



# MENUCHAV'SIMCHA

By Rabbi Efraim Blau

## SMALL INTERRUPTIONS ETERNAL IMPACT

Parshas Vayitzei

Yaakov and his family depart from the home of Lavan. On the way out, Rachel performs the first recorded idol heist when she takes her father's idols. But what was she trying to accomplish? After all, building new idols is not difficult. Even if Lavan never recovered the ones she took, he could easily replace them because they were just human handiwork made of wood, metal, or stone. So what was her real goal?

The answer to this question will teach us an incredible lesson. For the duration of time it would take Lavan to replace his idols, he would be unable to engage in idol worship. And that temporary pause was valuable enough for Rachel to act. It wouldn't fundamentally change who Lavan was, and it wouldn't make him abandon idolatry forever. But even a short interruption in negative behavior was worth it.

And from here we learn that even a short moment of spiritual improvement, whether it is even a few seconds of avoiding wrongdoing or a short-lived positive act, is precious and meaningful.

Sometimes in life, we assume that if we can't change permanently, or if we eventually slip back into old habits, then our efforts don't matter. However, even temporary improvement is of value.

In a sense, this is also evidenced in the Chanukah story. The miracle of Chanukah shows that even though there was not sufficient oil to last the eight days needed to produce new oil, they didn't hesitate. They didn't say, "Why should we light if we can't fulfill the mitzvah properly anyway?" Rather, they did what they could with the abilities they had. They refused to let the inability to achieve perfection deter their actions. And the results speak for themselves. An incredible miracle occurred, and Hashem rewarded their imperfect efforts with a complete, beautiful fulfillment of the mitzvah of lighting the menorah and also ultimately with the establishment of a holiday that would commemorate it forever, not just for one day.

Have an uplifting Shabbos.

### LESSONS FROM OUR LEADERS

BY RABBI YEHUDA WAINMAN

## ISAAC LEESER



1806-1868

One of the earliest influences of traditional Judaism in the United States was Isaac Leeser. Although he was not educated in a yeshiva setting, nor was he ordained as a Rabbi, his tenacious attachment to mesorah, tradition, and his opposition to those who denigrated it, played a crucial role in the formation of Jewish life in America. He was born in 1806 in Germany. He received his secular education in the local gymnasium, which was common in that part of Germany at that time. As well, he studied Torah under the chief rabbi of the city of Muenster, Germany, Rabbi Avraham Sutro. Rabbi Sutro was also an opponent of the earlier reformers, which helped shape the worldview of his erstwhile student. In 1824, he emigrated to the United States, where he settled in Richmond, Virginia. In 1828, he became the Chazan at Mikveh Israel Congregation in Philadelphia. As mentioned previously, Isaac Leeser was not traditionally yeshiva trained; he did not receive semicha and was not considered a rabbi in the traditional sense. However, he gained renown for his outspoken opposition to the those who would mock traditional Judaism and seek to reform it. To that end, he founded America's first Jewish newspaper, The Occident, in which he defended traditional Judaism against its detractors. He also published, in 1845, an English translation of the Chumash, and 1848 an English translation of the siddur. In 1857, Leeser resigned as chazan of Mikveh Israel and became chazan of the newly formed Beth El Emeth, where he served to the end of his life. Isaac Leeser passed away in 1868, leaving behind a rich legacy of steadfast adherence to Torah values.



## PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY KOLLEL LEGACY DINNER

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## BLOOD IN HALACHA

**Q:** Do I need to check my eggs for blood spots?

**A:** A blood spot in an egg is not kosher and can render the entire egg non-kosher. This is not due to the general prohibition against blood, but because it indicates the start of an embryo's formation, which may not be eaten. Since most eggs do not contain blood, one is not required to check them. However, the *Rama* writes that the custom is to be stringent and check each egg before use when possible, and this is indeed the widespread custom. *B'dieved*, if eggs were not inspected, the food may be eaten.

שי"ע ורמ"א י"ד סי' ס"ח, ערוה"ש ס"ב.

**Q:** What if I find a blood spot? Do I need to throw out the entire egg or just that spot?

**A:** Since all typical commercially sold eggs today are not fertilized unless the carton specifically says "fertile eggs," any blood that appears is not the start of an embryo. It is usually caused by a rupture of a blood vessel during the egg's formation. Therefore, the entire egg remains kosher and only the blood spot itself must be removed. The rest of the egg may be eaten.

מנחת יצחק ח"א סי' ק"ו, יחזה דעת ח"ג סי' נ"ז ע"פ השו"ע י"ד סי' ס"ו דביצים המזוהות, דהיינו שאינם מזכר אלא דספנא מערעא, דם שנמצא בהם, הם עצמם מותרים ורק הדם צריך לזרוק. ועי' באג"מ ח"א סי' ל"ו וז"ל כיון שעכ"פ איכא מעוט דבאים מזכרים שהדם אוסר כל הביצה מן הראוי להחמיר אף שאין זה מדינת עכ"ל. אמנם היום אין אפילו מיעוט שבאים מזכרים, ולכאורה גם האג"מ מודה דהם עצמם מותרים ורק הדם יזרוק.

