



KOLLEL UPDATES

SHLUCHOS SEMINAR

The Kollel Women's Circle recently hosted an evening for local Shluchos and Kollel wives.

The first part of the evening was a presentation on tips and strategies for successful event planning with PR consultant Mrs Ilana Silver.

This was followed by an inspirational Shiur. Drawing on the female heroines of Purim and Pesach, Rabbi Johnson drew parallel to the dual-role of a Shlucha: juggling the responsibility of home and family with the role of being a Shlucha in the outside world.

This program follows successful seminars with local Shluchim and we look forward to offering more such sessions in the future.

4-Parshiyos Series

Part one of the 4-Parshiyos series was a highly stimulating shiur on the Kabbalistic nature of the 4 Parshiyos, with specific focus on the inner meaning of the half Shekel.

The Dvar Torah presented here is based on the shiur. If you like what you read, join us for the remaining 3 presentations. See the reverse side for topics, dates and details.



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Marriage Lessons from a Broken Coin

At the foot of Har Sinai, the Chuppah of the cosmic marriage forged between Hashem and the Jewish people, the bride did the unthinkable.

Having heard Hashem declare *"I am Hashem your G-d"* and *"You shall have no other gods before Me"*, Bnei Yisroel built and worshipped the Golden Calf, committing spiritual adultery. Could there be a greater betrayal of Hashem? How would they ever be able to make amends and restore their relationship?

Hashem told Bnei Yisroel that to atone for their sin they would need to give נפשו - to pay up!

The Midrash describes how at that moment, Bnei Yisroel began to despair *"Why did we waste our time gathering the spoils in Egypt and at the Sea when we will now have to give it all away."* So great was their betrayal, they knew that they would not get off cheap.

Hashem knew what the people were thinking and told Moshe to tell them not to fear: *"I am not asking for 1,000, not 100, not fifty silver coins, not even 1 solitary Shekel. זה יתנו... מחצית השקל. All I am asking is for a half Shekel."*

Half a Shekel, that's all? Moshe was perplexed. How could a mere half Shekel be sufficient to atone for their terrible wrongdoing?

The half Shekel was not about monetary value. Hashem was telling Moshe that this half Shekel would be worth far more than the thousands of silver coins that Bnei Yisroel thought would be required. Exactly half a Shekel would be the penalty without exception. The rich could not give more and the poor no less. Half and only half.

But why a half? Generally, our gifts to Hashem have to be whole and perfect, like a *korban* which cannot have any blemishes. So why here was a half required?

Further, the Torah specifies that the weight of a full Shekel is 20 *Gerah*. If they were only giving a half Shekel, of what relevance is the value of a whole Shekel? The Torah should have said that the weight of the half Shekel is 10 *Gerah*?

The Torah seems to be teaching Bnei Yisroel that they

should know that there *is* a full Shekel, but that they are only giving half of it.

The Ariza"l explains that every soul is initially created comprising a feminine and a masculine element. The soul is then split in two; the feminine aspect being placed into a female and the masculine aspect into a male. The two grow up as individuals, sometimes on other sides of the world, until Hashem brings them back together to unite under the Chuppah.

In their single lives each saw themselves as a "whole", living only responsible to and for themselves. Under the Chuppah, in order to become one, each partner must surrender their sense of "wholeness" to become a "half" once again. A half which completes and is completed by the other, achieving a far deeper level of "wholeness" than ever before.

When a spouse wrongs the other, it is because they have reverted back to the more familiar "whole" mode.

The marriage between Hashem and the Jewish people is the same. To unite with Hashem means to surrender our ego, our own sense of independence as a "whole", and to see ourselves as being incomplete without our relationship with Him.

This is the power of the half Shekel. A gift worth thousands of dollars may say "I'm sorry" or "I love you". But it is parting only with *my* money. A half Shekel says "I am incomplete without you", "You complete me." A half Shekel is devoting my very self.

After the tragic sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem asks for half a Shekel. He does not want to be "bought off" with lavish gifts. True atonement is internalising that without Him we are incomplete.

Hashem pulled out a fiery half Shekel from under His throne and showed it to Moshe. When we give our half, Hashem reciprocates. Hashem is saying to the Jewish people, so-to-speak, *"I will complete your lacking and make you whole."* But beyond that, Hashem's half Shekel says that just as I complete you, You complete Me. I need you, for without you, My deepest desire cannot be achieved. Together we create the *Shekel Hakodesh*. ■



SHIURIM SCHEDULE

PURIM PREPARATION

Kollel Menachem is proud to present a full program of pre-Purim shiurim.

Textual Megillah Study

The next 2 Wednesday nights,
8:30pm in the Kollel with
Rabbi Yossi Gordon
For Men

Halachos for Purim

Brush up on the practical halachos and learn something new.
Tuesday March 4 - 2 Adar II.
8:30pm in the ORZ Mezzanine with
Rabbi Michael Stern.
For Men

Purim Personalities

Megillah Characters you thought you knew!
Tuesday March 11 - 9 Adar II.
8:30pm in the ORZ Mezzanine with
Rabbi Shlomo Barber.
For Men and Women

OPEN YOUR HEART

A feature presentation with
Rabbi Yonason Johnson
**Parshas Zachor
Souls in Conflict**
When the mind says one thing and the heart another...

SUNDAY March 9 - ז אדר ב'
for men and women in the
Goldhirsch Hall.

Reserve the dates for 2 additional upcoming presentations:

From Parah to Eifer
Getting back to your purest state
Parshas Parah

Monday Mar 17 - ט"ו אדר ב'

Rebirth and Renewal
Harnessing the lunar power within
Parshas Hachodesh

Sunday Mar 23 - כ"א אדר ב'



Q. During the holidays we went on a road trip. When it came time for lunch we did not have any water to wash *Netilas Yodayim* with. What is the halacha in this situation?

