

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



MATZAH IN THE WASHING MACHINE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

As we know, this week is Pesach. For children, one of the highlights of Pesach is to find the afikoman and hide it. One of the reasons for this minhag is to engage the children and make sure they don't fall asleep. This leads us to the following true story.

The Frankel family had ten children. One of the children, five year old Yehuda, got the afikoman and hid it.

When it came time to eat the afikoman, Mr. Frankel played along and searched all over the house for the afikoman. Yehuda played hot and cold with his father and gave him hints as to where it was. Finally, Mr. Frankel got really close to the afikoman and Yehuda revealed that the afikomen matzah was hidden inside the vertical washing machine!

All the kids were present as they watched their father react. "Yehuda, you hid it in the washing machine, but the washing machine is muktza, I can't open it", Mr. Frankel said.



FROM CHILD TO ADULT

Reflections on Rabbi Yosef Berger's drasha

The holidays on the Jewish calendar reoccur annually. In other words, the events that occurred thousands of years ago reoccur every year on that calendar date. On Yom Kippur 3,334 years ago in the Sinai Desert HaShem granted atonement to the Jewish people for their sin of the Golden Calf. So it is on Yom Kippur 5782 HaShem granted His people atonement for the sins of their generation. This is true with every holiday on the Jewish calendar. Just as Pesach is the time of birth for HaShem's people, so it is a time of rebirth for the world. By extension, it is a time of rebirth for every person who taps into this energy of renewal. If we could appreciate the freedom we attained with our exodus 3,334 years ago perhaps we could apply that freedom today to our personal lives as well.

As we study the Parshios of our exodus we will see how the theme of the Ten Plagues was to give Pharaoh and the Jewish people an understanding of Who HaShem is. Every Plague demonstrated another insight of HaShem; the Power of HaShem, the Unity of HaShem, the governance of HaShem, the Mercy and Kindness of HaShem, the Justice of HaShem and so on. HaShem used the exodus as the medium by which to introduce Himself to us and to the world. The entire experience of the exodus profoundly changed the worldview of our people. The liberation of our people may have been more in terms of our new worldview than in terms of our physical slavery.

“Oops”, Yehuda said with a grin. All of the children offered their opinion about how they should deal with the situation.

One child said, “well it's muktza. We can't open it and we will have to skip the afikoman entirely tonight”.

Another child said, “it's ok, we can leave the afikoman in the washing machine and use another matza for the afikoman”.

Another young child said they should walk over to a nearby non-Jew's home and wake him up. Then they should hint to him that they have matzah in their washing machine and that they would appreciate it if he could get dressed and take the matzah out for them.

Another child said that one of them should open the washing machine door with his foot.

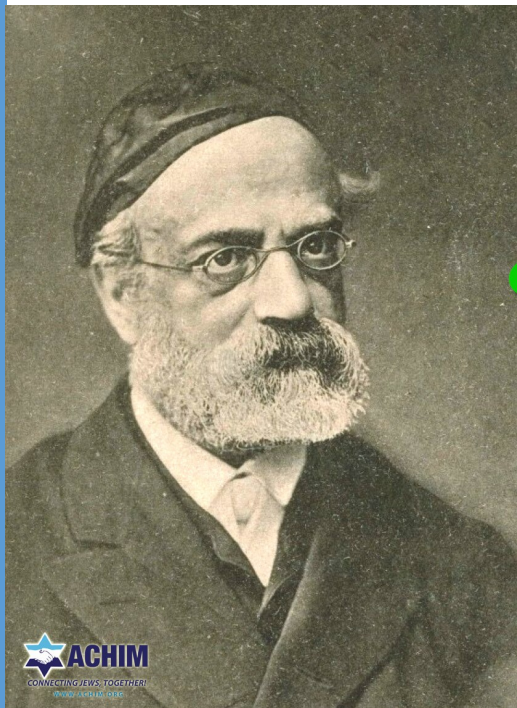
Another child said they should tell their one and a half-year-old baby to open the door of the washing machine for them.

