

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### ONE NATION UNDER G-D, INDIVISIBLE AND HOLINESS FOR ALL

HaShem tells his people at Mount Sinai You shall be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The main part of this verse is that we are His. The fact that we priests and that we are holy is the extension of belonging to Him. What makes us unique is that we belong to Him and that we are associated with His Being. This is like no other creature in the world.

Parshas Kedoshim opens with instructions to Moshe to speak to the entire nation together; great teachers, simple folk, women, children - everybody. While most lessons that HaShem gave Moshe were transmitted to select groups of people, this Parsha was transmitted to the entire population together. Why was this necessary?

The lesson that was transmitted was that we were instructed to be holy, just as HaShem is holy. The Rebbe from Kotzk asks how is this even possible; how can a man, a mortal member of the physical material world, be expected to be holy? In clarifying this question, the Shem MiShmuel explains the distinction between purity and holiness is that purity is just keeping ourselves away from spiritual contaminants. Even though we are naturally drawn to the lower elements of the material world, nevertheless by controlling ourselves we make ourselves pure, tahor. Being holy, on the other hand, is to be detached from the drives and attractions of the material world. The latter, to be holy, argues the Kotzker, is beyond the scope of human achievement, how then can Ha-

## THE COLLECTOR'S ITEM

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

During the 1990s, the Schwartz family, a young couple with ten children, faced a terrible tragedy when the husband suddenly died in a car accident. The young mother, now a widow, was left to care for all ten children on her own.

The community stepped in to support her. One man, Tzadok Cohen, took it upon himself to raise money and create a small financial cushion for the family. In order to do so, he approached one of the great Gedolim of the time and asked whether he would write a hamlatzah, a letter of recommendation encouraging people to support the cause.

The Gadol gladly wrote the letter. His intention, however, was that once it had served its purpose, it would be destroyed so it could not be misused in the future. Tzadok Cohen then conducted the fundraising campaign and succeeded in raising a significant sum for the widow. Eventual-

ly, she was able to remarry and rebuild her life.

About thirty years later, Mr. Shapiro, a collector from the United States, someone who collected memorabilia from great Torah leaders, heard that Tzadok Cohen still possessed the handwritten hamlatzah from the Gadol HaDor from thirty years earlier.

Mr. Shapiro offered Mr. Cohen \$20,000 to purchase the letter. Mr. Cohen agreed and sold it. But after receiving the money, he became filled with doubt.

He wondered what should be done with the money. He realized that the Gadol HaDor never intended for the letter to be preserved for so many years; he had wanted it discarded after use so it could not be misused. Perhaps, then, the letter should never have been sold.

But after the fact, what should be done with the money? Could it go to him, because he had spent so much selfless effort helping the widow? Perhaps this was a reward from HaShem for his efforts.

Or perhaps the money should not belong to him, and it should go to the widow. After all, the entire purpose of the letter was to raise funds for the widow. Maybe the proceeds of the sale should therefore go to her.

Or perhaps, because it should not have been sold, the money should go to neither the widow nor Mr. Cohen, and instead be used to support a public charitable fund. That was the question Mr. Cohen brought to Rav Yitzchack Zilberstein: What should be done with the money? Was he allowed to keep it? Should he give it to the widow? Or should it be directed to public charitable funds to help others?

See Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 601



Shem expect Man to rise to such heights?

He explains the understanding of HaShem's pronouncement at Mount Sinai that we are His nation of priests and a holy nation is that we were given a spark of HaShem in our neshama. Every Jew carries within his neshama a spark of HaShem's Holiness. If we are careful to protect that spark from any tumah, spiritual filth, and we keep that spark tahor from any contaminants then that spark of Holiness can grant us a level of Holiness akin to His. And even though we are made from physical material stuff we are able to rise to actual levels of Holiness.

However, the Kotzker explains, this gift of carrying a spark was a gift given to the nation of Israel, only to the nation and to all the members of this nation inas-

much as they are actual members of this nation. If, however, any member of Israel sees themselves outside of the nation, they cannot access this spark. Only those members who see themselves in the context of members of HaShem's people can access this spark that was granted to His people.

The reason this mitzvah was transmitted to the entire nation, like few other mitzvos, was because only as a nation can any individual hope to achieve this lofty achievement. Only to the nation as a single complete unit can HaShem expect holiness from them.

