

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



FIFA, TZITZES, & SHABBOS

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Eldad, a professional soccer player for Maccabi Tel Aviv, met an inspiring Rav and began learning with him. He attended the Rav's classes and loved learning Torah. Eventually, Eldad told his Rav that he wanted to make a commitment to his spiritual growth. The Rav suggested that he wear tzitzis, something that would be easy to do and not too difficult. Eldad followed his advice and proudly wore his tzitzis. Since Eldad was a professional soccer player, he would sometimes play on Shabbos, which is not exactly compatible with Shabbos observance. Eldad knew that one day



THERE MUST BE ONE POINT AND SEVERAL FEATHERS

Gleaned from Rav Aharon Lopiansky's talk

Korach was envious of Aharon's appointment to the High Priesthood and was driven to challenge Moshe's authority. When studying the story of Korach, we understand that he was driven by selfish motives, which teaches us many lessons about how one should protect himself from falling into the ever-present trap of placing self-interest above honesty. There are, however, other lessons to be learned from the arguments which Korach presented to Moshe in support of his position.

Korach, together with the tribe of Reuven, stood up to Moshe with the argument that there should be no special designation of kehunah: "The entire congregation is equally holy; HaShem rests among them all..." As mentioned earlier, Korach was actually vying for Aharon's position as Kohein Gadol and was not interested in dissolving the kehunah. Nevertheless, to maintain his relationship with his allies, the tribe of Reuven, he adopted this position. Korach was referring to the fact that the entire assembly of the Jewish people had direct communication from HaShem at Sinai when He gave us the Torah. The Presence of HaShem that rested on Mount Sinai continued to rest among them in the Mishkan. Korach's argument sounds valid. What is the answer? Why must there be a hierarchy of different levels of holiness? Let us take this point one step further. By creating a hierarchy of Yisroel, Levi, and Kohein, are we not setting ourselves up for fragmentation? Would unity, a primary ideal within the Torah, not be best served if all members of our nation were equal?

he should stop playing on Shabbos, but at the moment, he was not yet at the level where he could quit his exciting career as a professional soccer player.

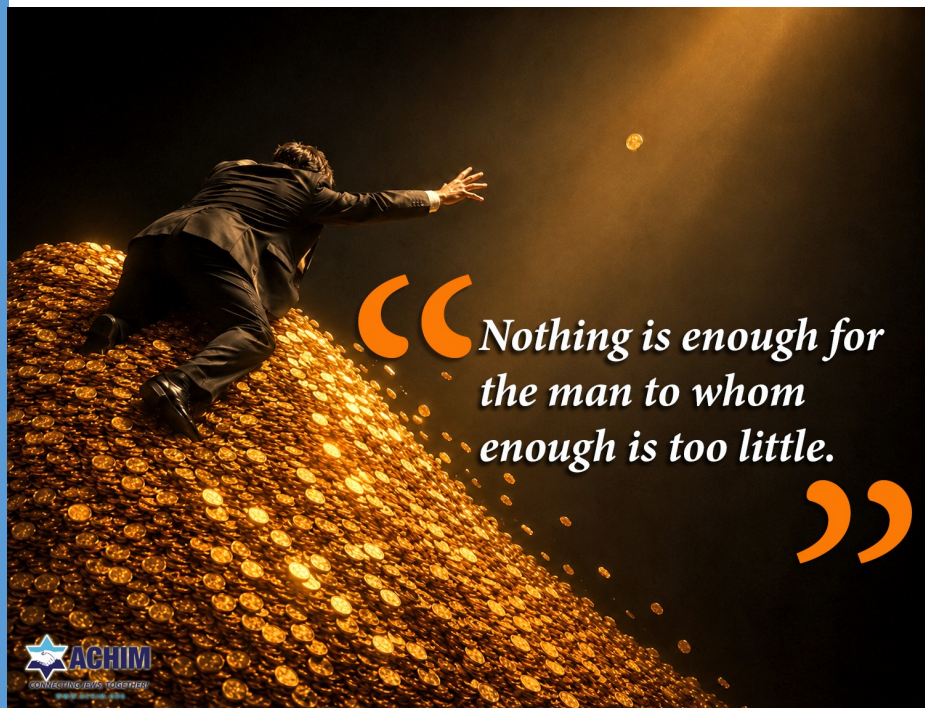
One day, he had a major game before a large crowd of spectators and realized that as he ran during the game, his tzitzis would fly in the wind.

He went to his Rav and asked, "I've been wearing my tzitzis every day, and I never forget them. But when I play on Shabbos, should I still wear them?"