Another child said that they can just open the door of the washing machine normally because it was kli she'melachto l'issur (a lower form of muktzah that can be used on Shabbos and Yomtov when it is needed), and they had a need for it, so they can open the door on Pesach directly.

Another child rejected that argument and said that kli she'melachto l'issur can only be used if there was no other permitted vessel available. In this case rather than use the muktzah they should just use another matzah from the box.

Which child is correct? What should they do in this case? What do you think?

This question was asked to Rav Zilberstein. See Chashukei Chemed Pesachim page 565



“Tears are the sweat of the soul.”

- Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

When children are young their worldview is very small and they are at the center. Everything in the world relates to them and is there to serve their desires. In fact, as an infant, his mother stood over him and attended to every one of his needs. As he gets older his circle of his experience expands and there are more things in the world and he still stands at the center. He wants this and wants that and expects to get it. At some point of his maturation he becomes a responsible adult. That change occurs when there is a shift in his worldview. In his new perspective he is no longer in the center of receiving but the center of giving.

When the Torah teaches us that Moshe matured, we are taught that the first thing he did was to check on the welfare of his brothers. Becoming 'big' shifts the worldview from taking from others to giving to others. When one ma-

tures he realizes that he is here to help others. It is OK for children to be petty because it is age appropriate but it is foolish for adults to be petty because they should have matured already. They should have escaped from that small worldview and expanded it to include others in the center. There are many other areas that distinguish the child from the adult.

The underlying distinction between the child and the adult is freedom from a myopic worldview. A child's worldview is nearsighted. He does not factor into his decisions what lies ahead. He lacks appreciation of long-term consequences. The adult has experience and is aware of long-term consequences that result from pleasurable activities.

With the help from HaShem may we all grasp the bounty of freedom that lies ahead in our beautiful holiday of Pesach and experience the expansion of our worldview and grow in our relationship with HaShem and with others.

Have a most beautiful Yom Tov!

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

KARPAS AND THE POWER OF TEARS

This week, as we all sit at the Seder, we will dip karpas in saltwater. Why saltwater? One reason is that the saltwater represents the tears of the Jewish people as they cried out in pain and prayed to Hashem. Tears and other body fluids are salty because they contain electrolytes which contain sodium. (Our bodies use electrolytes to create electricity that helps power our brains and move our muscles.) Let's look at tears a bit deeper. Why do our eyes pour out water when we are sad or in pain?

This question has perplexed scientists even until modern times. Before we answer that, let's look at tears in general. There are three basic types of tears: basal tears, reflex tears and emotional tears, and each tear type has a slightly different set of ingredients.

Basal tears lubricate the eyes, help keep them clear of dust and help to fight against bacterial infection.

Reflex tears clear out irritation of the eye caused by foreign particles, or from the presence of irritant substances such as onion vapors, perfumes, tear gas or pepper spray in the eye's environment. These reflex tears attempt to wash out irritants that may have come into contact with the eye.

Emotional Tears or psychic tears are what we refer to as crying or weeping. These tears are caused by strong emotional stress, pleasure, anger, suffering, mourning, or physical pain. The eye can produce more than half a cup of tears in minutes.

Emotional Tears are not restricted to negative emotions; some people cry when they are extremely happy, such as times of intense humor and laughter. Humans are the only creatures whose tears can be triggered by their feelings. Animals do not cry because of emotions.

We can understand why we need Basal tears to keep the eye lubricated, and Reflex tears to clear out the eye from irritants. But why do we need Emotional tears? Why do we need to have water pour out of our eyes when we are sad?

Interestingly Charles Darwin once asked this question. He saw no purpose to emotional tears so he confidently declared emotional tears "purposeless".

But nearly 150 years later, scientists have helped uncover the mysteries behind emotional crying. Of course, it is not purposeless. Scientists have uncovered at least four purposes for emotional tears.

