sin of the golden calf will be rectified, and unity will return to Am Yisrael. No longer will the evening tamid be offered, but only the morning one, in which the two blocks of wood will be unified in the hands of one kohen. Yechezkel's prophecy about the unity of the tribes will be fulfilled.

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From: ravfrand-owner@torah.org [mailto:ravfrand-owner@torah.org]
On Behalf Of

Rabbi Yissocher Frand Sent: Friday, April 07, 2006 11:10 AM To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Tzav "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Tzav These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Weekly Portion Torah Tapes: Tape # 499, Davening Quietly. Good Shabbos!

A Homiletic Reading of The Opening Verses of Vayikra

The parsha begins with the command regarding the Olah offering: Hashem spoke to Moshe: Command Aaron and his sons, saying: This is the law of the olah-offering. It is the olah-offering that stays on the

flame, on the Mizbayach [Altar], all night until the morning, and the fire of the Mizbayach shall be kept aflame on it. [Vayikra 6:1-2]

Within this pasuk, the Medrash finds an allusion to a person who is haughty (a baal gayvah). The Medrash interprets the phrase "olah" (literally that which goes up) as a person who holds himself on high, deriving from this, that such a person eventually inherits Gehinnom [hell] -- he will remain on the flames all night.

The Chassidic work Vayedaber Moshe gives a further insight to this pasuk. If the word "olah" refers to a "baal gayvah" we can say, he argues that the pasuk is hinting at the downfall of every conceited person. "This (Zos) is the Torah of the 'baal gayvah'" The word "ZOS" (meaning 'THIS is the way it has to be') is the downfall of every haughty individual. He is never willing to compromise. He is never willing to give in. It is always ZOS -- my way, or the highway!

Unfortunately, this is a cause so many times for friction in marriages. People are unbending and unyielding. This stems from an underlying conceit. Success in many of life's endeavors and particularly in life's relationships boils down to midos (character traits). The Baalei Mussar said in effect: A man's character is his fate. However we formulate this idea, it is a fact. A person's midos determines how he is going to do on the job, how he will do in marriage, how he will do in raising children.

"ZOS" -- always insisting on THIS way is Toras haOlah, the practice of the one who holds himself on high. Unfortunately -- as the Medrash points out -- such a person does not wind up in a positive fashion in the World of Truth.

The Kohen Is Always A Rookie

The next pasukim in the parsha teach the laws of the removal of the ashes: "The Kohen shall don his fitted linen Tunic, and he shall don linen pants on his flesh; he shall raise the ashes which the fire will consume of the olah-offering on the Mizbayach, and place it next to the Mizbayach. He shall remove his garments and shall wear other garments, and shall remove the ashes to the outside of the camp, to a pure place." [Vayikra 1:3-4]

The Beis HaMikdash was a very busy place. Starting with the offering of the morning Tamid sacrifice throughout the day, there was constant activity on the Mizbayach as the various private or communal offerings were brought. People who own their own business and office managers know that there is always a set routine that begins the start of each business day. Whether it be turning on the heat or the air-conditioning or flipping on the computer or other equipment, there is always a standard procedure that is the first thing that is done to begin the daily cycle of any busy operation. The first thing that they did in the Beis HaMikdash was to remove the previous days' ashes to outside the camp.

This was not just a matter of practicality -- that if they did not remove the ashes each day, the Mizbayach would get stuffed up. There may well have been room to accumulate several days' worth of ashes before cleaning out the Mizbayach. Nevertheless, this service of "Terumas HaDeshen" (Literally, 'the offering of the ashes') was the first thing that the Kohen did in the Beis HaMikdash every single morning.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch sees great symbolism in this. The message of the Terumas HaDeshen, he says, is that every day is a fresh beginning. One must begin anew, as it were, every single day. In matters of spirituality there is no resting on one's laurels, no such thing as saying "yesterday we had a banner day in the Beis HaMikdash." Yesterday is gone. Today is a new beginning. There is no concept of relaxing -- of being able to "take it a little easy today" because I accomplished so much yesterday. Each day we wipe the slate clean and start over.

In Rav Hirsch's words: "The thought of what has already been accomplished can be the death of that which is still to be accomplished. Woe unto him who, with smug self-complacency, thinks he can rest on his laurels, on what he has already achieved, and who does not meet the task of every fresh day with full fresh devotion as if it were the first day

of his life's work! Every trace of yesterday's sacrifice is to be removed from the hearth on the Mizbayach so that the service of the new day can be started on completely fresh ground." This is a powerful statement.

This is the message of the Terumas HaDeshen: "A new day, a new beginning. Today you are a rookie again. You must prove yourself again." This is why the daily Temple Service that symbolically represents all Divine Service always begins with taking out yesterday's ashes.

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This write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah Portion

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Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein

<info@jewishdestiny.com>

Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

Jerusalem Post :: Friday, March 30, 2012

WHY MURDERERS? :: Rabbi Berel Wein

As part of my long time nostalgia for my home town, Chicago, which I left almost a half century ago, I read a Chicago newspaper on my computer screen almost daily. The paper reports four to five murders daily. I am astounded by the casualness of the report of such killings. Here in Israel we are unfortunately not free of such violence though at a much more infrequent level. Very recently we are witness to an American soldier wantonly killing seventeen Afghan civilians for no apparent good reason. Last week four Jews, three of them little children, were murdered in cold blood by a young Moslem Frenchman. I am in the midst of reading a very chilling biography of the arch murderer Heinrich Himmler. It is very hard reading and I can only do so in sporadic bursts. Himmler uses the word "decency" over and over to describe his murderous policies. And what shall we think of the actual murderers, SS men and women, Wehrmacht soldiers, Ukrainian and Polish auxiliaries, the Sonderkommandos and the Einsatzgruppen battalions that performed the actual brutalities and killings? What made them such serial and ruthless killers?

I have always been troubled by this question. Is there no hope for humankind? Especially coming off of a century where over one hundred fifty million people were killed by war, governments and ideologues, I think that the question bears consideration. It goes to the basic nature and soul of human beings and should be the subject of serious thought and consideration of all of us.

Western man, since the days of the seventeenth century Enlightenment and the rise of democracy as an effective form of government, has preached a doctrine that proclaims that human beings are inherently good. Evil is caused by class disparity, economic unfairness, lack of tolerance, fanatical religions, oppression and exploitation of the working class, the violence of warfare and social disparities. All of this has certainly a grain of truth connected to it.

But all of these causes are outside of the individual human being itself. Because of this the Western world has a strong belief that if somehow these causes can be corrected or at least ameliorated the resulting violence and killing will also be diminished, if not even eliminated. There is no scientific proof that this theory is correct. But all of Western society and its governments subscribe to it anyway.

