



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



SNAKE IN THE HOOD

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Malky and Tova lived in a development, in a frum neighborhood quite similar to Lakewood. The development consisted of about twenty houses arranged around a central courtyard, with each house containing four apartments. Everyone who lived in the apartments was frum.

One day, Malky and Tova were standing and talking in front of their building when Malky suddenly noticed something in the courtyard, where children were constantly playing. She saw a venomous, dangerous snake. Both women were terrified. They knew that if they called government pest control, it could take a long time for help to arrive, and they felt there was immediate danger.

They decided to call an exterminator they knew. The exterminator came as soon as possible, identified the snake as extremely deadly, and successfully captured and removed it. Af-



NOTHING IS LOST

Gleaned from a talk by Rav Aaron Lopiansky

Moshe's first encounter with HaShem occurs when HaShem appears to him in a burning 'sneh'. The sneh is a very low bush. Besides being a low bush it has many thorns in which birds get caught. The Midrash asks what is the significance of using this bush as HaShem's introduction to Moshe? The Midrash explains that HaShem wanted us to know that His Presence exists in the lowest of creations, even in such a lowly plant. It is worth asking why this message is important at this moment of history?

When Yaakov moved down to Egypt to spend his final years with Yosef in Egypt HaShem appeared to him with words of encouragement. "I will go down with you and I will come back up with you." From this verse we learn that when the children of Yaakov are lowered into exile, HaShem's Presence goes down with them and remains with them until they return .

What significance is there knowing that HaShem is with them in exile? Does it mitigate the pain and suffering? It gets pretty bad even when His Presence is with us. Is there any benefit of having His Presence accompanying us in exile?

So often, as we travel through life we undertake certain projects that have setbacks. There are times that these setbacks could take years to work themselves out. Assuming we emerge from a multi-year setback and things come back on track, how do we perceive those years? We might consider them lost years and we just write them off and move forward. However, we might find redeeming factors from those years. Perhaps there were things that we achieved during those

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terward, he gave Malky a bill for five hundred dollars, explaining that the price was higher because it was a dangerous job.

At first, Malky and Tova thought they would split the cost between themselves, each paying \$250. But then they reconsidered. They said, "Why should we have to pay for this ourselves? We live in a shared building, and everyone benefited from removing the snake."

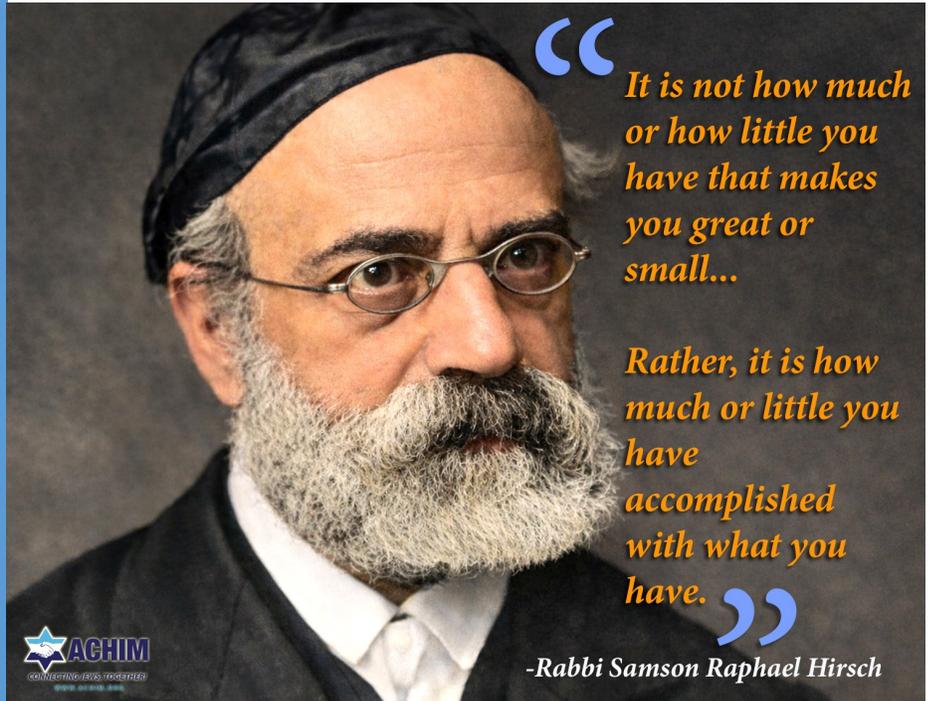
They approached their neighbors and asked if they would agree to split the fee four ways. The neighbors responded that they were willing to participate, but questioned why it should be split only four ways. They pointed out that there was an entire row of houses around the courtyard, with dozens of families. Since everyone benefited, they felt the cost should be divided among all the residents, with each person paying only a small amount.

As a result, instead of splitting the fee four ways, Malky and Tova began going door to door to ask people to share the cost. However, some residents objected. One person said, "We never saw the snake, we were never afraid of it, and we don't want to get involved. Why should we have to pay?"

