

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

EXCUSE ME - WHAT HAPPENS IF I PRESS THIS LARGE RED BUTTON...?

“And it shall be when your son will ask you at some future time, ‘What is this? — You will say to him, ‘With a strong hand G-d removed us from Egypt from the house of bondage.’” (13:14)

Every schoolboy’s dream is to be invited into the cabin of a large airplane flying at 35,000 feet above an azure sea, sailing by fluffy cumulus clouds as high as the Empire State building. Sitting in the captain’s seat, he watches the joystick being moved by some unseen hand as the autopilot eerily corrects the smallest deviation in the aircraft’s correct “attitude”.

But it’s not only aircraft that need the correct attitude.

Imagine our young schoolboy turning to the pilot and nonchalantly asking, “Excuse me captain, but what is the purpose of the third green button in the fourth array of the second bank in the left hand rear panel above the copilot’s seat?” The captain replies, “And the function of all the other 532 buttons in this cockpit are self-explanatory?! (He’s probably a Jewish pilot.) You understand what every button, lever and dial does in this cockpit except for that one?!”

“And it shall be when your son will ask you at some future time, ‘What is this?’ — You will say to him, ‘With a strong hand G-d removed us from Egypt from the house of bondage.’”

Rashi says that the question “What is this?” character-

izes the son as a fool. This appears to be problematic. For this exact same question: “What is this?” is asked by another son. The wise son. How can the same three words connote both foolishness and wisdom?

Imagine a different schoolboy in the cabin of that 747. He says to the pilot, “What an incredible array of buttons, levers and switches! It would be wonderful if you would tell me a little of what they all do...”

The wise son says “What is this?” to mean “What are these amazing buttons levers and switches by which we can affect ourselves and the world along with us?” He is asking that it be explained to him, as much as is possible, the laws, the statutes and the commandments of the Torah. When the foolish son says “What is this?” he is not impressing anyone with his knowledge when he singles out one mitzvah. He is merely revealing his ignorance. His question reveals his belief that there’s no one behind the control column. It’s just the autopilot speaking.

• Sources: Devarim 6:20; Rabbi Shimon Schwab in Ma’ayan Beit HaShoeva, heard from Rabbi C. Z. Senter

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe that He is hardening Pharaoh's heart so that through miraculous plagues the world will know for all time that He is the one true G-d. Pharaoh is warned about the plague of locusts and is told how severe it will be. Pharaoh agrees to release only the men, but Moshe insists that everyone must go. During the plague, Pharaoh calls for Moshe and Aharon to remove the locusts, and he admits he has sinned. G-d ends the plague but hardens Pharaoh's heart, and again Pharaoh fails to free the Jews. The country, except for the Jewish People, is then engulfed in a palpable darkness. Pharaoh calls for Moshe and tells him to take all the Jews out of Egypt, but to leave their flocks behind. Moshe tells him that not only will they take their own flocks, but Pharaoh must add his own too. Moshe tells Pharaoh that G-d is going to bring one more plague, the death of the first-born, and then the Jews will leave Egypt. G-d again hardens

Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh warns Moshe that if he sees him again, Moshe will be put to death. G-d tells Moshe that the month of Nissan will be the chief month. The Jewish people are commanded to take a sheep on the 10th of the month and guard it until the 14th. The sheep is then to be slaughtered as a Pesach offering, its blood put on their door-posts, and its roasted meat eaten. The blood on the door-post will be a sign that their homes will be passed-over when G-d strikes the first-born of Egypt. The Jewish People are told to memorialize this day as the Exodus from Egypt by never eating *chametz* on Pesach. Moshe relays G-d's commands, and the Jewish People fulfill them flawlessly. G-d sends the final plague, killing the first-born, and Pharaoh sends the Jews out of Egypt. G-d tells Moshe and Aharon the laws concerning the Pesach sacrifice, *pidyon haben* (redemption of the first-born son) and *tefillin*.

TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

YOMA 58 - 64

“One should not pass by a mitzvah.”

