We all have some bad midos (character traits) and some bad habits. When we consider doing teshuva for them, we are apt to think as follows: “I am really out of control. Why do I do those terrible things? I should be stronger! How can I increase my self-control so that I can overcome those strains, temptations, etc.?”

That sort of thinking can be useful. But it is not the only helpful approach. Another attack is this: “When do I fail like this? What is there in the environment? What else has happened that day? Under which specific circumstances do I fail? And, ...what can I do to change those circumstances?”

The technique of changing the circumstances in which we generally fail is what I call “Strategic Teshuva.”

The same is true for other temptations. Laziness comes naturally when one is surrounded by computer games, bad literature, inviting beaches and — most important — other lazy people. (A boy from Los Angeles told me it took him six years to get his bachelor’s degree because certain courses interfered with his beach schedule!) Illicit pleasures attract most strongly when they are readily available and when others in the neighborhood indulge.
**Shofar Scents**

Michael R. Leavitt  
&lt;mleavitt@his.com&gt; wrote:  
Dear Rabbi,

I just got a beautiful shofar from a friend returning from Israel. It sounds great, but it has one problem. It smells. But really bad. There were probably some marrow pieces left inside. My question is simple: “How do you clean a shofar?”

Dear Michael R. Leavitt

To answer your question, my wife spoke to Mrs. Sarah Glaser, author of *Life Saver! — The Jewish Homemaker’s Survival Kit* (Targum/Feldheim). She recommends vinegar or baking soda for removing odor. Pour synthetic vinegar into the shofar. Or dissolve baking soda in water, and pour into the shofar. Rinse and repeat. If necessary, let sit overnight in the vinegar/baking soda solution.

Eliminating a strong odor is important, because such an odor might lessen the honor of the mitzvah, violating the principle that “mitzvot should not be contemptible in your eyes.” And if the odor is as bad as you say, it’s forbidden to say a blessing in its presence.

But remember, the inside of the shofar needn’t compete with perfumes such as *Eau d’Elegance* or *Chanel*. Most shofars retain a slight, lingering reminiscence of their humble origin, the ram.

When Isaac blessed Jacob, Isaac said, ‘My son’s fragrance is like the fragrance of the field blessed by Hashem.’ Of course, Jacob was wearing animal skins on his hands and neck. Perhaps the power of Jacob’s mitzvah turned a bad smell into a good one. May Hashem accept our mitzvah of shofar this year, and may all our deeds be sweet-smelling!

Sources:
- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 79:8-9
- Mishna Berurah 79:31 and 586:90
- Bereishit 27:27, Rashi

**Succah-Net**

Elaine Rubin  
&lt;weaver51@teleport.com&gt; wrote:

Is it acceptable to use window screen material for the walls of the succah, or must it be material through which one cannot see?

Dear Elaine Rubin,

First, thanks for letting us ‘screen’ your question. Did you hear about the man who ran through a screen door? He strained himself.

The halachic definition of a ‘wall’ is different than Webster’s definition. Halachically, a wall can have a gap of up to three tefachim (handbreadths) and still be valid. This is based on a concept called ‘lavud.’ *Lavud* means that we consider any gap of less than three tefachim as though it’s connected.

But the laws of *lavud* are complex. Therefore, the custom is to use full walls, and not to rely on *lavud*.

However, a screen is a valid wall, even without appealing to the concept of *lavud*. Since it has wires running both horizontally and vertically, it is a full-fledged wall in its own right. So screens, although ‘holey,’ are valid succah walls.

Walls that sway with the breeze are invalid. Therefore, you have to fasten the screens tight so they don’t sway. (If they sway in a very gusty wind, that’s OK.) Your succah may not be the most private place (unless you hang curtains in front of the screens) but it’s valid.

Story: A thief once took advantage of a crack in a succah wall, to reach in and steal a pair of silver candle sticks. When the incident came to the attention of the Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky, *zatzal*, he remarked that thief must have been an *an ha’aretz* — someone ignorant of Jewish law. “A Torah Scholar could never have done such a thing,” jested the rabbi.

“Knowing the din of *lavud* (that the halacha considers a break smaller than three handbreadths as though it is sealed), a Torah Scholar would never have been able to get his hand through!”

