

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE FLAT TIRE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Mordechai lived in a small yishuv in Eretz Yisrael and earned his livelihood by growing flowers in his yard. He had many different kinds of flowers. Every week he would cut them, load them into his truck, and take them to a nearby city. There he would sell them to people who wanted flowers likavod Shabbos.

This was his parnassah, and each week he would make approximately 3,000 shekels.

One day, he cut all the flowers, placed them into different buckets, and loaded them into the back of his truck. He started the truck but noticed that one of the tires felt strange. He got out and saw that, in fact, one of his tires was completely flat.

It was very early in the morning, and no one else was around. He realized that if he didn't get to the city



SACRIFICE AND OFFERING FREE ZONE

As we begin the third book, Vayikra, which deals with the many details and specifications of the offerings, we must remember the story of Avraham Avinu back in Bereishis. When HaShem told Avraham that his children would inherit the land of Israel, he asked HaShem, "In what merit will they be able to inherit the land?" His question was based on the understanding that every nation will sooner or later turn away from HaShem, and their sins reach an intolerable limit. Once that happens, HaShem takes retribution from that nation and they are lost. This is the story that repeats itself throughout world history. Nations fill their cup with sins against GD and humanity, and then they are gone. Avraham assumed that this would be the fate of his descendants as well. He therefore asked HaShem with what merit, with what mechanism, will his people be assured that the Land will be theirs for eternity?

HaShem's response was that his descendants will have korbanos. Through the institution of korbanos, no matter how far away they may drift from HaShem, they will always be able to return. So while Avraham's concern was a valid concern, nevertheless, HaShem assured him that with korbanos his descendants will not be lost.

To appreciate how korbanos provide this assurance, we need to understand how to translate "korban."

We are accustomed to translating "korban" as offering, or perhaps sacrifice. However, those words represent heathen concepts. The word offering implies a gift that is given to the recipient in the hope that the one offering it will receive something in return. In our terms, such a notion is absurd in relation to HaShem, Who needs no gifts. What can mortal man offer HaShem? The word sacrifice implies giving up something and receiving nothing in return. This notion is equally absurd in the context of korbanos, because we gain so much from them. To say that one sacrificed \$100,000 for a beautiful car is nonsense; he received something of great value in return.

So how do we define korban? Korban derives from karov, which means close.

and sell the flowers on Erev Shabbos, he wouldn't be able to sell them later. By Sunday the flowers would no longer be fresh, and his entire week's earnings would be lost.

There was no one he could call that early, and he really needed to leave. Then an idea struck him.

He remembered learning in the Mishnayos (Bava Kama 81b) that our Sages say if a person has a barrel of honey, which is something very valuable, and his barrel cracked and is leaking, he is allowed to take someone else's barrel of wine, pour out the wine, and use the barrel to save his honey, as long as he fully pays for the loss of the wine.

So maybe the same idea would apply here.

There was another vehicle nearby that belonged to his neighbor, who he knew would be away for the next two weeks. Mordechai thought that he could jack up the car, remove one of the tires, and use it to replace his flat tire. He would then pay the full price for the tire, even though it was a used tire, and leave the cash at his neighbor's house.

This way he would be able to go sell the flowers. He knew that his neighbor wouldn't need the car while he was away, but his neighbor was unavailable to ask.

Was he allowed to take the tire without permission, as long as he paid for it in full?

What do you think?

See Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 438



*People wait all day
for 5pm.
All week for Friday.
All winter for
summer.
All summer for
winter.
And all of life for
happiness.
Don't let the
pursuit of
tomorrow
diminish the joy of
today.*

Karov also translates to relative, because it is someone who is biologically close to us. The function of the korban is to draw us close to HaShem. It is not something that we give as a gift to HaShem. The korban is there for us, for our benefit, because it allows us the opportunity to be inspired and to elevate ourselves closer to HaShem.

