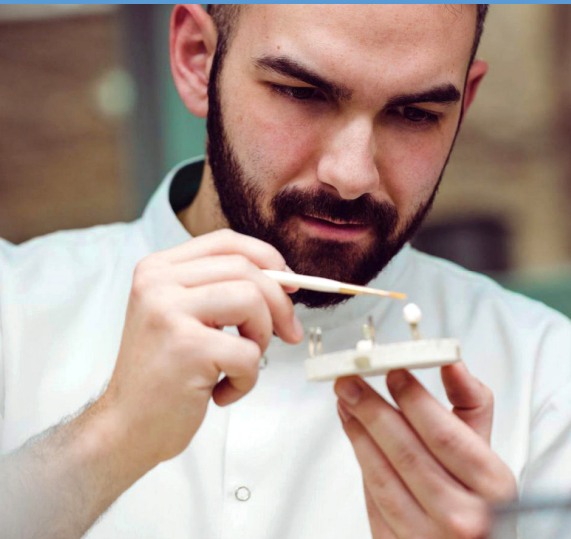




A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE FLAWED CROWN

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

The next Torah portion we read is Zos Habracha. The Torah says "He (HaShem) is King among Yeshurun (Klal Yisrael), when the heads of the people gather together". (Devarim 33,5)

Rashi comments that this means that when we gather together and have peace among each other, that is when HaShem is our King.

In addition to this indication of our peaceful gathering, Succos is Chag Ha'asif, the festival of gathering. Many commentators say that this is an allusion to the fact that Klal Yisrael reunites with each other after the forgiveness of Yom Kippur.

This leads us to the following true story that was recently emailed to us.

Baruch needed a crown and went to his dentist, Dr. Stein. When the crown came in from the lab, Dr. Stein noticed that there was a flaw in the material.

In fact, this was the second time this happened. The first time the crown came in with a flaw, Dr. Stein sent it back to the lab to be remade.



THE NOTES

For the past several weeks we have been using the parallel of the orchestra to gain a taste of our holidays. We understand Rosh Hashanah as our commitment to participate in the orchestra and to accept the direction from our Conductor. On the days leading up to Yom Kippur we prepared to remove any barriers that would interfere with the communication between the Conductor and ourselves. On Yom Kippur the Conductor Himself removed those barriers. During the subsequent days we prepared for our performance by gathering the instruments and preparing the symphony hall in which to perform. Finally, on Succos we actually perform. With our Lulav and Esrog in hand and our hearts swelling with joy that we have been chosen to perform and be so close to the Conductor, we sing our Hallel in perfect harmony to our Conductor. Every Jew performs with the instruments he was given following the notes that are designed for him. Even the non-Jews will come to hear the performance; they are, after all, the audience.

This is the destiny of our people - to sing the composition composed by HaShem in front of the entire world and have them appreciate the Grandeur of our Conductor. With the conclusion of Succos the performance concludes, the guests go home and we have completed our mission. What is the celebration of Shmini Atzeres? What is left to celebrate?

It is those notes from which we learn what to play. Those are the notes that the Conductor Himself gave us. These notes have no parallel.

In symphony orchestra every instrument has its respective set of notes. There may be

However this time, Dr. Stein told Baruch, "You know what, let's go ahead and use this one, if it breaks we'll take care of it."

Dr. Stein never explicitly said he would take care of it for free, but that was how Baruch understood it. Baruch understood that if it would break, Dr. Stein would replace it free of any charge.

Understanding that he might have to get it replaced, Baruch agreed to use the flawed crown.

Sure enough after about a year the crown broke because of the flaw. The lab agreed to replace the crown under warranty. However, the dental insurance company would not cover the costs of the reinstallation of the crown.

When Baruch came back to Dr. Stein to get the crown replaced, the dentist realized that the reinstallation would not be covered by insurance. He asked Baruch if he was OK with paying \$200 to cover his time for installing the new crown.

After Dr. Stein asked him this question, Baruch felt torn. He felt that it was Dr. Stein's decision to use the flawed crown. He could have sent it back like he had done in the past.

Furthermore, Dr. Stein implied that he wouldn't charge Baruch anything if the crown failed and needed to be replaced, by saying "if it breaks we will take care of it."

