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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Ki Seitzei ✍️ Rabbi Dovid Begoun

Show Your Gratitude

This week's parsha offers us an important insight into the obligation that we all have to show proper hakaras hatov (appreciation of good). Rather than being just another good character trait that we should strive toward, recognizing and appreciating the good that we receive is one of the most fundamental obligations of being a human being.

We read in the parsha, "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the congregation of Hashem, even their tenth generation shall not enter the congregation of Hashem, to eternity; because of the fact that they did not greet you with bread and water on the road when you were leaving Egypt, and because he hired against you Bilam son of Beor... to curse you."

Amazingly, the verse seems to equate the misdemeanor of the Ammonites, who failed to offer the B'nei Yisroel bread and water to the heinous crime of the Moabites who hired a sorcerer to curse and eventually annihilate the nation. In fact, by recording the Ammonite offense first, it would seem that the Torah views their misconduct as the more severe of the two.

The Ramban [*Devarim* 23:5] explains that the wrongdoing of the Ammonites was that they failed to show proper hakaras hatov to the Jewish Nation. The Ammonites and Moabites were the indirect recipients of the chesed of Avraham Avinu, as it was Avraham who redeemed Lot and his daughters (the parents of the original Ammon and Moav) from captivity and it was in the merit of Avraham that Lot and his daughters were saved from the destruction of S'dom. As a result the Ammonites and Moabites had a basic obligation of hakaras hatov towards B'nei Yisroel. Whereas the Moabites and the B'nei Esav went beyond their borders to bring them bread and water, once they heard that the B'nei Yisroel were not allowed to inflict stress upon them, the Ammonites refused to do so. (Incidentally, the Ramban explains why the prohibition to marry an Ammonite does not apply to an Ammonite woman. It was not the way of the land for women to go out and bring water and bread to passersby, therefore, it was only the men who displayed a lack of hakaras hatov y refraining from doing so).

This Ramban affords us several insights into this concept of hakaras hatov. Firstly, it applies to all of mankind, Jews and non-Jews alike. Secondly, the obligation to show hakaras hatov does not only fall

upon those who directly received the particular "good" but even on their offspring who were only indirect recipients- the Ammonites themselves had never been on the receiving end of Avraham's kindness. Likewise, the obligation is not only toward the actual perpetrator of the original "good" but even to their offspring- these individual Jews in the desert never did anything for the Ammonites. And thirdly, the obligation of the recipient of the "good" to show hakaras hatov exists regardless of there being a need on the part of the good-doer to receive the hakaras hatov. The Midrash [*Bamidbar Rabbah Behar* 34:8] points out that B'nei Yisroel would not have even profited from the water and bread of the Ammonites as they received a constant supply of manna from Heaven and water from the miraculous well. Nonetheless, the fact the B'nei Yisroel had no need for their donations in no way absolved the Ammonites from their obligation to properly recognize the good that was done to them. The Midrash finishes with a frightening observation, "If this is the punishment for those who did not reciprocate kindness toward those that were not in need of the reciprocal kindness, how much worse is it for the one who fails to reciprocate kindness toward one who is in need of the kindness."

A few verses later the Torah tells us that we are not allowed to abhor an Egyptian because we were a sojourner in his land. Rashi explains that although they tossed our males into the Nile and oppressed us terribly, since they offered us a place to live in our time of need, when there was famine in Eretz Canaan, we are obligated to show them hakaras hatov. The perpetrator of good must always be recognized and subsequent evil by the erstwhile benefactor does not cancel out the original obligation. Furthermore, the obligation of hakaras hatov exists even when the one doing the good had purely selfish motivations- the Egyptians only had a selfish incentive to invite the family of Yaakov to dwell in their land.

Throughout Elul, as we approach Yom Hadin, let us all commit ourselves to appreciating both Hashem and those around us for the continual good that we receive- evening, morning and afternoon.

This has been an adaptation from the *sefer Sifsei Chaim* vol. 2 p. 278-279.

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HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

Kashering from Milchigs to Fleishigs

Rabbi Ephraim Friedman

Anyone familiar with the laws of Kashrus is aware that a kosher kitchen must have two sets of pots, dishes, silverware, and all other eating and cooking utensils. One set would be for fleishigs and the other for milchigs. Just as a pot which was previously used to cook treif food can not be used for kosher food, a pot used to cook meat cannot be used for dairy and vice versa. It is also common knowledge, however, that pots or silverware which were used for treif can, in many cases, be kashered and then used for kosher food. Does this apply as well to kashering a utensil used for milchigs to then be used for fleishigs and vice versa?