The prophet Isaiah (27) addresses the distinction between the Jewish people and the nations of the world in the context of how HaShem delivers punishment. He tells his people that when HaShem contemplates how to punish them for their devious ways, He looks for a method that will accomplish a cleansing of their sins. He looks for a punishment that will correct their wrongdoings so that after it has ended, his people will shine and their beauty will be clear. In contrast, when HaShem punishes the other nations, it is a total decimation, a punishment after which nothing will survive. The prophet then explains why our people are different in this respect. He explains that HaShem's people are people of understanding, and they recognize that they can always return to Him. It is embedded in the DNA of our

people that no matter how far away we may drift, we will always be accepted if we return. In contrast, the other nations do not have such insight; once they have carved a devious path for themselves, there is no turning around. The only response from HaShem will be the decimation of that people.

In their case, there is no need to plan a punishment that will offer the chance to return.

Perhaps this is what HaShem responded to Avraham when he asked on what merit his descendants would remain eternally on this Land. HaShem told Avraham that they will have korbanos, the ability to always draw themselves near to Him, and no matter how far away they drift, they will always come back.

We need only to look back 100 years ago, when the masses of our people, whether in Europe or America, were drifting rapidly away from HaShem, when suddenly our greatest national trauma, the Holocaust, occurred. Is there anyone who could have imagined that a few years later we would return to our Land? Who could have imagined that less than a century later Torah would be flourishing, and that the masses of our people would be studying Torah at the levels we see today?

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE SECRETS OF AFTZA, KANKANTUM & GUMA

The creation of ink for a Sefer Torah, known as Dyo, relies on a remarkable synergy of three distinct elements found in nature. The Shulchan Aruch specifies these ingredients as Aftza, Kankantum, and Guma. While their names may sound mysterious, they correspond to naturally occurring substances that boast incredibly fascinating chemical and physical properties. Exploring how these three diverse elements combine reveals a profound display of the wonders of the Hashem's world.

The first ingredient, Aftza, is commonly known today as oak galls or gallnuts (left). These are the primary source of tannic acid, which gives the ink its dark pigment. The way oak galls are formed is an astonishing example of symbiotic bioengineering. A tiny wasp, called a gall wasp, (second from left) punctures the leaf bud or branch of an oak tree to lay a single egg. Along with the egg, the wasp injects specialized fluids that mimic the tree's own plant hormones. Instead, the tree is forced to construct a custom, climate-controlled, predator-proof sphere around the developing larva. Once the wasp matures, it chews a tiny exit hole and flies away, leaving the tannin-rich gall behind for harvest. You can think of a gall as an immune response from the tree, very similar to how an oyster creates a pearl to isolate an irritant. Tannins naturally exist in trees as a defense mechanism because they are highly astringent and incredibly bitter, designed to give grazing animals a terrible stomachache so they stop eating the leaves. The brilliance of the gall wasp is that it forces the tree to concentrate this exact defense mechanism into a dense, bitter shell around its baby. Historically, the absolute gold standard for making the finest ink came from a specific species of oak found in the Middle East, particularly around Syria. These Aleppo galls were prized by scribes across the ancient world because they contain an astonishingly high concentration of tannic acid, sometimes making up seventy percent of their total weight.

The second ingredient, Kankantum, acts as the oxidizer and is known today as copper sulfate or blue vitriol. Historically, this compound was harvested from bright blue pools of water near copper deposits. (Third from left) When natural copper sulfide ores are exposed to air and water, they oxidize and create acidic, metal-rich solutions. When this water evaporates, it leaves behind blue crystals. (Fourth from left) Today, it is typically manufactured by treating copper metal with hot sulfuric acid. Copper sulfate has incredibly striking physical and chemical properties. In its natural, hydrated crystal form, it is a stunning, translucent, electric blue. However, if you heat it up and bake the water molecules out of it, the crystal structure collapses into a pale white powder. If even a single drop of water touches the white powder, it instantly flashes back to its brilliant

blue color, making it a highly sensitive indicator used by chemists to detect moisture. When first mixed and written on the parchment, the ink is actually somewhat pale. The magical moment happens as the ink is exposed to oxygen in the air. The chemical reaction finalizes, oxidizing the compounds and turning the text a deep, permanent black. In the context of making ink for a Torah, copper sulfate acts as a mordant, a word originating from a Latin term meaning to bite. By itself, the dark tannin from the oak gall would just sit on top of the parchment and could easily flake away. When the copper sulfate mixes with the tannic acid, it triggers a chemical reaction that makes the ink bite into the surface of the parchment. It chemically binds with the collagen in the animal skin, creating a permanent, waterproof bridge between the parchment and the black pigment.

