

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE STAINED TALIS

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about the korban Pesach. One of the mitzvos of the korban Pesach is that one who is an arel, who did not get a bris milah, is not allowed to eat from the korban. The mitzvah of bris milah leads us to the following true story.

There was a certain gadol hador who lived in Bnei Brak. Since he was the gadol hador, he was asked to be a sandek at a bris nearly every day.

After this gadol was niftar he left his weekday talis as a yerusha, an inheritance, for his grandchild. The

THE JEWS; THE PEOPLE WITH THE BIGGEST HEART

Our Parsha opens with Pharaoh granting Moshe permission to leave. "You may go serve your G.D, who is planning on going?" Moshe responds "With our young and with our old, with our son's and with our daughters, with our sheep and with our cattle we shall go for it is a Holiday of HaShem" Pharaoh responds "Not so! Only the men shall go for that is what you are interested in!"

Pharaoh is suggesting that Moshe is lying by saying that his interest is to serve HaShem. His argument is that if your interest is to serve HaShem why must women and children go? The implication is that Pharaoh does not understand that serving HaShem is a family event. Pharaoh is a man of religion, albeit idolatry, why does he not understand?

In this short dialogue we find one outstanding distinction how Yiddishkeit differs from the religions of others.

We can divide our life's endeavors into two classes. The first class are those endeavors that give meaning to our lives. This may include activities that serve family, hobbies and things that give us enjoyment. The second class are those endeavors that we must do to achieve the former. This may include our profession, paying our bills, meeting with the doctor and dentist annually and so on. The latter are those activities that we would prefer not doing but must be done to get back to the meaningful activities.

In Pharaoh's understanding, religion was relegated to the latter. In other words, Pharaoh understood the powers of the gods to be a power that needed to be dealt with. If he wanted the Egyptian economy to do well, he knew that his gods could get it done. However, those gods needed to be treated nicely. They needed to be woken up with nice music and pleasant incense. The gods needed to have people bow before them and offer them sacrifices and so on. Naturally, this was an art which not everybody was able to perform

talis of this tzadik was very precious to this grandson. It was worn by a great tzadik and it was imbued with much holiness. However the talis was quite old and worn, and because it went to so many brisim, there were many wine stains on the talis. The grandchild tried his best to clean the stains but most were permanently embedded.

There is a mitzvah of hidur mitzvah, to do a mitzvah in the most beautiful way possible.

This grandchild wondered which would be preferred, should he buy a brand new talis that would be clean and use that one as a beautification of his mitzvah?

Or perhaps, his grandfather's talis, although not as aesthetically pleasing, would be better to use because it was the talis of a great tzadik?

He asked this question to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think would be a greater mitzvah, to buy a new one, or should he use his grandfather's?

See Upriyo Matok Shemos 168



properly. Just as you would hire a lawyer to represent you in court, you would hire a priest to represent you before your gods.

Given Pharaoh's perspective, Moshe's request that the entire family is going to serve HaShem was bogus! Since when do children serve G.D? What can they offer Him?

To contrast this with Judaism it is important to recognize that although Judaism is a religion it is also a relationship. We find many relationships; husband - wife, parent - child, friend - friend, siblings, teacher - student and so on. Judaism is the relationship between HaShem and His beloved people. All successful relationships are built upon appreciation and recognition that each party has for the other.

The Chovos Halvovos, written by Rabbeinu Bachya in the 12th century, teaches us what is required by every Jew to be successful in their Judaism. In this book he lays down in great detail all the points necessary to be addressed in order to build that relationship. Rabbeinu Bachya named his book Chovos Halvovos, Duties of the Heart, because the heart is the home of love and fear, concern and

care; it is the organ associated with relationships. We express our love to someone as loving them with all our heart.

We all have a personal relationship with HaShem. Consider how much He has granted us, how much He provides for us. Have we ever done anything for Him for which He owes something? Everything He does, He does for us because He cares about us! He made the whole universe for us!

These are the thoughts that permeate the thought process of the Jew. It is no wonder that Moshe tells Pharaoh that every member of our people; young and old, boys and girls and even our animals. How can anybody be absent?

This is who we are.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION SILVER

In this week's Parsha we find that Hashem tells Moshe to tell the Jewish people to ask for vessels of silver and gold from the Egyptians. It was because of this that the Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim with great wealth. Let's learn about silver together.

Silver is a chemical element with the symbol Ag. This is because the Latin word for silver is Argentum. Argentum comes from the Proto-Indo-European word *h₂erǵ* which means "shiny". Silver has a brilliant, white, metallic luster that can take a high polish. Silver has the highest reflectivity of any metal. Unlike copper and gold, silver is actually not a colored metal. It has no visible color, like a mirror.