Sources:
- Succah 7a
- Succah 16a and Tosafot D.H. “B’pachot”
- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 630:5, Rema ibid., Mishna Berurah 28
- Eravin 16b
- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 630:10
Our first responsibility is for our actions. When the "triggers" of the bad habits and midos occur, it is extremely difficult to stop the habits and midos from acting. One solution is to try to avoid the triggers. Change the environment. Move your residence if you can. If you can’t, spend as much time in another environment which will provide respite from the temptation. (The most effective positive environment is doing mitzvos with other people: Learn in a beis midrash, visit the hospital with others, plan a chesed project with others, teach Torah in a school, etc.) Certain activities cause tension which triggers anger. If you cannot avoid those activities, alternate with relaxing activities.

A second solution is to add something to the environment which will make it easier to do the right thing. If you have trouble getting up for davening in shul, make a chavrusa for ten minutes before davening. Then, when the alarm rings and you reach over to push the snooze button, you will think: “But what if my chavrusa comes and I’m not there?! How embarrassing!” — and you will get up!

In many cases you can make a contract with yourself: If I succeed in overcoming the temptation (enough times) then I will allow myself something I very much enjoy. This is what psychologists call a “behavior contract.” Thus I have a personal incentive to do the right thing. For example: “If I get through the meeting without getting angry, I will allow myself to buy that picture for the wall/go to that restaurant/etc.”

The key is to control the environment by avoiding some things and creatively adding others so that it will be easier to do the right thing.

Now, some people think that this cannot be right. This means that we are only running away from our problems, not solving them! The problem is precisely this: I am not able to overcome those temptations. How do I solve that problem? By avoiding them, or by adding extra incentives?

There are two answers. First, who says that the only problem is to overcome the desire? On the contrary: Our first responsibility is for our actions. Suppose someone cannot control a desire to steal from Macy’s. If he shops only in Bloomingdale’s, or he rewards himself for not stealing from Macy’s, he has not overcome the desire — but at least he is not stealing!

Second, often we can only overcome the desire if we have a respite from the wrong actions. As long as the bad habits and midos are active it is very difficult to gain control.

Therefore, avoiding the triggers and adding payoffs may be the only way to gain control.

The ultimate goal is to become immune to the temptations. But this may require two stages: First avoiding the triggers and adding payoffs; and then developing the psychological strength to resist. Trying to do without the first stage may make the second stage impossible.

Think of addictions. You cannot simply tell the addict: “Stop using that stuff!” He can’t stop, and all the therapy in the world will not help while he is still on the drug.”

But if he enters a sanitarium where the drug is unavailable, then the therapy can help him become immune to the temptation to use drugs.

Strategic teshuva may thus be the necessary first step to complete teshuva. But it is more than that. If that is all that you can manage at the moment, then strategic teshuva is enough to gain kappara (atonement). Hashem does not ask more of us than we can do. If you avoid the triggers, add incentives and start to work on immunity, then in the meantime you have kappara for all the past mistakes even before you achieve immunity. Isn’t that worth it?
Total Mitzvah

It is said in the name of the Vilna Gaon that there are only two opportunities among all the 613 mitzvos to physically “enter the mitzvah.” One is the opportunity to live in Eretz Yisroel, and the other to be in the succah you have constructed for the Festival of Succos. When you cross the border into the land of Israel, or walk into the succah, you have “entered” the mitzvah.

What is the connection between the succah and the Land of Israel?

Judaism is unique to the world in that Jewish national and religious destinies are identical. The concept of a successful Jewish nation in the Land of Israel is fundamental to our religious destiny. Other nations have holy places and live elsewhere, but for us, our land is our home, our holy soil and the necessary setting for the ideal fulfillment of mitzvos.

Accordingly, the Torah includes both civil and religious law, instructing us in our everyday behavior and our acts of worship, both of which are equally holy. The way we live in the Land is part of our service to Hashem. Thus we see in the Book of Joshua, that the first decisions that Joshua made when the Jews entered the Land of Israel were for urban planning, as important to their spiritual lives as the transportation of the Holy Ark.

