

The Mitzvah of Kisuy Hadam

It is a *mitzvas aseil min haTorah* to cover the blood of a bird or wild animal after the shechitah. The source of this mitzvah is in Vayikra 17:13: "If a person ... hunts a kosher wild animal or bird, he shall pour its blood [by shechting it] and cover it with earth."

The mitzvah of kisuy hadam is the responsibility of the shochet, and there is no obligation for the owner of the chicken to perform it himself. The minhag of kapparos is fulfilled even without the owner performing kisuy hadam.

Many people want to use the time of kapparos as an opportunity to do a mitzvah which would otherwise be inaccessible to them. During kapparos the shochet traditionally honors the owner of the chicken with fulfilling this mitzvah. If you choose to do kisuy hadam, make sure to do it properly. Otherwise your brachah might be a brachah levatalah, chas veshalom—always something to avoid, especially on Erev Yom Kippur, when we want to add in zechuyos, not the opposite.

Read further for some general guidelines followed by step-by-step instructions.

General Guidelines

The *possuk* says, “וכסוהו בעפר” - cover the blood with earth.” *Be’afar* can also mean *within* earth, indicating that the blood should be covered with earth both above and below. For this reason, the shochet shechts the chicken over a pile of sawdust (serving as the cover from below). The person doing *kisuy hadam* then takes some additional sawdust and covers that blood from above.

- There is no obligation to cover all the blood that comes out during *shechitah*. However, to fulfill the mitzvah properly, the blood you do cover must be covered completely. Taking a pinchful of sawdust and throwing it from a distance does not fulfill the mitzvah.
- As with other *mitzvos*, the *brachah* is said *oiver la’asiyan*, before and immediately prior to fulfilling the mitzvah. If you forgot to say the *brachah* beforehand, do not say it afterward.
- The *nusach* of the *brachah* is:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על כיסוי דם בַּעֲפָר

(Some say בַּעֲפָר הַדָּם instead of בַּעֲפָר.)

Step-by-step instructions:

1. Take a sizeable amount of sawdust in your right hand (or left hand, if you are left-handed).
2. Wait until the shochet finishes shechting the chicken over the pile of sawdust.
3. Say the *brachah*.
4. Carefully cover the blood on the pile of sawdust until the blood is not visible.

May each and every one of us be bentched with a וּמִתּוֹקֵה חֲתִימָה וגמר חתימה טובה לשנה טובה

¹ שמלה חדשה סי' כח ס"ט. אבל אם לא כסה, וראה אחר – חייב לכסות בברכה. דכתיב "ואמר לבני ישראל" – אזהרה לכל ישראל.

² ראה מטה אשר שם סקט"ו. ו"ל בדרך אפשר שזהו הסעם ד"שחיסה געלט" – ראה חו"מ סי' שפב.

³ שמלה חדשה שם ס"ו ומטה אשר שם סק"ו.

⁴ שמלה חדשה שם ס"ט.

⁵ מטה אשר שם סק"ט.

⁶ שמלה חדשה שם ס"ג.

⁷ שמלה חדשה שם.

⁸ שמלה חדשה שם ס"ג. הניקוד הוא ע"פ מטה אשר שם סק"ב.

⁹ תורת זבח סי' ס"א. וראה התקשרות גליון סב ע' 22 ובהערה 15 שם. ו"א שיש לומר "הדם" בפתח וחוץ ייד.

¹⁰ מטה אשר שם סק"א.