



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE HIDDEN DIARY

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, Moshe says, "Surely the *davar*, the matter is known." Simply, it means that the fact that Moshe killed the Egyptian supervisor became known to the authorities. But our Sages teach that there is a deeper understanding. It means, "Now the reason for the exile is known; the *davar*, the evil speech, and *lashon hara* that Jews are talking, is the cause of the exile."

This brings us to the following true story. The Rosenbergs were an elderly couple who lived in a house for many years. Eventually, Mrs. Rosenberg passed away, and sadly, within a few months, Mr. Rosenberg passed away as well. They lived to the ripe old ages of 90 and 93. The family was, of course, devastated.

After mourning, the children put the house on the market to sell. They cleaned out the house, took all the valuables out, anything that had any sentimental value, and they prepared and rehabbed the house to sell.

Zev saw the house listed and was interested in buying it. He looked at the house, and it looked good to him, and he was prepared to make an offer. The Rosenberg children told Zev they were happy to sell it, but on the condition that if in the course of the years he would ever



ONE OVER INFINITY IS GREATER THAN ZERO

In his introduction to *Sefer Shemos* the Ramban explains that our first exile which begins with Egypt and our enslavement in it, continues on until we arrive at Mount Sinai, receive the Torah and build the *Mishkan* through which we finally arrive at the status of our Forefathers. That status is to be the carriers of the *Shechina* of HaShem in this world. That is the mission of our people.

Presumably, the function of our first exile was to prepare us for that mission. In other words, before we can be capable of carrying the *Shechina* of HaShem, we must endure the travails of the pain and slavery of the Egyptian *galus*. In his commentary on *Tehillim* (84:5), Malbim also describes how the path of *galus* upon which we will travel to arrive at our final destination is covered with the tears of our exile.

Why should this be? Before arriving at the pinnacle of human accomplishment, to be the carriers of HaShem's Presence, should we not be primed with experiences of greatness, not of destruction?

There exists an interesting paradox. Let us consider the pilot of Air Force One. That is certainly a most prestigious position. After all, he is the one who flies the most powerful man in the world. He is actually one part of the greatness of the most powerful office in the world. On one side he ought to be filled with tremendous pride playing some role in the Presidency. However, on the other side consider how small he must feel. In his position of pilot he is exposed to so much greatness and power of the Presidency that most simple folks are not aware of.

find anything that belonged to their parents, he should please return it to them because everything that belonged to their parents had sentimental value.

Zev, of course, agreed. He bought the house, and moved in with his family.

Several years later, Zev pushed back a bookcase in the home, and, to his surprise, there was a little nook behind the bookcase. There was a book in the nook. Zev opened the book to see what it was, and it appeared to be a diary written by Mr. Rosenberg, the previous owner of the house. It was a diary detailing the days of his life. Some of it was good, some were neutral things, but frequently there were references in the diary to arguments between Mr. Rosenberg and his wife and how he did not have Shalom Bayis, peace in the home. It was a very interesting and fascinating book. Zev thought that surely it would have sentimental value to the Rosenberg children. He understood that he made a condition when he bought the house, that he was going to return anything that belonged to the previous owners to the children. So, Zev showed the diary to his wife Chava and told her that he was planning to return it.

But Chava said, "How can we return it? It's full of things that say bad things about their relationship. That would certainly harm the reputation of the parents, and it will be a form of lashon hara, gossip. You can't return it." But Zev said, "What do you mean? How can I not return it? I made a condition, the condition of the sale, that I return anything that belonged to the parents. And also, there's a mitzvah of hashavas aveidah, returning lost objects. How could I not return it? This would clearly be sentimental to them."

But Chava did not agree; she felt that the sellers did not have in mind something like this in the condition of the sale, and they could not return it. They shouldn't even tell anyone about it, and they should just burn it because if anyone found it, it could bring reputational harm to the parents.

Both agreed to bring this question to a Rav, and this question was brought to Rabbi Zilberstein.

What do you think? Should Zev return it because this was the condition of the sale and because it would be a mitzvah, or was Zev's wife right that they could not return it because this would cause damage to the parents' reputation, would be lashon hara, evil gossip, and therefore cannot be returned?

See Upiryo Matok Vayikra Page 201



And so, in spite of his position he recognizes how very tiny and insignificant he is in the scheme of things.

Let us express this paradox as a mathematical principle. Let us take an article that is composed of two parts. The relationship of one part to the whole article is $1/2$. That one part is half of the entire article. As the article increases its number of parts from which it consists, each part will represent a smaller part of the whole. That single part will go from $1/2$ to $1/100$. As the denominator gets larger the single part becomes smaller and as you approach infinity the part approaches zero.