The many billions of governmental dollars thrown at these problems have not produced really sanguine results. But the basic mindset that propels these policies and programs is so fixed in our current society that it is almost unpatriotic and even not compassionate to think or say otherwise. Our society simply believes that human beings are good people at heart and that all of this violence and murder is simply a socially or ideologically driven aberration.

Thus legislative governmental policy, judicial reordering of society is the way forward to help us out of our murderous environment. That is the heart of secularism and its thought process. For secularism, at its base, believes that human beings are by innate nature good and fine creatures. The Torah not surprisingly takes an opposite view on all of these matters. It states that mankind and individual humans are bad by nature. The inclination of humans from youth is evil and destructive. All humans are potentially wild donkeys that trample, bite and destroy.

The Torah was given to Jews to control this evil inclination and to counteract our base instincts. But, the Torah demands that we be trained in introspection, realizing that we are capable, each and every one of us, of murder and mayhem. That is what the great rabbi of the Mishna meant when he said that he truly desired forbidden foods and acts but that "my father in Heaven has decreed that I not behave in such a fashion." The truly religious person, not someone who is merely superficially observant or societally conformist to ritual observance, not someone who makes up one's own definitions of decency and goodness, has a moral brake that counteracts one's own evil instinct. The truly religious person realizes that he or she is capable of cruelty and violence, of cheating and stealing and of unjustified aggression towards others.

By admitting this to one's self, then one can begin to take the steps to control such bad behavior. Our society is in denial about itself and its true nature. As a result, our international diplomacy and internal social projects are in such disarray. A better future is always predicated on an accurate assessment of the realities of the present.

Shabat shalom.

From Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>
To Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com>
Subject Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Parshas Tzav

This is the law of the Elevation-offering. (6:2)

Rashi explains that "This is the law of the Olah-offering," is an inclusionary phrase. The Torah teaches us that one "law" includes all offerings that have been alu, placed on the Mizbayach, Altar. Even if they had been pesullin, disqualified, and, thus, should not have been placed on the Mizbayach in the first place, we say, Im alu lo yeirdu, "If they ascend, they should not descend." This is derived from Zos haTorah, "Every instance that the Torah writes, 'This is the law,' it comes

to include something." In this case, all disqualified korbanos, which must be allowed to remain on the Mizbayach until they burn out, are included. Horav Moshe, zl, m'Kubrin, renders this pasuk homiletically. Zos HaTorah - "This is the benefit/advantage of studying Torah." Even those who, for some reason, later deviated and became pasul, disqualified, lo yeirdu, they will not descend. Any person who has studied Torah has been infused with a spiritual antibody that protects him forever. He is never lost. There is a GPS homing device imbedded deeply within him. He picked up this device when he studied Torah. It allows him to always find his way back home - to Torah, to observance, to Hashem. One who has once learned is never lost. The light of the Torah serves as a beacon to guide him back.

Command Aharon and his sons, saying: This is the law of the Olah Elevation-offering. (6:2)

In previous exhortations concerning the korbanos, offerings, the word used to introduce the mitzvah was either daber, speak, or amarta, say. Why does the Torah use the more emphatic term, tzav, command, concerning the Korban Olah, Elevation/Burnt offering? Chazal explain that the more emphatic term is used here: to urge the Kohanim to be especially zealous in performing this service; and to assure that this enjoinder be repeated and emphasized constantly throughout future generations. Rabbi Shimon adds that this exhortation is especially relevant to those commandments that involve a monetary loss, such as the Korban Olah from which the Kohanim receive nothing. The entire animal is burnt, leaving nothing for the owner or the Kohen. Maharal explains that for the Kohen this was especially taxing, since the meat he received from the korbanos was his livelihood. While it is true that he retained the hide of the Korban Olah, this was hardly sufficient to compensate for his loss. Other commentators suggest that the financial loss applies to other offerings and aspects of the Temple Service. We will focus not on the actual emphasis, but on the need to place this emphasis - almost ritualistically - for the future generations. Once it was mentioned that emphasis be placed on the Kohen's alacrity to serve, it goes without saying that this exhortation is not a one-time command, but part of the future process of offering the Korban Olah. The commentators explain that everything novel inspires one to go out of his way in carrying out the command diligently, with vigor and alacrity. After all, it is the first time, and he is excited. This is especially true if he derives personal pleasure as a fringe benefit. Satisfaction, pleasure, and financial remuneration are all powerful motivators. As time goes on and the activity loses much of its allure, the fringe benefits diminish and he becomes accustomed to it. Thus, the inspiration he has received from the activity slowly dissipates and, finally, becomes non-existent. The Korban Olah presents a special challenge to the Kohen. It is a mitzvah that is l'doros, for all generations. It involves chisaron kis, monetary loss. There are no fringe benefits that might encourage a more favorable attitude toward the service. In other words, this mitzvah needs special encouragement.

One might think that the enjoinder to have the fire burn on the Mizbayach applies to the korban. No, the Torah is speaking to the Kohen, exhorting him to maintain his fervor, his passion, his fire, so that the original hislahavus, enthusiasm/passion with which he began his service, continues on throughout the generations. His religious fervor should not wane. The joy inherent in serving the Almighty should accompany him throughout his lifetime of service. Indeed, the joy inherent in serving Hashem is an intrinsic component of the mitzvah. It is not an add-on, but a vital and critical part of the mitzvah - without which the mitzvah is nothing more than a tepid, sterile act of observance. The Kohanim are reminded of this, so that the joy continues on and on. The Chafetz Chaim, zl, had occasion to be in Lida. The entire Jewish community turned out to hear words of Torah and mussar, admonition, from the venerable sage. The Chafetz Chaim related the following incident, with its accompanying lesson. "Once, I went to the mikveh in

my city, Radin, and noticed, to my chagrin, that the water was quite cold. I turned to the attendant in charge of the mikveh and asked, 'Why is the water cold?' He explained that he had no clue: 'I did what I always do. I took the water from the large cooking pot and poured all of it into the mikveh.'" The Chafetz Chaim went over to the pot to check the temperature of the water. When he saw that the water from the pot was, at best, lukewarm, he said, "Now I understand why the water from the pot was unable to heat the mikveh! In order to heat the cold water of the mikveh, the water from the pot must be burning hot."

The Chafetz Chaim stopped for a moment and gazed into the faces of those assembled before him. Eis tzarah hee l'Yaakov, "It is a time of trouble for (the people of) Yaakov. Many of our brethren have alienated themselves from the heritage of their fathers. They have distanced themselves from the Torah and have become cold to its mitzvos. It is our responsibility to bring them back, to warm their hearts and souls, so that they return to the warmth of Torah. There is, however, one problem: One cannot heat up a cold heart with a dispassionate soul. It is only when our hearts are aflame with religious fervor, with a burning passion for Torah and mitzvos, that we will be able to transfer our flame to them and ignite their dormant feelings for Yiddishkeit."