"On one hand, it is a mitzvah to wear them at every moment. On the other hand, it might give the impression that a religious, observant Jew is playing soccer on Shabbos. That could send the wrong message and make it appear that this is permitted. What should I do? Should I wear them anyway, or should I remove them for the game to avoid giving the wrong impression and causing a chilul Hashem, a profanation of Hashem's name?"

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein and can be found in Veharev Na, Volume 2, Parshas Shlach.

Thank you to Rav Stephen Baars for bringing this question to our attention.



“Nothing is enough for the man to whom enough is too little.”



Pirkei Avos (5:10) teaches of four different types of attitudes: "What is mine is mine and yours is yours; what is mine is yours and yours is yours; what is mine is mine and yours is mine; and finally, what is mine is yours and what is yours is mine." Regarding the final attitude, the Mishnah identifies it as the attitude of an ignoramus. How do we understand this attitude? This is not ignorance; it is sheer absurdity. Will I put on your shoes you will put on mine? How does the Mishnah identify this as an actual attitude?

The answer is that this is, in fact, the attitude of Communism, more or less: there is no private ownership. All members of the party are equal. Nobody is any different from another. There are no boundaries. We are one people, all equal. The Mishnah acknowledges this attitude, but it belongs to the ignoramus, not the wise man. HaShem creat-

ed His world with a hierarchy. The mission of man is to bring holiness to the world. It is for this that He took us a His people. HaShem created a people who possess all the components needed to deliver holiness to this world.

Consider the arrow, which is used to deliver the arrowhead and kill the animal. The point of the arrow is its arrowhead, not the shaft, the feathers, or the nock, the slit at the back of the arrow that fits onto the bowstring. And yet, every component of the arrow is needed, and every part of the arrow is critical in achieving its goal. For that matter, the bow and its string are equally necessary to achieve the mission of delivering the arrowhead into the animal. The very hierarchy of the bow and arrow is what brings about the success of their unity in achieving their goal.

The answer to Korach's argument is that there is truly holiness in every Jew, but it is not equal, and every person is a critical component needed to bring the enterprise to its goal. Our unity and complete fulfillment of purpose will be realized only when every member recognizes their respective role.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE YONAH

The Gemara (Eruvin 100b) teaches that even if the Torah had not been given, people could have learned important lessons by observing animals.

One of these lessons comes from the yonah, the dove:

אמר רבי יוחנן: אלמלא לא נתנה תורה, היינו למדים... עריות מיונה

"Rav Yochanan said: If the Torah had not been given, we would have learned... the restriction of improper relationships from the dove."

Rashi explains what is special about the yonah: **שאינו נזקק אלא לבת זוגו**

"Because it does not couple except with its own mate."

Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:15 describes the same idea:

משעה שמכרת בן זוגה, עוד אינה ממירה אותו באחר

"From the time it recognizes its mate, it no longer exchanges it for another."

People often describe this by saying simply that doves "mate for life." However, the lesson of the yonah is deeper than simply remaining with one partner for a long time.

Among mammals, long-term partnerships between a male and female are unusual. Fewer than 9 percent of mammal species form stable pairs. Birds are very different. Most bird species, perhaps 81 to 90 percent, form some type of male-female partnership during the nesting season.

Raising baby birds is difficult work. The parents must build or find a nest, protect their territory, keep the eggs warm, and gather enough food for their chicks. In many species, one bird could not handle all these responsibilities alone. Therefore, the male and female work together as a team.

Scientists call this "social monogamy." This means that a male and female appear to be a couple. They share a nest, protect the same territory, and raise their young together.

For many years, scientists assumed that the chicks in such nests always the offspring of the male and female raising them. From the outside, the pair appeared completely devoted to one another.

Modern DNA testing revealed that this was often not true.

Scientists discovered that in many bird species, some of the chicks in a nest were fathered by a different male. The female remained with her regular partner, and the two continued raising the chicks together, but genetically, some of the chicks came from an outside pairing.

This is called "extra-pair paternity," or EPP. It has been found in about 76 percent of socially monogamous bird species. In some familiar songbirds, between 11 and 40 percent of the chicks may come from outside pairings.

This shows that merely sharing a nest does not make a bird truly faithful. Many birds have partners, yet they do not always remain completely loyal to those partners.

The yonah appears to be very different. Its visible partnership is closely matched by genuine faithfulness. The pair does not simply live together and raise chicks together. Almost all their chicks are the offspring of that same male and female.

This helps us understand the lesson of the Gemara. Most animals do not form permanent pairs at all. Most birds do form pairs, but they do not always remain faithful to them. The yonah stands apart as a bird that shows unusual loyalty to its mate.