It is no wonder why so many mitzvos found in our Parsha relate to interpersonal relationships. We are instructed how we speak to another person, how to speak about our fellow Jew, how we must care for the property of our fellow Jew, how we must judge him favorably and so on. The way for His people to be able to access this great goal of achieving holiness is only through the complete unity of our people.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION THE INCREDIBLE LIGHTNESS OF THE EAGLE

Our Sages teach that we should strive to be "kal," light, just like a neshet, or an eagle. But what does it mean to be light? The Tur explains that being kal means being extremely nimble. Because eagles can change directions rapidly in the sky, we should be equally agile in our lives, quickly turning away from forbidden things. The Sefer Hamussar says this concept refers to the eagle's amazing ability to swoop down and lower itself, reminding us to always be willing to lower ourselves before our teachers. Finally, the Magen Avos says kal means reaching the very highest heights, encouraging a person to review their learning so much that they rise far above others.

This concept of kal—encompassing physical lightness, swiftness, vertical mastery, and soaring highest—perfectly encapsulates the eagle's unique aerodynamic profile. While other massive birds are built merely for passive floating, the eagle operates much like a modern fighter jet. Let's explore the unbelievable, scientific facts about the eagle's "kal" abilities highlighting exactly how it outmaneuvers other birds of its massive size.

**The Physics of Functional Weightlessness.** To understand how an eagle masters the sky, look at the physics of its literal lightness. Despite weighing up to fifteen pounds, eagles achieve a state of functional weightlessness. They do this through what is called "low wing loading." Their massive wingspan distributes their body weight so efficiently that they can lock their wings inside a rising thermal updraft and float upward without expending energy. Adding to this are the slotted primary feathers at their wingtips. Under pressure, these feathery "fingers" bend upward to reduce drag. This allows the eagle to maintain lift while flying at incredibly slow speeds. A massive swan or albatross lacks this deep feather slotting. If they tried to fly as slowly as an eagle in a tight circle, they would plummet straight toward the ground because their wings are simply not built for such highly specialized, low-speed hovering maneuvers in the open air. This lightness leads to many of the following amazing abilities.

**Extreme Aerial Agility.** This lightness translates directly into extreme aerial maneuvers. Eagles possess a thumb-like structure on the leading edge of their wings called the alula. When pulling out of a steep swoop, they extend this thumb. It acts as an anti-stall system, forcing a smooth stream of air over the wing, allowing them to aggressively change direction at low altitudes. Their agility even extends to completely inverted flight. To defend against an attack or snatch a bird mid-air, an eagle will execute a seamless barrel roll, flying upside down with talons skyward. (pictured left) Vultures and storks entirely lack the rotational wing flexibility to fly on their backs. Eagles also possess the intense spatial equilibrium needed for the death spiral. Two eagles lock talons high in the air and tumble in a rapid free-fall, separating with perfect timing to pull up right above the canopy. (pictured, second to left) Similarly, massive forest eagles use this agility for high-speed canopy slaloms, weaving through dense jungles at fifty miles per hour by repeatedly pulling their wings tight to shoot through narrow tree gaps. This incredible agility, the ability to swerve on a dime, is what our Sages want us to emulate.

**The Power to Swoop Low.** Just as our Sages noted the eagle's ability to lower itself, science highlights its incredible swooping power. When transitioning from highest mountain altitudes down to valleys, a Golden Eagle folds its wings into a teardrop shape to execute a "stoop," reaching speeds between 150 and 200 miles per hour. (pictured, third from left) The most unique aspect of this high-speed dive is pinpoint braking. A heavy pelican attempting this dive would shatter its bones upon impact. The eagle possesses fast-twitch muscle fibers required to snap its wings open at the last possible millisecond. The massive wings and fanned tail act as a parachute, absorbing huge G-forces to bring the bird to a near-instant hover inches above the ground. If its prey darts left, the eagle instantly pulls its left wing closer to its body. This asymmetric wing tucking creates drag that snaps its trajectory to intercept the target. Afterward, it defies asymmetric drag. When launching back into the air with struggling prey, the eagle adjusts the pitch of each wing to counteract the violently shifting weight beneath it, maintaining smooth flight.