As long as the Jewish heart beats, it is never too late. The embers have cooled; some have even turned into ashes, but there is an inner spark. The neshamah, soul, which is a chelek Elokai mi'Maal, a part of the Divine Above, continues to burn, regardless of its surroundings. That flame is eternal and can always be stoked into a powerful blaze. One may never give up on any Jew - regardless of his/her background or previous deeds.

Command Aharon and his sons, saying, "This is the law of the Olah/Elevation offering. It is the Olah (that stays) on the flame. (6:2)

The Midrash Rabbah makes an intriguing statement: Any nation or people which "elevates" itself over Hashem or His nation will be judged with fire. Chazal are teaching us the terrible punishment in store for the person or people who arrogate, who views himself or themselves as greater than Hashem. While this maxim is addressed primarily to the gentile oppressors who feel they can take on Hashem and His people, it serves also as a blanket statement decrying the ill effects of arrogance. Let us face it: Whoever acts haughtily is, in effect, against G-d, in Whose eyes we are all the same. One question remains to be addressed: Why of all places in which the Torah could have renounced the turpitude of arrogance, does it choose to do so while speaking to the Kohanim? What do Kohanim have to do with gaavah, haughtiness? They are the symbol of the ovdei Hashem, those who serve Hashem, with extreme devotion. They should be the last ones to whom the effects of this disgusting character trait should be addressed.

The Chasam Sofer, zl, explains that it is specifically concerning Kohanim that this character failing is so reprehensible. The Kohen has nothing about which to arrogate himself. He has no land, no property, no major possessions. He is supported by the nation, while he is devoting his life to serving Hashem. It is not unusual for the fellow who is with means to allow his material abundance to go to his head. The Kohen has no material abundance. He serves the people. Why is his head up in the clouds?

Thus, the Kohen who is arrogant is especially detestable. In the Talmud Pesachim 103, Chazal say that the mind cannot tolerate a pretentious, poor man His pomposity is especially abominable because he has nothing. He is no different than anyone else. Let him act that way.

It is the olah (that stays) on the flame...The flame on the Mizbayach should be kept aflame on it. (6:2)

In the Talmud Succah 28a, Chazal relate an incident in order to express the idea which is reflected in both of the above pesukim, by two different commentators. Chazal relate that Hillel HaZakein had eighty students, thirty of whom were worthy that the Shechinah rest on them, as it did on Moshe Rabbeinu. Thirty more of them were worthy that the sun stand

still for them, as it did for Yehoshua bin Nun. The other twenty ranked in between. This means that they were on a greater spiritual plane than those disciples who were compared to Yehoshua, but were not quite as spiritually developed as those who had achieved a status likened to Moshe. The greatest of the disciples was Yonasan ben Uziel, and the least of them all was Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai.

Anyone aware of that Chazal should be amazed by the "spread" between the top student and the one on the lowest rung - Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai. Chazal proceed to explain the disparity between these two Torah giants. Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai had mastered every aspect of Torah study: its expositions; Scriptural and Rabbinic exactitudes; the speech of the Ministering Angels; the language of the demons (thereby knowing how to control them), the medicinal properties of plants and herbs; and the various parables which are used to rebuke the Jewish nation. He was a veritable encyclopedia of every erudition concerning Judaism. This was the individual who was on the lowest rung of the spiritual ladder of ascendancy achieved by Hillel HaZakein's eighty students. What about Yonasan ben Uziel, the greatest of his students? Chazal teach that when he sat and studied Torah, the spiritual fire that emanated from him would burn any bird that flew above him.

We now have some idea of the spiritual distinction achieved by the students of Hillel HaZakein. The question is raised: If these are the achievements of the students, clearly Hillel was greater. How do we describe his Torah eminence in contrast to that of his students? The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, uses the words, Hee ha'Olah al mokdah, "It is the Olah (that stays) on the flame." He notes that the mem of mokdah appears in a diminutive form, sort of "depressing" the flame. He says this alludes to the fire of religious fervor within a person. The flame that is ignited to serve Hashem does not need to be apparent, pushing itself forward for everyone to see. The passion should remain within, embedded deep in his heart, emanating outward. This describes Hillel HaZakein's level of spirituality. He studied Torah with tremendous hislahavus, fiery passion. Yet, no birds were burnt as they flew over his house. He was able to control his fiery fervor and keep it within. Likewise, the Sefas Emes derives the same idea for the words, V'eish ha'Mizbayach tukad bo, "And the fire of the Mizbayach, Altar, shall be kept aflame bo, on it (within it) (ibid 6:2)." The greatness of Hillel HaZakein was manifest in that the birds that flew over him when he studied Torah did not burn. His flame burned brightly and passionately from within. Externally, to the observing eye, nothing could be observed. Passion for serving Hashem is the way an observant Jew is to live, but it may not be at the expense of another Jew. The idea of being frum oif yenem's cheshbon, being observant on another person's account, or executing religious authority at the expense of another Jew without consideration for his feelings, is the antithesis of religious observance. Horav Shalom Schwadron, zl, decries the absurdity of such an expression of religious activity, citing the following example. Some people make a point of publicizing themselves as devoted, G-d-fearing Jews, who will stop at nothing in carrying out Hashem's mitzvos with every stringency, to the highest level of exactitude. They take great pains to be meticulous in their observance of mitzvos. At times, however, this passion for perfection takes its toll on the sorry shoulders of others, as these "G-d-fearing" individuals in their pursuit of perfection in one mitzvah forget and even trample on the rest of the Torah. Rav Sholom cites an instance in which a young boy slightly past the age of bar mitzvah, but clearly not displaying any outward physical signs of maturity, was reading the Torah in the shul. It was Parashas Zachor, in which the reading of Amalek's attack is d'Oraysa, a Biblical obligation. This is a point when one is very careful to read the words and trop, cantillation notes, perfectly. The boy was about to begin Parashas Zachor, when a "G-d-fearing" Jew had the nerve to ascend to the bimah, lectern, where the boy stood and yanked him off, declaring that, since he was not "sure" that the boy was halachically a gadol, adult, he could not

read Parashas Zachor. Needless to say, the boy was humiliated by this spiritual extremist. While he might have been halachically correct in his legal debate, it should not have taken place at the expense of the boy. This was an individual who was empowering his own detestable character failings by using the Torah as an ally. While this is certainly not the meaning of "burning birds that were flying overhead," it does demonstrate the significance of seeing to it that one not be carried away with his religious observance at another Jew's expense.

