

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE STEWARD

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In last week's Torah portion the Torah references the prohibition not to hate people. The Torah says that Bilam saddled his donkey. He was a wealthy and important man. Why did he saddle his donkey himself and not ask a servant to do it? Rashi explains the principle that "hatred changes the normal pattern". Because Bilam hated the Jewish people so much he saddled the donkey himself. In this week's Torah portion the Torah opens with the importance of peace. This is because the blessing that Pinchos received was the covenant of peace.

This leads us to the following true story. Mark was an elderly wealthy businessman. He had an estranged relationship with his son Rob. He would often complain that his son never visited him or cared for him. As Mark got older Rob needed someone to take care of his father so he hired a Jewish man named Avi to care for him. Avi decided to himself that he would not tell



A STAMP COLLECTION

Given that we have begun the The Three Weeks of Mourning with the Fast of Tamuz, I would like to share an insight to our current exile instead of this week's Parsha of Pinchos

Every year as we travel through this period of mourning the question arises, what are we mourning? While we certainly are missing the Bais Hamikdosh and the Shechina, but, how can we mourn over it when we never experienced it. Can a child who was born after his father passed away mourn the loss of his father? What sense of loss do we experience today that can give us an appreciation of the loss of the Shechina among us?

A collection is a group of artifacts that one brings together into one group. There are two types of collections. The classic collection is when one collects many objects that are similar to one another but not exactly, for example a stamp collection and the likes. Every stamp shares a common factor, that they are a stamp, but there is no inherent connection between the members of the group. Compare this to parts of a do-it-yourself chest of drawers. This too is a collection of articles that have a similarity to one another. However, we can appreciate the distinction between these two collections. All the members of the latter are intimately connected to one another. They are so connected to each other that if one member is missing the entire collection is missing in its purpose. If you are missing one screw the chest will be unstable.

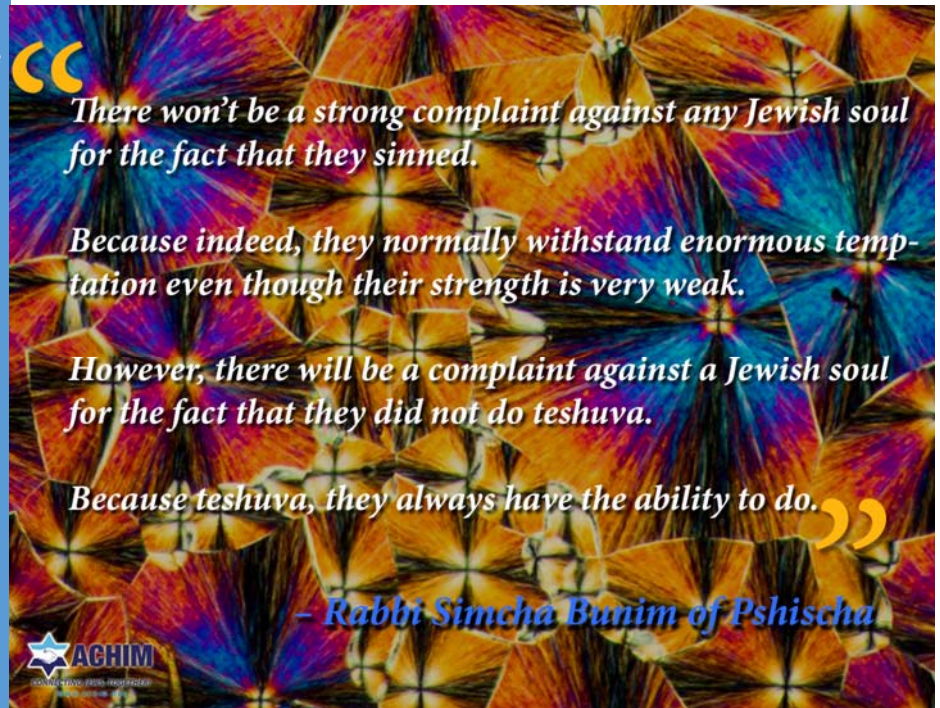
The distinction between our people and the nations of the world is similar to these two types of collections. Every nation is composed of its members. They share a common ethnicity, land, language or whatever else defines them as a nation. There is however no intrinsic connection between one member and the next. The nation does not change in any way with the absence of one member, similar to the stamp collection.

MITZVA MEME

Mark that he was hired. Rob agreed with this decision. One day Avi came to Mark's front yard and offered to help him with some chores. Mark obliged. The next day Avi offered to help with some more chores. Again, Mark obliged. Eventually this relationship developed and Avi began to take care of all of Mark's needs. Avi never revealed that he was a steward being paid by Rob. Avi did an exemplary job and Mark really loved Avi. Eventually Mark passed away. Because Mark's relationship with his son Rob was estranged, Mark left his entire estate to his good friend Avi who took such good care of him for so many years so diligently. He left nothing to his son Rob. When Rob found out that Avi was being bequeathed his father's will he strongly objected. Avi fooled his father, Rob argued. Had his father known that he was an employee and not just a friend he never would have bequeathed everything to him. Rob argued that the will, bequeathing the money to Avi should be invalidated because Avi deceived Mark by not telling him that he was being paid. Avi however argued that he should not be given the money because he was a friend, but rather because he did such a good job. Mark would have given him the money regardless.