The question was then brought to Rav Zilberstein: Who is obligated to pay for the cost of removing the snake? Only the people who saw it and were afraid? Only the one who called the exterminator? Only those who lived closest to the courtyard? Or everyone who lived around the courtyard?

What do you think?

See Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 338



years. Perhaps we corrected some fault which would never have been corrected had we not gone through those lost years. Take for example, the unfortunate teenager who could not get along with his parents and decided to run away from home. After several years he missed them and decided to return home and rebuild his relationship with them.

Although he lost those several years being away from home, he nevertheless emerged with a greater appreciation for his family which he might never have had. In fact, those lost years may have been the best thing that could have happened to him.

As our people suffered the enduring exile in Egypt for many long years, the people felt that these years were years of futility. Even when the redeemer would come to take them out of slavery, those many years of slavery would have remained purposeless. Therefore, HaShem instructs Moshe "tell the people that I have always remembered them and I was with

them all those long enduring years." The implication is that if those years were under the careful Providence of HaShem then certainly there was much that was accomplished.

When HaShem told Yaakov that He would go down with him to Egypt and would come back up with them from Egypt, He was telling Yaakov that even during those years of 'futility' HaShem was with them; there was nothing meaningless, it was all achievement and accomplishment.

Perhaps the importance of giving the message of the sneh at the beginning of our redemption is for us to know that no matter how distant our situation may appear from HaShem. No matter how futile and depressing it may be, HaShem is in that situation with us. That situation was carefully arranged by HaShem and specifically designed for us to travel through. There is purpose and growth for us to experience. When the redemption finally arrives we will be able to recognize what we have gained.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE SECRET WORLD OF GREENLAND

Greenland has been in the news this week, so let's learn a bit of the niflaos haborei that relate to Greenland. To begin, why is it called Greenland? Greenland was named by the Norse explorer Erik the Red in the late 10th century, and the name was largely a marketing tactic meant to attract settlers.

Erik the Red had been exiled from Iceland for manslaughter, after earlier being exiled from Norway for the same crime. Looking for a new place to live, he sailed west and explored the coast of a huge, unfamiliar island. When his exile ended, he returned to Iceland to recruit people to help him start a permanent settlement. He understood that persuading people to leave their homes for a cold, unknown Arctic land would not be easy. According to The Saga of Erik the Red, he said that people would be more willing to go if the land had an appealing name. He called it Greenland, to make it sound green, fertile, and welcoming—a sharp contrast to the harsher name “Iceland.”

Although the name was exaggerated, it was not entirely false. Erik settled in the deep fjords of southwest Greenland, near what is now Qassiarsuk. These areas are protected from strong winds and become surprisingly green during the summer, with grass and wildflowers covering the land. This settlement also took place during the Medieval Warm Period, from about 950 to 1250, when temperatures in the North Atlantic were warmer than they are today. During this time, Norse settlers were able to raise cattle, sheep, and goats for several centuries before the climate cooled again during the Little Ice Age.

There is a well-known geographical irony that “Greenland is full of ice, and Iceland is very green.” Most of Greenland is covered by a massive ice sheet, (pictured, second from right) and only the narrow coastal areas can support human life. Iceland, on the other hand, is warmed by the Gulf Stream and has a much milder climate. It was named by an earlier Viking explorer, Hrafna-Flyki, who survived a brutal winter, saw a fjord filled with ice, and angrily named the island “Iceland.”

More than 80 percent of Greenland is covered by ice. At its thickest point, the ice sheet is over three kilometers, or nearly two miles, deep. The weight of this ice is so great that it has pushed the center of the island below sea level. During summer, patches of pink or red snow—often called watermelon snow—can appear (pictured, second from left). This color comes from algae called *Chlamydomonas nivalis*, which produce red pigments to protect themselves from the sun's ultraviolet rays. The snow can smell faintly like watermelon, though it should not be eaten.

Before they had contact with Europeans, the Inuit of northern Greenland were already using iron tools. They did not mine this iron from the ground; instead, they harvested it from the Cape York meteorite—a massive iron space rock that crashed into the region thousands of years ago. One fragment, known as Ahnighito, weighs 34 tons and is the largest meteorite on display in any museum, housed at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City (pictured, left). This makes the Inuit one of the only civilizations in history to enter the Iron Age without mining, smelting, or access to natural iron ore deposits.

Greenland also contains some of the world's largest deposits of rare earth elements and uranium, especially at the Kvanefjeld site, which has made the island important in global politics and resource competition.

Despite its size, Greenland has no native reptiles or amphibians because the climate is too cold for animals like snakes, lizards, or frogs to survive. Surprisingly, however, Greenland has intense mosquito seasons during the summer. Swarms can be so thick that they have been known to suffocate caribou by blocking their airways. Geographically, Greenland is part of North America, even though it is politically connected to Denmark.