There is another issue to be addressed: Accepting stringencies when one is not on the proper spiritual plane of observance can be disastrous. One might suggest that the word "disastrous" is perhaps a bit strong. It is not. Ish l'reieihu quotes Horav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zl, who posits a number of sakanos, dangers, for he who is machmir, assumes certain stringencies, at a point in his spiritual development when he is not yet "there," not spiritually and emotionally ready for this leap in observance. The Rosh Yeshivah focuses on the koach ha'havchanah, ability to discern between right and wrong, between halachah and chumrah. In the famous Vidduy of Rabbeinu Nissim, which is recited at various intervals during the year, we confess the following misdeeds: Eis asher tiharta timeisi, va'asher timeisa tiharti, that which You deemed ritually pure, we deemed impure; and eis asher hitarta asarti, va'asher asarta hitarti, that which You permitted, we prohibited, and that which You prohibited, we deemed permissible. These confessions are enigmatic. It is understandable that we may neither permit nor render ritually pure that which the Torah has seen otherwise, but what is wrong with adding a chumrah and prohibiting that which is permissible, or rendering impure that which is actually pure? Are these activities considered sinful? The Rosh Yeshivah explains that one's perception of right and wrong becomes misconstrued. His understanding of mutar/assur, permissible/prohibited, and tahor/tamei, ritually pure/contaminated becomes deviated. This can lead to his permitting or rendering pure that which is otherwise prohibited or impure. Thus, one should be proficient in areas of halachah, knowing with clarity: what is a Biblical prohibition; what is Rabbinic; what is a stringency; what is a custom; and what is merely a chashash, an unease concerning how a person might act under certain conditions.

There is another danger to premature chumrah acceptance. The Rosh Yeshivah explains that to the unenlightened, someone else who has not decided to countenance such a stringent attitude appears to be a sinner. Immediately, the fellow who does not see it my way, whose perspective of the halachah might quite possibly be much more rational than mine, is now guilty of imperfect observance. This egregious attitude goes so far that one begins to condemn gedolei Yisrael, Torah leaders, who see the halachah from a completely different vantage point and who, thus, do not choose to adopt the various chumros.

Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, was a gadol baTorah and middos. His exceptional character refinement was one of a plateau equivalent with his encyclopedic knowledge of Torah. He was especially sensitive to the needs of others. Rav Moshe was accustomed to baking Pesach matzos at a certain matzoh bakery. This had been his custom for years, despite this bakery's lack of state-of-the-art equipment and space. After a while a new matzoh bakery opened, providing new equipment and enough space to carry out all of the hiddurim, honorings. When Rav Moshe heard of this new bakery, he thought of switching his baking to the state-of-the-art facility. When it came time to execute his decision, he changed his mind and stayed with the former bakery. He said, "If I switch to the new bakery many others will follow my example, causing a monetary loss to the owner of the old bakery. I will not bake my matzos at the expense of this man's livelihood."

If he shall offer it for a Thanksgiving-offering. (7:12)

The Midrash teaches that l'asid lavoh, after the advent of Moshiach Tzikeinu, all the korbanos, offerings, which effect atonement will be eliminated except for the Korban Todah, Thanksgiving-offering, which

will continue. In a perfect world, sin will no longer exist. Yet, gratitude and thanksgiving will never be cancelled. While this statement is a powerful commentary on the significance of expressing gratitude, what purpose will there be for this declaration once Moshiach arrives and the "good times" begin? Hodaah, gratitude, is expressed by the recipient of a personal miracle, who has been saved from a near-death experience, survived a humiliating experience, or for personal and collective family success. All of these situations will cease to exist in the times following the arrival of Moshiach. No longer will there be hunger and thirst, poverty and wealth, sickness and health. The world will be filled with peace. In other words, it will be physical and spiritual utopia. If so, the basic premise upon which hodaah is established will be abrogated. For what will we offer our thanks? Indeed, one would suggest that the Korban Todah would be the first offering to be eliminated.

Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl, explains that once we enter the period of our existence when the blinders of this world will be lifted, when we will have clarity of vision, comprehensibility of perspective, when it will all make sense, our sense of hodaah, gratitude, will be for the past - not for the present. We will see a world turned upside down, when what used to appear as irrational and adverse will, under our newly-gained perspective, be presented as prudent, necessary and beneficial. We will see that which we saw as deficient was the result of myopia induced by our physical limitations. The money we lost actually spared our lives; the sickness we experienced was the precursor of greater spiritual development; the adversity we sustained was for our ultimate good fortune.

There is a flip-side. Rav Zaitchik explains that there are also instances in which we think that we have experienced good fortune, we have acquired something which we thought we needed, landed that special position which is going to change our life. We then see that these occurrences were not really that fortuitous. After all, if someone lands a position for which he is hardly qualified, it could spell disaster for him. Likewise, if one is deserving of a reward which could manifest itself in a variety of ways; if he receives it the "wrong" way, it could mean the end of his good fortune.

Yes, one day we will see how Hashem provided for us; how the "thank you" which was not forthcoming in this world will reverberate from every part of our soul. In the Talmud Pesachim 50a, Chazal teach that le'asid lavo, in the future, all those who made the brachah of Dayan ha'Emes, the True Judge, the blessing one makes upon experiencing a death, will change their blessing to Ha'Tov u'meitiv, "He is good and He does good." We will see that what we, at the time, thought was tragic, was fundamentally good. As we build our homes, often experiencing life's vicissitudes, its ups and downs, it is important not to forget this concept. How easy it is to fall prey to the convincing effects of life's trials. It is so easy to lay blame, to question, to complain, to cast aspersion, but do we really know the truth? Who are we blaming - Hashem? If we put the same effort into seeking the positive as we do in formulating the negative, our entire attitude would change. After Klal Yisrael walked through the Red Sea after Hashem performed a miracle, allowing them to walk through dry land, they sang Shirah to Hashem. The Torah writes, Az yashir Moshe, "Then Moshe (and Bnei Yisrael) sang." Rashi teaches that the word, az, then, is an allusion from the text of the Torah to Techias HaMeisim, Resurrection of the Dead. We suggest the following explanation for Rashi's statement.

In his Shemen HaTov, Horav Zev Weinberger, Shlita, suggests that the root word of shirah, song, is yashar, straight. This provides us with a fascinating homiletic rendering of the pasuk. A song is a symphony of sound which is comprised of various notes - some high, some low. Each one individually does not seem to "fit." When they are all blended together into a perfect score, the high and low notes seem to straighten out. There is yashrus, straightness, perfection: the highs blending with the lows to create a perfect sound.

Life is filled with high and low points. Viewed at the time that these moments occur, they seem difficult to fathom. When one has the ability to view this conglomerate of "moments" from the perspective of hindsight; when he looks back on life, he sees how straight life really was, how everything worked out. This is when one sings shirah, declaring the straightness of life. Az yashir, when the time of az, then, arrives - and we are provided with a clear perspective of life, we will sing shirah, praising Hashem for life's straightness. May the advent of Moshiach Tzidkeinu arrive soon in our days.

Aharon and his sons carried out all the matters. (8:36)

Rashi states that the Torah is teaching us about the level of Aharon HaKohen's commitment. He did not deviate "right or left" from all that he was commanded, despite the voluminous details and minutae involved in these laws. Sifra comment that this alludes not only to his execution of the mitzvah, but also to the joy inherent in his performance. Although he did not hear the command directly from Hashem, Aharon jumped into it with enthusiasm and zest. There was no volunteering someone else, shrugging his shoulders, exhibiting false modesty. He was told - he immediately accepted without fanfare.

