



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE HITCHHIKER'S MINCHA

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Avi was driving his car when he saw another Jew waiting on the side of the road with his thumb out, looking for a ride. He stopped the car and asked the man where he was going. The man replied that he was headed to a particular neighborhood. Avi responded, "I'm headed in that direction and would be happy to drive you there." The hitchhiker was very grateful. As Avi was driving, he realized that he needed to make a quick stop. He stopped in an area where there was no parking available. So he pulled over into a no-parking zone and said to his passenger, "Please stay here, in the driver's seat in case a police comes. If they see you they won't give us a ticket. I'll be back in 15 minutes, and we'll continue the ride." The hitchhiker agreed. After finishing his business, Avi returned 15 minutes later to find that the hitchhiker was nowhere to



SEMPER FI, ALWAYS FAITHFUL

Inspired from Rabbi Berger's Shabbos Shuva drasha

As we enter the joyous holiday of Succos and Simchas Torah, we are celebrating our being chosen by HaShem to be His representatives in this world. He placed His Name directly on us for that specific purpose. In spite of our failing His expectations by making the Golden Calf, HaShem nevertheless, took us back with a renewed bris (covenant) that He will never forsake us. We will carry His Name for eternity.

The bris was two-fold; He accepted never to forsake us and we accepted never to forsake Him. If we were to attempt to forsake Him, that renewed bris would bring about events that will bring us back to Him.

What is our responsibility? Certainly, we must keep the mitzvos that He instructed us. However, there is another aspect. We must maintain the culture of Yiddishkeit, it is a culture that engenders worthiness to be the chosen people. Being HaShem's representatives comes with a mode of conduct and a distinct attitude which transcends the observance of the mitzvos. The United States Marines Corps are America's best soldiers. They are not called soldiers, they are called Marines and they have their own culture. Being a member of HaShem's nation is certainly no less. It is possible to observe the entire Torah with all its fine details and still miss Yiddishkeit. These points are the small nuances and subtleties that change the tone of our culture. Such changes are found in the altered perspectives of priorities and attitudes and modes of conduct that run counter to those of our Torah. Even though all the mitzvos of Torah may be fulfilled in their fullest, nevertheless, when

be seen. There was also a hefty \$300 ticket on his windshield.

Soon after, the hitchhiker returned, and Avi asked where he had gone.

The hitchhiker replied, "I had to daven mincha. It was shkia, so I ran to a nearby shul."

Avi exclaimed, "That was a very expensive prayer because you now have to pay for my \$300 ticket!"

The hitchhiker responded, "I agreed to wait in the car, but I didn't agree to miss davening. And anyway, you're not paying me. I just did you a favor to watch out for any police. I'm not obligated to pay you 300 dollars."

Avi retorted, "You agreed to watch the car. How could you leave, that was negligence?"

The hitchhiker said, "I didn't want to miss davening."

What do you think: is the hitchhiker obligated to pay for the ticket?

Regarding the question of two week's ago about the young man who was interested in learning more about Judaism, Rav Zilberstein wrote that it would not be permitted to disrupt his Shemonah Esrei, because it is not guaranteed that the young man will become Torah observant as a result.

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those altered perspectives creep in, it jeopardizes the essence of Yiddishkeit.

The Maharal refers to our nation as being grounded in the world of the intellect. Although we are active members of the material world, nevertheless, we are driven by priorities found in the world of intellect. We define our goals and achievements by the yardstick of seichel, intellect. The other nations, by contrast, are grounded in the material world and use material measurements to define their goals and achievements. While other nations define success by the acquisition of wealth and arms we define success by happy families serving HaShem with joy and commitment. While the other nations might identify a successful leader by how many followers one has, we identify our leaders by their Torah knowledge together with the strength of their moral character.

Notwithstanding all of the above, there is plenty of room for

the Jew to remain contemporary and still maintain his Yiddishkeit. Let us take the Succah as an illustration. The body of the succah is not limited. The walls can be made from any material and may be painted and decorated in any which way. We can say with certainty that the succah's made by our people in the times of the Mishna were quite different from the succah's we make in America. However, we know with absolute certainty that there was no difference in the s'chach that was used. Throughout the millennia our people have always used material that grows from the ground and is not m'kabel tumah. The moment we use s'chach that is artificially made, even though it looks like authentic bamboo and feels like bamboo, that succah is invalid.