When we consider ourselves as being one part of the Greatness of HaShem, which is the case as we are the carriers of His Presence, we begin to approach non-existence using our simple mathematical principle. One over infinite is practically zero. Of course it is not actually zero because it is a part, however, it gets very close to zero. At the same time, however,

being a very tiny part of the Greatness of HaShem is tremendously uplifting. Anyone who is a teeny tiny part of His Greatness is not a zero!

Therefore, before we can achieve our mission of being the greatest people in the world we must master coming close to non-existence. That is the role of slavery. Slavery brings a person close to non-existence. Perhaps this is why to path to our destination is covered with tears.

New Hampshire's motto is "Live free or die". The implication is that one should choose death over slavery.

The creation of our people as well as the perpetuation of our people teaches us quite the opposite. Only through slavery and the ability to subject oneself to the Highest Authority can one live. True living comes from subjection to Creator Itself.

Perhaps the reason our exiles endure bitter pain and slavery is to properly prepare us to accept the ultimate Yoke of Heaven and thereby achieve the greatest achievement Man can achieve in this world.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

Most of us have eaten pickles. But did you realize that pickles are one of the most ancient foods around? It is likely that the Bnei Yisrael may have eaten pickles even in Mitzrayim. Let's learn about the history and science of Pickling.

Pickling, a culinary art steeped in history, is a method of food preservation that has been practiced globally for thousands of years. This technique involves either anaerobic fermentation in brine or immersion in vinegar, effectively extending the shelf life of various foods from vegetables to meats. The historical roots of pickling trace back to ancient civilizations, where pickling was essential for survival, especially during times when fresh food was scarce.

The origins of pickling can be traced back to the area of Eretz Yisrael and Aram Naharaim, around 2400 BCE, which is around the early years of Noah. Archaeologists have unearthed evidence indicating that the practice of preserving cucumbers in acidic solutions was prevalent in the Tigris Valley around 2030 BCE. Many notable ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians, Babylonians, and later the Greeks and Romans practiced pickling.

Pickling was primarily invented as a method for preserving food, not just for flavor enhancement. Before the advent of modern refrigeration, spoilage was a significant concern, particularly for perishable items like fruits and vegetables. Pickling extended the shelf life of these foods by creating an acidic environment where harmful bacteria could not thrive, effectively preventing spoilage. Pickling allowed for preserving food for out-of-season use as well as for long journeys. The tangy flavor was a beneficial byproduct of this preservation process. Historically, pickled foods were vital for long sea voyages, providing sailors with a source of vegetables and fruits that wouldn't spoil on the journey. Pickles have even made their way into space! Astronauts have been known to take pickled foods on space missions due to their long shelf life and preservation qualities.

Pickling has taken various forms across different cultures. In South Asia, 'achars' are a popular form of pickled condiment, often made from mangoes, lemons, and other fruit, seasoned with an array of spices. South-east Asia is known for its 'acar', a pickle made from cucumbers, carrots, and chilies. In Europe and America, pickles range from the classic dill pickles to the sour sauerkraut, each with its unique preparation method and cultural significance. What are kosher dill pickles? Unlike some other pickling recipes, kosher dill pickles typically do not use vinegar. The use of garlic and dill is more prominent in kosher dill pickles compared to other types, and this contributes to its unique flavor profile.

While cucumbers are the most common, pickling can be applied to a wide range of foods, including fish, meats, and eggs. In some cultures, even dairy products are pickled.

The term 'pickle' comes from the Dutch word 'pekel' or the Middle Low German word 'pokel', meaning brine. This etymology is reflective of the crucial role brine plays in the pickling process.

Let's explore a bit of the science and process of pickling. Pickling can be classified into two main methods: fermentation in brine and immersion in vinegar. While vinegar-based pickles are more common in Western

cuisines, fermented pickles are predominant in Asian and Eastern European cuisines.

The high acidity of the pickling medium, usually with a pH of 4.6 or lower, is crucial for preservation. It inhibits the growth of spoilage-causing microorganisms and contributes to the unique flavor of pickles. Salt is a key ingredient in pickling, preventing undesirable microbial growth while enhancing flavor. Its concentration must be carefully balanced to achieve both preservation and palatability. Spices like mustard seed, garlic, cinnamon, and cloves not only add complex flavors but also possess antimicrobial properties that further aid in preservation. Fermented pickles undergo a process involving lactic acid bacteria, which thrive in anaerobic conditions and produce lactic acid, contributing to the pickle's tangy taste. Different microorganisms dominate the pickling process depending on environmental factors. At lower temperatures and salt concentrations, *Leuconostoc mesenteroides* is prevalent, while at higher temperatures, *Lactobacillus plantarum* takes over.

