

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE SAFECRACKERS

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion alludes to the prohibition against theft. The Torah writes that when Moshe was a shepherd he led his sheep to the desert. Why did he take the sheep to the desert? He could have stayed in green pastures! Our Sages explain that he did this to ensure that the would not accidentally pasture on a field that belonged to someone.

This leads us to the following fascinating, perhaps well known story, that was brought to Rav Chaim Kanievsky.

Ari Stern and Donny Weiss were neighbors in an apartment building. Ari had to go on a two week trip to Europe. He gave his apartment key to Donny in case of an emergency, such as a fire. Ari told Donny explicitly not to open the apartment for anyone unless it was an emergency.

While Ari was gone, Donny got a knock at his door. It was two delivery men, with a delivery of a black leather couch. The delivery man said, "We are here to deliver this couch that was ordered last week by Mr. Ari Stern. We came all this way and carried the couch up the steps, but no one is answering the door. Do you



BOOT CAMP

With this week's Parsha, Shemos, the Egyptian exile begins and will last 210 years. In the final 86 years of this period, the slavery intensifies. This horrid experience was the prelude to our becoming HaShem's chosen people. How do we understand this? Should HaShem's chosen people not have great beginnings instead of horrid degrading slavery? What was the purpose of slavery and how did it prepare us for our destiny?

Our Sages teach us that this exile was already predestined several hundred years before. When HaShem told Avraham that his children would inherit the Land of Israel, Avraham asked HaShem how could he know for sure that they would merit the Land. His question was not questioning HaShem's intent. Rather his question was that perhaps his descendants would not be deserving of the Land. How could he be confident that they would retain their worthiness to be owners of the Land. In response to this question HaShem told Avraham that his descendants would be exiled for a period of 400 years and would rise from that exile with great riches and would inherit the Land. How does the 400 years of exile resolve Avraham's question? How does an exile ensure that we will forever merit the Land?

In the Parsha of Behar, the Torah teaches us the nature of our relationship to the Land. If one inherits his portion of the Land he has no rights to sell that parcel in perpetuity. It can only be leased for the duration of time until the Yovel year, which occurs every 50 years. The reason for this limitation is because "the Land is HaShem's and He allowed us to live in it. It is not ours to sell." Behold! HaShem never really

know where the owner is?"

Donny told them that the owner was away for a while. The delivery man asked if there was a way to open the door. Donny reluctantly replied that he had the key but insisted that he couldn't open the door. The delivery man showed Donny the receipt proving that Ari had purchased it, and said, "Look we came all this way, you can watch us. We are just going to put the couch down and leave. We won't touch anything".

Donny relented, and let the couch be placed inside. Sure enough, the delivery men put the couch in the living room and left.

The next day the same delivery man came back. He was very apologetic. "I made an error with the order. Mr. Stern actually ordered a brown leather couch, not black. Is it ok if I quickly switch it?"

Donny reluctantly opened the door again and the delivery men quickly switched the couch.

A few days later Ari returned home. Immediately after, Donny heard loud screaming coming from Ari's apartment. Ari's safe was broken into, he had been robbed of \$100,000 in cash. The only thing that looked different, and showed that someone had been in his home, was the addition of a brown couch in his living room!

When the dust settled, it turned out that this was all a plan hatched by devious thieves, who knew there was a large sum of money in the safe. A burglar was hidden inside the first couch. He was left alone to crack the safe for 24 hours. The next day he was removed inside of the couch, when they replaced it. It was all a clever ruse to rob Ari.

Normally a watchman is liable for negligence. Is Donny liable for this loss when he was told explicitly not to open the door for anyone? Or do we say this loss was something that he never could have anticipated so he would not be liable to pay the \$100,000 to Ari?

What do you think. Is Donny liable for this loss?