This is a general rule of halacha that is taught in a statement by the *amora* Reish Lakish on our *daf*. However, we find an exception to this rule in our *sugya* regarding where the Kohen Gadol began to sprinkle on the golden *mizbe'ach*. During the service on Yom Kippur the *Kohen Gadol* would pass by the first *keren* of this *mizbe'ach* and not sprinkle until he reached the next *keren* (on the far side). The *gemara* states that this exception is learned from the wording of the verse, “*el ha'mizbe'ach*” — which connotes that he transverse the entirety of the *mizbe'ach* before beginning.

• Yoma 58b

“It is a mitzvah that the two goats of Yom Kippur be equal in their appearance (color –Rashi), height and value — and they should be purchased at the same time.”

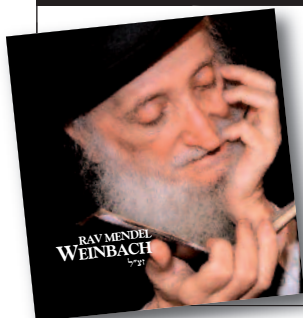
Thus begins the first *mishna* in the sixth chapter of our *mesechet*. (The *mishna* adds that if these criteria are not fulfilled the goats are nevertheless kosher for use.) The reason for the preference that they be equal in these four respects is derived in the *gemara* from the fact that the Torah states “*shnei se'irim*” — “two goats” — three different times in *Sefer Vayikra*, which implies three equalities.

However, a quick count shows that there are only three verses, yet we are meant to learn what appear to be *four* similarities according to our *mishna* from these verses! How so?

The commentary of the “*Tosefot Yeshanim*” explains that in fact what appear to be four equalities listed in the *mishna* are in fact only three. The quality of having the same “appearance” includes having the same height as well. According to Rashi, however, this explanation would not seem to suffice, since he defines “appearance” as “color” — black or white — and another explanation appears necessary in order to reconcile the “count” according to this approach.

• Yoma 62a

A Memorial Tribute on the First Yahrzeit



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Proceeds will be used for the Gemach Charity Fund established by Rav Weinbach, ז"ל.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What was Pharaoh's excuse for not releasing the Jewish children?
2. How did the locusts in the time of Moshe differ from those in the days of Yoel?
3. How did the first three days of darkness differ from the last three?
4. When the Jews asked the Egyptians for gold and silver vessels, the Egyptians were unable to deny ownership of such vessels. Why?
5. *Makat bechorot* took place at *exactly* midnight. Why did Moshe say it would take place at *approximately* midnight?
6. Why did the first-born of the animals die?
7. How did Moshe show respect to Pharaoh when he warned him about the aftermath of the plague of the first-born?
8. G-d told Moshe, "...so that My wonders will be multiplied" (11:9). What three wonders was G-d referring to?
9. Why did G-d command the mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh to Aharon, and not only to Moshe?
10. Up to what age is an animal fit to be a Pesach offering?
11. Prior to the Exodus from Egypt, what two *mitzvot* involving blood did G-d give to the Jewish People?
12. Rashi gives two explanations of the word "*Pasachti*." What are they?
13. Why were the Jews told to stay indoors during *makat bechorot*?
14. What was Pharaoh screaming as he ran from door to door the night of *makat bechorot*?
15. Why did Pharaoh ask Moshe to bless him?
16. Why did the Jewish People carry their matzah on their shoulders rather than have their animals carry it?
17. Who comprised the *erev rav* (mixed multitude)?
18. What three historical events occurred on the 15th of Nissan, prior to the event of the Exodus from Egypt?
19. What is the source of the "milk and honey" found in *Eretz Yisrael*?
20. The only non-kosher animal whose first-born is redeemed is the donkey. What did the donkeys do to "earn" this distinction?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 10:11 - Since children don't bring sacrifices there was no need for them to go.
2. 10:14 - The plague brought by Moshe was composed of one species of locust, whereas the plague in the days of Yoel was composed of many species.
3. 10:22 - During the first three days the Egyptians couldn't see. During the last three days they couldn't move.
4. 10:22 - During the plague of darkness the Jews could see and they searched for and found the Egyptians' vessels.
5. 11:4 - If Moshe said the plague would begin exactly at midnight, the Egyptians might miscalculate and accuse Moshe of being a fake.
6. 11:5 - Because the Egyptians worshiped them as gods, and when G-d punishes a nation He also punishes its gods.
7. 11:8 - Moshe warned that "All these servants of yours will come down to me" when, in fact, it was Pharaoh himself who actually came running to Moshe.
8. 11:9 - The plague of the first-born, the splitting of the sea, the drowning of the Egyptian soldiers.
9. 12:1 - As reward for his efforts in bringing about the plagues.
10. 12:5 - One year.
11. 12:6 - Circumcision and *Korban Pesach*.
12. 12:13 - "I had mercy" and "I skipped."
13. 12:22 - Since it was a night of destruction, it was not safe for anyone to leave the protected premises of his home.
14. 12:31 - "Where does Moshe live? Where does Aharon live?"
15. 12:32 - So he wouldn't die, for he himself was a first-born.
16. 12:34 - Because the commandment of matzah was dear to them.
17. 12:38 - People from other nations who became converts.
18. 12:41 - The angels came to promise that Sarah would have a son, Yitzchak was born, and the exile of the "covenant between the parts" was decreed.
19. 13:5 - Goat milk, date and fig honey.
20. 13:13 - They helped the Jews by carrying silver and gold out of Egypt.