Although the structure and outside appearance may change, the essence of the succah remained unchanged. In a similar vein, this is true with Yiddishkeit. Although with changing times our people look different from their ancestors but so long as the core values and modes of conduct are in sync, Yiddishkeit has not changed. Changing the exterior is not consequential. It is the nuanced subtleties which reflect the inner core of Yiddishkeit that must be protected.

How careful we must be to protect our authentic Yiddishkeit.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and a beautiful joyous Yom Tov.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE BLUNT-HEADED BURROWING FROG

Look at this creature. What is it? Is it a turtle without its shell?

Please meet the *Glyphoglossus molossus*, a unique frog species native to Southeast Asia. It has long intrigued biologists, food enthusiasts, and conservationists alike. It is also known as the Blunt-headed Burrowing Frog, Balloon Frog, Broad-lipped Frog, or the more wordy name, Truncate-snouted Spadefoot Frog. The frog's rather peculiar appearance, combined with its significant ecological and culinary roles in its native habitat, makes it a subject of considerable interest. It has also gained attention due to its round, blob-like body and expressive face.

The name *Glyphoglossus molossus* comes from "glyph glossus," which means "carved tongue," and "molossus," which means "large as a dog."

Why is it so fat and chubby? Its giant, chubby appearance is due to a self-defense technique in which it inflates itself with air to look more formidable when it feels in danger. When threatened, the Blunt-headed Burrowing Frog inflates itself with air to appear larger and more intimidating. Moreover, the Blunt-headed Burrowing Frog spends most of its life underground, emerging primarily during rains. Its physical structure is well-suited for burrowing and conserving water.

Discovered by Albert C. L. G. Günther in 1868, *Glyphoglossus molossus* is endemically found in several countries of Southeast Asia, including Cambodia,

Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. This species is native to the drier parts of mainland Southeast Asia.

Due to its somewhat unattractive and distinctive looks, it has garnered a variety of names like the Blunt-headed Burrowing Frog, Balloon Frog, and Broad-lipped Frog.

These burrowing creatures spend a significant portion of their lives underground. However, come the rainy season, they emerge in large numbers to engage in a breeding frenzy in temporary water sources.

In Thailand, where it's termed "Eung pak khuat" or "Eung phao," the frog is a traditional delicacy. Due to its supposed exquisite taste and texture, it's often consumed whole, typically barbecued. This culinary demand has, unfortunately, led to extensive harvesting, significantly depleting their natural populations in many areas. Because of this, the frog is classified as "Near Threatened" according to the IUCN.

Studying these creatures in their natural habitat presents challenges. Being part of the elusive Microhylidae family, they tend to halt all activities as soon as humans approach—a survival instinct possibly developed due to their extensive harvesting by humans.

This unique frog is a reminder that Earth is home to an estimated 8.7 million species, many of which remain undiscovered or unidentified. Every species, no matter how 'unattractive' or 'peculiar,' plays a role in the grand tapestry of Hashem's ecosystem.

COOKING WITH PRESSURE

The Alter of Kelm, Reb Simcha Zissel Ziv was among the great talmidim of Reb Yisroel Salanter, the father of the Musar movement. He had a hanhaga which is reflected in his letters to his son. When he heard an insight that inspired him he would not share it with anyone. He would not tell it over even to his closest talmidim. Only after an extended time which could be as long as a year or two, would he share it with others.

I had the good fortune to learn about the Alter's hanhaga from my Rebbe, Reb Mendel Kaplan z"l. He explained the reason for this.

When hearing an inspiring insight which truly touches you in a profound way, it acts upon you in the same way a pressure cooker acts upon the food that is placed inside it. The pressure cooker impacts the food inside by creating pressure. Inside the pot great pressure is impressed on that food and it cooks in a most remarkable way. The moment the pressure is released, the impact is lost.

Similarly, when a thought impacts you in a profound way, do not release it. Let it sit within you. It will continue to impact you in many more ways. The power of a thought can be profound if you just let it percolate. Once this thought is shared, it loses its pressure. Although other people may appreciate it, the power of the thought will be lost.

The best time to share it with others is once you find that the thought is no longer providing its original inspiration. At that point sharing it helps revive the original inspiration.

By Paysach Diskind as heard from Reb Mendel z"l



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the burekas, Rav Zilberstein wrote that the cook would have to pay for the extra ones that she ordered even though they were eaten by the students.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in memory of
שמואל בן ישראל

whose yartzeit is י"ט תשרי

By Reb Reuven and Naomi Miller

It is also dedicated in honor of the yartzeit of the Vilna Gaon דכותו יגן עלינו



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