1st Seder Weekly Divrei Torah
A BAIS MEDRASH PROGRAM FOR MEN

PARSHAS TAZRIA-METZORA – WHITEOUT

Rabbi Shlomo Caplan

This week's Parsha discusses the halachos of tzaraas. The Ramban explains that tzaraas is not leprosy but rather a spiritual illness with physical manifestations. One type of tzaraas is identified by a white splotch on one's skin. A person who discovers such a blemish must go to a Kohein who will determine if it is halachically tzaraas. If it is indeed tzaraas, the Kohein will declare him tamei (impure). However, if subsequently the tzaraas spreads over his entire body, the Kohein will then declare him tahor (pure). "Kulo hafach lavan tahor hu – it has turned completely white, it is pure" (Vayikra 13:13).

This Halacha is quite enigmatic and many Meforshim attempt to explain its rationale. Rav Shlomo Wolbe suggests that we refer to the Gemara in Sanhedrin (97a) to better understand this Halacha: "Rav Yitzchok said, 'Mashiach ben Dovid will not come until the entire government turns to heresy.' Said Rava, 'Where is this found in the Torah? It has turned completely white, it is tahor '" (Vayikra 13:13). Why would Mashiach come when things get even worse?

Rav Wolbe cites a Rashi regarding the meraglim – the spies who returned with a negative report about Eretz Yisrael. The meraglim said, "We arrived at the land to which you sent us, and indeed it flows with milk and honey" (Bamidbar 13:27). Rashi explains that the meraglim prefaced their disparaging remarks with this compliment because any falsehood that is not accompanied by some truth cannot endure. Rav Wolbe goes on to explain that evil, like falsehood, is devoid of any substance and value. An evil regime cannot succeed without professing some worthwhile ideals and morals. However, when a government or a society becomes so corrupt that anything goes, its basis for acceptance by discerning people loses all credibility. It will self-destruct. When this happens all evil disappears and that is why Mashiach will certainly come if the entire government turns to heresy. This then is the symbolism and mystical reason why tzaraas which covers the entire body is tahor. Even impurity cannot exist unless it has some attachment to purity. Complete impurity, like falsehood and heresy, does not have the capacity to endure.

A similar phenomenon occurs when an individual hits rock bottom spiritually. The Medrash Rabba on Parshas Toldos (Bereishis 27:27) relates an astounding incident. When the gentile aggressors wished to ascend the Temple Mount, they feared entering the Bais Hamikdash. Therefore, they sought out a Jew who would go into the Bais Hamikdash first. They turned to Yosef Meshisa and said, "You go in first and whatever you bring out you may keep." Yosef Meshisa entered the Bais Hamikdash and brought out the Golden Menorah. The gentiles told him, "It is not appropriate for an ordinary person to use [such a magnificent object]. Go back in and whatever you bring out you may keep." Yosef refused, "It is bad enough that I have angered my Creator once. Should I anger Him yet a second time?" When Yosef Meshisa realized that even the gentiles had no respect for him, he lost any rationalization for his own behavior.

Whether we observe a universe with absolutely no moral compass, despots that attack other countries with impunity or a world that accuses the nation that suffered the indescribable viciousness of the attack of October 7 of committing genocide, we are tempted to say kulo hafach lavon tahor hu. Indeed, is Mashiach knocking on the door?

HALACHA Q&A FROM RABBI YISROEL UNGAR

Please contact R' Ungar (Ymungar@gmail.com) with questions or comments

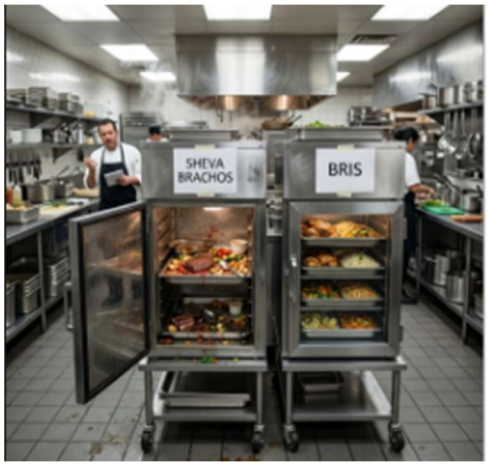
QUESTION: May one put croutons into hot soup in a bowl on שבת? May one add in lokshen into a bowl of hot soup? Does it make a difference whether the lokshen is wet or dry?