The Mishnah Brurah in Hilchos Yom Tov (509:25) quotes a Magen Avraham who says that the minhag is not to do so. The reason for the minhag as explained in the Magen Avraham (ibid:11), is that the option to kasher utensils from fleishigs to milchigs and vice versa could lead one to own only one pot (or one set of silverware, etc.) and to rely on kashering each time the utensil is needed for the other type of food. Such a practice is forbidden because it will inevitably lead to mix-ups. Similarly, we find in Chulin (8b) that a shochet who also butchers the meat and cuts off the treif fats must own separate knives for each function and can not rely on using the same knife in a permissible sequence and fashion, because he is likely to err at some point. The same principle holds true with regard to owning one set of kitchen and eating utensils. In order to ensure that one won't be tempted to disregard having two sets and try indeed to get along with only one set, the minhag developed to forbid kashering from one type to the other so that owning separate utensils for milchigs and fleishigs will be unavoidable. Consequently, even one who owns separate sets and wishes to change the status of a particular utensil by kashering it, would be prohibited from doing so.

Although certain Achronim challenge the validity of this minhag maintaining that to enforce this would be tantamount to creating a new gzeirah (see Pri Chodosh Y.D. 99:1 and Aruch HaShulchan Y.D. 121:11 and O.C. 509:10), nevertheless it has been accepted by the majority of Poskim and is considered common practice nowadays. The Shaar Hamelech on the Rambam (Hilchos Yom Tov 4:8) endorses the minhag as well, however he rejects the explanation of the minhag offered by the Magen Avraham and suggests a different approach. Whenever one wishes to kasher a vessel by means of hagolah- immersion in boiling water- twenty-four hours must first elapse from the time the vessel became treif until hagolah is performed. Kashering which is attempted within twenty-four hours may not be valid and the vessel would remain treif. In order to safeguard against improper kashering, explains the Shaar Hamelech, the minhag became to avoid kashering whenever possible. Obviously, if a utensil was used for treif and is consequently useless without kashering, kashering is allowed. However a kosher utensil with either a milchig or fleishig status should be used exclusively for its original designation and should not be kashered for the mere convenience of switching its function.

Kashering Through Libun

According to the explanation of the minhag offered by the Shaar Hamelech, it would follow that only to kasher through hagolah would be objectionable, since it is this form of kashering which requires a twenty-four hour wait. Kashering by means of libun chamur, on the other hand, would not be restricted. The process of libun chamur involves heating the utensil to a very high temperature which results in burning and destroying any taam-flavor that is absorbed in the walls of the utensil. This process is effective even on a utensil which was used just moments before. However, based on the explanation of the Magen Avraham, even libun would not be permissible. Therefore, as the Pri M'gadim states explicitly (O.C. Aishel Avrohom 451:30) one should not switch a utensil from milchigs to fleishigs or vice versa, even by means of libun.

Kashering to Pareve

The minhag to restrict switching the designation of a utensil through kashering applies only to switching from milchigs to fleishigs or vice versa. To kasher a utensil of either designation in order to use it as a pareve utensil is permissible and is not a violation of the minhag. The Maharsham (2:241) says in the name of the Butchacher Rav that after kashering to pareve, if one later wishes to begin using the utensil for food of the opposite type than its original designation, this too is permissible.

Kashering for Pesach of from Treif

The Mishnah Brurah (451:19) quotes a teshuva of the Chasam Sofer (O.C. 110) which states that if one wishes to kasher a year-round utensil in order to use it for Pesach, he is permitted to switch its fleishig/milchig designation as well. Since the kashering process is being performed for a legitimate reason, the minhag of not switching does not apply.

The Pri M'gadim quoted by the Mishnah Brurah (509:25) goes a step further and says that one who wishes to switch the designation of a utensil may intentionally cook treif in it, creating a situation where kashering is inevitable. Once kashering is being performed, it is permissible to newly designate the freshly kashered item for either type of food, milchigs or fleishigs. This eitzah of the Pri M'gadim has become accepted practice.

An additional leniency which the Maharsham quotes from the Butchacher Rav is that any utensil which has sat unused for twelve months may be kashered and switched from milchigs to fleishigs or vice versa.

Ovens

According to many Poskim, the minhag of not kashering a utensil from one type to the other does not apply to ovens. Kashering an oven which involves removing taam implanted through zeah (steam) rather than through direct contact between the food and the utensil, when properly performed, may be done even to switch the ovens' designation from milchigs to fleishigs or vice versa.

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