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Abarbanel

ON PARSHAT BO

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

Every year at the Pesach Seder we repeat the words of Rabbi Gamliel from the Haggadah: “What is the reason that we are eating this matza? It is because when G-d redeemed them from Egypt there was not enough time for their dough to rise and become leavened, as it says in the Torah, ‘They baked the dough that they took out of Egypt into unleavened cakes, for they could not become leavened since they were driven from Egypt and they could not delay....’”

The first difficulty, according to Abarbanel, is that prior to their hasty exodus G-d had already commanded them to eat matzas and avoid all leavened products. The matzas were to be eaten with bitter herbs along with the sacrificial Pesach lamb on the night before they were to leave Egypt. Why then does Rabbi Gamliel refer only to the unleavened dough that they took with them when they left in haste and not to the matza which they had eaten the night before? Additionally, the verse from the Torah is very enigmatic. What does the Torah mean by “for they could not become leavened?” It would appear that just the opposite would occur. The verse refers to their having reached Succot, their first destination after having left Egypt several days before. Surely the dough would have risen and become leavened during that time. How then could they bake it into “unleavened cakes”?

Abarbanel answers as follows: Rabbi Gamliel is giving the

main reason why we eat matza every year at the Seder. However, G-d gave the command to eat matza and refrain from leavened dough before they left Egypt in order to magnify the extent of the sudden and miraculous mass exodus of the entire Jewish population. The people were eager to fulfill the mitzvah of matza and they kneaded the dough under the assumption that they would be able to bake it before leaving Egypt. However, before they could accomplish that, Pharaoh issued the expulsion order and they hastily packed the unbaked dough and carried it on their shoulders. Days later, when they reached Succot, they were able to bake the dough, and although they were afraid that the dough would have become leavened by that time, G-d miraculously intervened and they were still able to bake unleavened matzas from that dough. The entire incident was designed to impress upon them and further generations that the haste with which they left Egypt, and the subsequent miraculous baking of the matzas was an additional demonstration of G-d’s direct hand in all aspects of the exodus from Egypt.

Additionally, G-d commands us to refrain from eating leavened dough for a full seven days in order to further connect us to the miraculous redemption. To refrain from eating leavened products for a day or two would not be a sufficient reminder for later generations of the hasty exodus as it is not at all unusual for people to refrain from such products randomly for short periods of time throughout the year.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

RABBI YEHOSHUA BEN LEVI - AN AMORA IN ERETZ YISRAEL

“The only truly free man is the one who learns Torah. Everyone who constantly learns Torah is elevated.” — Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi (Avot 6:2)

Only one who learns Torah is not subservient to material matters. Such freedom, in which the spirit is not enslaved by



physical appetites, is the only true freedom.

Lest one think that he can aspire to the crown of Torah only if he has great intelligence and applies it to learning, the Sage informs us that everyone, even someone who is not brilliant, can achieve this goal if he is constantly dedicated to learning Torah.