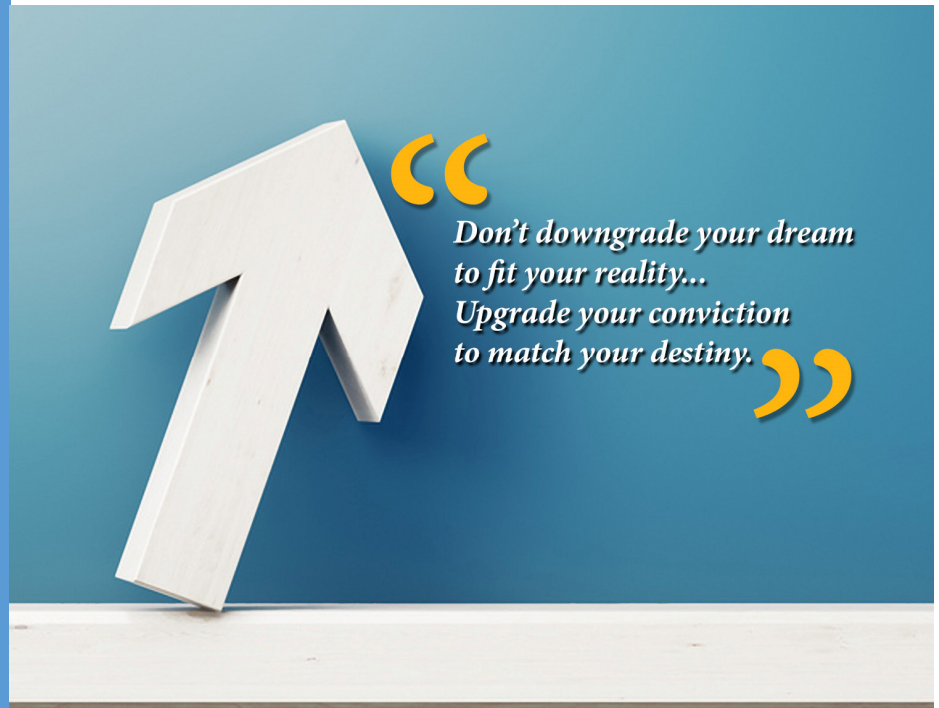
Baruch never would have agreed to use the flawed crown if he thought he would have any responsibility. On the other hand, however, Baruch understood the possible risks and he consented to go ahead with it.

Baruch wondered if he had an obligation to pay the \$200 to replace the crown.

What do you think?

If you have a true mitzvah dilemma that you would like us to share, please email it to rabiweiner@gmail.com

MITZVA MEME



several violins playing the same notes but the oboes have their own set of notes and the clarinet has his own and so on. The conductor has everyone's notes and directs everyone accordingly. If everyone shared the same notes nobody would know which part is theirs and which part is their neighbor's.

The Torah, however, which are the notes written by HaShem for our performance are quite the opposite. There is only one Torah and it never changes. The Torah that Moshe wrote is the very same Torah that Yeshayahu studied and it is the very same Torah that Rashi studied. The very same Torah that the Vilna Gaon studied is the same Torah that my grandson studies as well. Those notes are so rich because they carry the Names of HaShem Himself. His genius is infinite and His Names are infinite. Just as every person has his unique insight and experiences which generate his unique understanding, so too, the Torah that

every person studies and the Torah they learn carries a tune which is unique to them. There will be nobody else who will express it in quite the same way. It is the combined Torah which every Jew studies and the mitzvos that every Jew performs; everyone in their unique way, that creates the symphony which expresses the Will of the Conductor. It is for this symphony that HaShem created the world.

Our symphony has no parallel because we are not merely being directed by the conductor, we are actually playing the notes which carry the Name of the Conductor. The music generated is not coming from our personal instruments alone but it is an expression of the Conductor Himself through the filter of each member of the orchestra.

If we are to remain true to our parallel of the orchestra let us consider Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah as the cast party. Now that we have performed our symphony, and the guests have gone, it is time to celebrate with the other musicians, with the Conductor and certainly with the Notes!

Have a wonderful Shabbos and a joyous Simchas Torah!

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE GIANT

According to scientists, the largest creature on our planet is the blue whale. It is the largest animal known to have ever existed.

A blue whale can reach a length of 100 feet. It is about twice the length of an 18 wheeler tractor trailer. Next time you are on the highway and pass a tractor trailer appreciate that a blue whale is nearly twice as long as that.

Scientists estimate that there are between 10,000 and 25,000 blue whales worldwide today.

The blue whale weighs up to 170 tons. That is 340,000 pounds, the weight of 2,267 people weighing about 150 pounds each.

A baby blue whale (calf) emerges weighing up to 60,000 lbs and up to 26 feet long. What a baby!

The tongue of a blue whale alone, weighs more than an elephant!

The blue whale has seven stomachs and eats a million calories a day. Despite being so massive, this giant of the ocean feeds on some of the smallest marine life; tiny shrimp eat sea animals called krill. An adult blue whale can eat up to 40 million krill in a day.

The front part of the mouth is thick with baleen plates; around 300 plates, each one a meter (3.3 feet) long, hang from the upper jaw, running 20 inches back into the mouth. There is what looks like a moustache of long bristles on the end of each plate to help it hold the minute prey. The whale feeds by lunging forward at groups of krill, taking the animals and a large quantity of water into its mouth. With each mouthful, the whale can hold up to 11,000 lbs of water and plankton. (Think about that. Think about how much water is in an Olympic size pool. The Blue Whale swallows two Olympic pools in one gulp!) The water is then squeezed out through the baleen plates by pressure from the ventral pouch and tongue. Once the mouth is clear of water, the remaining krill, unable to pass through the plates, are swallowed. The whale licks these bristles with its fleshy tongue.