How is silver procured? Silver can be found in the Earth's crust in its pure, free elemental form. This is called "native silver" (**Pictured top right**). Silver can also be found as an alloy with gold and other metals. In fact most silver is produced as a byproduct of copper, gold, lead, and zinc refining. Silver can also be found in minerals such as argentite and chlorargyrite.

Silver is more abundant than gold because it can be processed from other metals. However silver is much less abundant than gold as a native metal.

When we think of silver's uses we mostly think of jewelry, coins, silver candlesticks and tableware. But the truth is that silver has many other uses. Silver is used in solar panels, water filtration, in electrical contacts and conductors, in mirrors, window coatings, in catalysis of chemical reactions, as a colorant in stained glass and in specialized confectionery. Its compounds are used in photographic and X-ray film. Dilute solutions of silver nitrate and other silver compounds are used as disinfectants and microbicides added to bandages, wound-dressings, catheters, and other medical instruments.

Silver has the highest electrical conductivity, and thermal conductivity of any metal. Because of this we would expect it to be used in electrical appliances. Interestingly, during World War II, during the race to create the Atom Bomb, the US used 13540 tons of silver for the electromagnets for enriching uranium (**Pictured bottom left**). Although silver was expensive, it was used because of the wartime shortage of copper. Nowadays however, silver is rarely used for its electrical conductivity, due to its high cost. There is an exception. Silver is used for its conductivity in radio-frequency engineering, particularly at VHF and higher frequencies where silver plating improves electrical conductivity.

Why does silver tarnish? This is because silver reacts with sulfur. When silver is exposed to sulfur-containing gasses in the air, it

discolors and then darkens as it reacts with the gas to form a surface layer of tarnish called silver sulfide. Gold does not react to sulfur and that is why it doesn't tarnish. To produce silver that does not tarnish, precious metals such as palladium, platinum, and gold can be included in the silver, but that becomes quite costly.

Being that silver is a soft metal with low structural strength, it was not used often in metallurgy. In fact most silver used for coinage and jewelry is in reality a silver-copper alloy, and not pure silver.

Where can silver be found? Historically, Spain was a great source of silver. Historians say that when the Phoenicians, the Canaanites, first came to what is now Spain, they obtained so much silver that they could not fit it all on their ships, and as a result used silver to weigh their anchors instead of lead. The Romans also procured most of the silver for their currency from Spain.

With the discovery of America, Central and South America became the dominant producers of silver particularly Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina. In fact Argentina got its name from the Latin word for silver, Argentum, because it was a great source of silver. Today, Mexico and Peru are still among the primary silver producers with Mexico producing 5,000 tons or 18.7% of the world's total of 26,800 tons and Peru producing 3,780 tons. (**Mexican silver mine pictured bottom right.**)

We know that in Hebrew the word for silver, Kesef, is the same as the word for money. This seems to indicate that silver has a special connection to money. The truth is that silver is the most widely used material for coin-making throughout history. Since silver is considered less valuable than gold, silver was used to make coins of a lower denomination that could be used to pay for everyday transactions. The Dinar and Zuz mentioned in the gemara were coins made of silver.

Silver has an additional interesting effect. It kills bacteria. This is because silver ions interfere with enzymes in the bacteria that transport nutrients, form structures, and synthesize cell walls. This is one of the reasons why silver was used for silverware. The silver antibacterial properties helped to keep food free from bacteria. This effect has been incorporated into medicine as well. Silver is incorporated into wound dressings and used as an antibiotic coating in medical devices and other healthcare applications.

ASHRECHA, YOU MUST BE A GREAT MOTHER!

A group of talmidim in the Adelpia Yeshiva once broke into the teacher's lounge late one night and made use of the video monitor. Rabbi Dovid Trenk, the menahel; found out and came to the building, heading straight for the lounge. But he didn't go in. He stood outside, in the hallway, and cried out words of Tehillim in an anguished voice; he never even spoke to the young men. Instead, his roar, "Shir hama'alos mima'amakim kerasicha Hashem," echoed through the empty hallway, conveying everything he felt; the disappointment and the hope.

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One of the boys left yeshivah every day after Minchah, biking home, where he would spend the rest of the day. His mother was upset, and she mentioned it to Rabbi Trenk. "Until he finally leaves, it's 10 o'clock in the morning, and by 2:30, he's back. What kind of day is that?" she asked.

Reb Dovid spoke gently. "You're a lucky woman," he said. "Ashrecha, you must be a great mother... Where is your son going? To the movies? To the mall? He's going home, to you. He wants to be here, in your home. That's a great mother!"

(From Just Love Them, The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Trenk, By Rabbi Yisroel Besser, Published By Artscroll Mesorah)



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the light rail and the air conditioners, Rav Zilberstein wrote that the air conditioners belong to the renter and not the landlord. This is because he paid full rent even though he was suffering from the dust.

I am dedicating the printing of this TableTalk to the memory of my dear friend
Lev ben Moshe Desyatnikov

תנצבה

Paysach Diskind

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