



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



BUILDING ON YOUR PROPERTY

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Torah portion the Torah makes a reference to the partnership between Yissachar and Zevulun. (Bereishis 49,13) Zevulun would support Yissachar so that they could learn Torah. In return, Yissocher shared the reward and blessing of Torah learning with Zevulun.

This partnership leads us to the following story of partnership.

Four families lived in an apartment building. They all owned the building jointly and they also owned a grassy yard next to the building. One day some of the families raised the idea of converting the yard next to the building into an extension that would greatly increase the size of each of the apartments. Three of the families agreed and thought it was a great



HEAVY PACK, NO SLEEP, GESHMAK!

Before our father Yaakov passes, he blesses his 12 sons, each one with their unique blessing that fits their destiny. To Yissocher he says "Yissocher is a large bone donkey (able to carry heavy loads) and rests between the boundaries (along the road with the loads on his back). And he sees that tranquility is good and lowers his shoulder to take on more burden."

Yaakov's portrayal of Yissocher is that of a donkey who is perpetually carrying a load even when he lays down to sleep. He is always transporting and does not sleep in his barn but rather on the road with his load on his back. At the same time Yaakov tells us that Yissocher appreciates how good tranquility is and continues to lower his shoulder to take on more load. If he appreciates the goodness of tranquility why then does he take on more load? Should he not take a break if that is good?

Our Sages teach us that the load which Yissocher carries is the Torah that he studies. His studying of Torah is not a passing activity but it is a load which he carries with him wherever he goes. Yissocher is the talmid chocham, the Torah scholar, who toils day and night in growing and deepening his understanding of Torah. He sleeps a few hours and is consumed by his studies. He will not walk four cubits without being engrossed in Torah study.

If so, how do we explain "he sees tranquility is good and lowers his shoulder to take on more"? If Yissocher's burden of Torah study is so overwhelming where is the tranquility?

idea. They wanted to extend the apartments into the yard.

One family, the Greens, disagreed. They preferred to have a yard for their children to play in. They also enjoyed the view that the yard offered.

The other three families replied that they were the majority and their interests override the views of the minority.

However, the Greens argued that they had a valid reason to object. The yard was necessary for the kids. In addition, even though the others were a majority, the Greens still owned a significant portion of the yard. If the others would use the yard to build an extension they would be using the land without the Green's permission.

They felt that ownership of the yard was not a democracy that can simply be decided by majority rule. If someone builds on the yard then they are building on the Green's property too, and that is theft.

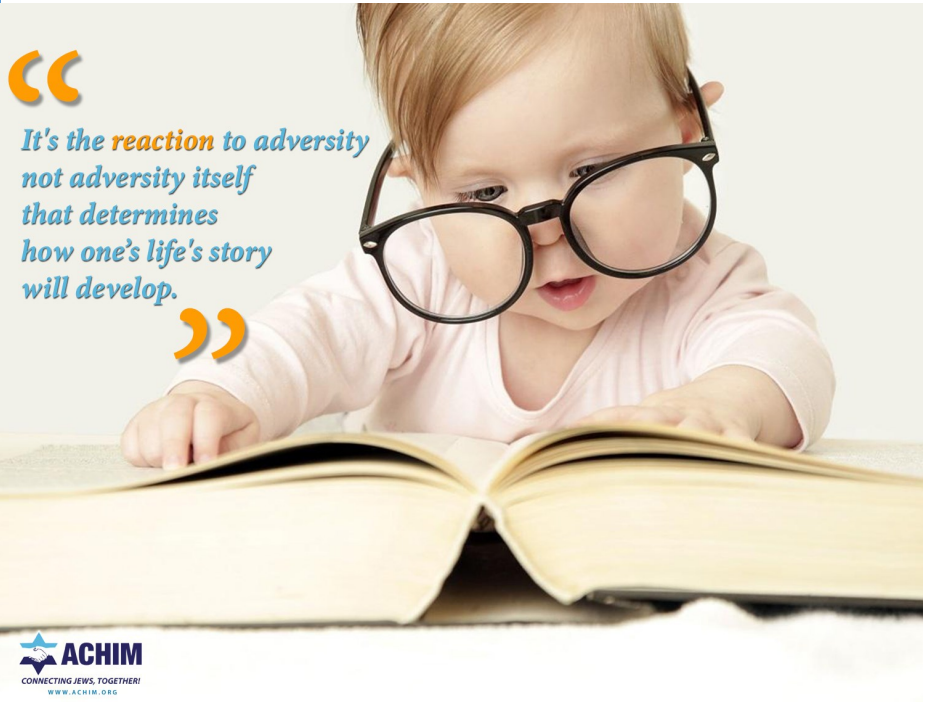
What do you think? Does one family have the right to block the extension? Or does one family have to follow the will of the majority?