Living in Israel gives the Jewish people the opportunity to sanctify every little act that they do, Jewishly. Merely going to the corner store to buy a carton of milk is part of the fulfillment of the Jewish destiny when it is done in the Land of Israel.

Similarly, during the festival of Succos, a Jew has a chance to make every little act he does a holy act — by being in the succah. Eating a celebratory meal or even sleeping in the succah is a mitzvah, a symbol of the total fulfillment of G-d’s plan for the Jewish people.

Twin Mitzvos

A further comparison can be made between the mitzvah of living in the Land of Israel and the mitzvah of sitting in the succah during the festival of Succos.

Both mitzvos require us to merit the opportunity to perform them. Many times it is written in the Torah that if the Jewish People sin they will be expelled from the Land of Israel. Similarly, the performance of the mitzvah of succah also requires special merit, as we find in tractate Succah, chapter 2, Mishna 9. The laws of Succos state that the mitzvah to sit in the succah is negated by heavy rain. Our mishna reads: “Rain falls ... to what can this be compared? To a servant who comes to pour a drink for his master and the master throws the flask in his face.” If the Jewish People don’t follow G-d’s ways, then He brings rain so they won’t be able to perform the mitzvah.

Why must one merit the opportunity to do these two mitzvos? The answer involves another similarity between the two. Both mitzvos involve our deserving to receive the entire Torah. That is why Rashi, in the beginning of Bereishis, explains why the Torah begins with the creation of the world rather than the first mitzvah, kiddush hachodesh — the sanctification of the new moon. Since G-d created the world, it is His right to give Eretz Yisroel to the Jewish People. If Eretz Yisroel belongs to us then so does the Torah for they go hand in hand. As we have learned, Eretz Yisroel is the optimal place for the performance of all of the mitzvos.

The Talmud in Avoda Zora relates how G-d compares the Jewish People with the other nations in their willingness to receive the Torah. Since the Festival of Succos is the optimal time for receiving the Torah through their observance of the commandments to sit in the succah and yishuv Eretz Yisroel, because they unlock for us the entire Torah.

Why are the Jewish People worthy of receiving the Torah through their observance of the commandments to sit in the succah and yishuv Eretz Yisroel? Because it is the ability of a Jew to totally immerse himself in mitzvos that makes him deserving of the entire Torah.

Why Eight Days?

Regarding Succos the Torah writes, “On the first day it shall be a day of rest and on the eighth day it shall be a day of rest.” But we know that the mitzvos of Succos last seven days, not eight. What is the significance of the eighth day?

The number seven represents the physical world, eight the spiritual. For seven days the succah shows us that the world is temporary. Just as we rejoice in the Succah which is a temporary structure — so too must one rejoice with the notion that life is temporary.

Life is temporary? How can we rejoice? The answer is the eighth day. On the eighth day — Simchas Torah — we do not take the four species and we do not sit in the succah. It would seem that the festival of Succos is over. But it is not so. Simchas Torah, which begins anew the yearly cycle of reading the Torah, is a Yom Tov.

This shows us that the Torah extends through the physical realm and beyond. Torah is the source of all creation and life, existing forever. So if one understands that the eighth day, Simchas Torah, gives meaning and life to the other seven days, then one rejoices. True joy comes when one discovers the real meaning of life.

Clouds of Glory

We refer to the three festivals of Pesach, Shavuos and Succos as the ‘time of our freedom,’ the ‘time of the giving of the Torah,’ and the ‘time of our rejoicing.’ We understand that Pesach is the time of year we were freed from Egypt and Shavuos the time of year we received the Torah at Mount Sinai, but why is Succos called the time of simcha? What special event took place at that time?

Why do we celebrate Succos in the month of Tishrei? Since the festival of Succos commemorates the clouds of glory that surrounded the Jewish People for 40 years from the time of the Exodus from Egypt, Pesach would seem to be a more appropriate time.

Perhaps the answer lies in the words of the Vilna Gaon. After the sin of the golden calf, the clouds of glory disappeared, and returned only after the Jewish People were commanded to build the Mishkan. On the day after Yom Kippur — the 11th of Tishrei Moshe told the people to bring donations for the building of the Mishkan. They brought them for two days, and on the 14th of Tishrei the makers of the Mishkan gathered the materials. Finally, on the 15th they began their work, and the clouds of glory returned.

