



# Torah Bits

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The process of sinning and repenting ascends to a different level in this week's portion. In addition to the regular steps of penitence, the Torah commands that the sinner must bring a *korban*, an animal sacrifice to atone for his sin. This ritual encompasses many deep philosophical and psychological ramifications that are discussed in detail by the great thinkers of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, among them Rambam, Ramban, and Ibn Ezra. After all, the concept of sacrificing living things is quite difficult to understand, especially in the context of a Torah that is so demanding regarding the treatment of animals that it prohibits humans to eat a meal *before* their animals have been fed!

Yet the laws of sacrifice are not limited to simple sinners. The law applies to the rich and poor, the weak and the mighty, and even to the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) himself.

The Torah tells us that when the *Kohen Gadol* sins, he too must bring an offering. Although the Torah is detailing the ramifications of the *Kohen Gadol's* individual transgression, it mentions the sin of the nation too: "If the anointed *Kohen Gadol* will sin, bringing guilt upon the people" (*Leviticus* 4:3).

Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Sforno, three of the most famous Torah commentators, all comment on the strange juxtaposition of the nation and the *Kohen Gadol*. "After all," they ask, "what connection do the people have to the *Kohen Gadol's* sin?" Why is *his* sin considered "bringing guilt upon the people"?

Dr. George Fordyce Story, was a prominent English physician in the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Despite his medical skills, he unfortunately possessed

a major flaw - he was a heavy drinker. During a dinner at which he was quite inebriated, Dr. Fordyce was urgently summoned to tend to a distinguished person who had taken ill with unspecified symptoms.

Far from sober, Dr. Story had great difficulty locating the patient's pulse or even counting the beats. Frustrated and realizing his *own* condition, he muttered to himself, "Drunk, by golly!" and then proceeded to write a prescription.

The next morning Dr. Story received an official looking letter from his patient. He expected it to contain a stern rebuke for his inadequate doctoring the preceding night. It did not. Inside was a short note: "I, too, am aware of the sorry state I was found in yesterday evening - I am sure that you will keep your evaluation confidential." Enclosed was a 100 pound sterling note.

Perhaps the Torah is teaching the *Kohen* and us a lesson in human nature. When the people see the *Kohen* bringing a *korban*, they may feel that *they* too have sinned. A sense of guilt will fall upon the entire nation. And when he says the words of repentance, albeit quietly unto himself, the feeling of the people will be that they too are at fault. It is important for good leaders to know that their deeds affect the standard of their community. When they rise, so does their flock. Moreover, when, Heaven forbid, they fall, the nation falls with them. It is their duty to understand that they do not operate in a vacuum. Whatever they do, or whatever they say, trickles down to the people.

*(Rabbi Mordachai Kamenetzky)*

Please Learn These Halachos at your Seudas Shabbos for a Refuah Shelaima for **Reuven ben Tova Chaya**  
**"WRITING"**

- 1) It is forbidden to carve a meaningful shape out of food; therefore, one cannot carve the shape of a basket out of a watermelon.
- 2) One may not write letters or make meaningful shapes with icing or whipped cream.

(Source: "*Practical Halachos of Shabbos*," Rabbi Mayer Birnbaum, pg. 50)

**A community initiative in conjunction with:**

Agudas Israel, Bais Avraham, Bais HaMedrash HaGadol Shaarei Chesed Shul, Nusach Hari, TICK, Young Israel

## “ASK THE RABBI”



*Dear Rabbi:*

*Has Judaism developed any rituals or guidelines for guiding people through the grieving process after they divorce their spouse? I am thinking of a process parallel to the traditional rituals for mourning the death of a loved one.*



*The Rabbi Answers:*

Sometimes divorce can be as emotionally traumatic as losing a loved one and the intense feeling of sadness and confusion needs to be addressed. If Judaism views marriage as a fusion of two individuals into one flesh, then divorce is akin to having an amputation. That is why we only resort to it when there is no alternative. You don't amputate a limb unless it is posing a threat to the rest of your body.

Yet, not all catastrophes mandate formal grieving. The process of *shiva*, when mourning the loss of a loved one, gives the mourner an opportunity to reflect on the life of the deceased, recall their attributes, accomplishments, and legacy. When the mourner can internalize some of this, he takes part of the deceased with him, and that is a great source of comfort. It gives meaning to the deceased's life, creates a bond and immortalizes his existence.

