



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE WASTED MEAL

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion talks about the mitzvah of returning what you stole. This leads us to the following true story.

Avi went to a hotel in Israel overlooking the Dead Sea. He had a wonderful time at the hotel and especially enjoyed the fact that the hotel offered complimentary meals for the hotel's guests.

Avi invited his friend Yaakov to join him at the hotel. The two met in the lobby and they spent some time together. For lunch Avi invited Yaakov to join him. He went to the hot buffet and filled up two plates with delicious food. Yaakov noticed the sign by the buffet table saying "For



IF HELPLESS THEN HOPEFUL

With the situation in Israel on my mind I would like to pass up a discussion on the Parsha and focus on what is occurring both in Israel and in the world. After Shavuot I went to check up the latest news in Israel hoping that we succeeded in bringing quiet to the region. Unfortunately, I discovered how far away that moment seems to be considering the other arenas where the conflict is playing out; in the streets of Israel, in the fermenting of public opinion here in America and the world as well as nasty legislators in Washington. This discovery was disappointing. Why should it be so difficult for the IDF, a well armed and well trained army with soldiers who are patriotic and go to battle with good cheer and many of whom trust in HaShem?

After some consideration I remembered a profound insight learned from the prayer of the Kohein Gadol on Yom Kippur when he entered the Kodosh Hakadoshim. This was the person who carried the most sanctity on the day that carried the most sanctity in the place that contained the most sanctity. His very short prayer when he entered was that HaShem not listen to the prayer of the traveler. Apparently, this request from HaShem was the most significant request for the welfare of our people. Why?! What was the prayer of the traveler?

Our Sages teach us that the Kohein Gadol was referring to the weary traveler who is traveling during the rain season on the dirt road either by foot or by horse and suddenly it begins to rain. This rain could delay his travel for a long time and can certainly make life miserable for him till he gets to his destination. He knows that there is nobody that can help at that moment other than HaShem. He is helpless, he needs it to stop NOW! So with complete focus he turns to HaShem in prayer knowing that He can stop the rain and davens "Please stop the rain!". In his helpless situation he offers

paying hotel guests only". They went to Avi's room together and sat down and enjoyed the view.

Avi handed a plate to Yaakov saying, "Here, enjoy this meal". Yaakov said, "I'm not sure I'm allowed to eat this meal. I'm not a guest here and I didn't pay for it". Avi thought that it was okay. "It's like you're taking part of my meal. Nobody will mind. They have so much food here and a lot of it goes to waste anyway." Yaakov still felt that it was wrong to take the meal without paying for it. Avi said, "If you don't eat it then it'll go in the garbage. I'm putting it aside near the garbage cans to be thrown out." At this point Yaakov felt if it was going in the garbage he might as well eat it to save it from being wasted. It would be an aveira of Baal tashchis to throw it out. Once Avi planned to throw it out, Yaakov felt justified in eating it, to prevent it from being wasted.

But Yaakov left the hotel feeling unsure. Did he have to go back to the hotel to offer to pay for the meal? On one hand it was going in the garbage and it was ownerless but on the other hand, he ate the hotel's food and he didn't pay for it.

What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Beresihis Page 102

**“If Hashem Does Not Protect The City
All Other Defense Forces Are Meaningless.”**

**Dovid Hamelech
(Psalm 127:1)**



a sincere and focused prayer relying on nobody other than HaShem. Such a prayer will succeed in stopping the rain.

As long as there are travelers in this situation the rain will never come. The economy of Israel is primarily agriculture and without rain the welfare of our nation will decline. It was therefore a most appropriate prayer for the Kohein Gadol on Yom Kippur.

The obvious question is that on the other side of that traveler was an entire nation praying that it should rain. Everybody, including that traveler, needs rain. We know that the prayer of the community is much stronger than the prayer of the individual. Why will HaShem pay attention to the traveler's prayer over the prayer of the larger community?

The answer is that although the entire nation davens to HaShem for rain, they do not turn their entire focus and their entire trust to HaShem because they know that sooner or later it will rain; after all it is the rain season. Even though every member of our nation

is cognizant that only HaShem makes it rain, nevertheless, the sense of urgency which would drive our focus and trust to reach 100% is lacking.

Our Sages are teaching us that the focused prayer of one individual whose request will hurt that nation is more powerful than the prayer of the entire nation that is not totally focused. It can even override the welfare of the entire nation!

So long as we harbor a sense of security behind the IDF and feel confident that with their patriotism and their good cheer and commitment, our complete focus and complete trust in Him will be lacking. We will simply wait till the IDF finishes the job, and ask HaShem to help them. We are not helpless.

While it is true that the IDF is an incredible force and they have a yiddishe kup with guts and guns, nevertheless, we must recognize how we ARE in a helpless situation and nobody can grant us security, except HaKadosh baruch Hu!

May HaShem help us realize our helplessness without any more pain and answer our subsequent prayers immediately!

