



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE BURNING STAMP

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, Bereishis, Hashem says: Yehi Ohr, let there be light. This leads us to the following story.

Yaakov was a stamp collector and he had a very rare collection of stamps. One day Eli, a stamp connoisseur as well, asked if he could visit Yaakov and look at his collection. Eli came over and admired Yaakov's stamps. Yaakov took out two stamps from behind a glass frame. "Eli, do you see these stamps, there are the only two of their kind in the entire world."

"Yes," Eli said, "I know. I am aware of their value. They are each worth 2000 dollars because they are so rare."

"Can I look at them a bit more closely?" Eli asked. "Sure" Yaakov said. Eli picked up one of the stamps and held it close to his face.

Suddenly Eli took a lighter out of his pocket. "You don't mind if I light up here", Eli said, and he proceeded to burn up one of the rare



APPRECIATION; THE VERY FIRST EXPECTATION

Immediately following the seven days of creation the Torah tells us that HaShem did not bring rain to the world. In spite of all the vegetation being created on the third day no plant began its growth until the first rain. That first rain did not occur until after Adam was created on the sixth day. The reason HaShem waited for Man to arrive was because there was nobody who would appreciate the rain. Adam knew that rain was needed and he davened that it should rain. It was only after his prayer and his recognition did HaShem bring rain to the world.

This is the very first expectation HaShem had from Adam; appreciation.

Before any interaction between HaShem and Adam takes place the Torah establishes what the purpose of this world is; that Man should have appreciation to HaShem for all that He does and for all that He gives. Appreciation is the glue that bonds relationships. The deeper the appreciation is, the stronger the bond will be. Every page of our siddur is filled with expressions of our dependence upon His Kindness and of our appreciation for that Kindness

From time to time we encounter moments when we lose someone or something or are about to lose someone or something. At these moments we suddenly get a surge of appreciation for that gift. If we do not actually lose that gift, we cherish it so much more than we did before. I have a friend who survived cancer and continues a healthy life for many years.

stamps!

Poof! The stamp burned to ash in a matter of seconds.

Yaakov could not believe what he just saw.

"How could you have burned my rare stamp?," Yaakov cried.

Eli said, "Yaakov please calm down. I caused you no harm. In fact I greatly helped you. You see up till now each of the stamps was worth \$2000 because they were so rare. But now that this stamp is the only one left in the world it is worth far more. I know that it is now worth a million dollars! In fact, I know someone that might want to buy it from you".

But Yaakov replied, "I don't care how much this is worth now. You had no right to destroy one of the stamps. I'd like you to pay for the damage you did, of course".

But Eli replied with a smile. "What damage? I didn't cause you any loss. Now instead of having two stamps worth \$4000 total, you have one stamp worth 1 million dollars. I helped you, why should I pay you?"

"I don't care about the value", Yaakov retorted. "I had two stamps that meant a lot to me, and now you destroyed one."

Eli, replied, "perhaps you should pay me for greatly increasing the value of your assets!"

This question was brought before Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein.

Granted that it was not nice of Eli to destroy the stamp without asking. But after the fact, did Eli have to pay Yaakov for burning his stamp? Eli burned Yaakov's property but he actually increased the value of Yaakov's assets. Perhaps Yaakov would have to pay Eli for increasing the value of his stamps?

See Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama page 44

MITZVA MEME



Every day he recites Modeh Ani multiple times a day. His appreciation of life has increased many fold.

In light of this great lesson I wish to take the opportunity to express our appreciation to all the partners who make TableTalk a reality.

We are now in our sixth year of production. Everyone who reads the front page and back page knows that the Star-K is our biggest sponsor as well as our other corporate sponsors. Without our weekly sponsorship for the printing it would not be possible. It is to all of these sponsors that I and Reb Yitzi Weiner have much hakaras hatov. I am certain that our readers share that hakaras hatov as well.