The Chasam Sofer, zl, asked one of his congregants to lead the tefillah, services. The congregant responded atypically, presenting a side of humility heretofore unknown to anyone. He shrugged his shoulders, as if to say that he was unworthy of such distinguished honor. The Chasam Sofer countered, "The Torah teaches that, 'Aharon and his sons carried out all the matters.' Rashi explains that Aharon and his sons listened without deviating to the right or left. This means that they did not shrug their shoulders in 'humility.' They did not present themselves as being unworthy. They were told to do something, and they did it!" Excessive humility is a subtle form of arrogance.

Va'ani Tefillah

Matzmiach yeshuos. He makes salvation grow.

This is different than oseh yeshuos, "He makes salvation," or "He creates salvation." In this instance, Hashem is allowing for the fruits of salvation to germinate and continue growing until they produce more salvation - even hundreds of years later. Imagine, one helps another Jew either physically, materially, emotionally, or spiritually. This catalyzes a transformation within the individual which can, over time, create other opportunities of salvation. One authors a volume of Torah thought. Years later, this sefer is still in use, creating greater, increased reward and merit for the author. Hashem does not just make a one-time salvation, but sees to it that it grows into greater benefit for others. When we do something "good," its effect and ramifications might continue for generations. The flip-side, of course, is that the "bad" that we do also stays around for some time. .

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Rav Kook List

Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Tzav: The Community's Prayer of Thanks

After Rav Yehudah recovered from a serious illness, a delegation of rabbis and students paid the illustrious scholar a visit.

"Blessed is the merciful God Who has given you back to us," they exclaimed, "and not to the dust!"

Rav Yehudah responded: '[By this statement], you have exempted me from the obligation of offering a prayer of thanks.'

The Sages taught that one who survived a perilous situation - imprisonment in jail, crossing the ocean, traversing a wilderness, or

recovering from a serious illness - should recite Birkat haGomeil. This Blessing of Deliverance expresses our appreciation to the 'One Who bestows kindnesses to those not deserving.'

Yet this episode with Rav Yehudah is quite baffling. How could the (somewhat peculiar) announcement of his visitors qualify as a substitute for Rav Yehudah's own offering of thanks for his recovery?

For the Benefit of the Community

Risky and dangerous circumstances are frequently the result of some moral fault or social failing. Those who find themselves in jail, sick, or in the wilderness, are often people who defy the rules of society, who fail to watch over their health, or who seek to evade the restrictions of organized communal life.

This, however, is not the case with a pious scholar like Rav Yehudah. Rav Yehudah was the leading scholar of third-century Babylonia; he was the founder and dean of the famed academy at Pumbedita. His illness was not due to his own personal shortcomings, but rather to those of the society in which he lived. His community failed to properly appreciate the tremendous privilege of hosting such an eminent scholar. Rav Yehudah's illness was a wake-up call that jolted the people. They became more aware of the wonderful benefits to be gained from Rav Yehudah, as the possibility of losing the great scholar became very real.

The community's visit after his recovery reflected their recognition that thanksgiving really should come - not from Rav Yehudah - but from them. They expressed their appreciation in simple, artless words. In this way, they emphasized that without his spiritual influence - in Torah, wisdom, and ethical living - they would be unable to even aspire to higher values.

The visitors did not speak in Hebrew, the language designated to express lofty feelings of holiness, the holy language used by the angels. They used the common language of the masses - Aramaic - indicating their lowly state without Rav Yehudah's elevating influence.

Due to his illness, the community had gained a heightened awareness of the great benefit that God provided in sending them such a holy and pious man. "Blessed is the merciful God Who has given you to us" - to provide us with spiritual and moral leadership.

"And did not give you to the dust." They employed a bald description of death, stripped of any deeper insight. In this way they expressed their awareness - after the shock of nearly losing their spiritual leader - of their lowly spiritual and intellectual state without his refining influence. Until now, they realized, they had failed to fully avail themselves of everything his pure spirit could provide. Thus they portrayed the possibility of his death as being "given to the dust," since his lofty influence would be irretrievably lost.

By their visit and unusual announcement, the community demonstrated that they better recognized Rav Yehudah's contribution, and would work harder in the future to absorb his teachings and ethical example.

The Scholar's Response

Rav Yehudah was obligated to give thanks for his recovery. But after seeing this positive consequence of his illness - an awakening of the community to acquire Torah and wisdom - he realized that his illness was truly a kindness from God, "Who bestows kindnesses to those not deserving."

By answering 'Amen' to their declaration, Rav Yehudah acknowledged that he willingly accepted his suffering, knowing that it was the source of a blessing for the community as a whole. As the Sages noted, "More than the calf wants to nurse, the cow wants to provide milk" (Pesachim 112a). (Adapted from Ein Eyah on Berachot 54a, sec. 9:20)

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Weekly Halacha by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Assorted Pesach Issues

Question: Is it halachically acceptable to celebrate Pesach away from home after selling one's home with all of its chametz contents to a non-Jew?

Discussion: Anyone who owns chametz is obligated to get rid of it before Pesach begins. This can be accomplished in one of two ways: By destroying it¹ or by selling it [or giving it away] to a non-Jew.² Either way, one fulfills his basic obligation and does not transgress the Biblical injunction against owning any chametz.

But there is something else to consider: The Rabbis obligated each person to search for chametz on the night before Pesach. [If one leaves town before that time, he is still obligated to search for chametz the night before he leaves, although no blessing is recited for that search.] In the opinion of many poskim, the search for chametz is obligatory whether or not one owns his chametz by the time Pesach arrives, since once the rabbinic ordinance was enacted, it cannot be abrogated regardless of the circumstances.³ Consequently, selling the house to a non-Jew does not free one from his personal obligation to search for chametz.

A solution⁴ to this problem is to set aside one room in the house, even a small one, and not sell it to the non-Jew along with the rest of the house. That room should be cleaned for Pesach and thoroughly searched for chametz on the night before Pesach, with the proper blessing recited for the bedikah.⁵ One who will have already gone out of town by the night before Pesach should follow the same procedure on the night before he leaves—but he may not recite a blessing on the bedikah.

Question: How extensive does the search for chametz have to be? How is it possible to thoroughly search a whole house in a short period of time?

Discussion: Halachically speaking, an extensive and thorough search is required in any place where chametz may have been brought during the past year.⁶ Since it is almost impossible to properly check an entire house in a short period of time, some people actually spend many hours checking and searching their houses on the night of bedikas chametz, often devoting a good part of the night to the bedikah.⁷ But most people cannot—or do not—spend so much time searching their homes for chametz. How, then, do they fulfill this obligation?

