

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE KIOSK POKER GAME

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha Yaakov promises Hashem that if he returns home safe and complete he will give tzedakah, maaser to Hashem.

The mitzvah of tzedakah leads us to the following interesting true story.

Benny was a fundraiser for a medical Gemach in Eretz Yisrael. The organization that he worked with provided medical equipment to needy people, and the organization had broad appeal among all Israelis.

One month the organization was in great need of a fundraising push. Benny decided that he was going to distribute tzedakah boxes to as many stores as possible.

One day he came to a kiosk in a busy commercial square. The kiosk sold drinks and snacks. Benny approached the owner of the kiosk. "Would it be ok if we put this Tzedaka box near the window of your kiosk?" Benny asked the proprietor. The owner, named Avi, said "Of course, I will call you when it gets filled up."



FROM WHERE DO WE SPROUT?

Later in the Torah Yisro tells Moshe that he plans on leaving the Jewish people to return 'to my land and to my birthplace'. This is the natural order because when you leave a place and you go to your birthplace you will first encounter your native land and only later arrive at your birthplace. It is therefore noteworthy in our Parsha when Yaakov tells Lavan that he intends to go home; he inverts the order. He says to Lavan 'send me and I will go to my place and to my land'. Why does Yaakov invert the order?

Yaakov did not have a land to which he belonged. The Land of Israel was only a promised Land but was not yet his. He was a stranger with no country that he could call his own. The only place to which Yaakov belonged was his family. The reason he wanted to leave the home of Lavan was because now that Yosef was born and the family was just about complete, it was time to create his own place, his own family away from the foreign influence of Lavan.

When Yaakov tells Lavan that he plans on leaving, his message is that his first destination is to go to 'his place'; to his family independent of Lavan. And then onto his land. The journey to the Land will occur only after he reaches his place, his family and his home.

Yaakov is the father whose face is etched into the Throne of HaShem. Our Sages teach us that Yaakov is the chosen of the three fathers since all of his children were completely dedicated to HaShem. He is the father who lives on eternally as our Sages teach us that Yaakov did not die.

Our Sages teach us that Avraham referred to Temple Mount as a mountain, Yitzchok referred to the Temple Mount as a field and only Yaakov recognized the Temple Mount as a house. "This is the House of HaShem". Yaakov's scope of vision included our final des-

Benny was grateful and went on his way.

Three days later Benny gets a call. "Hi, it's Avi from the kiosk. I think you should pick up your Pushka box. It's filled to the brim".

"Really", Benny, replied, with apparent joyful surprise in his voice. "Why did it get filled up so quickly? Most tzedakah boxes of ours take more than a month to fill."

"Well", said Avi, "Every Friday night I organize a large poker game outside my kiosk. We get a big crowd and serve drinks. Last Friday when the crowd was really having fun with the poker game, I made an announcement that the organization that you work for does great work, and passed the pushka around. Many of the players gave very generously, and that is why it's full. I'm sure it is filled with some big bills as well".

Benny was extremely grateful for Avi's help. But he felt conflicted. The organization needed the money, but could he take money from a gambling game played on Shabbos?

On one hand, the organization could really benefit from the money. In addition, most pushka boxes take money from the "whole world" and there is no way to determine when the money was donated or how it was earned. Perhaps it was fine to keep the money.

But on the other hand, if he knew that it came from gambling, and he knew that it was earned on Shabbos, was he allowed to keep it? And if he could not keep it, how would he return it?

Benny's question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Shemos 407



tiny which recognizes the Temple Mount as the eternal Home of the Shechina. This begs the following question.

If Yaakov is the immortal father of our people and he is the chosen father and he is the one who recognizes our ultimate destiny, why is he the father that has no land that he can call his own? Why is it that the only place he can call his own is his family and his home? Even the Land of Israel is only a promised Land but not yet realized?