Perhaps this is the simcha of Succos, the time of the reunification of Hashem with the Jewish People, represented by the return of the clouds of glory. Each year, after experiencing the introspective month of Elul and the Aseres Yemei Teshuva, the 10 Days of Repentance, we come to Succos with simcha; because through our repentance and teshuva we have drawn closer to Hashem, and arrived at z’man simchaseinu.

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dose of both. On *Yom Kippur* we affict ourselves with fasting and supplications, to clarify for ourselves the awesomeness of He who created us, and the dread of His impending judgment. On *Succos*, we sing, dance and eat festive meals outside in the succoh, and enjoy the blessings of the new year.

In each way, we must fulfill the commands of Hashem with deliberation, intent, and a whole heart. When we are in shul on *Yom Kippur* during hours of the most intense prayer of the year, our heartfelt intent to approach Hashem is evident. When we are in the succoh, we approach Hashem through the joy of our celebration, and we should do it with the same intent.

But how does one serve Hashem with joy, with the same intent as *Yom Kippur*? One should be happy because Hashem has given us His commandments. It is as if He has invited us to enter His holy palace, sit at His table and share in His goodness. When our thanks to Him for this incredible opportunity express themselves in singing and dancing, we should jump up and dance with our whole heart.

**Rabbi Mordechai Perlman, based on Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe**

**The Lonely Branch**

There is a well known Midrash that the four species represent the four different kinds of Jew. The esrog, having both smell and taste, is representative of those who learn Torah and practice *maasim tovim*; the *lulav* comes from a fruit-bearing tree but has no smell, and represents those who learn Torah but do not practice *maasim tovim*; the *hadassim* have a sweet smell but no fruit, and represent those who practice *maasim tovim* but do not learn Torah; the *aravos* represent those Jews that have neither *Torah* nor *maasim tovim*, as they neither give fruit nor possess a fragrant smell.

On *Hoshana Rabbah*, the last intermediate day of Succos and one of the holiest and most awe-inspiring days of the year, we lay down the four species that we have used throughout the festival and pray that the world should receive enough water for all its needs. At this most climactic moment, as we entreat Hashem to Hashem soar heavenward, we pick up a bundle of *aravos* and beat them on the floor. Of all the species, why is it that we take the only one that symbolizes a lack of Torah and *maasim tovim*?

It is an unfortunate trait of human nature that a person feels it is sufficient to have done only a part of what was required of him. However this is not enough. *Hoshana Rabbah* represents the culmination of a process that begins on *Rosh Chodesh Elul* and encompasses *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur* and *Succos*. It is the process of *teshuva*. It is a time that is supposed to bring us nearer to Hashem. On *Hoshana Rabbah*, as this time draws to a close, we take hold of the *aravos* alone, with no smell and no taste, in order to emphasize that very often, it is those who are the furthest removed that have the greatest sensitivity to their faults and are prepared to try and rectify them.

**Rabbi Reuven Laufer**

**Protected by...**

Every Shabbos Chol HaMoed Succos we read the Haftorah (Yechezkel, Chapter 38) about the final confrontation at the end of days between Gog and the nation of Israel. How does Succos connect with Gog, Magog and the end of days?

It is ironic to note that after the exodus from Egypt, while travelling in the desert, a place that offers absolutely no natural security or protection, the Jewish people experienced their greatest sense of true security, protected from their enemies and entirely provided for by G-d.

Every year, when the Jew leaves his home for a week to eat, sleep and live in a succoh; an often flimsy structure with a roof made of bits of wood, reed, bamboo, etc., he actualizes this idea — that ultimate care and protection come only from G-d. By virtue of the closeness to G-d he has achieved during *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, he can now experience a sense of true security.

The word “Gog” in Hebrew means roof. Modern man, divorced from a belief in G-d, deeply believes that a good job, a big bank account, a solid economy, a high tech army, in short, a strong solid “roof over his head,” is the source of true security.