Have a very wonderful Shabbos

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

SESAME

Last week we learned about the poppy seed. A few weeks ago we learned about salt. This week, let's learn about salt and poppy's neighbor in a bagel, the sesame seed.

The Sesame seed has one of the highest oil content of any seed. Sesame seed is one of the oldest seeds harvested for its oil, and it was domesticated well over 3000 years ago. Sesame seed is considered to be the oldest oilseed crop known to humanity.

We will see that oil and fat is reflected in its name. The word "sesame" comes from Latin *sesamum* and Greek *sēsamon*. But etymologists say that those words come from Aramaic and Hebrew words, *shumshum*. The root of *shumshum* derives from *shuman* or *shemen* which means fat. The doubling of *shum*, *shumshum*, indicates very much fat. This of course is because *shumshum* was harvested for its high oil content.

Chalva is derived from sesame with added sugar or honey. It has been in use since ancient times. Babylonian women used to eat it to preserve their beauty and youth; Roman soldiers to get energy and keep their strength. Even today it's very popular in the Middle East. Why is it called Chalva? Chalva means fat in Hebrew, and in Arabic it means sweet.

Sesame seeds are ground and made into a paste called *techina*. *Techina* comes from the Arabic word *tachana* which means crush. Of course the origin of the Arabic word is the Hebrew word, *tochen*, to crush.

Sesame is also a common component of the spice mixture *za'atar*, popular throughout the Middle East.

You've likely heard of the term "Open Sesame". Where is that from? To explain we need a bit of background. Sesame fruit is a rectangular capsule. The length of the fruit varies from about half an inch to 4 inches. When the seeds are ripe the capsule bursts releasing a pop sound. The opening of the capsule releases the "treasure" of sesame seeds. In the story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" first written by the 18th century French archeologist Antoine Galland, the phrase "Open Sesame" magically opens a sealed cave to reveal a treasure.

Archaeological remnants suggest that sesame was first

domesticated in the Indian subcontinent more than 5000 years ago. Charred remains of sesame recovered from archeological excavations have been dated to 3500-3050 BCE. Archeologists claim that trading of sesame between Mesopotamia and the Indian subcontinent occurred by 2000 BCE. It is possible that the Indus Valley Civilization first exported sesame oil to Mesopotamia.

Why was sesame a common ancient crop? Why is it commonly found in the Middle East? One unique aspect about sesame is that it can survive a drought and keep growing. It's called a "survivor crop". Sesame is drought-tolerant, in part due to its extensive root system.

Hashem gave Sesame the special ability to grow in areas that do not support the growth of other crops. It is also a robust crop that needs little farming support—it grows in drought conditions, in high heat, with residual moisture in soil after monsoons are gone or even when rains fail or when rains are excessive. It was a crop that could be grown by subsistence farmers at the edge of deserts, where no other crops grow.

Let's learn about the sesame plant itself. Sesame is an annual plant that grows 1.6 to 3.3 ft tall, with opposite leaves 1.6 to 5.5 inches long. It makes flowers that are tubular, 1.2 to 2 inches long, with a four-lobed mouth.

We are mostly familiar with off white sesame seeds. But sesame seeds occur in many colors. The most traded variety of sesame is off-white. Other common colors are buff, tan, gold, brown, reddish gray and black. The color is the same for the hull and the fruit.

Myanmar (formerly called Burma) has the greatest world production of sesame. In 2010, it produced over 722,900 million tons of seeds, 18.84% of world production. The black and darker-colored sesame seeds are mostly produced in China and Southeast Asia.

Here is an interesting fun fact. McDonald's buys 75% of all of Mexican sesame production just for the sesames that they use on top of their buns. That's a lot of buns!

DON'T TEACH GEMORA. TEACH TALMIDIM

Rabbi Yisrael Reisman told over the following story: Before I began teaching at the Yeshiva of Torah Vadaath, I met with Rabbi Avraham Pam, and sought his guidance. At the end of one of our conversations, I presented something that troubled me:

"Occasionally, we see Rebbeim who are 'burnt out,' who no longer have the fire that is necessary for successful teaching. How do I make sure this doesn't happen to me?"

Rav Pam's answer, typically, was brief but to the point.

"Some Rebbeim teach Gemora. They are in danger of losing their sipuk (sense of satisfaction). Don't teach Gemora. Teach talmidim. Focus on the person, not the subject."

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Pictured: Top, Rabbi Yisrael Reisman, Bottom, Rav Avraham Pam



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the parking lot, Rav Zilberstein answered that the thief would have to pay all the customers he collected money from, as they never should have been charged. Because it is unlikely that he can find all of them, he should donate the money to "tzorchei rabim" something that will benefit the public. See Upiryo Matok Bamidbar page 29

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of the best neighbors (across the street) and in memory of our beloved **Yehudah Chaim Kashnow z'l**
By Bonnie Blas Kashnow, Ariella and Adina

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