To relieve pain. Tears brought about by emotions have a very different chemical makeup than those for lubrication. Emotional tears contain more of the protein-based hormones and natural painkillers than basal or reflex tears. If you walk into an open cabinet door or stub your toe on a sharp corner, the sudden shock of intense pain might bring a few tears to your eyes. Pain severe enough to make you cry releases endorphins and oxytocin. Crying also produc-

es leucine enkephalin. L.E. is an endogenous opioid peptide. If the word "opioid" stands out to you, then you probably see where this is going already; L.E. is comparable to morphine, and it produces a similar pleasurable effect. This is why people feel better after a good cry. Next time you're feeling sad and you know you're only a few moments away from tears, let nature do its job. Crying is healthy, and it feels good. These natural chemical messengers help relieve emotional distress along with physical pain.

To remove toxic substances. Emotional tears contain more stress hormones than other types of tears. Why would tears have stress hormones? The biochemist William Frey posited that crying removes toxic substances from the blood that build up during times of stress. The emotional secretion of tears helps excrete stress-inducing hormones built up through times of emotional distress. This is why tears serve a therapeutic role. Emotional crying, which tends to make you feel better, is a part of the healing process. The body is releasing its toxic substances caused by the stress and trauma. Crying releases tension and gives you a psychic reboot. That is what we mean when we refer to a good cry."

To reduce aggression. Scientists have also found that there are 160-plus different molecules in tears. Some of these molecules send out strong emotional signals and chemical messages to others. It might work similar to a pheromone, which is a chemical that an animal produces which changes the behavior of another animal. One of the substances that tears release helps to reduce aggression in others. When we cry out in pain, and shed tears because of that cry, it automatically has an effect on the people around us so that they should be less aggressive.

To create empathy. Not only are there chemical signals that reduce aggression in others, but tears also send out chemical signals that automatically set off empathy and compassion in others. This may also explain why we can cry when we are very happy as it signals others to have empathy and join us in our joy.

It is very interesting that our Sages teach that "the gates of tears are never closed". This means that when we pray to Hashem with tears it has a very powerful effect in Heaven. Just as tears on this earth inspire compassion in others, it does the same thing in the spiritual world.

Our Sages teach that we have to be extremely sensitive to women because "Dimasa Krova" they are closer to tears. Scientists echo the words of our Sages. Scientists say that women cry 60% more than men. Why is this true? Scientists suggest three reasons. 1. Testosterone, a hormone that men have more of, is a hormone that inhibits crying. 2. Women have larger tear ducts. 3. Women have a hormone called prolactin, a hormone that might promote tears.