The final ingredient, Guma, is still widely known today as Gum Arabic. This ingredient serves as the vital binder that forces everything to work perfectly together. Gum Arabic is the hardened sap of the Acacia tree, primarily found in the blistering heat of the African Sahel. It is an emergency defense mechanism for the tree. When the bark is split by dry winds or grazing animals, the tree weeps a thick, sticky resin to instantly seal the wound, preventing infection and the fatal loss of moisture. After a few weeks of baking in the hot sun, this sap hardens into golden, glassy tears that are snapped off the branches by hand. (right) One of the most seemingly magical properties of Gum Arabic is its ability to act as a natural emulsifier. At a microscopic level, its molecules have a split personality where one end loves water and the other end loves oils and resins. When added to a liquid, it grabs onto both, forcing ingredients that would normally separate to stay perfectly mixed. Today, this unique property is incredibly valuable in the modern food industry, keeping heavy flavor oils and sugar syrups suspended in sodas. For the ink, it dramatically alters the surface tension of the water. It gives the ink body a thickness, ensuring that when the Sofer's quill touches the parchment, the ink stays exactly where it is placed without bleeding or feathering into a blurry puddle. Once the ink dries on the parchment, the Gum Arabic performs its final magic trick. As the water evaporates, the gum hardens into a microscopic, clear shell around the black pigment particles, laminating the ink into the fibers of the skin and protecting the letters from humidity and flaking over the centuries.

Together, these three incredible marvels of nature create an ink that can last on Sifrei Torah for generations.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

“THE BALTIMORE TRIP”

Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz was born in Slutzk in 1867. He was close with the Rav of Slutzk, R' Yosef Ber Soleveitchik, the Beis Halevi. He entered Volozhin at 16 years of age and became one of the main students of R' Yosef Ber's son, R' Chaim Brisker. R' Baruch Ber married the daughter of R' Avraham Zimmerman, whom he succeeded as Rav of Halusk. In 1926 he re-established his yeshivah in Kaminetz, where it continued for 13 years.

In 1929, R' Baruch Ber came to New York for a short time. It was not long before Mayor Jimmy Walker honored him with a ceremony at City Hall. He presented him with a key to the city and announced, "Rabbi Leibowitz is living proof that evolution is false. Only G-d could have created such a person!!"

There are many amazing stories from his time in the U. S. A.