On a personal note, my debt of gratitude that goes to

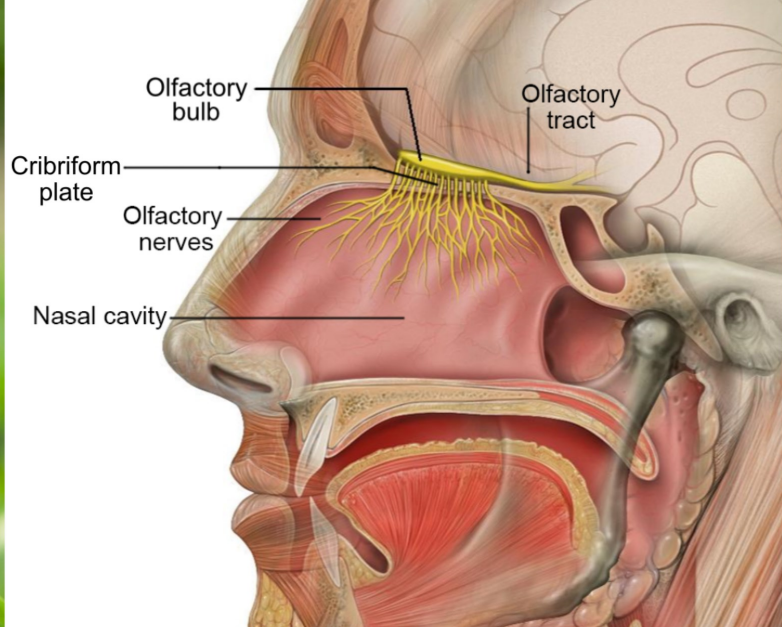
Reb Yitzi Weiner who is the master of this publication is great. He runs his own business but always gives priority to TableTalk.

There is however, one partner that perhaps nobody knows of other than Reb Yitzi and I. The cost of printing TableTalk on high gloss paper with outstanding clarity costs about \$1.70 at Staples. We could never afford to print it at that cost. Bais Yaakov and their IT staff have been so extremely generous to print every week's issue at their cost, making it possible for us to print over 800 copies weekly so that our community can have enhanced Shabbos seudos.

In the spirit of appreciation and all of what Yiddishkeit teaches, Reb Yitzi and I wish to express our deepest appreciation to Reb Zalman Nissel, BY's CEO, his incredible IT staff and the entire Bais Yaakov family for always being there to make TableTalk available for the community.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos and a guten vinter!

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

SMELL

In the past few weeks, we learned about the smells of the chelbona and besamim. This week I had a stuffed nose, and I was unable to smell. It struck me that even if a small part of my nose was blocked, I was unable to smell. How exactly does our nose allow us to smell?

Let's look at this a bit deeper together.

Up on the roof of the nasal cavity (the space behind your nose) is the olfactory epithelium (pronounced: ol-FAK-tuh-ree eh-puh-THEE-lee-um). Olfactory means 'related to smell'. The olfactory epithelium contains special receptors that are sensitive to odor molecules that travel through the air. These receptors are very small — there are about 10 million of them in your nose! There are hundreds of different types of odor receptors, each with the ability to sense certain odor molecules. One odor can stimulate several different kinds of receptors. The brain interprets the combination of receptors to recognize as many as one trillion different smells.

When odor molecules bind to the receptors, this causes an electrical response that spreads through the nerve fibers at the top of the nasal cavity. When the smell receptors are stimulated, signals travel along the olfactory nerve to the olfactory bulb. The olfactory bulb is right underneath the front of your brain, just above the nasal cavity. Signals are sent from the olfactory bulb to other parts of the brain to be interpreted as a smell you may recognize. Take a moment to appreciate the genius behind all of these. These tiny nerves at the top of your nasal cavity can detect the difference between a trillion different smells!

Did you ever have an experience where you smell something unpleasant, but no one else can smell it? This is because we all have different combinations of odor-detecting cells in our noses, so people vary greatly in their sensitivity to smells. Two people can smell the same thing but perceive it completely differently. Most of these differences are caused by genetic differences.

Why are we unable to smell when we have a cold?