One important study used DNA testing to examine the parentage of pigeon chicks. In the first part of the study, researchers tested 25 chicks. Each chick represented a separate mating. They found no evidence that even one of these chicks had been fathered by a male outside the regular pair.

The researchers then carried out a longer study. They followed 13 established pigeon pairs over two complete years and tested 43 chicks.

Out of those 43 chicks, only two were considered possible cases of outside parentage. Even in those two cases, the evidence was not definite. Throughout the study, the established pigeon pairs remained together.

Compared to many other bird species, this was an extremely high level of faithfulness. The pigeons' family life was almost exactly what it appeared to be from the outside.

Researchers have also spent thousands of hours observing pigeons living together in crowded breeding lofts. They noticed that a paired pigeon almost never entered the nest box belonging to another couple.

Each pigeon pair seemed to recognize its own space and the space of its neighbors. The birds treated the boundaries surrounding each family's nest very seriously.

Someone might argue that pigeons remain faithful only because they are too busy to do otherwise. Both parents spend many hours guarding the nest, warming the eggs, and feeding the chicks. The male also protects the nesting area. Perhaps the birds simply have no opportunity to form outside pairings.

Researchers tested this possibility in a study published in the scientific journal *Animal Behaviour*. They temporarily removed male rock pigeons shortly before the females were expected to lay their eggs. The females were left without their mates in a shared loft. Other males soon approached them and attempted to form new pairings. The females refused.

Even though their mates were gone, the females ignored the other males and rejected their approaches. Their faithfulness did not depend only on the male standing nearby and guarding them. They remained loyal even when they were left alone.

The researchers concluded that the pigeon partnership is a true two-way commitment. The female remains loyal to her mate, while the male protects the family's nesting area and shares the daily work of caring for the young. The yonah is also special because of how equally the male and female raise their family. Researchers describe rock pigeons as having a "nearly egalitarian parental care system." This means that the father and mother divide the responsibilities in an unusually equal way.

This partnership can even be seen inside their bodies.

In most bird species, the male and female experience different hormonal changes while raising their chicks. Pigeons are unusual because both parents undergo a similar physical change.

When their chicks hatch, both the father and mother experience a major increase in a hormone called prolactin. This hormone causes a part of their digestive system, called the crop, to produce a rich substance known as "crop milk."

Both parents feed this crop milk to their chicks. It contains important nutrients that the young birds need in order to survive.

The father pigeon is therefore not merely an assistant who brings food from outside. His body changes so that he can feed and care for the chicks in a way similar to the mother.

The male and female pigeon remain loyal to each other, defend their family's boundaries, take turns warming the eggs, and both produce food for their chicks. Their partnership affects every part of their lives.

The truth of the Torah does not depend on scientific experiments. The teachings of Chazal do not require approval from a laboratory. Still, it is fascinating that thousands of years after Chazal described the character of the yonah, modern DNA testing and behavioral studies discovered how unusual the yonah is.

It is no wonder the Gemara in Shabbos 49a teaches that the dove represents Klal Yisrael. Just as the yonah remains faithful to its mate, the Jewish people remain faithful to HaShem even when the male is absent.