All nations sprout from the soil of their country. They call their native land their motherland for she gave birth to them. All the nations of the world belong to their land. We, the Jewish people, the nation of HaShem did not sprout from our Land. We were already a nation before we reached our Land. We sprouted from the soil of the Jewish home. The Jewish home is Yaakov's 'place'. Already in Yaakov's adolescence the Torah's contrasts Eisov and Yaakov as the former being a man of the field and the latter as being the one who sits in the tents of Torah. Eisov sprouts from the ground and Yaakov

from the home.

Only when Yaakov returns to his 'place' and builds the House of Yaakov will we then be able to return to our Land.

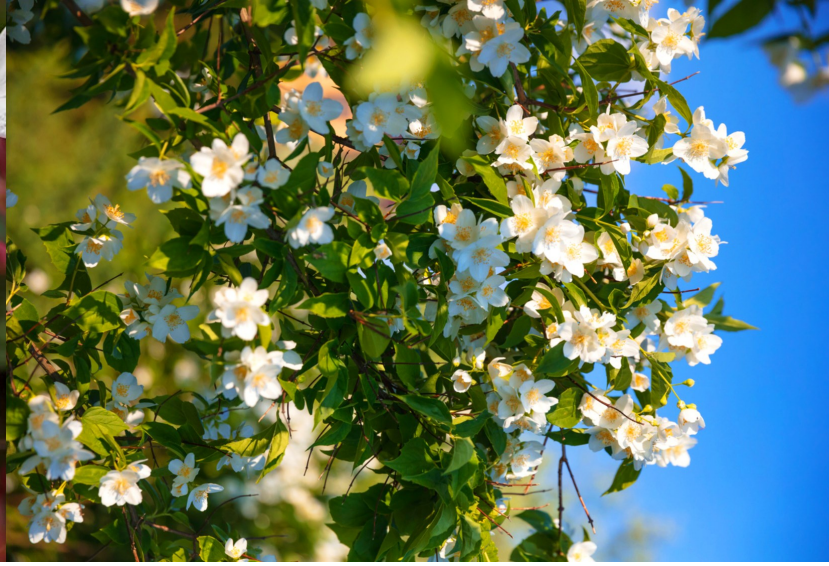
It is because of those reasons mentioned earlier; Yaakov's immortality, and his face etched into the Throne of HaShem and that he was the chosen of the fathers, that he had no Land. He was going to first build his home, the house of Yaakov in this world and only then would he go to his Land.

Whereas the French home is the product of the French people and the French people are the product of their land. They begin with their land and only later arrive at their family. We are different.

The Jewish Land is the product of the Jewish people and the Jewish people are the product of the Jewish home.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

DUDAIM, JASMINE

In this week's Parsha we find the mysterious story of Reuvein and the Dudaim. Reuvein finds "Dudaim" for his mother Leah. Rachel asks Leah for the dudaim to which Leah replies, "Is it not enough that you take away my husband, but you also take my dudaim?" Rachel then offers that Leah can be with Yaakov that night in exchange for these dudaim.

This story is very mysterious. What was the big deal about these dudaim? Why did Leah want them? Why did Rachel want them? Why did Reuvein fetch them?

To begin, what are dudaim? Rashi quotes our Sages that dudaim were the flower, Jasmine. Why did Rachel and Leah want Jasmine? The commentaries say that Jasmine was an herb that helped to assist with childbirth and pregnancy. (Ramban) It was also an herb that helped one fall asleep. (Targum Avraham) It was a flower with a delicious smell used by women to perfume themselves. (Ramban) Dudaim, which means "love", was also an herb that increased ahava and cheshek, love and desire between husband and wife. (Seforno) The commentaries also point out that this flower was not easy to find and it was only found by accident by Reuven's donkey. (R' Avraham Ben HaGra)

This is quite fascinating. Let's look at the Jasmine flower a bit deeper and we will see many of these ideas from our Sages have been echoed by modern scientists.