Several poskim find justification (limud zechus) for the laxer version of bedikas chametz, as the house has undergone many weeks of meticulous pre-Pesach cleaning and scrubbing and there is no vestige of chametz around. Once the rooms of the house have been cleaned, they may be halachically considered as “a place into which no chametz has been brought.” While checking and searching is still required in order to ascertain that no spot in the house was overlooked, the search need not be as thorough and exacting as if no cleaning had been done.⁸

A better suggestion—for those who do not do a meticulous search on the night before Pesach—is to do partial searches earlier. As soon as a certain area in the house is cleaned, the area should be carefully checked for chametz—either at night using a flashlight or in the daytime by natural light. The wife or an older child can be entrusted with this search. If the house is checked in stages, then an exhaustive search need not be repeated on the night before Pesach in the areas that were

already checked, provided that it is certain that no new chametz was carried into those areas.⁹

Question: Is it permitted to get a haircut or do laundry on erev Pesach after midday (chatzos)?

Discussion: It is forbidden to do melachah, “work,” even if it is needed for Yom Tov, on erev Pesach after chatzos. Two¹⁰ basic reasons are given for this rabbinic prohibition: 1) When the Beis ha-Mikdash stood, erev Pesach was considered a Yom Tov, since the Korban Pesach was brought on that day. It retains the status of Yom Tov today even though the Korban Pesach is no longer offered.¹¹ 2) To give everyone a chance to properly prepare for the Seder.¹²

Certain forms of personal grooming and certain households chores that are halachically classified as “work” are forbidden to be done on erev Pesach after chatzos. Thus it is forbidden to get a haircut or a shave,¹³ to sew new clothing¹⁴ or to do laundry¹⁵ on erev Pesach after chatzos. One must arrange his schedule so that these tasks are completed before midday. L'chatchilah, one should even cut his nails before chatzos.¹⁶

If, b'diavad, one could not or did not take care of these matters before midday, some of them may still be done while others may not: sewing or completing the sewing of new clothes may not be done at all; a haircut and shave may be taken only at a non-Jewish barber; laundry may be done only by a non-Jewish maid or dry cleaner.¹⁷ Other chores, such as ironing clothes,¹⁸ polishing shoes, cutting nails, sewing buttons and other minor mending,¹⁹ may be done with no restrictions.

Question: What should be done if a package containing chametz arrives at one's home or business during Pesach?

Discussion: One who knows or suspects that the package may contain actual chametz may not assume ownership of the package. If he can refuse to accept the package, he should do so. If he cannot, he should not bring it into his house or yard and should have specific halachic intent not to “acquire” the chametz. The package is considered “ownerless”—anyone who wants it is free to take it.

If the package was mistakenly brought into the home or business, one must have specific intent not to “acquire” it. One may not touch the actual chametz.²⁰ If the package comes on Chol ha-Moed, the chametz should be immediately discarded, either by burning it or by flushing it down the toilet. If it comes on Shabbos or Yom Tov, it should be put aside²¹ and covered until it can be discarded.

Question: What are the restrictions regarding eating roasted meat on Seder night?

Discussion: It is a longstanding minhag Yisrael not to eat any roasted meat on either one of the Seder nights. “Meat” includes meat from any animal which requires shechitah (ritual slaughter), including chicken and turkey. Roasted fish, however, is permitted.²²

“Roasted” includes any type of dry cooking (e.g., pot roasting) or baking.²³ Even if the item was cooked first and then roasted it is forbidden. But if it was roasted first and then cooked afterwards most poskim permit it. A minority opinion forbids that as well.²⁴

Fried, barbecued, broiled over an open fire or smoked meat are all considered roasted meat and are forbidden.²⁵ Liver, which is broiled, is not eaten on the Seder night.²⁶ Deep fried meat, however, is considered to be cooked, not roasted, and is permitted.

Some families do not eat roasted meat during the daytime Yom Tov meals either, but most people do not follow this custom nowadays.²⁷

Based on the guidelines outlined above, it is important to remember that at the Seder, it is forbidden to eat the roasted zeroa which is placed on the Seder Plate. But it is permitted to eat the zeroa during the daytime meal. In any case, the zeroa should not be discarded, as it is

considered a bizyaon mitzvah to do so,²⁸ and one should make sure that it is eaten at an appropriate time.

- 1 By eating it, burning it, flushing it down the toilet, or throwing it in a river.
- 2 This is a complex halachic procedure which can only be administered by an experienced rabbi.
- 3 See O.C. 436:3 and Mishnah Berurah 27 and 32.
- 4 Another possible solution [for people who are away for Pesach and are staying at another person's home] is for the guest to "rent" from his host—with a valid kinyan—the room in which he is staying, and search for chametz in that room; Maharsham 3:291. But other poskim prefer not to rely on this solution; see Shevet ha-Levi 4:44.
- 5 Siddur Pesach K'hilchaso 12:1.
- 6 O.C. 333:3.
- 7 Several gedolim, among them the Gaon of Vilna, the Chasam Sofer and the Brisker Rav, were reported to have spent a good part of the night searching their homes for chametz.
- 8 Sha'arei Teshuvah 433:2; Da'as Torah 433:2; Chochmas Shelomo 433:11; Rav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Mevakshei Torah Ohr Efrayim, pg. 532); Kinyan Torah 2:122; The basic idea is quoted by Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 432:12.
- 9 Siddur Pesach K'hilchaso 13:1.
- 10 See Pnei Yehoshua (Pesachim 50a) for a third reason for this prohibition.
- 11 Mishnah Berurah 468:1.
- 12 Beur Halachah 468:1. According to this reason, even when erev Pesach falls on Shabbos it is forbidden to do work on Friday.
- 13 Mishnah Berurah 468:5.
- 14 Rama, O.C. 468:2.
- 15 Mishnah Berurah 468:7.
- 16 Mishnah Berurah 468:5. Although a minority view recommends that one shower/bathe and polish his shoes before chatzos as well, this was not accepted by most poskim.
- 17 Mishnah Berurah 468:7. Towels and children's clothing which became dirty (or were discovered to be dirty) after chatzos and are going to be needed during Yom Tov may be machine-washed even by a Jew.
- 18 Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 2, pg. 56, quoting an oral ruling by the Chazon Ish.
- 19 Rama, O.C. 468:2 and Mishnah Berurah 8. Lengthening and shortening a hem is also permitted.
- 20 Mishnah Berurah 446:10.
- 21 The chametz is severe muktzeh and may not be moved for any reason; O.C. 446:1. Some poskim add that it may not even be moved with one's body or foot, even though other types of severe muktzeh may be; L'horos Nassan 5:30.
- 22 Mishnah Berurah 476:9.
- 23 Mishnah Berurah 476:1. Aruch ha-Shulchan 476:2, however, questions why pot roast should be forbidden.
- 24 Peri Chadash, quoted by Be'er Heitev 476:1, Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 2 and Kaf ha-Chayim 4.
- 25 See ha-Seder ha-Aruch 95:5.
- 26 Aruch ha-Shulchan 476:4.
- 27 See Sha'arei Teshuvah 473:2.
- 28 Chayei Adam 130:6.