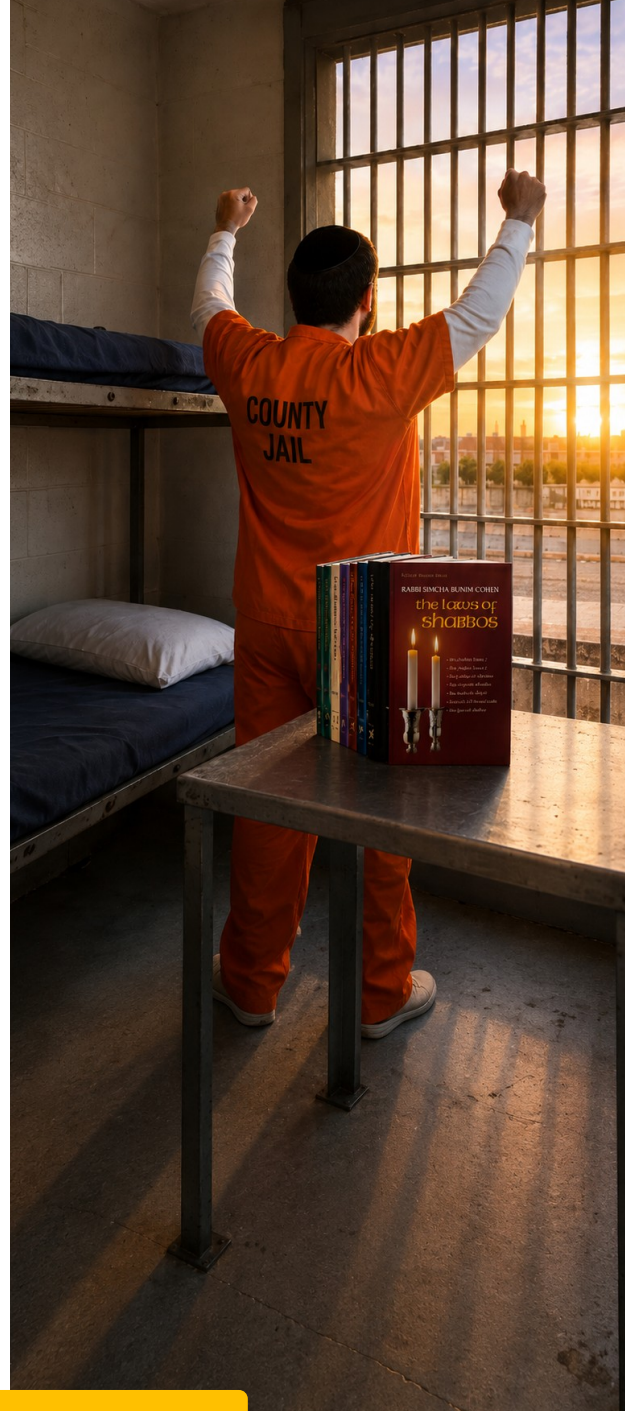
THE PRISONER WHO KEPT TWO SHABBOSOS

Rav Meilech Biderman shared the following true story that took place in the United States several years ago. A Jewish man who had grown up far from Torah and mitzvos was sentenced to fifteen years in prison for a serious crime. While behind bars, he began moving closer to Yiddishkeit. An important Rav visited the prison every two weeks, and the prisoner began learning Torah from him. One of his first decisions was to learn the halachos of Shabbos. The Rav helped him greatly and brought him English books about the laws of Shabbos so that he could continue learning on his own and steadily grow in his new life.

One day, the Rav arrived and found the prisoner unusually happy and excited. "What happened?" the Rav asked. The prisoner answered, "I learned in one of the books you brought me that Chazal teach: 'If Yisrael would keep two Shabbosos, they would immediately be redeemed.' I have decided to keep two Shabbosos properly. After that, I will be redeemed and released from prison! In just a few days, I will be free and able to return home!" The Rav listened with pain. He did not want to disappoint him, but felt he had to explain Chazal correctly. "My dear friend," he said, "I deeply respect everything you are doing. However, Chazal were speaking about the entire Jewish people. They meant that if all of Klal Yisrael kept two Shabbosos properly, the geulah would come and Mashiach would arrive. They were not promising that an individual prisoner would automatically be released. You were sentenced to remain here for fifteen years. Please do not assume that you will certainly be freed after two Shabbosos." But the prisoner remained firm. "It does not say that Chazal were speaking only about the entire Jewish people," he replied. "I believe their words can also apply to an individual." He remained completely confident that after keeping two Shabbosos, he would be freed.

The Rav usually visited every two weeks, but this time he was delayed and did not return for a full month. When he finally arrived, he was shocked to discover that the prisoner was gone. The prison workers told him that the man had been released one week earlier. For several days before his release, he had been telling his friends that he would soon be leaving prison. The Rav began investigating, determined to understand how such an extraordinary thing had happened. The judge who had sentenced the man had grown old and retired. He decided to write his memories of some of the most serious cases he had handled, including this prisoner's trial. The judge reopened the case and carefully reviewed the testimony, arguments, and evidence. As he examined everything again, he realized something terrible: the evidence incriminating him was inconclusive. The judge was honest enough to admit that he had made a mistake. The authorities reviewed the case, and the Jewish prisoner was set free.

Rav Meilech concludes; tens of thousands of Jews keep Shabbos every week who do not experience redemption. The difference is that this man believed the words of Chazal with his entire heart and soul; he was already celebrating his release! He had no doubt that their promise was true and that his geulah would come. Because his emunah was so strong, he was worthy of experiencing his own personal geulah. The same idea applies to many situations in life. The stronger a person's emunah is, the more worthy he can become of receiving the help, salvation, and yeshuah he needs.



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the young doctor who had only a permit, not a license, Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein (Chashukei Chemed, Nedarim, page 457) wrote that the father was permitted to accompany him and, in fact, should do the driving. This is because the father would drive most effectively and get them to their destination as quickly and efficiently as possible.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to the loving memory of
Shmuel Fleischman z"l
שמואל יודל בן בנימין יעקב ז"ל

By his family



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