What do you think? Does Avi get the money? On one hand he should receive the will for he truly cared for Mark and did a great job. But on the other hand perhaps by not being completely transparent about why he was there, he was being deceitful and does not deserve the money. What do you think?

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Our people are also composed of the members of our people. However, every member of the Jewish people carries a unique mission which without that individual our people are incomplete and we will not be able achieve our destiny, similar to the chest.

The analogy of the human body would best illustrate this. There are many varying parts and cells in the human body. Each one is critical for the functioning of the entire body. The body cannot afford the loss of any one member. However, even when all components are in their respective places there is one more component that is essential for its existence; the soul! Without the soul, even when all the parts are in place there is no person. There may be a body with all it's parts but the person that they make up is not present and hence, not one part serves any purpose.

The Jewish people are that person in which every member serves a

critical role. The soul of the Jewish body is the Shechina, the Presence of HaShem, that rests in our midst. When the Shechina rests within us every one of us is intimately connected to each other just as the cells of the body. However, when the Shechina leaves us, we are just members of a nation with no inherent connection to one another.

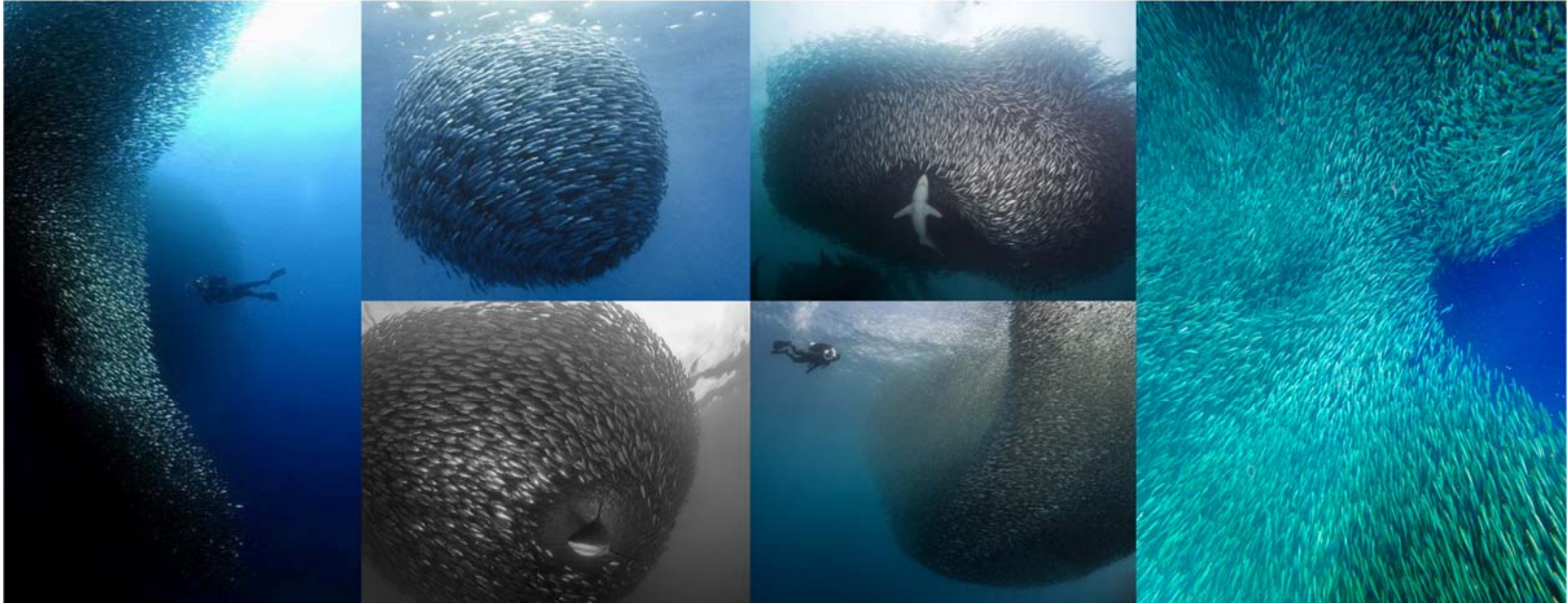
The reason we suffer so much from a lack of unity among our people is really because we are missing the uniting force of the Shechina. We may attribute it to other reasons, but at the root, it is because we are like all the body parts with no life source.

So, during this period while we often lament the great tragedies that befell our people throughout our long dark night of exile, we can also focus on something that we experience daily and feel the pain of lacking the sense of unity that we really could have.