See Hebrew Veharev Na Volume One page 49

MITZVA MEME

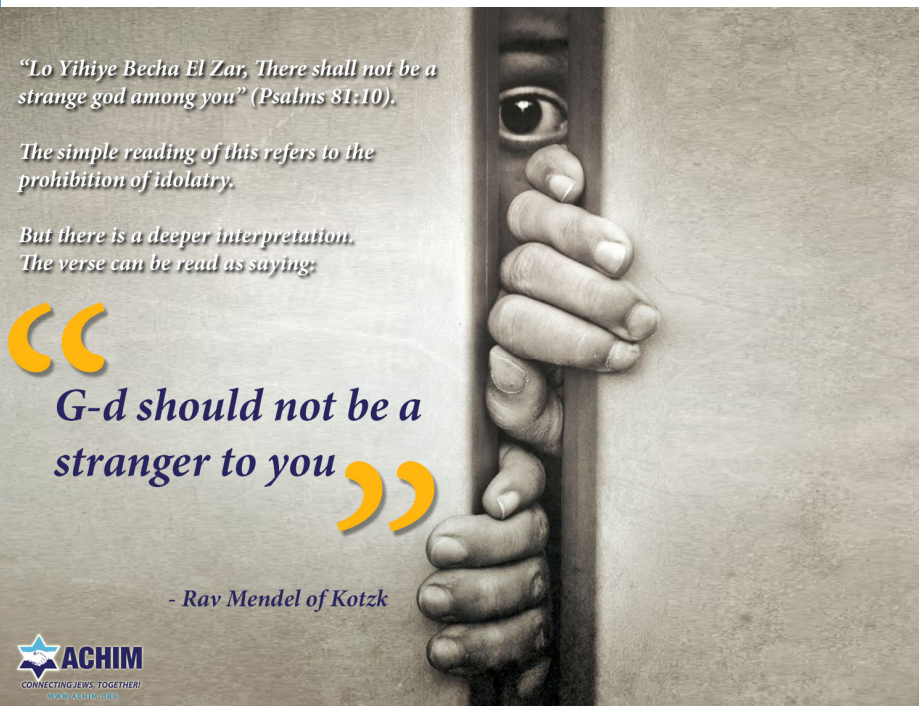
"Lo Yihye Becha El Zar, There shall not be a strange god among you" (Psalms 81:10).

The simple reading of this refers to the prohibition of idolatry.

But there is a deeper interpretation. The verse can be read as saying:

G-d should not be a stranger to you

- Rav Mendel of Kotzk



gave us the Land. The most He gives us is the right to dwell there. Hence, we have lowered the level of requisite worthiness. We do not own the land we simply have rights to live in it. We do not need to be worthy of owning it only dwelling in it. Certainly, the cost of using it is less than the cost of owning it.

Nevertheless, even if we have succeeded in lowering the level of worthiness required to live in the land, the question still remains how does an exile ensure us that merit? The answer is that our relationship with HaShem is not only that we are His chosen people. It is that we are His servants! We actually belong to Him and are His property. We do not even have the basic rights over our identity that the non-Jews have. To illustrate this; if a non-Jew wishes to sell himself as a slave to his neighbor, he may do so and the sale of his self is final. There is no backing out. Just as when he sells his car the sale is final and there is no backing out,

so too, if he sells his very self to his neighbor he no longer has autonomy, the sale is final. A Jew on the other hand, cannot sell himself. If he does attempt to sell his self, the sale is not valid. The reason for this is because HaShem already owns us. We are already owned by Him and do not have those basic rights over our own identity to alter it.

Once we recognize our relationship to HaShem as belonging to Him we no longer need the merit to live in HaShem's estate. A slave is always entitled to live in the estate of his master. This is not to suggest that HaShem may wish to send us out because of one reason or other but the right to live in His estate is guaranteed.

Perhaps the function of the Egyptian exile was to be our boot camp to becoming servants to HaShem. As devastating as it was for us to endure that terrible exile, we came out understanding that we truly owe our very existence to HaShem and He has all the rights to our identity in the most profound way. And everyone is welcome home!

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

MARMOTS: THE ROCK DIGGERS

Last week we learned about the sea otter, a very cute and furry animal. Lets learn about another cute furry animal, with a wide face, short muzzle, small furry ears and a bushy tail, the Marmot.

The marmot is actually a giant squirrel. It is similar to a woodchuck, but instead it can be called a "rock chuck." It chooses to build its burrow under boulders and rocks. Why? Because grizzly bears are its predators. Bears are also aggressive diggers, but the bears can't dig under the rocks. In addition rocks and cliffs also serve as observation sites where the rodents sit upright watching for both terrestrial and aerial predators.

Marmots weigh between 3 and 24 pounds. They are typically 13 to 28 inches from head to tail. The tail can be 4 to 8 inches long. They have a pair of large incisor teeth on the upper and lower jaw that grow continuously. They need to be kept short and sharpened by frequent gnawing. When alarmed, marmots emit a sharp, piercing whistle and scurry to their burrows if danger persists.

Marmots live in groups of one male with two or three females. These groups then live in larger groups called colonies.

