



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Matos-Masei

July 29, 2022

A Taste of Torah

Spoils System

by Rabbi Aharon Wilen

The Jewish People had just fought a victorious battle against the nation of Midian. Hashem had commanded them to go to battle to avenge the Midianites' role in causing the Jewish men to sin with the Midianite women in Shittim. When the Jewish soldiers returned with the spoils from the battle against Midian, Elazar the Kohen Gadol informed them of the need to *kasher* (make kosher from non-kosher flavor absorbed in the vessels) the vessels used for food that they had taken from the Midianites. The Talmud teaches that, at the same time, Elazar also told the Jewish People of the mitzvah of *tevilas keilim*, the obligation to immerse vessels used for food in a *mikvah* before they could be used. Many of the commentators wonder why these laws were not taught earlier when the Jews waged a war against Sichon and Og and conquered their lands on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Various approaches are offered for why the laws of *kashering* as well as *tevilas keilim* were not discussed then already.

The Chasam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer; 1762-1839) offers a fascinating insight to explain the delay of the laws of *tevilas keilim*. The Talmud Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud) explains that the concept of *tevilas keilim* is to take a vessel that had previously belonged to a non-Jew and has now passed into the possession of Jew and to raise it into the holiness of the Jewish People. The Chasam Sofer explains further that this initial lack of holiness can't be just because these things were used to prepare non-kosher food. Even new, never-used vessels

require *tevila* (immersion). Rather, says the Chasam Sofer, the problem is due to the utensil being in the domain of the non-Jew's ministering angel. Every nation has a unique ministering angel that represents it in Heaven, and the vessels take on a less-than-ideal spiritual status due to the influence of this angel. When a vessel leaves the possession of a non-Jew, it leaves the domain of the ministering angel of that non-Jewish nation. When it then enters the domain of a Jew, it needs to be immersed in a *mikvah* to introduce it into a higher level of spiritual existence.

Back in Parshas Shelach, following the negative report of ten of the spies, Kalev and Yehoshua, the two spies who did not participate in the evil report, responded to spies and said that the Land of Canaan would be easily conquered because "their shade has left them" (Bamidbar 14:9). The Ramban explains that "their shade" refers to the umbrella protection of these nations' ministering angels. The seven nations that inhabited the Land of Canaan (including the eastern side of the Jordan River) were doomed to defeat because their ministering angels had abandoned them. Sichon and Og were from these Canaanite nations, and their destruction stemmed from the departure of their Heavenly protection. Since their ministering angels were no longer involved in their affairs at the time of their defeat, says the Chasam Sofer, the negative spiritual power these angels bestow upon the vessels was no longer present, and so the vessels seized from them did not require immersion.

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Stories for the Soul

Keeping Clean

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Rabbi Naftali Porush (1871-1952) was the driving force behind the construction of Jerusalem's Shaarei Chesed neighborhood. Rabbi Porush went to great lengths to ensure that even poor families would be able to purchase homes in the new neighborhood.

One day while in shul, Rabbi Porush overheard two people talking. "Did you hear about Rabbi Porush's plans to build homes in Shaarei Chesed?"

"Sure," the other replied. "It's a wonderful idea. But you can be sure that Reb Naftali will end up with two of those houses for himself!"

As a result of what he overheard, Rabbi Porush shelved the project for two years. When the project finally resumed, he vowed not to even *buy* one for the houses for himself, lest anyone suspect him of using his position as a means to pay less than others. He honored this vow for the rest of his life.

Our Sages teach us, based on a verse in this week's parsha, "And you shall be vindicated from Hashem and from Yisrael (Bamidbar 32:22)" that one is obligated to make sure his actions are not subject to any suspicion.

Kollel Happenings

CONNECTION THROUGH CRISIS: THE NINE DAYS & AHAVAS CHINAM THIS MONDAY

Join Kollel Director Rabbi Moshe Heyman for the final class of a 3-part series titled *Connection through Crisis: The Nine Days & Ahavas Chinam*. Monday 8/1 at 8 pm at the new Southeast Kollel Space, 4932 S. Xenia St. In-person for women, available on Zoom, as well, at <https://zoom.us/j/3038202855> (Password 1234).

SPRING-SUMMER AVOS UBANIM CONTINUES THIS SHABBOS

The Kollel's spring-summer Avos Ubanim program continues this Shabbos afternoon at the Kollel Torah Centers in West Denver and Southeast Denver. Learning begins one hour before mincha, followed by nosh and prizes. Program ends 15 minutes before mincha in Southeast Denver, at mincha in West Denver. For sponsorships and more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Join Rabbi Shachne Sommers as he discusses a number of difficulties encountered in the weekly Torah portion, and develops a comprehensive approach to resolve the issue, simultaneously conveying a deeper understanding of the material being discussed. Tuesday nights on zoom, 8:15-9 pm, for men and women.

Halacha Riddles

Last week we asked: Why would one wash *netilas yadayim* (as before eating bread) before eating non-bread food?

Answer: Because he is eating a food dipped in one of the Seven Liquids recognized by halacha (wine, blood [obviously irrelevant in this context], olive oil, milk, dew, bee honey, water). The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 158:4) rules that any food dipped in one of these liquids and still wet requires *netilas yadayim* before eating it. The Mishna Berura (ad loc.:20) cites some opinions that this halacha does

not apply today, and notes that many people are lenient. The Mishna Berura himself seems to be inclined that one should be stringent, but no blessing should be recited due to the dispute. Thus, one who chooses to be stringent and observe this halacha would wash his hands before eating any food dipped in these Seven Liquids if it is still wet.

This week's question: How would one's intent for cleanliness affect his haughtiness?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part LVII

When the Nazis conquered Poland in 1939, they took over the building of the yeshiva. The entire library was taken out and burned in the town square. A brass band played as the fire consumed the holy books, the sound of the accursed Germans' rejoicing and merriment mingling with the anguished weeping and cries of the Jewish populace who witnessed the tragic scene.

The building became the headquarters of the regional German Military Police. In 1945, following World War II, the building was taken over by the Polish government, and was used as a building of a university.

In 1964, Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin of Detroit, founded by Rabbi Moshe

Rothenberg, a student of the yeshiva in Lublin, received \$177,042.25 as reimbursement for the building.

In 2003, the building was returned to the Jewish community. In 2005, the 11th Siyum Hashas (Completion Celebration) of Daf Yomi was held worldwide, and one of the many celebrations was held at the original Yeshiva Chachmei Lublin building. In 2007, following renovations, the building was reopened as a shul.

In 2013, a four-star hotel, Hotel Ilan, opened in the building. In recent months, the building has been used as a refugee camp for Jewish refugees from Ukraine fleeing the Russian invasion.

A Taste of Torah

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Midian, on the other hand, was not from these Canaanite nations. The war against the people of Midian was a separate battle of revenge specially ordered by Hashem. The ministering angels of Midian were still present during this war, and so their utensils still had this negative spiritual status and needed *tevila* to raise them to greater holiness before they could be

used by a Jew.

It is of utmost importance to bear in mind the unique sanctity of the Jewish People. Here, the Torah teaches us that even vessels owned by a Jew must be elevated and sanctified before they can be used for food! How much more so must a Jew himself ensure that he bring sanctity and holiness into himself and his day-to-day life.

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