When one has a cold, flu, or sinusitis, there is swelling and a lot more mucus in the nose. The mucus and swelling in the nose prevent the smell (odorant) from reaching the top of the nasal cavity. Hence the smell never reaches the smell nerves, and the nerves are not stimulated. But after your nose or sinus infection settles, the swelling and excessive mucus resolves. The odorant is then able to reach the smell nerve fibers again. Hence, you regain your sense of smell.

You likely have heard that people who have COVID can lose their sense of smell, even if their nose is not stuffed. Why does this occur? Scientists have discovered that the SARS-CoV-2 virus damages some of the cells that support the sensory neurons in your nose. It damages support cells that provide structural and metabolic support. The COVID virus doesn't cause long-term damage to the actual sensory cells, but it attacks the support cells that assist in smelling.

There are some viruses, however, that damage the sensory neurons in our nose directly. That can lead to long-term or permanent loss of smell called Anosmia.

We know that when we have a cold, we are unable to taste as well. Why not? This is because much of our perception of the taste of the food is really our olfactory system smelling the food in our mouth! Chewing your food releases aromas that travel from your mouth and throat to the nose. Without smell, we can detect only five basic tastes: sweet, salty, bitter, sour, and umami (savory). But our brains incorporate information from both taste and smell receptors to create the perception of many more different flavors.

The sense of smell is closely linked with memory, probably more so than any of our other senses. We know that smells evoke particular memories. Smell is also highly emotive. Much of our emotional response to smell is governed by an association, so a positive memory will be linked to positive smells. Because of this, not only is a loss of smell hard because we are unable to smell and taste, but smell loss can affect one's ability to form and maintain close personal relationships and can lead to depression. An important issue here is the fact that smell loss is invisible to all but the patient. Because so much of memory is triggered by smell, losing one's sense of smell can result in the loss of an important sentimental pathway to memories.

Here is an interesting fact. We learned above that flavor is a result of the interaction between smell and taste. In rodents, scientists are able to detect the convergence between sound and smell. That is called Smound: Sound and smells converge in the olfactory tubercles of rodents which gives it a new perception.

Scientists suspect that humans may also experience smound. This can mean that certain foods will taste better based on the sounds that are played while eating them.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous creation!

'REB YISROEL AND SHEPHERDS OF SHEEP'

Reb Yisroel Salanter was very sick in the latter part of his life. During that period, Reb Yisroel would move from place to place spreading his teachings of Mussar. It was known that he would tell his hosts, wherever he would be, that in the event of sickness that may occur on Shabbos they were not allowed to desecrate Shabbos to save his life.

The reason for this strange request was because Reb Yisroel felt that he fell under the category of 'shepherds of sheep'. The Gemara teaches us in regards to such shepherds in the event they are found in a life threatening circumstance on Shabbos one may not desecrate the Shabbos to save them. The reason for this ruling is because, as a general rule, such shepherds steal from the public by having their sheep pasture on property that is not theirs. They are therefore considered "gozeil es harabim" and as such, they are subject to this status.

Reb Yisroel explained to his hosts; "the community supports me because they believe I am such a great tzadik and yorei shamayim. The truth, however, is that I am not who they think I am. Their support is actually not deserved and therefore I am a "gozeil es harabim".