A. Washing one's hands before eating bread is a Rabbinic Mitzvah. Rabbinically hands are considered *Tamei* and a Kohen would not be able to eat *Terumah* without first washing. The rabbis extended the requirement for *Netilas Yodayim* to all Jews (not only Kohanim) when eating any bread (not only for *Terumah*). Even though the Temple has been destroyed and Kohanim no longer eat *Terumah*, the enactment of *Netilas Yodayim* remains in force. This is so that we will be accustomed to washing before eating in preparation for when the Beis Hamikdosh is speedily rebuilt¹.

There are very detailed laws about what type of water and what type of vessel must be used for performing *Netilas Yodayim*.

Netilas Yodayim is an extremely important mitzvah. Chaza"l teach that one who is careful with *Netilas Yodayim* will be blessed with wealth². Conversely, one who is lax with *Netilas Yodayim* will come to poverty³. The Talmud tells of the great *Mesirus Nefesh* of Rabbi Akiva⁴ who when imprisoned would use his water rations for *Netilas Yodayim*.

Therefore when travelling or going on trips, one should always ensure to pack sufficient water and a suitable cup for washing in case none will be available while travelling.

If this was not done, the Shulchan Aruch discusses what one should do in a scenario where no water or cup for washing is available.

The Shulchan Aruch⁵ rules that if water will be available within the time it takes to walk 4 mil (approx. 72 minutes) one cannot eat before obtaining that water. If one would need to go back or travel out of their way then they are only required to diverge for the time it would take to travel 1 mil (18 minutes).

Consensus among the Poskim is that this refers to an amount of time rather than a geographical distance. Therefore when travelling on the highway for example, if one would reach

water (gas station etc.) within 72 minutes drive, he would be obligated to do so before relying on other leniencies (or eating without washing). If one is travelling in a manner where it would not be possible to stop or would involve significant cost or effort e.g. on an inter-state bus, or if one is travelling where it would be dangerous to stop, they are not required to wait.

Netilas Yodayim must be performed using a cup. The time-frames and laws discussed above⁷ regarding water would also apply to being able to obtain a suitable cup. One should not rely on washing without a cup by using a tap for *Netilas Yodayim* even if it is turned on and off each time⁷.

Alternatively, in the absence of a cup, there are options of dipping one's hands into water which would qualify as a mikva if available. Examples would be the ocean, natural springs, lakes and rivers. In this case the blessing would be על שטיפת ידיים and one would only be required to dip their hands once.

If suitable water or a suitable cup will not be available as per above, only then would one be able to rely on the leniency of wrapping both of one's hands until the wrists (in gloves etc.) and eating without touching the bread. Note that holding the food in a bag or eating with a fork etc. would not suffice⁸.

Even still, the Alter Rebbe writes that there are those who oppose relying on this leniency even when no water is available and he concludes that one who is stringent is praiseworthy. It would appear from the Alter Rebbe that it is preferable to rely on some of the leniencies in the quality or nature of the washing liquid (see below).

The Shulchan Aruch⁹ rules that one may wash their hands in the morning and have in mind that this washing will suffice for eating throughout the day. This applies as long as he maintains concentration throughout the day that his hands do not touch anything which would require re-

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Rabbi Yonason Johnson

washing or wears gloves. If one slept or went to the bathroom the stipulation would no longer work. This condition can be made on any halachically required washing such as *Negel Vasser* in the morning or after going to the restroom.

The Maharsha"l challenges the leniency of making a stipulation and therefore the Alter Rebbe rules that we do not rely on it unless one is in a situation where no water will be available later¹⁰. Even then, ideally the stipulation should be made in conjunction with covering one's hands while eating.

Netilas Yodayim must be performed using water and no other form of liquid. The water too should not be discoloured.

Where such water is not available and will not be available within the time-frames above, the Alter Rebbe in his Shulchan Aruch rules that one can rely on the lenient opinions which allow washing with juice or other beverages. Discoloured water should not be used in any circumstance. As mentioned above, using other liquids would be preferable to wrapping one's hands (even when employed together with the stipulation method).

Being fed by someone else is not an option either. Even if the person eating is being fed by someone else and not touching the bread themselves, they are still obligated to wash *Netilas Yodayim*. The one feeding the bread would not be required to wash¹¹. ■

¹ Shulchan Aruch Harav OC 158:1

² See Shulchan Aruch Harav OC 158:15 that one should not do so with the anticipation of becoming wealthy, since this is like serving one's Master in order to receive reward.

³ See Sotah 4b and Rashi.

⁴ Eiruvin 21b. When left with only enough water to drink or to wash his hands, Rabbi Akiva chose the latter, preferring to risk his life then violate the law of his colleagues.

⁵ Orach Chaim 163

⁶ Tzitz Eliezer 8:7

⁷ See Piskei Teshuvos 159:19. It is questionable whether water coming through standard taps comes from the koach of a vessel. This is different to a tap on a barrel which may be used by turning the tap on and off. See however Minchas Yitzchak who is lenient with our taps in a real *שעת הדחק* if the water is turned on and off and also one dips their hands in water collecting at the bottom of the sink.

⁸ Seder Netilas Yodayim Adh"z sec. 22

⁹ OC Siman 164

¹⁰ See Aruch Hashulchan who writes that we have not seen this followed in practise. Chayei Adam raises the concern that this practise could also lead a person to forget the bench, for which the stipulation does not help.

¹¹ Shulchan Aruch Harav OC 163:2