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By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Practical Aspects of Matzoh baking By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question:

Personally, I find the different terms used in reference to matzoh very confusing: On the one hand, I have been told that if one is working on the dough constantly, one need not be concerned if more than eighteen

minutes elapses before the matzoh is baked. On the other hand, I have been told that if eighteen minutes elapses, the dough becomes chometz. And then I see a product advertised as "Eighteen minute matzoh." I thought that if it is more than eighteen-minute matzoh, it is chometz. Also, could you explain to me the advantages of hand matzoh over machine matzoh, and if there is a valid reason why some people use only shmura hand matzoh for the entire Pesach.

Answer:

In order to answer your question, it is necessary to explain the process of making matzoh. Although matzoh is the simplest of products, just flour and water, a tremendous amount of detail is involved in preparing it in a halachically correct way. We will divide our discussion into three headings: the flour, the water, and the manufacture.

The flour requirements

To fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzoh on seder night, one must be certain that the flour was "guarded" to guarantee that it did not become chometz.

It is important to clarify that there are two different halachic issues. The first factor is that one must be careful that the matzoh is baked in a way that it does not become chometz, so that one does not, G-d forbid, violate the prohibition of eating chometz on Pesach. This concern exists for all matzoh that one may consume any time during Pesach. However, even if one is guaranteed that the matzoh is 100% free of any concerns that it has become chometz, there is an additional requirement so that the matzoh eaten at the seder fulfills the mitzvah of eating matzoh. This matzoh must be made lishmah – meaning, that one must supervise the process and be sure that the matzoh not become chometz, specifically for the sake of fulfilling the mitzvah.

The concept of lishmah

There are several mitzvos that can be performed only with an item that is made lishmah: this means that it is manufactured with the specific intention to be used for the mitzvah. These include the mitzvos of tzitzis, tefilin, mezuzah, and matzoh. Thus, for example, the leather used in the manufacture of tefilin must be tanned specifically for the kedusha of the mitzvah of wearing tefilin. For this reason, when placing the hide into the chemical solution that makes the hide into usable parchment or leather, one must state that it is being manufactured lishmah. Even a small job such as blackening the tefilin straps should be performed specifically for the sake of the mitzvah of tefilin. For this reason, prior to repainting one's tefillin, one should state that he is doing this for the sake of the mitzvah of tefilin.

In a similar way, the manufacture of matzoh is required to be lishmah. For this reason, before beginning work in a matzoh bakery, the workers say: Kol mah she'ani oseh hayom hareini oseh lesheim matzos mitzvah, "Everything that I am doing today, I am doing for the sake of producing matzohs that will be used for the mitzvah."

Although the Gemara (Pesachim 40a) discusses the fact that the flour used for the mitzvah of matzoh must be prepared lesheim matzos mitzvah, it does not state clearly at what stage this is necessary. Among the early poskim, there are three opinions as to the stage from which one is required to guard the flour from becoming chometz and from which one must prepare the flour lesheim matzos mitzvah: from the time of harvesting, from the time of grinding, or from the time of kneading. Shulchan Aruch rules that it is preferable to "guard" the wheat from the time of the harvest, but it is satisfactory to use wheat that was guarded only from the time of grinding. Other poskim require lishmah from the time of the harvest. In normal usage, "shmura matzoh" refers to matzoh guarded from the time of the harvest.

Harvesting lishmah

There is a dispute among Rishonim whether any act that must be performed lishmah can be performed only by a Jew, or whether it can be performed by a non-Jew who is instructed by a Jew standing over him to perform this act lishmah. This dispute has major ramifications for many mitzvos, such as preparing hides to be made into parchment for writing tefilin, mezuzos and sifrei torah, and preparing hides for manufacture into tefilin “batim” and tefilin straps, or preparing threads for manufacture into tzitzis. According to the first opinion, hide that was tanned by a non-Jew for the sake of the mitzvah is not kosher for use. According to the second opinion, if a Jew stands and instructs the non-Jew to tan the hide lishmah and remains near him, the resulting hide or parchment can be used for the mitzvah.

Based on the above dispute, some contend that a Jew should operate the controls that cause a combine to harvest the wheat to be used for shmurah matzoh.

At times, it seems that matters were simpler when wheat was harvested by hand. A friend of mine, who was born in the Communist Soviet Union, described to me how his father harvested wheat for matzoh baking with a hand-held sickle. However, even harvesting the wheat by hand under these circumstances creates its own interesting shaylah. Poskim rule that when cutting grain for matzoh in a non-Jew’s field, one should preferably not cut the grain that he himself intends to use for mitzvas matzoh (see Sdei Chemed vol. 7 pg. 377). This is because of concern that the field might have been originally stolen, and thus the matzoh baked with wheat from this field might be considered stolen matzoh, which is invalid for matzos mitzvah. There is a complicated halachic reason why this concern does not exist when harvesting wheat for someone else to use.

The water requirements: Mayim shelanu, water that remained overnight. The Gemara states that all matzoh used on Pesach must be baked exclusively with water that remained overnight, called mayim shelanu (Pesachim 42a). One should draw this water from a spring, well, or river during twilight (or immediately before) and leave it in a cool place for a minimum of one complete night to allow it to cool down (Shulchan Aruch 455:1 and commentaries). Maharil contends that it is preferred to draw the water the day before the baking, rather than draw water several days in advance (quoted by Be’er Heiteiv 455:7). The water should not be drawn or stored in a metal vessel, since metal conducts heat and thus causes the water to become warm (Magen Avraham 455:9). In addition, the water should not be drawn or stored in a vessel that has been used previously to hold other liquids (Magen Avraham ibid.). The latter vessel is not to be used out of concern that some liquid may mix with the water, and this may cause the dough to rise faster than it would otherwise. Many contemporary poskim frown on the use of tap water for matzoh baking out of concern that the fluoride and other chemicals introduced into the water may cause the dough to rise faster (see Piskei Tshuvos 455:7).

It goes without saying that one may not use warm water for making matzohs, nor may one work in a warm area (Pesachim 42a; Shulchan Aruch 455:2). It is important to note that the requirement for mayim shelanu is not only for the matzohs eaten at the seder; all matzohs eaten the entire Pesach must be baked exclusively with mayim shelanu.