• Tiferet Yisrael

ENVOIOUS ACQUAINTANCE

From: Anonymous

Dear Rabbi,
I have a friend who seems to have everything go right for him, whereas for me it seems that everything that could go wrong does. Quite frankly I'm jealous of him and it's affecting our friendship. What should I do?

Dear Anonymous,

I think everyone can relate to having these types of feelings to various degrees over varying periods of time, either towards others in general, or toward a specific person. So don't get down over it.

We have to realize that G-d runs the world, and He decides who will "succeed", to what extent, and for how long. He also knows what true success is for each and every person, and it's not the same for all.

You have to try your best within normal means to secure your needs and attain your aspirations. This involves defining acceptable and realistic goals. Then rely on G-d to send you what's right for you at the right time.

What seems good for someone else is not necessarily ultimately good for him; and even if it is good for him it might not be good for you, or at this time. Therefore there's absolutely no room for comparing yourself with others.

This reminds me of a true story I heard from the descendant of a man who left Europe for economic reasons a few

years before WWII. He ended up in Columbia with another Jewish friend, and together, they eked out a meager living by peddling in the streets of Bogotá.

After a while, in desperation, they decided to buy lottery tickets. When the friend saw the number on his ticket, he decided he didn't like his – it was an "unlucky" number. The first young man then offered to swap tickets if it would make his friend happy.

They switched tickets and, lo and behold, the friend wound up with the winning number, while first young man ended up with the "unlucky" number which he got from the friend.

The friend with the "winning" number used the money to return to Europe, but unfortunately lost his life in the Nazi invasion of Hungary. The young man who relinquished the "winning" number in lieu of the "losing" one initially remained poor and stranded in Bogotá, but eventually became quite successful, and in the meantime he was able to provide for the rescue of most of his family to Columbia, and eventually to the U.S.

This is an example of a seeming winner turning out the loser, while the loser is actually the winner. We certainly don't want your successful friend to stumble, but rather hope for a win-win scenario for the both of you. The point is just that one never knows. So you just have to try your best, without comparing or competing, and count your blessings while praying that you receive from G-d what's right for you in the right measure at the right time.

NEW!

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What is Ohr Somayach's new and innovative feature for assisting everyone to learn, analyze and remember the Talmud? Especially helpful for those learning Daf HaYomi!

Talmud Navigator – "Excel" in Talmud

The Talmud, often referred to as "The Sea of the Talmud", is vast both in breadth and depth. The *gemara* (Megillah 18b) describes the difficulty of maintaining a hold on all the Torah you learn, quoting Proverbs (23:5): "When you lift (or close) your eyes from it – and it disappears".

Chazal (Eruvin 54b) prescribe a method for gaining a true understanding and making a lasting acquisition of all the material you learn. Rav Chisda is quoted as saying, "The Torah can only be acquired with signs."

Talmud Navigator is an attempt to organize the Talmud in database form, mapping and charting the Talmud by tagging the various components and building blocks of the according to type and hierarchy. It is based on the system outlined by the Ramchal in

Derech Tvuos.

This system of textual organization serves as a self-help way to outline the *sugya* in a clearer fashion. It assists in promoting a better understanding of the flow of the *Gemara* and in facilitating summary and review. It is also an excellent tool for a less advanced *Gemara* learner to identify and grasp the logical flow and interconnections of its various components.

Each Thursday we will post a PDF file which maps the *gemara* studied in that week's *Daf Yomi* cycle. G-d willing, we plan in the future to make available the Excel file which enables the user to make his own condensed selections of the *Gemara*. For example: Highlighting the main statements, arguments, questions, conclusions or personalized anchor points of the *sugya* determined by the learner to facilitate his own review.

Talmud Navigator is prepared by Rabbi Hanoach Zweig and is available at www.ohr.edu

REJOICE WITH TREPIDATION

“Serve G-d with awe, and rejoice with trepidation (Psalms).” The Sages inquired: What is the connection between the opposite ideas — joy and trepidation? They answered: In a place of joy, there should also be trepidation (Talmud Berachot).