**Conquering the Alpine Heights.** Finally, kal means reaching the highest levels. Alpine eagles are the ultimate conquerors of the extreme high-altitude zone. While transient birds might achieve high flight altitudes during migration, alpine eagles are permanent residents at 10,000 to over 15,000 feet. Surviving this freezing environment requires incredible biological winter gear. Most typical raptors possess bare legs, but the high-altitude species are "booted eagles," boasting dense feathers completely covering their legs to prevent frostbite during sub-zero blizzards. At these incredible heights, the atmosphere holds a fraction of the oxygen found at sea level. High-altitude eagles thrive in this hypoxic "death zone" through a complex, unidirectional respiratory system. Using special air sacs, they push fresh air in a continuous loop, extracting vital oxygen during both inhalation and exhalation. Their specialized vision is another high-altitude tool. Microscopic oil droplets in their eyes act like polarized snow goggles to filter out harsh UV glare. This lets them easily spot camouflaged white prey against completely white snowfields. Because lifting heavy prey in thin air is exhausting, they brilliantly weaponize gravity. They strike mountain mammals on narrow ledges, using gravity to knock them off before flying down to feed. To live here permanently, they build massive fortress eyries in the most inaccessible crags of sheer rock walls. These structures can even deflect avalanches.

From functional weightlessness to extreme high-altitude adaptations, the majestic eagle perfectly embodies the concept of kal in every possible way.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

Note: Tosfos in Chulin 63a says that neshet is not an eagle, and we will discuss that a different week. However most commentaries say that neshet is an eagle.

## ALL WATCHED HIM SQUEEZING HIMSELF THROUGH THE SMALL WINDOW

The Ridvaz was Rabbi Yaakov Dovid Wilovsky (1845–1913), a world-renowned Talmudic scholar and community leader. He is best known for his monumental commentaries on the Talmud Yerushalmi, which are printed in nearly all standard editions. His life followed a path from Eastern Europe through several major American and Israeli cities:

Born in Russia, he served as the Chief Rabbi of several major communities, most notably Slutsk, Poland, where he founded a prominent yeshiva.

He first arrived in America in 1900 to raise funds for his publications. In 1903, he was elected Zekan ha-Rabbanim (Elder Rabbi) by the United Orthodox Rabbis of America at a meeting in Philadelphia. He was appointed Chief Rabbi of the United Orthodox Congregations of Chicago in September 1903. His time there was marked by struggles to reform kosher supervision and Jewish education. Frustrated by the state of religious life in America, he moved to Tzfas in 1905. There, he established the Toras Eretz Yisrael yeshiva.