See Chashukei Chemed Bava Basra page 83

MITZVA MEME



*It's the **reaction** to adversity not adversity itself that determines how one's life's story will develop.*



While we might define tranquility as peaceful and not having to do heavy labor, nevertheless, it is more correctly associated with being calm and serene. Even if one is involved in heavy labor he may very well be described as tranquil.

As a child, I remember taking note of how those people who are heavily involved in Torah study were the happiest people. There is a special serenity you will find on the face of Torah scholars. In spite of their incredibly difficult schedules and short periods of sleep, they are people whose tranquility is palpable.

The context of Yaakov's blessing seems to indicate that it is specifically the burden of Torah which brings tranquility. Yaakov says that 'Yissocher sees that tranquility is good so he lowers his shoulder to take on more'. How does that work?

The Torah is the Word of HaShem. When one studies Torah, they are engaging in His Word. Studying Torah is actually an experience of communicating with HaShem. The soul of every Jew comes directly from HaShem and yearns to be in His Presence. There is nothing more comforting and nothing more exhilarating for a Jew's soul than to be in communication with Him. The more one takes on, and the more consuming his Torah study is, the greater his experience will be. The heavier the load the greater the joy. The absolute ecstasy one experiences when he suddenly understands a piece of Gemara that he was struggling with is a taste of Heaven! All of life's problems suddenly fade! When that bolt of clarity strikes his whole life is filled with light!

Have a very safe and very wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE FIERCE WOLF

“Benjamin is a wolf who will tear apart (z’ev yitrafi); in the morning he will devour spoils and in the evening he will distribute plunder” Bereishis 49:27. In this week’s parsha, Yaakov Avinu gathers together the 12 tribes and tells them to “listen to Israel your father” in order to give them each a final bracha before his impending demise.

Binyamin – the youngest of the brothers and the last to receive his bracha – is compared to a wolf who will hunt and devour his prey. When we think about wolves, we often do think of them in this manner: as very large and vicious canines, cunning predators who hunt (and live) together in a close-knit pack and who can bring down animals even many times their size. Let’s see what else we can learn about wolves, and how their behavior can teach us more about Jacob’s blessing.

Wolves inhabit all parts of the Northern Hemisphere and can be found in North America, Europe, Asia and North Africa. All wolf species tend to live in the wilderness; they are shy and tend to stay away from human habitation. People generally think that wolves only live where it is very cold, but wolves can also be found in very hot climates, with daytime temperatures over 1000 F. Other species of wolves can be found in swamps, coastal prairies and in temperate forests.

There are 3 species and close to 40 subspecies of wolf, and they display a wide variety of sizes and colors. The most common type is the Grey Wolf – aka the timber wolf, common wolf, or tundra wolf. Adult Grey Wolves can be over 6 feet long and weigh up to 175 lbs. Grey Wolves have thick fur ranging from white to black, but they are usually a shade of grey. The Red Wolf (a less common species) is smaller, growing up to 5½ feet long and weighing half as much as their Grey cousins.

Wolves live, hunt and travel in packs. A pack will have only one alpha male and one alpha female (his mate) and the pack will most always consist only of these parents and their young, altogether having between 10 and 30 individual wolves. Each wolf pack stands alone and they will guard its territory against all intruders, including other wolves. On average, a wolf will live 4 to 8 years in the wild.

Wolves are nocturnal, sleeping during the day and hunting for food

at night. They are carnivores, eating the meat they have hunted. Wolves are voracious eaters and can eat up to 20 lbs of food in one meal – akin to a human eating one hundred hamburgers (hence the expression “to wolf it down”)! A single wolf is capable of catching and killing a deer unaided; but when hunting as a pack they are formidable and can prey on much larger animals, including deer, elk, and moose. They are also known to prey on domestic animals, such as goats, sheep and cattle.