These two world views cannot co-exist forever. We are told by the prophets that armageddon is inevitable, a final confrontation that will witness the destruction of mankind’s false faith. Succos teaches us that our apparently flimsy roofs will ultimately be triumphant over modern man’s misguided sense of security.

**Rabbi Chaim Salenger**

**All Four One**

The Torah (Leviticus 23:39-40) commands us to “take for yourselves” four species; the *lulav* (palm branch), the *esrog* (citron), the willow branch and the myrtle branch, on Succos. What is the significance of this commandment, in which we take the above species and wave them during our prayers?

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in *Horeb*, Chapter 31, points out that each of the species has different qualities. Together, they symbolize all the physical blessings that G-d has given us. The *esrog* symbolizes sustenance and aroma; the palm branch, sustenance but no aroma; the myrtle branch, aroma but no sustenance, and the willow branch neither sustenance nor aroma — it is just wood. These four indicate clearly that everything has been created by G-d for man, to benefit him through nature. If we look at them in greater detail we see that each represents a different category of our benefits from nature.

Rabbi Hirsch divides our blessings into the following categories. The first group includes things in nature that require no finishing touches by man. For instance, the air you breathe, the light which shines for you, the beauty which makes you happy, the sweet-smelling scent which refreshes you, etc. This category is symbolized by the *myrtle*, which has a pleasant aroma, and the *esrog*, which has aroma and sustenance.

The second category comprises things in nature that are inherently beneficial to man, but out of which man has to extract the benefit, i.e. all means of sustenance, which are represented by the *lulav*, a branch of the date-palm.

The third category includes things whose consummation depends entirely upon the hand of man, upon which man exercises his power as their master and from which he extracts all the usefulness that is in them. Nature supplies only the raw material. For instance, his dwelling, clothing, utensils, etc., represented in general by wood, i.e. the willow branch, which has no aroma or sustenance.

In the words of Rabbi Hirsch: “Take these four to represent all that G-d offers you as gifts of nature. Take them as your very own before Hashem, your G-d. Acknowledge and acclaim that it is G-d who vouchsafes unto you all that is good in life. Cling to them only as the means of living in the presence of G-d according to His will. Rejoice in them before your G-d as the means of fulfilling your duties.” This commandment is a way of acknowledging that the purpose of all our physical blessings, strengths and capabilities, is to “take them before G-d” and to dedicate them to a spiritual purpose. Do not ignore the physical you may enjoy it and benefit from it — but do so with the purpose of reaching beyond the physical world and into the spiritual world.

**Rabbi Mordechai Becher**

**Coming Clean**

“OK Mugsy, the game’s over, come clean with your hands up.”

“Hey Jake, that don’t look like Mugsy! Clean shaven, business suit and tie.”

“Your name’s Moshe? Jake, did the boys stake out the wrong joint again? Rip up the warrant and let’s go see what’s going on here.”

Hoshana Rabbah is called the last chance to do *teshuva*. But how can *teshuva* help if the books of judgment are sealed after *Yom Kippur*? Isn’t it too late?

*Teshuva* creates a new person, distinct from the old individual. When the angels assigned to bring the decree of *Yom Kippur* arrive on *Hoshana Rabbah* looking for Mugsy, they find only Moshe and must rip up the decree.

**Rabbi Pinchas Kantrowitz**
**Weekly Daf**

*S Chullin 19 - 25 • 33 - 46

**A Trace Of Trachea**

**Introduction:** In order to do a proper Shechita one must sever with a knife the trachea and the esophagus, or the majority of both. If half of the trachea has been severed before he begins the shechita, the animal is still not considered a treifa (terminally ill due to an organic defect), because the majority has not been severed.

**Case One:** The front half of the trachea was severed before shechita and he completes shechita on the back half.

**Case Two:** The back half of the trachea was severed before shechita and he does shechita on the front half.

**The Ruling:** Rabbi Kahana asked Rabbi Yehoshua what he ruled in regard to the validity of the shechita in both cases. Rabbi Yehuda ruled that in Case One the shechita was valid and in Case Two it was invalid.