Similarly, we annually mourn the destruction of the Temple, and contemplate its meaning, significance, and centrality in our lives. We gain insight into what has been lost, what we can do to compensate, and yearn for its rebuilding.

However, in a divorce, as unfortunate as it may be, one must strengthen oneself to get up and move on. You don't dwell on the past, just look to the future. What it beholds might make you forget about your tears.

Sincerest condolences,  
Shlomo Soroka

## “ANSWER THE RABBI”

*This Week's Question:*

Rashi writes (4:22) that a generation whose leader sins and brings an offering to effect atonement is praiseworthy. How can this be reconciled with his earlier comment (4:3) that if the Kohen Gadol sins, it is considered a communal sin which reflects badly on the people?

*Thanks to everyone who sent in great answers last week!*

*Email your answers to [ssoroka@stlkollel.com](mailto:ssoroka@stlkollel.com) and you will be entered into a raffle for a \$50 Gift Certificate from the Kollel Bookstore....Congratulations to our latest Raffle Winner: Mr. Marty Olevitch! Next Raffle Drawing...Thursday, April 2nd.*

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**Candlelighting: 6:59 P.M.**  
**End of Z'man Krias Shema-  
Gra: 10:A.M.**  
**Magen Avraham: 9:24 A.M.**

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# HALACHA

## “Proper Conduct With Food Items” (continued) (THE WEEKLY HALACHA)

**QUESTION:** *Is it permitted for the head of the family to toss the slices of ha-motzi bread to those assembled around the table, or must they be handed to them?*

**DISCUSSION:** If the bread will become dirtied or ruined when tossed, or even if there is a chance that it will, it is forbidden to toss the bread. [This is true of all other foods as well.]

If, however, the bread will not get dirty or ruined when thrown, the Rishonim disagree whether or not it may be tossed. Most poskim, including the Mishnah Berurah, rule stringently on this issue. [Other foods, however, may be tossed if they will not become dirty or ruined.]

But handing the slice of ha-motzi bread directly into the hand of the person who will eat it is also frowned upon by the Shulchan Aruch. It is considered bad mazal to do so, since this is the manner in which we serve a mourner when he is sitting shivah. It follows, therefore, that since neither tossing the piece of bread nor handing it directly to him is appropriate, the correct method is to place the bread slices on the table within easy reach of the diners, or to pass around slices of bread on a plate, etc.

**QUESTION:** *Is it permitted to eat food or drink that was mistakenly brought into a bathroom?*

**DISCUSSION:** Although eating in the bathroom is forbidden, we do not find that the poskim expressly prohibit bringing food into a bathroom. Surely b'diavad, food, drinks, vitamins or medicines that were stored there do not become forbidden to ingest. Similar halachos apply in other cases where a ruach ra'ah, an evil spirit, may affect food.

For instance:

- It is prohibited to touch food or drink prior to washing one's hands in the morning upon awakening. But if, inadvertently, the food [or drink was touched before washing, it does not become forbidden to eat.
- It is forbidden to store [raw or cooked] food or drinks under a bed [even if the food is wrapped and sealed in metal containers or in a suitcase] in which someone will sleep. But if, inadvertently, food or drink was stored under a bed and someone slept on the bed, many poskim hold that the food does not become forbidden to eat.
- Mayim acharonim may not splash on food or dishes used as eating utensils. B'diavad, if mayim acharonim splashed over dishes, the dishes should be washed well before they are used. If mayim acharonim splashed over a food item, the food may be eaten.

**QUESTION:** *We previously mentioned that food or drink may not be stored underneath a bed. How, exactly, do we define "underneath a bed" as regards this halachah?*

**DISCUSSION:** "Underneath a bed" means that it was stored on the ground (under a bed in which someone was sleeping. Therefore:

- It is permitted to place food on top of the bottom bed of a bunk bed, even if someone is asleep on the top bed.
- It is permitted to place food underneath a baby's carriage, even if a baby is sleeping in the carriage.
- Most poskim permit storing food under a couch or bed which is not being used for sleeping.
- It is permitted to place food under a bench [or an airplane seat], even if the bench is used for sleeping, since a bench is not a bed.

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