A wolf pack has remarkable powers of endurance and has been known to follow their target for days and nights on end. Wolves are not particularly fast (with a top speed of only ~ 28mph), but they are very persistent. Here we have an excellent example of the expression “slow and steady wins the race”.

Wolves in a pack will develop very close relationships and strong social bonds. They demonstrate deep affection for their clan members and may sacrifice themselves to protect the family unit. Pups and young wolves are cared for by all the adult wolves in the pack. They live, work, sleep, hunt and play together. When wolves howl, they are communicating with other members of their pack ... and warning others to stay clear of their territory. A wolf which has been driven from the pack or has left of its own accord is called a “lone wolf”; a lone wolf is an unhappy wolf.

So, what have we learned about wolves? They are adaptable and make their homes in a variety of environments, but they thrive in the ‘wilderness’. They work together to sustain their tribe and are fierce in defending their territory. They are devoted family members, loving each and every member unconditionally, and will do anything to protect them.

Targum Onkelos gives a midrashic ‘translation’ to Binyamin’s blessing, explaining that since the Bais HaMikdash stands in his portion of the Land, he is to distribute the “plunder” of the Kohanim (i.e. the karbanos offered there) to those who come to worship in his “territory” (i.e. Yerushalayim) – taking care of both the physical and spiritual needs of his brethren (see Rashi). Comparing Binyamin to a wolf is an apt analogy indeed. Yehi ratzon sheh yi’baneh Bais HaMikdash bim’heirah b’yameinu!

Ed. by Avraham Cohen

THE IMPRESSION OF THOSE FIRST WORDS, 'I DIDN'T GET IT,' WOULD REMAIN, FOREVER TAINTING THE JOY

The name of Rav Boruch Ber Leibovitz, the Kamenitzer Rosh Yeshiva, has become synonymous with lomdus, a penetratingly deep insight into each word of the Gemara.

But Rav Baruch Ber was a lamdan in another area as well, and possessed an equally keen perception of the practicalities of life. Many aspiring talmidei chachamim from across Europe sought letters of semicha, Rabbinical ordination, from Rav Boruch Ber. However, it wasn't easy to procure a letter from him. Reb Boruch Ber had his own standards, and would keep potential Rabbanim in his yeshiva for a full week, watching how they davened, how they ate and how they interacted with others. Talmudic proficiency wasn't enough to become a Rav, and the Rosh Yeshiva wanted to see the whole picture.

One day a young Kollel man entered Reb Boruch Ber's office, and introduced himself, asking to be tested for semicha. Reb Boruch Ber told him to unpack and get settled, and they would find time to speak in learning over the course of the week. The visitor was surprised. He had expected the entire process to take one day and had told his wife that he would return that night. He asked Reb Boruch Ber if he could return home immediately and inform his wife that he would be away for the whole week, and would then return to Kamenitz. Reb Boruch Ber thought for a moment, and then told the fellow to sit down. He began to test him. After an arduous exam, he wrote him a beautiful letter of approbation. The talmidim asked their Rosh Yeshiva why he had deviated from his tradition of keeping applicants in Yeshiva for an entire week.

Reb Boruch Ber explained what had occurred. "Let us imagine the scene had I allowed that yungerman to return home and ask his wife for permission to spend the week here in Kamenitz. She would have heard him coming and anticipated his joyous announcement that he had received the semicha. He would then enter and his first words to her would be that he didn't get it... but he would then proceed to explain to her how he hadn't yet taken the exam and would have to go back.

However, the impression of those first words, 'I didn't get it,' would remain, forever tainting the joy that she would eventually feel when he got the semicha later. Even when he would get it later, she would always remain with a vague feeling of disappointment, that it hadn't been perfect." Rav Baruch Ber did want to allow that to happen.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's questions about the kidney miracle, Rav Elyashiv Zt"l answered that the doctor is exempt to pay any damages, and the woman is obligated to pay the doctor. But she is obligated to pay the costs of removing a cancer and not the more expensive costs of a kidney transplant.

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