

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



## NEW MONEY

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Yuval was desperate to find a job. He finally applied for a job as the custodian in a bank. He was told that there was a long list of applicants and the bank would call him if they were interested. Sure enough, Yuval was called in for an interview. He was eager to get the job, and did his best in the interview. A few days later, the bank's hiring manager, Shimon, called him back.

"We interviewed about 50 qualified candidates for the job, and we would like to offer you the job", Shimon said. Yuval was thrilled. "In fact we'd like to offer you a two year contract which will be renewed at the end of the two years". "Absolutely", Yuval said. The two year contract meant greater job security for him, and he was thrilled about it.

Yuval started the job and enjoyed it. But soon his fortune was about to turn around. He purchased an Israeli lottery ticket.



## MASTER SPINNERS

The Parsha tells us how "all the women whose hearts inspired them with wisdom spun the goat hairs." The Torah associates the spinning of the goat's hair into yarn with the women whose hearts were inspired with wisdom. It would seem that there is some unique connection between women and their wisdom to the art of spinning the hair into yarn. Why should this art be unique to women?

There is a remarkable phenomenon that takes place in the spinning process. Let us take, for example, a goat whose hair is four inches long. This means that there is no fiber on this goat that is longer than four inches. Nevertheless, through the spinning process you can end up with yarn that is hundreds of feet long. How does that occur, if no fiber exceeds four inches? The answer is that as one fiber spins, it catches the fiber behind it and the first and second fibers are now attached to each other. As one continues spinning the first and second fibers the third fiber behind the second fiber gets caught on the second fiber and the sequence continues until you have hundreds of feet of yarn.

This remarkable phenomenon finds its parallel in the continuity of our nation. No generation lives more than 100 years, and yet our people maintain a continuity of over 3,300 years since receiving the Torah! How does that occur?

When contrasting the human condition to the animal condition we find a distinct difference. Although Man is clearly the Master creature as we do control

When he heard the numbers announced he was in shock. He won 10 million dollars and was now a millionaire.

After the dust settled, and Yuval returned to work, he felt decidedly different about his job. He approached Shimon, the hiring manager. "I am really so grateful to you for offering me this job. I'm also grateful that we have a two year contract. I plan to continue working, but to be honest, I'm embarrassed to be the janitor in a bank. I'm now a wealthy man, and this position is beneath me.

In addition, once the media hears that the lottery winner works as a janitor in the bank, I will be the focus of a lot of media attention and I don't want that hassle.

I know that I signed a contract to work for two years, but can you please forgo the contract and release me from my obligation?"

Shimon listened and then replied. "I will be totally honest with you. Our hiring process took a lot of time and expense. We are happy with your work and we would rather you finish the terms of your contract so we don't have to find a new person."

Yuval knew that Shimon had a point. He had given them his word. But did he still have an obligation to work for them once his circumstances had changed so drastically?

On one hand, how can they keep him working against his will? But on the other hand, he gave them his word that he would work for two years. How could he stop just because he became wealthy?

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. See Upiryo Matok Bereishis

“ You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it. ”

— Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher



the world, nevertheless, Man is so weak and delicate for the first many years of his life. If a three year old child would be left alone, G.D forbid, his chances of survival would be low. There is no such parallel in the animal world. Why did HaShem make us so dependent?

Perhaps we were designed this way to allow for the continuity of society. The design HaShem used in planning Man was such that there is much bonding between the child and his mother during his most formative years. The bonding is used not only for nurturing the material needs of the child but it is used to nurture the emotional needs of the child. The emotional needs of Man are certainly greater than those of animals. Healthy strong emotions can take Man to heights of accomplishments that can actually help him transcend human limitations. So many great men have exceeded human limitations by the force of their strong emo-

tions of commitment and bravery and courage. All these qualities develop through the bonding period that the child goes through with his parents and primarily his mother.

Once the child matures and becomes a mother herself she will bond with her child just as her mother bonded with her and she will transmit those beautiful strong qualities to her child and the process continues.

Behold! Although any given generation lives no more than 100 years the yarn that it generates continues endlessly.

Perhaps the reason why the Torah associates the art of spinning short fibers into endless feet of yarn with women and their wisdom is because they are the ones who know the art of spinning the society of Torah into an eternal continuity of history.

How grateful we must be to the mothers of our people.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



# SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

## AVNEI MILUIM, THE GEMSTONES OF THE CHOSHEN

Last week we learned about sapphire. In this week's Parsha the Torah talks about the Avnei Miluim, the precious gemstones that filled the choshen, the breast plate that the Kohein Gadol wore. These precious stones were donated by the princes, the Nesiyim. Rabbeinu Bachaya (Shmos 28,21) has a fascinating exposition on the purpose of the stones of the Choshen. He says that precious stones have certain spiritual properties that can influence in certain ways. Each of the precious stones correspond to each of the twelve tribes, and their special influence. R' Bachaya writes that Aristotle also wrote a book about the healing power of gemstones. As an aside, the philosophers Plato, Pliny, and Galen also wrote about the power of gemstones, and gemstone healing was also practiced by Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, India, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome and Native American cultures.

Rabbeinu Bachaya gives a disclaimer that precious stones work only under certain conditions and they draw their power from heavenly spiritual forces. Therefore if the stones are not tahor, not pure, they will not work. In modern times, healing with gems and precious stones has seen a resurgence. Modern scientists call crystal and gem healing a pseudoscience, which does not have a scientific basis. However it is interesting to note that the concept of using gemstones to heal has a source in the Torah. The unscientific way which is commonly practiced today does not likely correspond with the Torah description of how these tools can work.

Let's look at several of the gems listed in the Torah and learn about their spiritual properties.