In connection to the above the Arizal writes: “It is forbidden to pray while depressed, for in doing so the soul will not be able to receive the supernal light that is normally drawn down upon a person during prayer.... One must also act with great humility, totally submitting himself before G-d with fear and awe, while at the same time harboring great joy within him, as much as possible.”

Our Father Our King

From the well-known “*Avinu Malkenu*” [Our Father Our King] prayer, we see that on the one hand, we relate to G-d as a loving father, while at the same time He is our King.

As a King, it is fitting to show G-d the proper honor. Furthermore, when one reflects deeply on the fact that G-d manifests Himself in the world as a King, he will be overcome with fear and awe, for a king’s decisions are based on justice, not love.

In contrast, as a father, G-d loves each and every one of us dearly, wanting only what is best for us. As G-d’s children, we are all granted permission to enter into His chamber, to seek advice, or to ask for our wants and needs. When one realizes that he is relating to G-d, Who also relates to us a Father, he will feel comfortable speaking out his thoughts and feelings, as one would speak to a friend. The more one becomes accustomed to this, the easier it will be to overcome the great fear and trepidation which can sometimes be felt when turning to G-d in prayer.

Finding the Right Balance

When attempting to draw close to G-d through prayer, one must remember to also keep a distance. Only when one attaches himself to G-d, both with love and fear — joy and trepidation — can one experience the ultimate closeness to G-d. Only by fusing these emotions — drawing close through the feelings of love and joy in one part of the heart, while at the same time remaining distant through the feelings of fear and awe in the other — can one truly approach G-d with the proper state of mind, establishing a true connection with Him. This is the appropriate foundation for prayer.

FROM BERLIN TO JERUSALEM BY LAND

**Michael Selutin - Age: 35 - Jerusalem
Schiller’s School in Germany
Journalist
Mechina**

“Suddenly the 50-year old drunk Croatian truck driver said to me, You know, Hitler was not so bad after all.... And I thought, What am I doing with this guy in the middle of nowhere?! No one will hear me screaming!”

Life as an atheist in Berlin, Germany started to get boring and meaningless by age 28, says Michael Selutin. That’s when he decided to leave his job in software to hitchhike, bus, and train his way from Berlin to Jerusalem in search of wise men who could answer life’s questions.

Michael says that in all his travels he never

actually met a wise man — but he did encounter some startling and candid anti-Semitism, since no one knew he was Jewish: a drunk Croatian truck driver confessed praise for Hitler, a Turkish man called Israelis inhuman warmongers out to destroy Muslims, and a Jordanian swore the Holocaust was a big hoax.

Finally in Jerusalem, Michael spent a year in yeshiva asking rabbis his long list of questions and soaking up their answers. He then entered Ohr Somayach’s Mechinah program for a year. “Ohr Somayach became my new Torah home where I could learn every day.” Michael and his wife got married last August with Rabbi Weiner as their *mesader kedushin* (rabbi who officiates the wedding). They both write for a German newspaper and share immense fulfillment at Michael’s continued Torah studies in Mechinah every afternoon.



Common Kiddush Questions

BY RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

One of the most common halachic realms where we actively see different *minhagim* customs manifested is that of making Kiddush on Shabbat. One family stands when making Kiddush, another sits, while a third does some sort of combination. Additionally, another's "*minhag*" preference might just depend on how tired or hungry one is. However, aside from the proper "postural" preferences on how to make Kiddush, there are actual variations inherent in the words and actions of the Kiddush itself.

Kiddush Commencement

Although everyone agrees that the Friday night Kiddush starts with the passage of G-d's resting on the Seventh day after completing Creation, on the other hand, the Shabbat Day Kiddush is not so clear-cut. Some start Kiddush with '*V'Shamru Bnei Yisrael et HaShabbat*, the Biblical passage detailing how the Jews kept Shabbat in the wilderness, while others start with '*Zachor et Yom HaShabbat Iekadsho*, the exhortation to keep Shabbat excerpted from the Ten Commandments. This passage is also the source cited by the Gemara (Pesachim 106a) as a support for making Kiddush on Shabbat day. Yet others start with the last *pasuk* of that passage, '*Ki Sheshet Yamim*', and others from that verse's midpoint, '*Al Kein Beirach*'. In fact, the Kabbalists cite an entire lineup of passages to be recited as part of the Shabbat morning Kiddush, replete with twelve *challot*, two bundles of *hadassim*, and circling the table. Which is the correct Kiddush?