Remarkably, despite the size of its mouth, the dimensions of its throat are

such that the blue whale cannot swallow an object wider than a beach ball.

A blue whale has eight tons of blood and a 1,000-pound heart to pump it.

Blue whales can reach speeds of 30 miles per hour. They cover up to 283.221 miles per day. They typically swim at a depth of about 43 feet in order to eliminate drag from surface waves. The deepest confirmed dive is 1,660 feet.

Although the blue whale is a deep-water hunter, as a mammal, it must come to the surface of the sea to breathe. When it surfaces, it exhales air out of a blowhole in a cloud of pressurized vapor that rises vertically above the water, up to 30 feet high.

The whales' only natural predator is the orca, the killer whale. Studies report that as many as 25% of mature blue whales have scars resulting from orca attacks. The mortality rate of such attacks is unknown.

Though we can't hear them, blue whales are one of the loudest animals on the planet, communicating with each other using a series of low frequency pulses, groans, and moans. The reason why we can't hear it even though it is so loud is that blue whale make calls at a frequency of 10 Hz; the lowest frequency sound a human can typically perceive is 20 Hz.

It is thought that in good conditions blue whales can hear each other across distances of up to 1,000 miles.

What are blue whales saying when they talk to each other? Scientists are not sure but have six possible suggestions: Maintenance of inter-individual distance, Species and individual recognition, Contextual information transmission (for example feeding, alarm, courtship), Maintenance of social organization (for example contact calls between females and males), Location of topographic features, and Location of prey resources.

The blue whale is one of the longest-living animals, it can live up to 120 years.

Thank you Hashem for showing us your wisdom.

IF THEY FIND ME SLEEPING I WANT THEM TO HAVE SOMETHING TO DO

In past weeks we shared stories about how our Torah leaders were exceptional at considering things that many of us might overlook. Here are two other examples of how the small things are what distinguish big people.

Rav Avraham Pam, zt'l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaas, once had to be hospitalized. When he went to the hospital he took the time to make sure to bring along an English book with stories about gedolim. He put the book on a table near his hospital bed.

Knowing that Rav Pam wasn't going to be reading it in the hospital, someone asked him why he had brought it.

"I know that people are going to be coming to visit me," Rav Pam explained, "and I am sure some will arrive and find me sleeping. If they find me sleeping I want them to have something to do while they are waiting."

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt'l once attended the wedding of a member of a distinguished family. Their daughter was getting married to a very fine young man. This family had the custom that the chassan would give a derashah (Torah talk) at the wedding meal to the guests.

At the banquet, before beginning to speak, the chassan turned to Rav Elyashiv to ask his permission to speak before him.

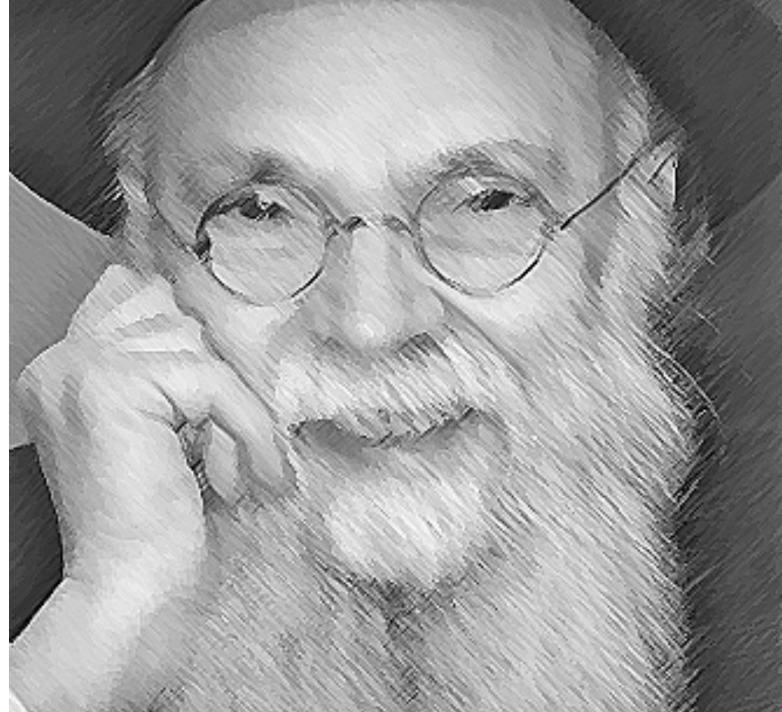
Rav Elyashiv sensed that the chassan was nervous and uncomfortable about speaking. Rav Elyashiv also sensed that the chassan felt compelled to speak because that was the custom of his new in-laws.

So Rav Elyashiv replied in a loud voice,

"Today, derashos?" Today, people come to a wedding to eat and enjoy themselves."

When the in-laws heard Rav Elyashiv say this, they decided to forgo the customary derasha.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding the question of putting one name in the Torah, Rav Zilberstien said it was permitted because the second family made the writing of the Torah possible.

We express our great appreciation to

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for the printing of this week's TableTalk.

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