Jasmine is a genus of shrubs and vines that are in the same family as the olive. Jasmine is native to Iran, as well as the tropical and subtropical regions of Eurasia and Mediterranean Europe. Several countries and states consider jasmine as a national symbol. For example, the Syrian city Damascus is called the City of Jasmine.

The flowers are typically around one inch in diameter. They are white or yellow, although in rare instances they can be slightly reddish. Jasmines have berries that turn black when ripe. Jasmine shrubs can reach a height of 10 to 15 feet, and Jasmine vines can reach up to 30 feet in height by attaching to

nearby structures.

Jasmine is widely cultivated for the characteristic fragrance of their flowers. The main reason jasmine is so famous is its strong fragrance. People adore the flower for its strong, sweet smell. Jasmine is cultivated commercially today for domestic and industrial uses, such as the perfume industry. Countless cultures worldwide include it in aromatic products like candles, perfumes, soaps, and lotions. Jasmine produces fragrant flowers during the spring and summer. The flower releases its fragrance at night after the sun has set. The smell is especially strong during the night because the drop in temperature (at the end of a day) triggers the opening of its flowers. Because of this, in India, Jasmine is known as the "Queen of the Night" because of its intoxicating perfume that is released at night.

The scent of jasmine produces a calming and relaxing effect and has sedative properties. As a cut flower, it fills the home with a relaxing scent perfect for drifting off to sleep. Some gardeners prefer to plant jasmine outside the bedroom window to allow its fragrance to drift in, in the night air.

Jasmine is used across the world in rituals like marriages, religious ceremonies and festivals. The flowers are worn by women in their hair in South and Southeast Asia. In Thailand, jasmine is the symbol for mother and portrays love and respect. It is also a popular woman's name around the world.

How about Jasmine's medicinal properties? According to WebMD, Jasmine is used to relieve tension and headache. It can also facilitate childbirth by decreasing pain associated with labor.

According to Healthline, it is also used to cause relaxation as a sedative and effectively reduce depressive symptoms. It is also used to increase desire as an aphrodisiac. Finally, the jasmine flower is a popular home remedy believed to improve lactation for nursing mothers. It is no wonder that Rachel and Leah wanted this special flower, and this shows the wisdom of the young Reuvein who was four or five years old at the time. (Seforno) .

HE WOULD BE TERRIBLY EMBARRASSED IF HE KNEW THAT HE HAD KICKED THE RAV

In the frigid winter nights of Eastern Europe, it was the job of the shammas to tend to the shul's oven in the pre-dawn hours before others arrived. This way, when people began filing in at dawn to learn or recite Tehillim, the shul would already be warm. The shammas in Baranovich was a bit lazy and he would rely on wandering beggars who arrived in shul during the night to heat the oven. The problem was that often beggars would not arrive during the night, and when people came to shul in the morning the room was frigid. Many complained about this, and it looked as if the shammas might lose his job. Then suddenly; all complaints stopped. The shul was comfortably warm every morning. Everyone assumed that the shammas had taken their complaints seriously and was finally doing his job. The shammas assumed that the beggars were doing the job for him.

No one suspected the truth - that the Rav, Reb Yisrael Yaakov Lubchansky, was arising extra early so that the shul would be warm, thus satisfying everyone.

One morning, the firewood was wet and R' Yisrael Yaakov had to blow on it so that it would burn well. While his head was in the oven door as he continued to blow the fire, the shammas walked in. Certain that it was a beggar who was tending the fire, the shammas, in a joking manner, gave the man a kick in his pants. Reb Yisrael Yaakov knew that the shammas would be terribly embarrassed if he knew that he had kicked the Rav, so he pushed his face deeper into the oven until the shammas left the room. The smoke was burning his eyes and choking his lungs but he would not remove his head until the shammas had left. By the time the shammas walked away, a portion of Reb Yisrael Yaakov's beard had burnt off.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the worker who won a lot of money, but who wanted to continue to get up early to daven and work, Rav Chaim Kanievsky answered that he should daven at the right zman, and if he does so he should not be concerned about ayin hara or other negative consequences.

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