Rabbi Abba, who overheard this ruling, repeated it to Rabbi Elazar who in turn presented it to Rabbi Yochanan who challenged him to explain the difference. Rabbi Elazar made the following distinction:

In Case One we view the severed trachea as if a gentile, who is not qualified for shechita, and made shechita on the first half and the shechita was completed by a Jew, making it kosher. In Case Two we view the situation as if a Jew did the first half of the shechita and a gentile completed it, rendering it non-kosher.

Rabbi Yochanan rejected this explanation and ruled that in both cases the shechita was valid. The Sage Rava later explained why Case Two was not similar to a gentile completing the shechita.

If a Jew did shechita on a completely unsevered trachea, he was capable of completing the shechita on the remaining half. By allowing the gentile to do so in his stead he created a situation in which the life of the animal was taken by someone not qualified for shechita. When the back half of the trachea was already severed before he began the shechita, he ends up doing as much shechita as is possible on that organ, and is therefore considered as the one who has taken the life of the animal, rendering it a kosher shechita.

**The Five-Year Limit**

At what age did a Levite begin serving in the transporting of the Sanctuary during the years that Jews were in the Wilderness?

One passage (Bamidbar 4:3) states that he started at 30. Another (Bamidbar 8:24) indicates that the starting age was 25. How do we resolve this apparent conflict?

The Levite did not actually begin to partake in the rigorous efforts of taking apart, carrying and putting together the portable Sanctuary and its sacred vessels until he was 30 years old. The reason for this, explains Rashi in Chumash, is that a man does not reach his peak of strength until he is 30, as our Sages put it in Pirkei Avos (5:24): "At thirty one achieves strength."

But a Levite could not participate in this sacred and demanding work until he trained. His training began at the age of 25.

This resolution of the seeming contradiction leads to an interesting conclusion about education. If a student fails during five years of study to absorb and retain what he has learned we may assume that he is not capable of succeeding in that field.

Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi, in his commentary on Chumash, thus explains this conclusion of the Talmud:

It is not logical to assume that the Torah insisted on every Levite training for five whole years before becoming eligible to work because there will certainly be some who require less time than others. The five-year figure must then be the limit on how long we must make an effort to train the slowest learner. If this is the limit then we can assume that one who is still untrained after five years of study can be considered uneducatable in that field.

* Chullin 24a

**The Prophet’s Standard**

“Oh L-rd, G-d, behold my soul has never been polluted; from my youth until now I have not eaten that which dies of itself (neveilah) or that which is terminally ill because of an organic defect (treifa); nor did loathsome meat (pigul) ever enter my mouth.” (Yechezkel 4:14)

Thus spoke the Prophet Yechezkel upon receiving a Divine command to prepare his food in a particularly disgusting way, as a prophetic indication of the suffering in store for his sinful nation. On the surface this was an appeal to honor his sensitivity to anything of an undignified nature, and it indeed was answered with a softening of the directive.

Our Sages, however, saw in the prophet’s words an outline of his superior standard of spiritual behavior, one that went beyond the letter of the law.

“My soul has never been polluted” cannot refer only to the fact that he did not willingly enter into contact with the dead, since Yechezkel was a Kohen, and this would have been expected of any Kohen. His point of pride here was that he was so disciplined in his thoughts during the day, that he was never the victim of polluting thoughts which would cause him to have a nocturnal emission.

“I have not eaten neveilah or treifa” cannot mean those meats forbidden to all Jews. It therefore refers to the meat of an animal which has no organic defect, but which is so close to dying that it is rushed to the shechita while it still may be slaughtered and eaten. Even though the halacha permits the meat of such an animal since it is not a treifa, Yechezkel avoided it because of this similarity arising from its proximity to death.

“Nor did loathsome meat enter my mouth” does not refer to the pigul, which is forbidden to all Kohanim when the shochet of a korban had in mind for it to be eaten beyond the time limit set by the Torah. It refers instead to the prophet’s aversion to eating the meat of any animal about whose kashrus a question had arisen, even if the ruling was positive. (This is the source for what we call “Glatt kosher.”)