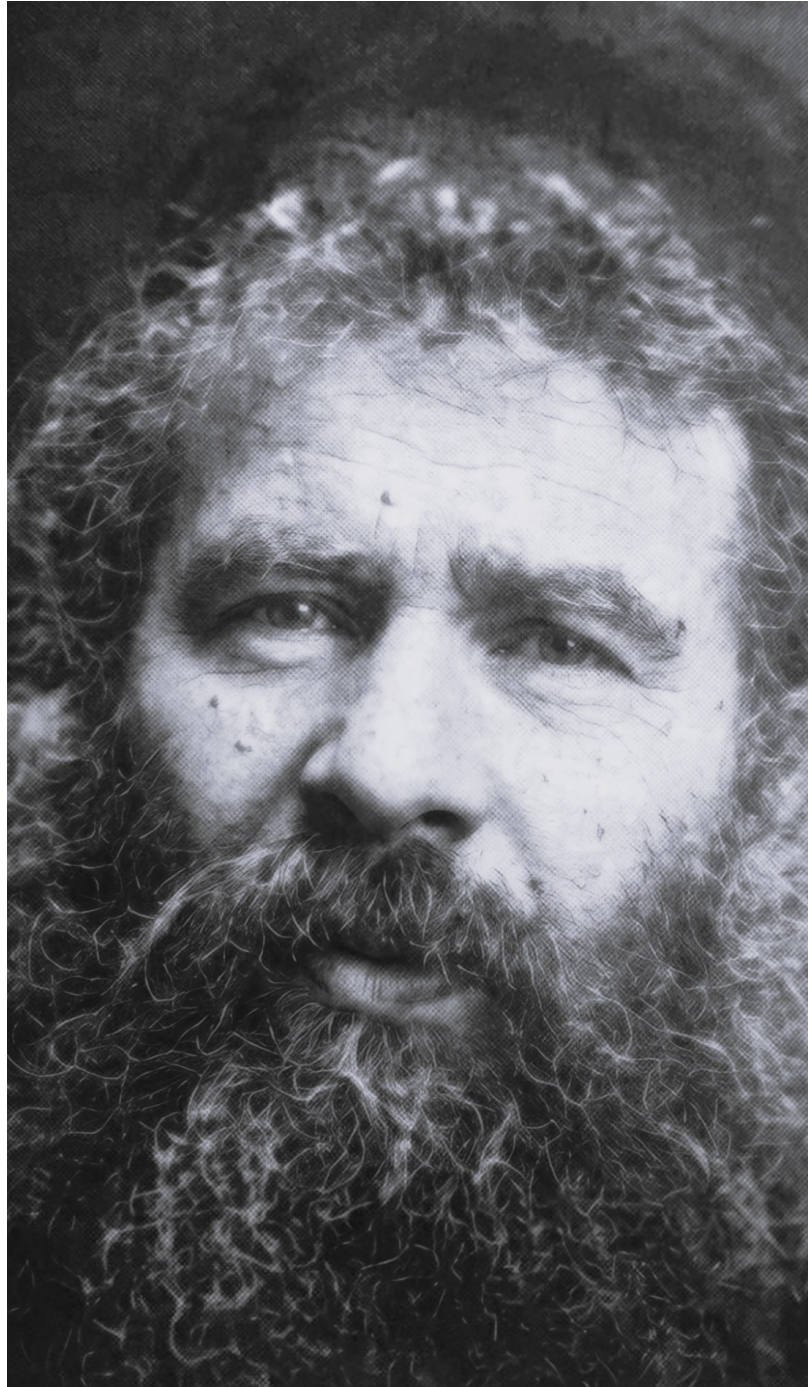
Rav Chaim Kanievsky recounts that once, the Chazon Ish was in Tzfas, and he met an older person who was there during the time that the Ridvaz was there as well. The Chazon Ish asked the man to repeat an interesting or impressive story that he could remember. The old man thought for a moment and then said that on Shabbos Shuvah, the entire city had shown up at his shul to hear the Ridvaz's words. Knowing how great the attendance would be, people arrived early; not only was the building already full, but the crowd was overflowing.

When the Ridvaz showed up wrapped in a tallis, he noticed that the only way he would be able to reach the podium was to force people to squeeze themselves together, which would inconvenience many people. What was he to do?

The Ridvaz went around to the front of the building, where he knew that there was a tiny window that he could squeeze himself through. The people in the shul, close to the podium, all watched him squeezing himself through the small window. All of this was done in order to ease the burden on everyone else.

Rav Chaim adds that the Chazon Ish was so excited about this story that he repeated it the entire day to every person who approached him.

From Experience Greatness by Rabbi Moshe Hubner



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the catering mix-up, Rabbi Mordechai Shuchatowitz answered as follows. Neither Eli, nor the guests, nor the hall owner did anything wrong, and they bear no responsibility for the mishap. Assuming that the waiters were people who know what "Bris" and "Sheva Brachos" mean, they were negligent in taking the Sheva Brachos food and serving it mistakenly but wrongfully at the Bris. Although unintentional, it was essentially "gezel b'shogeig", theft by negligent mistake, for which a person is liable, in keeping with the well known rule of Adom Muad L'Olam. However, their liability would be limited to the actual value of the food they took, not the full amount the caterer would have been paid for serving the Sheva Brachos meal [Menias Revach, withholding profit], nor for additional costs he may have incurred in procuring and preparing replacement food for the Sheva Brachos event [Gamma]. Amongst the waiters, their individual liability might depend on their equal participation in taking the wrong food as opposed to having a head waiter in charge of the others, in which case further Halachic clarification would be necessary.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of all of our wonderful grandchildren.

By Marvin and Arlene Glazer



Brad E. Kauffman Esquire and Kauffman and Forman P.A.  
specializing in corporate and construction law,  
estates, wills and trusts and business litigation.