Odem, Ruby. **(top left)** The ruby is the gem that corresponds to the tribe of Reuven. It is fascinating that the Old French word for ruby is Rubin, almost identical to the word Ruben or Reuven. The etymology of the English word Ruby is obscure, and it is possible that the fact that the Ruby was Ruben's stone may have influenced its name. R' Bachaya writes that Reuven had a ruby because the ruby has the power to help pregnancy, help conception, and prevent miscarriage. This is similar to the dudaim, the special plants that Reuven found for his mother to help her conceive. Even in modern times alternative therapies cite the use of rubies to help with fertility issues.

Pitda, Emerald **(top, 2nd from left)** is the gem that corresponds to the tribe of Shimon. R' Bachaya writes that emeralds have the power to calm down, and cool down a person's desires, particularly their sensual desires. This corresponds to Shimon who had great control in the area of immorality. This was to demonstrate that the incident with Zimri was not characteristic of the entire tribe. Even in modern times alternative therapy cites the use of emerald to help calm a person down.

Barekes, Carbuncle **(top, 3rd from left)** is the gem that corresponds to the tribe of Levi. (Others say that Barekes is crystal **(top, 4th from left.)** Carbuncle is the color of a fire. The word Carbuncle comes from the Latin words which means "small coal". R' Bachaya writes that Carbuncle has the power to help a person become wise. This corresponded to Levi who would illuminate the Jewish people with the light of Torah. Even in

modern times alternative therapies cite the use of carbuncle to help a person understand complex fields like astronomy, astrology, and mathematics.

Sapir, Sapphire **(top right)** was the gem of Yissachar. We learned a lot about Sapphire last week. R' Bachaya writes that sapphire has the power to bring peace. Yissachar was a tribe of Torah scholars. Peace, the effect of sapphire is like the effect of Torah scholars, who our sages say are Marbe Shalom Baolam. In addition the luchos were made of sapphire, and the kisei hakavod, Heavenly Throne, which Torah scholars are attached to is made of sapphire. Even in modern times alternative therapies cite the use of sapphire to give a person peace of mind and serenity.

Yahalom, Diamond, **(bottom left)** was the gem of Zevulun. R' Bachaya writes that the diamond has the power to influence success in buying and selling. This is similar to the tribe of Zevulun who were successful merchants. In modern times I have not found an alternative therapy that associates the diamond with success in business. However alternative therapies call diamond the "Stone of Invincibility" and that this 'invincibility' manifests itself to this day bringing emotional strength, courage and determination to those who wear one. We know that diamonds are the hardest natural material on earth. The word diamond comes from the same Latin root as the word "adamant" which means unbreakable, inflexible.

Shebo, Turquoise, **(bottom, 2nd from left)** was the gem of Naftali. The word turquoise comes from the word "Turkish", because the stone was brought to Europe from Turkey. R' Bachaya writes that the gemstone turquoise helps a person who rides on horseback. Naftali was called the swift gazelle. Even in modern times alternative therapies cite the turquoise as having the power to protect riders from injury due to accidents or falls.

Tarshish, aquamarine **(bottom 3rd from left)** was the gem of Naftali. The word aquamarine comes from the Latin word for seawater, because this gem has the color of the sea. R' Bachaya writes that the gemstone aquamarine helped people digest their food. This corresponds to Asher who had olive orchards and produced olives. Even in modern times alternative therapies cite the use of turquoise to cure illnesses of the stomach.

Shoham, Onyx or Sardonyx **(bottom right & 2nd to right)** was the gem that corresponds to the tribe of Yosef. The word onyx comes from the Greek word for fingernail, because the gem is pinkish with white streaks. R' Bachaya writes that onyx has the power to give a person charm, and helps one find favor in the eyes of all who see him. This corresponds to Yosef who similarly found favor in the eyes of all who saw him. In modern times alternative therapies cite the use of Sardonyx to allow one "to project an incredible charisma".

Please note that the purpose of this article is not to endorse or condone the modern use of gem healing, but rather to explore another fascinating facet of the wisdom of the Torah. One should speak to a Rav before any use of gems to heal and the way it is practiced today might involve non-Torah practices which could include superstition, idolatry, and witchcraft.

## THAT IS ALSO BITTUL TORAH!

Rav Dovid Trenk would often recall how once, the Adelpia Yeshivah had the zechus to host Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky. Reb Yaakov was on the way back from Lakewood to Monsey, and he had stopped in Adelpia to take a refreshing break.

The talmidim lined up outside the home of the Rosh Yeshivah, Reb Yerucham Shain, and waited for Reb Yaakov. They sang as he stepped out of the car, and then each bachur approached to say shalom aleichem. Reb Yaakov smiled, and then said, "Back to yeshivah, it's already bitul Torah." (A waste of time from Torah.)

One of the assembled bachurim told Rav Yaakov that they were in the middle of secular studies, so it wasn't bitul Torah.

Without hesitation Reb Yaakov replied "That is also bittul Torah!," he said emphatically.

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### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about whether a non Jew who avoids shatnez gets a "wellness benefit" Rav Zilberstein gave a fascinating answer. He cites the Netziv (Haamek Davar, Vayikra 19,19) who said that in addition to being a mitzvah, avoiding shatnez also has a practical effect on our body. The Netziv continues that "it is known among scientists that if you take a string of wool mixed with linen, and tie it around a telegraph wire, that it stops the (electrical) flow of the telegraph from going through". In a similar vein shatnez has a physical effect on a person and blocks certain flows of hashpa-ah. Therefore even a non Jew will have wellness benefits from wearing a shatnez free suit.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of

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צביה בת יהושע

By Dovid and Madeline Tenenbaum

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