* Chullin 37b

* Chullin 26 · 32 will appear in OhrNet Parshas Ha’azinu.
Bang Your Head Against the Mountain

If a Jew slaughters an animal belonging to an idol-worshipping non-Jew there is a difference of opinion as to whether the meat of that animal is kosher. One view is that even though the idol worshipping owner had in mind to offer some part of the animal as a sacrifice to his idol, his intentions cannot affect the validity of the Jew’s shechita. Rabbi Eliezer, however, contends that the owner’s intention does transform the shechita into an act of idol worship, which makes the meat forbidden.

But what if the animal belonged to the Jew and the idol worshipper merely gave him money as advance payment for a portion of its meat? Will Rabbi Eliezer rule in this case as well that the meat is forbidden?

This question was put to Rabbi Ashi who offered the following response:

It will depend on whether the idol worshipper was a violent person who would not permit the Jew to refund the money and back out of the deal. If so, the Jew is considered as having resigned himself to being his agent, and the meat is forbidden because of this idolatrous intention. If this is not the case, however, then the Jew can simply say to him “Here is your head and here is the mountain. Either bang one against the other or take your money back!”

Rashi explains that even though the money given by the non-Jew actually acquires a share of the meat for him, the Jew’s ability to refund the money is considered as having renounced any role as the agent of the idol worshipper whose intention is therefore no longer relevant to the status of the shechita.

The Secret Sinner

One who slaughters an animal outside of the Beis Hamikdash and announces that his shechita is for the sake of a sacrifice which one can voluntarily offer (such as olah or shlamim) his shechita is invalid. This is a rabbinical decree based on the fear that onlookers will assume that he has now consecrated the animal as a sacrifice and mistakenly learn form his action that one may slaughter sacrifices outside the Sanctuary.

If, however, he slaughters an animal and announces that it is for the sake of a chatas (sin offering) the shechita is valid. Since one cannot voluntarily offer a chatas the onlooker will realize that his words are meaningless and there is no danger of misinterpretation.

If a man who announces that his shechita is for the sake of his chatas is known to offer a chatas as atonement, the shechita is invalid because the onlooker will assume that he is indeed doing the shechita of a sacrifice outside the Sanctuary.

Why, asks Rashi, is the shechita also not invalidated by rabbinic decree even when it is not known that he has committed a sin obligating the atonement of a chatas sacrifice? After all, will the onlooker not very well speculate that he has committed such a sin and that this is a bona fide sacrifice offered outside the Sanctuary?

Rashi’s answer is that had he indeed committed such an involuntary sin it would not have remained a secret. The sinner would have certainly made it public knowledge in order to suffer the embarrassment which would help him achieve atonement. The lack of such public knowledge will therefore lead the onlooker to discounting the statement of a man not known to have sinned in regard to the animal being a chatas and the shechita is therefore valid.

Magen Avraham (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 607:2) presents a challenge to Rashi from the Gemara (Yoma 86b) which applies the passage “Fortunate is he whose iniquity is forgiven and his involuntary sin is concealed” (Tehillim 32:1) to one whose sin is not public knowledge, since publicizing his sin only reduces respect for Heaven. Why, he asks, does Rashi suggest that such a sinner would publicize his unknown sin to achieve atonement when such publicity is counterproductive?

His solution is that since we hear this man publicly announce that he is making shechita on a chatas we assume that he mistakenly believes that public knowledge of his sin will contribute to his atonement. Such an attitude would surely have motivated him to earlier publicize his guilt and since we heard nothing before we assume he committed no sin and disregard his present statement.

How to Tell the Difference

“This is the animal which you may eat,” said Hashem to Moshe (Vayikra 11:2). The stress on “this” leads to the interpretation that Hashem held up before Moshe every species of animal and said to him: “This you may eat and this you may not eat.”

This Gemara raises a question in regard to what Rashi comments on the Divine command to Noach to take into his ark seven of each species of clean animal and only two of the unclean ones. How did Noach know what would eventually be commanded to the Jewish People about clean animals that may be eaten and unclean ones which may not be eaten? This is proof, says Rashi, that Noach learned Torah.

Even if Noach learned Torah, asks Iyun Yaakov, how could he be capable of distinguishing between permitted and forbidden animals if he did not have Hashem demonstrate for him the way He did for Moshe?