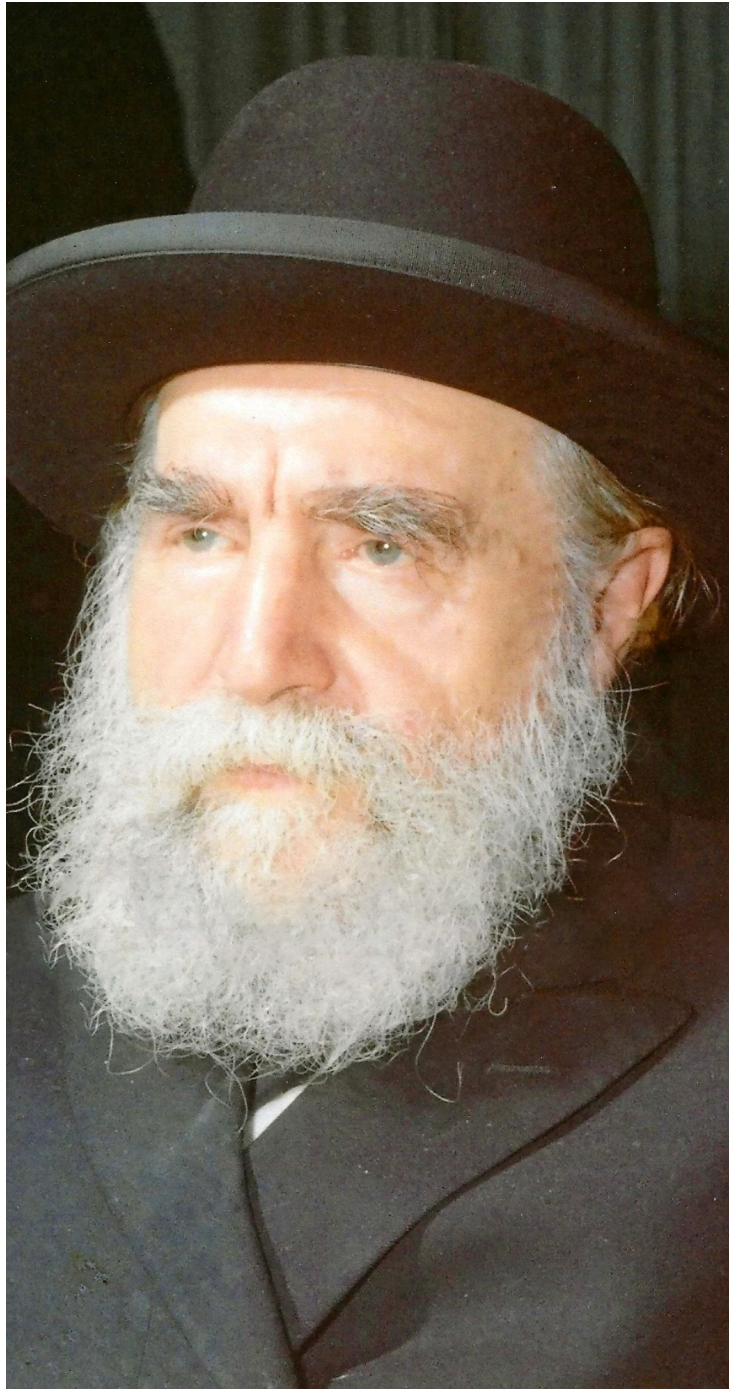
“R’ MOSHE FEINSTEIN SENSED THE STUDENTS’ DISCOMFORT, AND HE INSTANTLY STOOD UP”

Rav Moshe Feinstein was the Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim. Each year before the Yom Tov of Pesach, a generous supporter of Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim, Mr. Louis M. Friedman, would purchase new outfits for the yeshivah’s needy students. At that time, a large truck would pull up in front of the yeshivah building, loaded with new suits, shirts, shoes, ties, tzitzis, etc. to brighten the yom tov for some one hundred students.

One year, to honor Mr. Friedman for his generosity, the school administration organized an assembly which was to be followed by a dinner in the lunchroom. The assembly room was filled to capacity. To the left sat the needy students who had received the new outfits, the women’s section was to the right, while the center was filled with members of the Board of Directors, parents and other invited guests. The president of the yeshiva spoke glowingly of Mr. Friedman and his charitable acts, especially his purchase of the clothing. Before ending, the president turned to the needy boys who received the suits and suggested that they show their appreciation for Mr. Friedman by rising in his honor.

The boys looked at each other sheepishly, embarrassed to stand up in front of so many people and thereby acknowledge their poverty. Their embarrassment lasted for but a moment. R’ Moshe Feinstein sensed the students’ discomfort, and he instantly stood up. Some men, seeing the Rosh Yeshiva stand up, stood up as well. The Board of Directors stood up. The women stood up. Everyone else stood up. The boys, now having nothing to feel ashamed of, also stood up. A modest man, Mr. Friedman felt embarrassed at being the only one left sitting. He too stood up, giving the impression that everyone had risen in honor of some other Mr. Friedman.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding the question about the pesach appeal, in an identical case (only difference was that it was not for Pesach needs) Rav Zilbershtein decided that the poor friend had no obligation to pay his \$100 pledge. The reason is because he only pledged these funds for the poor person whom the appeal was being made for. Since that person was himself it is considered a neder b'taus, a mistaken pledge and is therefore non-binding.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in loving memory of
Rosalyn Bramson (Bubby Bramson)

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By Malka and Alex Barron and family

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