On most Mercator maps, Greenland appears about the same size as Africa. In reality, Africa is about fourteen times larger. Greenland is actually closer in size to Mexico or Saudi Arabia. This distortion happens because of the Mercator projection, created in 1569 for navigation. Since Earth is round and maps are flat, distortion is unavoidable, similar to trying to flatten an orange peel without tearing it. The Mercator projection stretches land near the poles to preserve accurate compass directions. As a result, places near the equator appear correctly sized, while polar regions like Greenland and Antarctica look much larger than they really are. In short, the map sacrifices size accuracy to preserve direction.

How cold Greenland gets in winter depends greatly on location. There are essentially two different winters: one along the coast, where people live, and another on the interior ice sheet, where almost nothing survives.

Along the coast, winters are milder than many people expect. Ocean currents such as the Gulf Stream help warm these areas, making coastal winters similar to those in places like Minnesota, Maine, or Ottawa. In southern Greenland, including cities like Nuuk and Qaqortoq, average winter temperatures range from about 14°F to 23°F, and temperatures can even rise above freezing in January. Northern Greenland, especially around Qaanaaq, is far colder, with winter temperatures often dropping to between -20°F and -30°F.

The interior of Greenland is extremely cold and dangerous. As elevation rises toward the center of the ice sheet, up to about 10,000 feet, the warming influence of the ocean disappears. Winter temperatures here usually range from -40°F to -76°F. In December 1991, a weather station recorded -93.3°F, the coldest temperature ever measured in the Northern Hemisphere.

Many visitors say Greenland feels less cold than expected because the air is extremely dry. Low humidity means the cold does not penetrate the body as quickly. For example, 10°F in Greenland can feel warmer than 30°F in a damp city like New York or London. However, one major danger is the piteraq, a powerful windstorm caused when dense, freezing air rushes down from the ice sheet toward the coast. These storms can drop temperatures by 40 degrees in minutes and produce winds over 150 miles per hour, strong enough to destroy buildings and boats.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

I AM ALWAYS CONCERNED THAT MONEY WOULD NOT BE 'KOSHER MONEY'

Rav Meir Tzvi Bergman named his first child Ben Tzion. Before the pidyon haben, he went to the Chazon Ish to buy coins from him to give to the kohen, since it was well known that the Chazon Ish had such coins. When Rav Meir Tzvi bought the coins, the Chazon Ish hinted that after the pidyon haben, he should buy the coins back and return them to him.

Rav Meir Tzvi said that he would. "Do not tell that to the kohen ahead of time," the Chazon Ish pointed out, "because if you say that, it will be a matanah al menas l'hachzir, and the pidyon haben must be a proper kinyan. Only after the pidyon haben has been performed should you go over to the kohen and buy back the coins."

The day of the pidyon haben dawned. Rav Avraham Mordechai Cohen, (pictured) father of Rav Aharon Cohen of Chevron, was asked to serve as the kohen. Rav Avraham Mordechai, a tzaddik who worked as a rebbe of young children, also happened to be Rav Shach's neighbor.

All the gedolim of Yerushalayim, as well as roshei yeshivah and talmidei chachamim, attended the pidyon haben. The house was too small for all the guests, and it was very crowded.

Immediately after the pidyon haben, Rav Meir Tzvi intended to approach the kohen to tell him that he wanted to buy back the coins, but the kohen disappeared in the commotion. Only after they sat down for the seudah did Rav Meir Tzvi see him returning, and he hurried over.

"I'd like to buy the coins back from you," he said.

The kohen looked at him and felt bad. "It's a pity you didn't tell me earlier that you wanted them back. I went home and divided the coins among the pushkas that I have, and now the money is locked in there."

Puzzled, Rav Meir Tzvi asked, "Why did you hurry to put the coins into the pushkas?"

"I'm a rebbe, and I get paid for my work, but I cannot give tzedakah from that money because I am always concerned that I am not doing my job properly and that money would not be 'kosher money'. I am afraid that after one hundred and twenty years I will be asked in Shama-yim, 'You gave tzedakah from that money!?' But the money from the pidyon haben is definitely kosher money. Therefore, every time I get money from a pidyon haben, I hurry to give it to tzedakah."

Rav Meir Tzvi returned to the Chazon Ish without the coins, explaining why he had not brought them back.

The Chazon Ish heard the story and said, "He's an ehrlicher Yid."

Since that incident, Rav Meir Tzvi took on the habit of giving to tzedakah any money that he finds on the street without simanim, saying that such money is certainly kosher and suitable for tzedakah.

From At His Table, Published By Tfutza Publications



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the person who gave the free full-page ad: Rabbi Zilberstein (Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 324) answered that this person is completely exempt from damages. It is not even considered a grama for which he would be obligated to pay midinei Shamayim, because he did nothing wrong at all. Rather, the business owner did something wrong by not paying his taxes.

May Hashem, with His infinite kindness and compassion
grant a Refua Schleimah to
Tsvi Gedeliah ben Sarah

His loving family- Eidensohns, Palmers, Troppers and Grandma



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