The pickling process significantly alters the texture, making foods crunchier, and infuses them with tangy, spicy, or sweet flavors depending on the ingredients used in the brine or vinegar solution.

But pickling does not only improve the flavor of the vegetables. In some ways, it makes the vegetable healthier. Pickling can enhance the nutritional and health value of foods. For example, in fermented pickles, B vitamins are produced by the bacteria. Pickles, particularly those that are fermented, are good for the stomach primarily because they contain probiotics. These are beneficial bacteria that play a vital role in digestion and maintaining gut health. They help balance the gut microbiota, aiding in the digestion of food and the absorption of nutrients. Additionally, fermented pickles can contribute to a healthy immune system and even improve the gut's barrier function. However, it's important to note that vinegar-based pickles, which are not fermented, do not contain these probiotics.

Pickling also has the great benefit of reducing food waste as pickling can be a way of preserving excess produce. Even in your own kitchen, if you have cucumbers, tomatoes, radishes, or peppers that are getting a bit old, you can give them new life by simply putting them in pickle juice, putting them in the fridge for a week, and turning them into pickles. They can be a perfect Shabbos treat.

Traditional pickling methods have evolved over time, adapting to modern needs. Innovations include refrigerator pickles, which are quick and easy to make in our own refrigerators, and the use of unique ingredients for flavor variations. However, the fundamental principles of pickling have remained consistent over time – using an acidic environment to preserve food.

Let's conclude with a few pickle fun facts. Queen Cleopatra claimed pickles contributed to her beauty. And Julius Caesar and other Roman emperors believed pickles provided strength. Christopher Columbus used pickles to prevent scurvy among his crew, and Amerigo Vespucci, the Italian explorer who gave his name to America, was a pickle merchant. The average American eats almost 9 lbs of pickles a year.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

EIN MERAVIN SIMCHA BESIMCHA, ONE MAY NOT MINGLE ONE JOY WITH ANOTHER

Reb Asher, a relative of Reb Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, related the following story. He had once come to Premishlan to spend the Yomim Noraim in the presence of Reb Meir of Premishlan, and had stayed there until the end of Sukkos.

During that period, Reb Meir's daughter was so dangerously ill that by the time Simchas Torah came around, she was at the point of death.

The tzaddik, as always, was dancing exuberantly on Simchas Torah, when a group of chassidim rushed into the beis midrash with an outcry, imploring that he do something to call down the mercies of heaven on his daughter.

The tzaddik, Reb Meir (who, out of unfeigned humility, used to refer to himself in the third person, by his diminutive nickname, as "Meir'l"), walked into his daughter's room. He saw at once how matters stood.

He came out of her room and said: "Master of the Universe! You commanded us to blow the shofar on Rosh HaShanah - and Meir'l blew; You commanded us to fast on Yom Kippur - and Meir'l fasted; You commanded us to dwell in the sukkah during the festival - and Meir'l dwelt in the sukkah; You commanded us to be happy on Simchas Torah - and Meir'l is Bsimcha, is happy.

But now You've gone and caused Meir'l's daughter to be sick. Meir'l, for his part, has to accept this state of affairs Besimcha, joyfully, for the Mishnah teaches us, 'A man is obliged to bless his Maker for sad tidings in the same way as he does for glad tidings.' And the Talmud explains that this means, 'to accept joyfully.' Meir'l therefore is accepting his lot joyfully.

"But Ribbono shel Olam - Master of the Universe! Does the Halachah not establish the law that Ein Meravin Simcha Besimcha, 'one may not mingle one joy with another'? ..."

Immediately after this tefillah, news came from his home that his daughter's fever was subsiding, and she recovered.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the robbers who stole the cakes and left the money, Rav Zilberstein (Upiryo Matok Vayikra Page 56) said that the man left holding the money would not be allowed to keep the money. This is because it is called a Hefker BeTa'us, a mistaken abandonment. This is because they didn't mean to abandon the money, and because they never would have agreed to give so much money for two cakes. Instead, the man should keep enough money to compensate himself for the stolen cakes, and the balance of the money should be donated to a free loan gemach that serves the public until the thieves possibly return to claim the money.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to memory of the mother of Elana Malachevsky
Nesya bas Shlomo

May this dedication bring an aliyah to her neshama

by Boris and Elana Malachevsky



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