As a solution to this problem we are referred to the Gemara (Zevachim 116a) which states that Noach only accepted into the ark those animals which had not been involved in any sinful deviation from their mating pattern. Two ideas are proposed as to how Noach could detect this. Rabbi Chisda says that all the animals were passed before the ark and only the ones pure of deviation were accepted by the ark. Rabbi Avahu says that only the sinless ones came on their own to the ark.

Maharsha proposes that just as Noach detected which animals had not deviated by applying the tests mentioned by Rabbi Chisda and Rabbi Avahu he also detected which of the animals were clean and which were unclean by applying the same test. The proof that Noach learned Torah is therefore not from his ability to distinguish between clean and unclean species but rather from the fact that Hashem spoke to him in the terms of clean and unclean which would only be relevant after the Torah was given to Israel.

If so, Noach required only a superficial knowledge of the Torah laws concerning clean and unclean species in order to understand the concept and not a thorough knowledge of the laws as did Moshe who had to teach them to his people.
KING...Continued from page one

code: Short, short, short, long. Short, short, short, long. ...—, ...—. The letter is the letter “V”. “V” for victory. Then a voice: “The night is your friend. The V is your sign.”

The Free French government was in exile in London. In its stead, a puppet regime ruled, but the people were loyal to their leader even though he was far away.

Nightly, they listened, hoping for a few words, a message of encouragement from their leader. For, however far away he was, they would never desert or be unfaithful to him. They longed for the day when he would emerge from exile and free them from their oppressors.

II. A Brief History of Kings

Where have the all the kings gone? As part of the Creation, Hashem wanted there to be a tangible symbol of His Kingship. From this symbol we would be able to catch the smallest glimpse, the most distant echo of the Glory of Heaven, its Awesomeness and its Majesty. For this reason He created kings.

A few hundred years ago, kings ruled with absolute authority in their lands. More recently, nations have been unwilling to give to their rulers unbounded dominion; rather the king has been placed under the rule of the state.

With the advent of the republic, the notion of kingship has been virtually extinguished. There remain but a few nations who still conserve a constitutional monarchy, but even in those countries, the monarchy is but a pale puppet show beset with problems from without and within.

In a republic, it is the people that rule; or rather, it is the political parties that rule. The fear of the king is no longer. We have reduced the king to a glib smile and well coiffed hair, to a denim jacket and a strong handshake, or as it’s called in the trade “pumping the flesh.”

The tenure of a president is transitory. Even in countries where he may enjoy a broad power-base, he must expend vast amounts of time, money and energy flattering the spectrum of political interests to assure his re-election.

Since monarchy was created only to give us a microcosmic semblance of the Heavenly Kingship, how should we understand this ebbing of the power of kings? In other words, if the earthly monarchy is no more than a reflection of Hashem’s Kingship, and a means to make it easier for us to accept His Dominion upon ourselves, why has the power and the status of monarchy been allowed to wane?

Hashem relates to us through ‘measure for measure.’ When the world at large believed in G-d, we were afforded an ever present representation of Hashem’s Kingship in the form of the rule of kings. When the world turned to atheism, there was a concomitant withdrawal of the power of kings.

The basic tenet of Judaism is that Hashem is One. When a king united his people he was also the symbol of their unity. Today, on the other hand, political parties by definition stand for diffusion and separation. This is but a mirror of the fact that the world has turned its back on Hashem’s Oneness.

Only when the world perceives the Oneness of Hashem will kingship return to mankind.

III. The Return of the King

For some two thousand years, the Jewish People has been ‘sitting by its radio,’ listening attentively, waiting for the return of the King.

The false monarchy of atheism, the puppet regimes of hedonism and materialism seem to rule unchecked, but from His exile, the King still rules.

He is in hiding. We do not see Him. But we continue an unremitting guerrilla war against His enemies. We will never be subjugated to them, never accept their rulership.

And He continues to rule, even though we do not see Him. He rules in secret, in hiding. And we sit by our ‘spiritual radios’ — our Holy Torah, receiving instructions from Him.

We long for the day when He will return to us and the world will acknowledge Him as Ruler. When kingship will return to the House of David and there will come a Rosh Hashanah when we will crown him, not in exile, but revealed for all the world to see.

• Based on Alei Shor, Vol. 2 Malchuyos, by Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe.

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