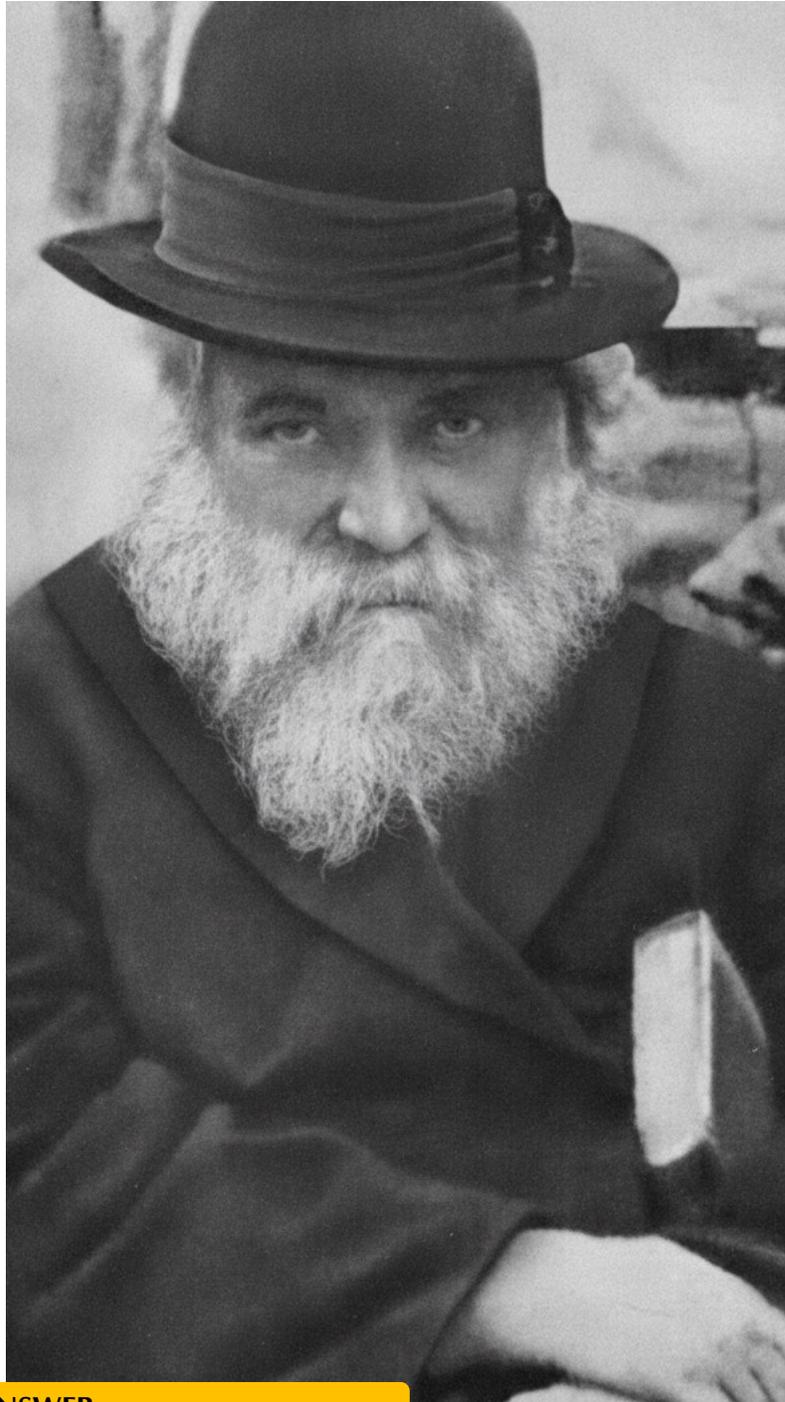
An old man from Baltimore once told an interesting and personal story. He had been a student of Reb Baruch Ber in the Kaminetzer Yeshiva. When R' Baruch Ber was in Baltimore he stayed in his home. They spent all day together. One night they came home late, and the man went upstairs to check if R' Baruch Ber's room was in order. His wife was listening to the radio in their bedroom, and it was very loud.

The man was embarrassed. "What are you doing? How can you blast the radio with my Rebbi downstairs? Turn it off."

Then the man went downstairs to see if R' Baruch Ber needed anything before he retired for the night. R' Baruch Ber didn't understand a word of English, but he did recognize the tone of his student's voice as he spoke to his wife.

"Did you learn to talk like that in my yeshivah? I cannot stay here. I'm not sleeping in this house tonight!" The man pleaded with Rav Baruch Ber to stay. Rav Baruch Ber relented and agreed to stay only after the man went back upstairs and apologized to his wife.

From Experience Greatness, By Rabbi Moshe Hubner



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the accident, Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein answered (Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 417) that two things happened at the same time. First, he banged her head, and with that he cured her inability to speak. Second, at the same time, he also broke her bones. Therefore, he does not have to pay for what happened to her head, because that actually helped her, but he does have to pay dmei chavala for the damage to her bones.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated as an expression of gratitude to Hashem for all His kindness and the miraculous wonders He does for us every single second.

הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו!

By one who enjoys reading TableTalk



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