

LIVING WITH THE PARSHAH 5779
PARSHAS METZORAH SHABBOS HAGADOL

By HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN, KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

Shabbos Hagadol only falls out on Parshas Metzora in a leap year so it is a relatively rare confluence. Nevertheless, our meforshim tell us that each combination of laining and Haftora carries its own significance, so we will attempt to discover some of this week's joint message.

Many people make the mistake of thinking that the Torah's stress upon avoiding lashon hara implies that we should not speak too much. However since I had the zchus of meeting a number of talmidim and even relatives of the Chofetz Chaim zt"l, I can readily share their testimony that he actually spoke a lot. The embodiment of careful and kosher speech was actually an extremely voluble person. A number of stories will attest to this. I believe it was grandson, Rav Hillel Zacks zt"l who told me that the Brisker Rov zt"l was once traveling through Warsaw when he heard that the Chofetz was speaking there at a convention. He got off the train and went directly to the large hall where the Chofetz Chaim had already finished his speech but was still sitting in a corner of the room informally answering questions. The Brisker Rov, too, had something he wished to ask but he didn't want to interrupt the tzadik, so he sat down and listened. All of a sudden, the Chofetz Chaim switched subjects and responded to the Brisker Rov's query. Soon he returned to other subjects, but the Brisker Rov had to return to his journey on the train. The Brisker Rov later told the story as both an open manifestation of the Chofetz Chaim's ruach hakodesh but also of the fact that he could speak for hours while being extremely scrupulous not to utter a word even close to lashon hara.

This may be what the Chidah zt"l means by his explanation of one of the most popular words in the Torah: And Hashem spoke to Moshe *leimohr* . He points out that at the beginning of this week's Sedra, which is about the punishment for lashon hara, the word *leimohr* – to speak – is the antidote to lashon hara. Not only should a person not be silent or taciturn, but we should fill our moments with the spoken word, such as Torah, tefilah, compliments and advice to others and other positive forms of speech. This is the Torah's mandate and alternative to lashon hara, to use this great power which Hashem has given us for good. Another side to this lesson may be seen later in the Sedra. When someone finds what appears to be a leprous growth on his home, he goes to the kohain and declares *kenega* – “something like a growth appeared to me in my house” (14:35). Many meforshim ask why the person states this phenomenon with such uncertainty. He may even be an expert and knows with certainty that it *is a nega*, so why not say so? The Maharal answers that since the person has no *authority* to declare it a *nega*, it would render his words a falsehood and we must be careful always to speak the truth. The Tosfos Yom Tov adds that there is a “covenant granted to the lips” (Moed Katan 18a) which could make the near-nega into something defiled just by saying so. Therefore, one should be extremely careful not to say definitively that something is a certain illness or catastrophe unless it has already been determined empirically. This is also the teaching of Shabbos Hagadol when we hear long speeches but are careful to weigh each word meticulously. The Haftora is the culmination of all of No'ie from Malachi and reminds us of the power of words in our lives. They can uplift or destroy, enhance or G-d forbid hurt. May we go to the Hagadah and all the many words we will utter over Yom Tov, transposing every one of our words into berachos.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS HAGADOL

HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5779

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Since before Pesach many people buy new utensil, we will focus this week exclusively on tevilas keilim.

Question: Could you please clarify what materials make keilim (vessels) require toveling – immersing in a Mikvah and which do not.

Answer: The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 75b) states that only metal keilim require tevilah. Therefore wooden spoons, bowls and rolling pins do not need tevilah. Also klei cheres – earthenware – do not require tevilah. However, there is some question about ceramic items and china. They should therefore be toveled without a bracha. Glass also requires tevilah only m'drabbanan but we **do** make a bracha as we do for any mitzvah d'rabbanan. The same goes for pyrex, crystal and duralex. Corelle is made of a majority of glass and requires tevilah with a bracha (Igros Moshe Yoreh Deah 2:164 and Minchas Yitzchok 4:114:4). There is a great machlokes about flat glass keilim such as challah boards and cutting boards (see Shevet Halevi 6:245 who says they require tevilah with a bracha and Sefer Tevilas Keilim 11:112 who says they do not require a bracha). Therefore one should tovel them without a bracha. Although there are some Poskim who rule that one should tovel plastic (Minchas Yitzchok 3:76-78), most Poskim hold that one need not tovel them at all (see Tzitz Eliezer 7:37). Many Poskim hold that disposable keilim generally do not tevilah at all (Igros Moshe Yoreh Deah 3:23). However, the Debreciner Rov, Rav Moshe Bik, Rav Sheinberg and Rav Elyashiv zichronum livracaha held that they should be toveled with a bracha. In fact, Rav Elyashiv added that one who throws away a disposable aluminum kli in order to avoid toveling it transgresses bal tashchis. However, those who follow Rav Moshe Feinstein, Minchas Yitzchok and Chelkas Yaakov not to tovel are on solid ground.

Question: What about electrical keilim? Do they require tevilah and what should be done if the instructions state that getting the utensil wet cancels the warranty?

Answer: The Chelkas Yaakov (Yoreh Deah 41 and 43) rules that electrical keilim do not require tevilah since they only function when they are plugged in (see Tiferes Yisrael Keilim 11:2). However the Shevet Halevi (2:57:3) strongly disagrees, stating that being plugged in does not change the status of a kli. This position is also held by the Be'er Moshe 4:100), Igros Moshe Yoreh Deah 1:57), Minchas Yitzchok 2:72) and, it would seem, the majority of Poskim and Rabbonim today. Rabbi Avrohom Blumernkrantz zt"l wrote in his Pesach book every year that one *should* tovel electric utensils and not worry about the warranty. The kli should not be used for a week or so until it dries and all will be well. Rav Moshe offers advice which works for urns and some other (but not all) electric utensils to turn the kli upside down and not immerse the electrical element and wires. However, the Minchas Yitzchok (2:72) rules that even the electrical parts must be immersed. It seems clear that one should lechatchila immerse electrical keilim. If one did not, bedeved, one can rely upon the Chelkas Yaakov but we must be honest that his opinion has become a daas yochid amongst the major Poskim. There are other suggestions such taking the kli apart and putting it back together so that it has now been “made” by a Jew, but many rabbonim testify that the kli will not be ruined or dangerous by being toveled.

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