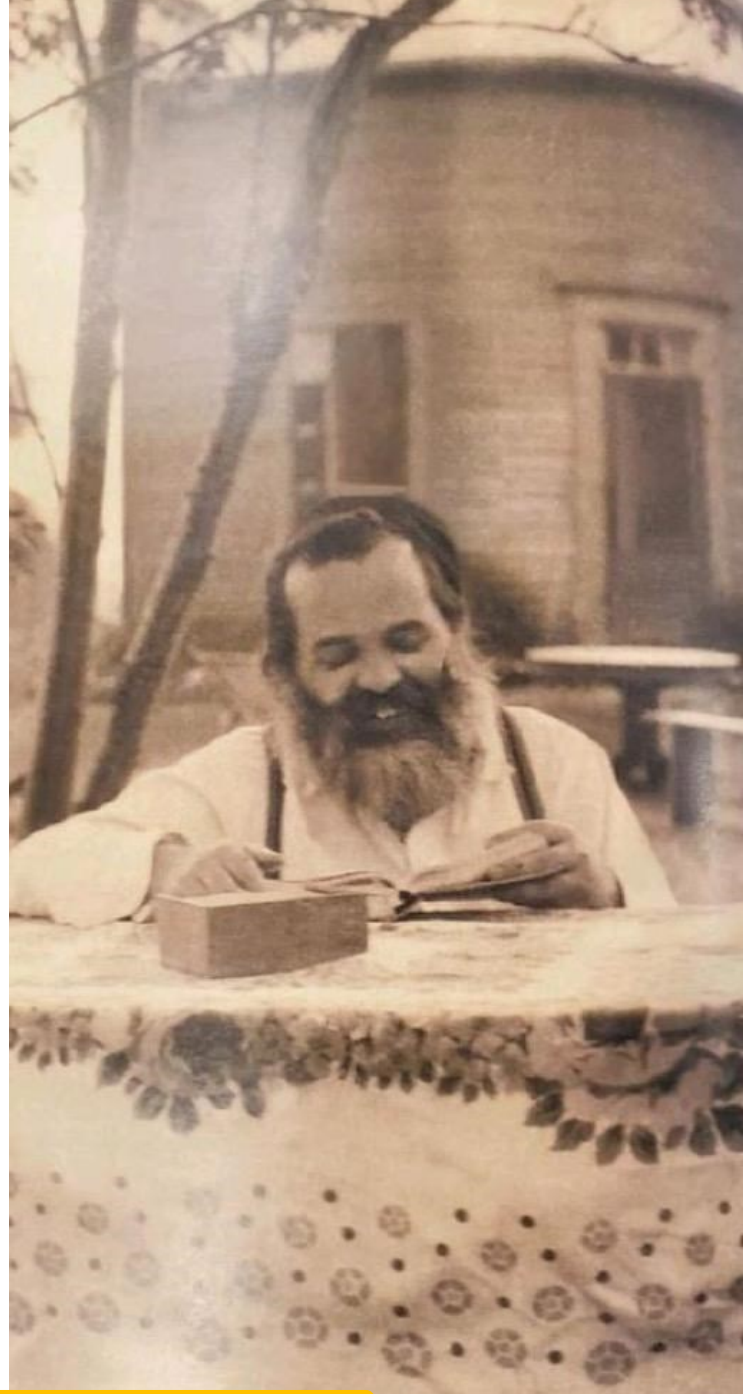
Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky had the good fortune to meet an older person who was a child in the home where Reb Yisroel passed away. The man was from Konigsberg and his father hosted Reb Yisroel. Reb Yaakov asked him if his family followed Reb Yisroel's request. Were they m'chalel Shabbos for Reb Yisroel's health? The man told Reb Yaakov that Reb Yisroel fell ill motzei Shabbos and passed away before the next Shabbos.

Reb Yaakov exclaimed; "R'tzon yireiov yaaseh!", HaShem carries out the wish of those who fear Him.

As told by Reb Yaakov to his grandson.

Correction to last week's story. The one who spoke to the bachurim in Slabodka was Reb Moshe Mordechai Epstein, the father-in-law of Reb Moshe Finkel. The Alter was already in Eretz Yisroel at that time.

Pictured: A rare picture of Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the weight loss surgery, Rav Yosef Elyashiv answered that gaining weight on purpose to get the reimbursement would be considered genaivas da'as, tricking the insurance company. This is because had the insurance principals known that he did it on purpose, he likely would not get the procedure covered by insurance.

This week's issue is in honor of Paysach Diskind for all that he does for the Klal and his wonderful work with Achim. May he and his family be gebentched with gezunt and nachas from their entire family, ad meah v'esreem shono.

by Rabbi and Mrs. Joseph Katz