May HaShem return His Shechina speedily in our days and bring us together in ways that we have never imagined.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION THE GREAT SOUTH AFRICAN SARDINE RUN

The great Sardine Run is an incredible phenomenon which scientists do not really understand. Billions of sardines make their way up the east coast of South Africa from the eastern Agulhas Bank to the coast of KwaZulu-Natal in a huge mass, over 4 miles long and almost 100 feet deep, heading north. It is a magnificent sight that happens every year between May and July. The migration is restricted to the inshore waters by the preference of sardine in the cooler current. They stick together in large groups or shoals for safety and stick to the surface and the coastline due to their love of tasty plankton and their keenness to stay warm. Sardines avoid the strong and warm offshore Agulhas Current, which flows in the opposite direction to the migration. A band of cooler coastal water and the occurrence of Natal Pulses and break-away eddies make it possible for sardine shoals to overcome their habitat constraints and migrate northwards. The importance of these enabling factors is greatest where the continental shelf is narrowest.

What happens exactly? Billions of sardines release eggs in the cool waters of the Agulhas Bank and then move north. Their eggs are released into the water and fertilized before being left to drift into the wide open ocean, where they are mainly carried north and west by the currents.

Many marine predators are drawn to this mass migration, attacking the sardines from below, including dolphins, cape gannet, cape fur seals, great white sharks, hammer-head sharks and Bryde's whales. Dolphins will force thousands of sardines at a time into 'bait balls', forcing them closer to the surface where they can pounce on them.

Humpback whales swim through too, not looking to eat them, but on their own journey to their summer breeding grounds. Above them, tens of thousands of birds, including cormorants, terns and gulls dive down at them, attacking them.

This magnificent feeding frenzy is a little known phenomenon that can be enjoyed by anyone. Simply, head out in biplanes to watch from the air or stand on the coast and witness the thousands of birds attacking the shimmering mass, or even dive and snorkel for some real adrenaline pumping action.

This seasonal peculiarity occurs between May and July on the rugged shores of the north eastern cape and southern Kwa-Zulu Natal coastlines of South Africa. This fantastic wildlife 'migration' is actually still relatively mysterious, although there are, of course, theories. The most likely reason for this migration is the temperature change. In that area, June and July are winter months so if the weather drops below 21 degrees they migrate to warmer waters.

This truly is a once in a lifetime opportunity, the unique chance to view animals from the sky, earth and water all taking part together in something completely miraculous.

DRAWING LOTS

Reb Yeshaya Asher Zelig Margulies, one of the mekubalim of Yerushalayim, once shared a story about a Jew who came to Reb Shayele Kerestir to complain about his difficult financial situation. Reb Shayele listened to the litanies of problems and suggested a particular business in which the fellow might engage. Along with advice, Reb Shayele dispensed warm blessings for success.

A year later, the same Jew returned to inform the Rebbe that he had succeeded. He thanked Reb Shayele for the guidance and encouragement. But he faced a new problem. Along with success had come a steady stream of requests for help. Suddenly, distant relatives and old friends were appearing on his doorstep, eager to reignite their friendship. He felt beholden to all of them, yet the expense of satisfying their expectations was mounting.

Reb Shayele was deeply pained that a Jew who had faced poverty such a short time earlier could have forgotten its taste so quickly. He requested a pen and piece of paper from the gabbai and turned back to the visitor. "Who are the distinguished Jews in your hometown?" the Rebbe asked. The petitioner listed off some of the prominent personalities, and Reb Shayele wrote the name of each one. "Now," the Rebbe reflected, "since you don't want to share your wealth, we will find another person who is more willing!" The visitor gasped, realizing the import of the Rebbe's words. He immediately protested, insisting that he regretted his words and that he would be generous with anyone who asked for help. "Why does one seek parnasah if not to assist other Yidden?" the Rebbe wondered. As the Jew continued to plead for a second chance, Reb Shayele prepared slips of paper with various names he had written on them. "I will include your name in the draw. If your regret is genuine, then you will win the lottery and preserve your wealth; if not, someone else will be given the opportunity."

Reb Shayele withdrew a slip of paper as the Jew stood there and wept; the name selected was that of the visitor. He had been given a reprieve. "You've learned your lesson the Rebbe told him. "Be kind and generous in the future. That's the purpose of your wealth.

(From Reb Shayaleh, By Rabbi Yisrael Besser. Reprinted With Permission From The Copyright Holders)



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the Sushi meal, Rav Zilberstein answered that the employer is obligated to provide a normal, typical meal that is typically eaten in that city.

With the shuls beginning to open, we will be placing the TableTalk's in the shuls as we did in the pre-Corona days and we will be minimizing the other distribution methods.

If you are unable to get your TableTalk from shul please let me know and we will try to accommodate you.

Contact me at paysach@achim.org
Paysach Diskind

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