The manufacture of the matzoh

There are many halachos implemented by Chazal to guarantee that the dough does not become chometz prematurely. For example, one must wait a day or two from when the wheat is ground until it is mixed with the water (Shulchan Aruch 453:9). This is because of concern that the flour may still be warm from the friction of the grinding, and will therefore leaven too quickly. One may not knead the matzoh dough in a place exposed to the sun or in a warm area. One must be very careful that the heat from the matzoh oven does not spread to the area where the

dough is kneaded or where the dough remains until it is ready to be placed inside the oven (Shulchan Aruch 459). Thus, a matzoh factory must be set up in a way that the kneading area is close enough to the oven to allow for speedy baking of the matzoh and yet be positioned in a way that the kneading area is not heated up by the oven.

Eighteen minutes

Our original question was: I have been told that, technically speaking, if one is working on the dough constantly, one need be concerned if more than eighteen minutes elapses before it goes into the oven. On the other hand, I have also been told that one may not pause once one begins to work the dough out of concern that the dough will become chometz immediately. And I have also been told that the Gemara and Shulchan Aruch state that one cannot wait more than eighteen minutes after the water is added to the flour. Which of these statements is correct?

We now have enough background information to address this question.

As strange as this answer may seem, all the above statements are correct, as we will explain. Shulchan Aruch rules that one should not leave the dough for even a moment without working it, and that if one leaves dough for eighteen minutes without working on it, the dough becomes chometz. Furthermore, Shulchan Aruch states that once the dough has become warm from working with it, it will become chometz immediately if it is left without being worked (Orach Chayim 459:2). This implies that once the dough is warm from the kneading, it becomes chometz immediately if one stops working on it. Although there are more lenient opinions regarding whether the dough becomes chometz immediately, all opinions are in agreement that one must not allow any unnecessary waiting without working on the dough (see Mishnah Berurah 459:18; Biyur Halacha ad loc.; Chazon Ish, Orach Chayim 121:16). Thus, in practical halacha, it is really a much bigger concern that the dough is kneaded constantly than whether it actually took eighteen minutes from start to finish.

Machine Matzoh

Although the use of machine matzoh for Pesach has now become almost universally accepted, it is educational to understand the dispute that existed among nineteenth-century poskim concerning eating machine-made matzohs for Pesach. When the first factories began producing machine made matzoh for Pesach use, many great poskim, including Rav Yosef Shaul Natanson, author of the multi-volume work *Shaylos u’Teshuvos Sho’el u’Meishiv*, were vehemently opposed to their use on Pesach. Their opposition centered primarily over the following three major issues:

1. The economic factor: There was a major concern that the introduction of the machine matzoh would seriously affect many Jewish poor, who were gainfully employed in kneading and baking matzohs. Although the problem of Jewish poor is unfortunately still with us, it is doubtful that the increased use of hand matzohs would have significant impact on their plight.
2. The chometz factor: There were major concerns whether the factories were producing matzoh that met all the above-mentioned halachic requirements. Among the concerns raised were: Is the machinery thoroughly cleaned after each run, or does there remain dough in place, stuck to it for more than eighteen minutes? Is the dough being worked constantly, or is it left to sit after it has begun to be worked? In the contemporary world, a factory for baking matzohs can be planned and constructed in a way that a very minimal amount of dough adheres to equipment, and mashgichim can supervise that whatever dough remains can be removed swiftly. One who purchases machine-made matzoh is relying on the supervising agency or rabbi to guarantee that the operation is run in a proper fashion.

3. The lishmah factor: There is another issue involved in the manufacture of machine matzohs – Is it considered lishmah? Is the intent of the person operating an electrically-powered machine for the sake of manufacturing matzoh considered making matzohs lishmah? The same issue affects many other halachic questions, such as the spinning of tzitzis threads by machine, and the manufacture of leather for tefilin straps and batim (or parchment). There is much discussion and dispute about this issue raised in the poskim, and it is still disputed by contemporary poskim. (See Sdei Chemed, Vol. 7, pgs. 396-398; Shu”t Maharsham 2:16; Chazon Ish, Orach Chayim 6:10 s.v. vinireh d’ein tzorech; Mikra’ei Kodesh, Pesach II pgs. 11-17.) It is primarily for this reason that most halachically-concerned people today who use machine-made matzoh on Pesach still use hand-made matzoh for the seder.

We should all be zocheh to eat our matzoh this year together with Korban Pesach in Yerushalayim.

Problems that emerge during the baking:

There are two very common problems that can occur while the matzoh is being baked: A matzoh that is kefula (folded) and one that is nefucha (swollen). A matzoh kefula is a matzoh folded in such a way that the area between the folds is not exposed directly to the flame or heat of the oven. This area between the folds does not bake properly, and thus, the entire matzoh becomes chometz-dik and must be discarded (Rema 461:5). A matzoh nefucha is a matzoh that swells up, usually because it was not perforated properly (Rema 461:5 and Taz). Thus, while baking, air is trapped inside the matzoh. The matzoh looks as if it has a large bubble in it. If the swollen area is the size of a hazelnut, the matzoh should not be used (Mishnah Berurah ad loc. #34).

To avoid discovering these problems on Yom Tov, it is a good idea to check one’s matzohs before Yom Tov to be certain that none of the matzohs are kefula or nefucha. I can personally attest to having found both among the matzohs that I had intended to use for the seder. One should also verify that the bakery separated challah from the matzohs, or else be certain to separate challah before Yom Tov.

Is there an advantage in eating only shmura matzoh the entire Pesach? There are poskim who recommend eating only shmura matzoh the entire Yom Tov. There are two reasons cited for this practice. Some are concerned that when the grain ripens, it can become chometz even while still on the stalk. By eating no matzoh other than shmura, one guarantees that this problem not occur, since shmura wheat is harvested before it is fully ripe (Bair Halacha to 453:4 s.v. Tov). A second reason for the practice of eating only shmura is to fulfill the mitzvah of eating matzoh the entire Pesach. Although there is no requirement to eat matzoh except for the seder night, one fulfills a mitzvah each time one eats matzoh during Pesach (see Baal HaMaor, end of Pesachim). Some contend that one should strive to fulfill this mitzvah with matzoh that is made lishmah from the time of harvesting. According to both approaches, this practice is a chumra only and not halachically required.

Your very own Matzoh

The halachah is that one can fulfill the mitzvah of matzoh only by eating matzoh that is your property. Thus, one cannot fulfill the mitzvah with stolen matzah. Some have the practice of being certain that they have paid for their matzoh before Pesach, in order to demonstrate that the matzoh is definitely theirs (based on Mishnah Berurah 454:15). There is an interesting dispute between poskim whether a guest at someone else’s seder fulfills the mitzvah with matzoh that is the property of the host. Sfas Emes (commentary to Sukkah 35a s.v. bigemara asya) contends that one does not fulfill the mitzvah, unless one owns the matzoh enough that one would be able to sell it. Since a guest cannot sell the matzoh that the host is serving, Sfas Emes contends that a host must give each of his guests their matzoh as a present before they fulfill the mitzvah. However, the universally accepted practice is to follow the opinion of the Mishnah Berurah (454:15), who states that one fulfills the mitzvah with borrowed matzoh.