**Q:** What about hard boiled eggs which can't be checked?

**A:** Hard-boiled eggs do not require checking, since *halacha* allows us to rely on the majority of eggs, which do not contain blood spots. Some have the custom to boil at least three eggs together so that if a blood spot is found in one, it is nullified by the others, and some also use a designated "egg pot." These practices are not mentioned in the *Shulchan Aruch* or other classic halachic sources, and they seem to have originated with fertilized eggs rather than the commercial eggs used today. Nonetheless, many people still keep these customs.

שי"ע ורמ"א י"ד סי' ס"ח, ערוה"ש ס"ב, עי' באורחת רבינו החדש י"ד עמ' כ"ד, ט"ז י"ד סי' ס"ו סק"ה, ש"ך סק"י, חזו"א י"ד סי' כ"ו סק"ב.

**Q:** I noticed a blood spot after the egg was mixed into other food. What do I need to do?

**A:** If the egg was not checked and blood was later found after it was already mixed with other eggs or other food, the mixture does not need to be thrown out. The blood itself should be removed and discarded. If it is already mixed in and cannot be removed, the food is still permissible to eat.

אג"מ או"ח ח"ג סי' ס"א.

**Q:** What is the status of human blood? Is it forbidden to eat?

**A:** Human blood is rabbinically forbidden to eat since it looks like animal blood, which is biblically forbidden. However, the prohibition applies only when the blood is completely detached from the body. Blood that is still inside the mouth is permitted. Therefore, bleeding gums may be sucked and the blood swallowed.

שי"ע י"ד סי' ס"ו.

**Q:** I was eating bread and I noticed some blood that came from my mouth on the bread. What do I need to do?

**A:** One must scrape off the blood from the bread, and the rest of the bread may be eaten. The same *halacha* applies to blood from your mouth found on any food. The blood should be removed, and the rest of the food can be eaten.

שי"ע י"ד סי' ס"ו.

**Q:** I have a bleeding finger. Am I allowed to suck the blood and swallow it?

**A:** According to some authorities, only blood that is already inside the mouth is permitted, since it never left the body and is not seen. However, many others permit any human blood when it is clearly identifiable as human blood. Therefore, it is permitted to suck blood directly from a cut finger, since its source is obvious.

עי' ברש"י כתובות ס. ד"ה מוצצו, ובכריתות כ"א: ד"ה על הככר, תוס' שם, דרכי תשובה י"ד סי' ס"ו סק"ח, אורח מישור סק"ה, הפלאה כתובות ס., נחל אשכול ח"ג סי' כ"ה סק"י, כנה"ג ב"י ס"ו ס"ס כ"ה סק"מ.

It should be noted that although it is permitted to suck blood from your mouth or from your finger, on Shabbos it is forbidden to do so.

מ"ב סי' שפ"ח סוס"ק קמ"ו ומשמע שם דשניהם הם איסורי דאורייתא, ועי' במנ"א שם סק"ג ש"ך דמוצץ דם מבין השינים אפשר שהוא אב מלאכה, ובשו"ע הרב כתב שהוא מדברי סופרים.

**Q:** Human blood gets mixed into food by mistake. Can I eat that food?

**A:** If human blood gets mixed into food, as long as the blood is not noticeable, the food is permitted to be eaten (even if there's more blood than food).

רמ"א י"ד סי' ס"ו, ופרמ"ג שם.



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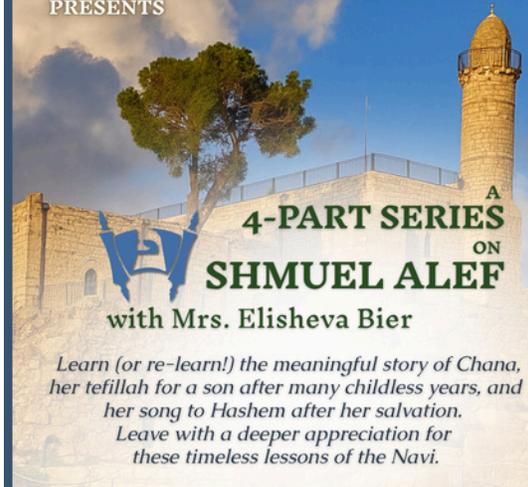
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## PARSHAS VAYEITZEI SHABBOS ZEMANIM

Friday, November 28

3:55 pm - Likras Shabbos Program

4:19 pm - Candle Lighting

4:22 pm - Mincha/Maariv

4:37 pm - Shkiya/Sunset

Shabbos, November 29

8:15 am - Shacharis

8:49/9:25 am - Latest Krias Shema

3:56 pm - Mincha

4:36 pm - Shkiya/Sunset

5:31 pm - Maariv

5:48 pm - 72 minutes

6:30 pm - Masmid

7:30 pm - Rabbi Reisman