Approximately 60% of their life is spent hibernating, and approximately 80% of a marmot's life is spent underground. Marmots are active from March to September. The rest of the year they hibernate, but they can wake up mid winter if necessary.

As we mentioned they are diggers, able to penetrate ground that even a pickaxe would have difficulty with! They dig under boulder fields, rocky slopes, and crevices in cliff faces. Not only are they diggers, they were blessed by HaShem with the insight of engineers. When the time comes to dig its den for the long 9-month hibernation in the cold country it lives in, the marmot must know the engineering of the soil and terrain well. If it makes its winter home in the wrong place, water draining in, may flood and drown the little creature in the spring while it is hibernating.

The marmot's burrow for hibernation is 23 feet below ground, sometimes with a 300-foot tunnel leading to it. They build an extensive dens and burrows systems with multiple entrances, tunnels, and exits that are used for shelter, hibernation, and breeding. When digging its winter home, it stays in high ground, and away from depressions or ravines that can fill with water.

During hibernation they live on fat reserves accumulated during the summer. Their fat reserves amount to 20 percent of their total body weight.

Using the traditional definition of hibernation, marmots are actually considered the largest "true hibernators". Bears do not have the same physiological characteristics as other Obligate hibernating animals. Historically there is a question of whether or not bears truly hibernate since they experience only a modest decline in body temperature (3–5 °C) compared with the much larger decreases (often 32 °C or more) seen in other hibernators. Hibernating bears are able to recycle their proteins and urine, allowing them both to stop urinating for months and to avoid muscle atrophy. They also increase the availability of certain essential amino acids in the muscle, as well as regulate the transcription of a suite of genes that limit muscle wasting.

However Obligate hibernators, like marmots, are animals that spontaneously, and annually, enter hibernation regardless of ambient temperature and access to food. Obligate hibernators include many species of ground squirrels, other rodents, mouse lemurs. Obligate hibernation is a physiological state wherein the body temperature drops nearly to the temperature of their surroundings, and heart and respiration rates slow drastically. For example, during hibernation, Arctic ground squirrels will reach temperatures as low as -2.9 °C (26.8 ° F), maintaining sub-freezing abdominal temperatures for more than three weeks at a time. However, during that time the temperatures at the head and neck remain at 0 °C (32 °F) or above.

Thank you HaShem for showing us Your Wisdom!

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING THAT WILL MAKE YOU HAPPY

One hot summer day, Reb Mendel Kaplan was driving with a talmid on the highway and got lost. Seeing construction in progress at the side of the road, the talmid pulled over to ask the workers for directions. The yeshiva bachur got out of the car to talk to the workers, and was greeted with curses. "Can't you read the signs!" they screamed. "You can't come here!"

Reb Mendel then got out to help his student. A big, bare chested worker came towards Rav Mendel speaking in a disrespectful manner.

Reb Mendel just walked up to him, put his arm over the man's sweaty, grimy shoulder, and said, "You know, you should have respect for me because I'm old enough to be your father.

But I can understand your getting upset like this. I don't see how you can even work on such a hot day. Let me tell you something that will make you happy even on a hot day like today. Because of your work, people will be able to travel easily for years to come; old people, people with children.

Even people with old broken down cars like mine.

And they'll be able to do it only because of your work."

As Rav Mendel spoke, the worker's face lit up. He then gave Reb Mendel elaborate directions to his destination.

From Reb Mendel, By Yisroel Greenwald, Published By Artsroll Msorah. Reprinted with permission from the copyright holders



THE ANSWER

Regarding the question of the Kovna Lawyer, Rav Oshry answered that Jews have a responsibility to do whatever they can to make the killers of the Holocaust be brought to justice and they are not allowed to do anything that may allow them to escape justice. In this case Rav Oshry said that a person who does this should not be the shaliach tzibbur. What happened in the end is interesting. Rav Oshry spoke "from his heart" to the lawyer and the lawyer realized his error. The lawyer became a baal teshuva and davened with the tzibbur every day after that. After a while, the lawyer moved away from Kovna because he was scared that the murderers would take revenge on him for abandoning the case.

MAZEL TOV TO JEWELS FOR THEIR SUCCESSFUL CHARIDY CAMPAIN

Ben Jessurun Agency

Bjessurun@allstate.com • 410-443-0771

Shabbos, Table Talk & Goldberg's Bagels.
מעין עולם הבא!

1500 Reisterstown Rd. | Baltimore | 410-415-7001 | www.goldbergsbagels.com

Rosenbloom PEST-CONTROL
TOTAL CUSTOMER DEDICATON