ANSWER: A bowl of soup on שבת is definitely a כלי שני and maybe even a כלי שלישי. Yellow croutons are deep fried and considered cooked, and being that אין בישול אחר בישול, one is allowed to put these croutons into the bowl and even into the pot which is a כלי ראשון. Dry lokshen is the same since it is cooked. However, if the lokshen is wet, the liquid will cook in the pot, and it can only be added into a כלי שני. A כלי שני will not cook a liquid that was once cooked, even if it is cold right now. Baked salad croutons is different. A baked item may not be cooked on שבת, and a כלי שני can cook קלי הבישול/foods that cook easily. Baked items cook easily and may not be added into a כלי שני. A כלי שלישי, however, will not cook baked items and one may add them into a כלי שלישי. When one uses a ladle that wasn't left in the pot too long (If it is, then it possibly becomes a כלי ראשון like the pot) to serve soup into a bowl, the bowl is considered a כלי שלישי in regard to adding baked items. However, uncooked spices may not be added to this bowl unless the soup is first poured into a second bowl.

עי' סימן שי"ח סעי' ד'. מ"ב ס"ק מ"ה

THE CATERING MIXUP

Questions for discussion at your Shabbos table by Rabbi Yitzi Weiner



Eli was making a bris and rented a catering hall for the afternoon event. He also hired waiters to serve the guests. The catering hall was responsible for providing the food.

All the food prepared for the bris was placed in a warmer clearly labeled "Bris." There was also going to be a Sheva Brachos in the same hall later that night. The food for that event was placed in a separate warmer labeled "Sheva Brachos."

When the bris began and everyone gathered, the waiters brought out the meals. However, instead of taking food from the warmer labeled "Bris," they mistakenly took the food from the warmer labeled "Sheva Brachos."

The food intended for the bris was simple chicken, while the food prepared for the Sheva Brachos was steak and much more expensive meat. Not realizing their mistake, the waiters served all of the expensive Sheva Brachos meals to the bris guests.The guests praised Eli, saying they had never tasted such good bris food and that it was the best bris they had ever attended. Eli was very happy.

Later, the owner of the catering hall discovered that all the food intended for the Sheva Brachos had been eaten. He then had to scramble to prepare replacement food for the evening event.

Once everything settled, it was unclear who was financially responsible for the mistake. Eli met with the catering hall owner to discuss who should pay the several-thousand-dollar difference. Eli argued that the waiters were at fault and should pay, since they made the mistake. The catering hall owner argued that Eli, as the host of the bris, was responsible. Eli then suggested that perhaps the guests who ate and benefited from the expensive food should have to pay for what they ate. Another possible argument was that the catering hall owner should be responsible for leaving two similar sets of meals in a way that allowed confusion. They agreed to bring the case to a rav.

Who do you think is responsible for the loss? Eli, the host? The waiters who served the wrong food? The guests who ate and benefited from it? The catering hall owner?

Regarding last Weekly's question about the friend who was stuck in the room, Rav Zilberstein answered (Chashukei Chemed, Bava Kama, page 460) that in that specific case there was a heter to do what he did, and he did not have to pay any compensation. It goes without saying that one should be extremely careful not to extrapolate from this case to any other situation, and one must, of course, consult a highly competent Rav before engaging in similar Shailos.

HE AGAIN REMINDED ME NOT TO FORGET TO TELL THE NON-JEW THAT HE WOULD DAVEN FOR HIM

Rav Yisrael Klopholtz recounts that when he was a young boy, he worked in a factory that had two managers. One was Jewish, while the second was not. Sadly, the Jewish manager was against religion. He therefore made life very difficult for the religious workers who wanted to keep their religious practices. Friday afternoons and Yomim Tovim were especially difficult. The non-Jew, on the other hand, was very accommodating and allowed them to leave early on Fridays and right before the holidays.

Once, before Rav Yisrael went on vacation, the non-Jewish manager asked him where he was going. Rav Yisrael responded, "I am going to the city of Radin."

Many people knew of the great and holy Chofetz Chaim, who lived in Radin. When the non-Jew heard that Rav Yisrael was going there, he asked Rav Yisrael to request a blessing from the Chofetz Chaim for children. The non-Jewish manager did not yet have children.

"I arrived on Friday afternoon in Radin and was planning to stay there through Shabbos. There was not much time, so I immediately made my way to see the Chofetz Chaim. During the conversation, I mentioned the non-Jewish manager's request. When the Chofetz Chaim heard that the non-Jew was helping me keep my religious practices, he was deeply moved. He specifically said that he would daven for him. He repeated that I should inform the non-Jewish manager that the Chofetz Chaim felt obligated to daven for him because of his just ways.

"On Sunday, when I was preparing to leave, I returned to the Chofetz Chaim to say goodbye. This time, the Chofetz Chaim himself brought up the request of the non-Jew. He again reminded me not to forget to tell the non-Jew that he would daven for him. "Within the year, that couple was blessed with a child."

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