The Great Kiddush?

The answer is an interesting one, one that is alluded to by the way the Gemara refers to the Shabbat Day Kiddush: "*Kiddusha Rabba*", 'the Great Kiddush'. This nickname actually is a seemingly mystifying misnomer for a Kiddush that is 'merely' a rabbinic enactment to honor the Shabbat. Shouldn't such a weighty and significant title rather be exercised on the biblically mandated Friday night Kiddush? Although there are other rationales to explain this puzzling moniker, the accepted reason is that it is simply '*lashon sagi nahar*' — a euphemism. In other words, the Shabbat Day Kiddush is called 'Great' because it actually is *not* as important as the Friday night Kiddush.

This understanding affects various *halachot* and nuances of the Shabbat Day Kiddush. The most important distinction, as detailed in the Gemara and later implied by the Shulchan Aruch as well, is that the only part of this Kiddush that is halachically required is the *beracha* of '*Borei Pri HaGafen*' on the wine.

This means that the various passages people customarily say before this Kiddush are not actually part and parcel of the Kiddush itself, rather merely serving as the preamble. In fact, it is known that many *Gedolim* (great rabbis) did not say any *pesukim* before Shabbat Day Kiddush, and only recited the *beracha* of '*HaGafen*'.

Divided Verses

The Aruch Hashulchan takes this a step further. He explains that although there is a Talmudic dictum that any *pasuk* that Moshe Rabbeinu did not stop at we may not either, meaning that we may not recite half *pesukim*. Even so, since the *pesukim* here are simply meant to be an introduction to give extra honor to the Shabbat day and are not actually a requirement of the Kiddush, we are allowed to do so. Therefore, he maintains that one may start with '*Al Kein Beirach*' even though technically it is in the middle of a *pasuk*. Several other authorities, including the Maharam Shik and the Ben Ish Chai, rule similarly; the Ben Ish Chai even referring to starting Kiddush with '*Al Kein Beirach*' as '*minhag ha'olam*' — universal custom.

However, this logic is not universally accepted. In fact, the Mishna Berura states that even though he acknowledges that many start Kiddush from '*Al Kein Beirach*', all the same, in his opinion, it is incorrect to do so, as the rule of not reciting half-*pesukim* should still apply to Kiddush. This is why many are *makpid* and careful to start their Kiddush from the beginning of that *pasuk*: '*Ki Sheshet Yamim*'. Either way, whatever one's Kiddush custom is, he definitely has something to rely upon. However, if one does not have a specific custom, it seems preferable not to start mid-*pasuk*, and rather choose a different starting point for Kiddush.

A Brisker Twist

A consequence of the basis of this *machloket* (dispute of rulings) is that it has become the starting point of another. The famed Brisker Rav, Rabbi Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik *zatzal*, was bothered by one of the *halachot* of Kiddush. If, as previously explained, the Shabbat Day Kiddush is intrinsically just a *beracha* of '*Borei Pri HaGafen*' on the wine in order to honor the Shabbat, then shouldn't it be in the category of '*Birchat HaNehenin*' (referring to blessings recited on items we derive pleasure from, i.e. food) where halachically one must partake of the item he recited a *beracha* on? If so, one must at least taste the Kiddush wine; otherwise, how can he fulfill his obligation? Although he acknowledged that this is not normative halacha, nevertheless, the Brisker Rav maintained that *lechatchila* (preferably) one should strive to at least get a taste of the Kiddush wine. That is why at many a Kiddush you will usually find at least several people waiting to get some Kiddush wine before joining the rest of the crowd in digging into their coveted *mezonot*. This just goes to show that when it comes to properly honoring Shabbat by making Kiddush, even a small drop goes a long way.

* Editor's note: Further discussion by the author on this topic may be found along with sources at http://ohr.edu/this_week/insights_into_halacha/5477