

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE COUTURIER

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha discusses how Betzalel was charged to make the Mishkan and the clothes of the kohanim. The clothes of the kohanim were unique in that they contained shatnez, they contained mixtures of linen and wool.

This is normally forbidden, as shatnez.

The mitzvah of shatnez leads us to the following true story.

Avi owned an upscale suit store that catered to both Jews and non Jews. Not all of his suits were checked for shatnez, there was however an area designated for suits that were pre checked for shatnez. This service was done for his Jewish customers. The suits in the "pre checked" section were more expensive.

One day a distinguished looking non Jewish man walked into the store. He looked around the store and stopped by the sign that said



PURE BUT SMALL WINS THE RACE

Excerpted from the writings of my dear brother in-law, Rav Michael Bodenheimer zt'l

There is a famous story which was told by Rav Shimon Schwab zt'l about his encounter with the great Chofetz Chaim. The Chofetz Chaim, who was a Kohein, asked Rav Schwab if he was a Kohein or Levi, to which Rav Schwab answered that he was neither. The Chofetz Chaim proceeded to tell him why he and his ancestors were Koheinim and were chosen to serve in the Beis HaMikdash and why Rav Schwab and his ancestors were not chosen. That is because when Moshe solicited the nation calling 'All who are for HaShem come to me' it was my grandfather who responded and not yours. The response to Moshe Rabbeinu's call for action separated those who were to serve in the Beis HaMikdash and those who would not serve.

We must ask ourselves why, in fact, did all of the Jews not respond to Moshe? Only 3,000 people from our nation actually served the Calf, the rest did not. Why did they not respond to Moshe's call? Furthermore, why did their response have an effect for the rest of history? How did their response define for the rest of our history who will serve in the Beis HaMikdash?

The Netziv explains that Moshe was soliciting people for the purpose of executing those who served the Calf. Those volunteering for this task were placing themselves in harm's way. The ones being executed and their friends might

"Shatnez Free Suits". The suits looked nice.

Curious, the man turned to Avi, the proprietor.

"Can you explain what shatnez is, and why these suits are more expensive?"

Avi decided to answer in a way that he never did before.

"Sure", Avi said. "Shatnez means a mixture of wool and linen. According to ancient Jewish wisdom, avoiding wearing materials made from shatnez is very beneficial for your overall well being."

The man was curious and said, "I am very passionate about wellness, wellbeing and all sorts of homeopathic and holistic treatments, and I'd like to try out the shatnez free suits".

With the intent to buy a suit that was "better for his well being", the non Jewish customer bought a shatnez free suit, which was about 50 dollars more expensive than the regular suits.

Later Avi thought about the exchange and wondered if he did the right thing. The man paid fifty dollars extra for a shatnez free suit. But non Jews are not commanded to avoid shatnez. Was there any benefit at all for him? Perhaps telling a non Jew that shatnez is better for his wellbeing is "gneivas daas", tricking him.

He wondered if perhaps he should track him down and return the extra money. Is there any benefit at all for a non Jew to avoid wearing shatnez?

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retaliate and kill these volunteers.

There is a rule that if one is engaged in fulfilling a mitzvah he is protected from danger. That is only if it is not a dangerous situation. If, however, it is a dangerous situation where one can expect danger, the mitzvah will not protect him. If, however, the one performing the mitzvah is doing so with no personal gain whatsoever, then the mitzvah will protect him even if the situation is dangerous.

Moshe was therefore asking for people whose entire motivation was absolutely selfless with no personal interest at all. Only those people whose entire life's drive was to fulfill HaShem's Will and nothing else would be candidates for this mission. Any other person, although they were righteous, would nevertheless be endangering themselves if they would undertake Moshe's mission.

Rabbeini Bachya writes in Chovos Halvovos how careful one must be that all his actions be done with the purest of intent for HaShem only. One should not perform mitzvos or learn Torah to become the greatest Rabbi, or to create the biggest Yeshiva. Those intentions detract from the value of the mitzvah. At the end of Shaar Yichud Hamaaseh he writes "it is better to exert all your energy to purify the intentions of your mitzvos rather than to do more mitzvos with less pure intentions. The few mitzvos that are pure have much value while the many mitzvos that lack pure intent have little value.

Perhaps the reason for the Leviim's eternal role in the Beis HaMikdosh was because their response to Moshe indicated their purity of intent. As the Psalmist writes in Psalm 33 "Fear of HaShem is pure, it endures for eternity."

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

SAPPHIRE

This week's Parsha discusses how Moshe brought down the luchos. When we think of the luchos, some people think of gray, granite rock. However our Sages teach that the luchos were made out of the stone Sapphire. Let's explore the sapphire together.

Sapphire is a precious gemstone which is a variety of the mineral called corundum. The name sapphire is derived from the Latin "saphirus" and the Greek "sapheiros", both of which originally come from the Hebrew word ספיר (sappir).

Corundum has two primary gem varieties. The blue ones are sapphires and the red ones are rubies. Rubies and sapphires come from the same mineral; the presence of chromium is what makes a ruby red. **(Pictured, top second to left)**

Sapphires are typically blue, but they also come in many other colors, orange, yellow, green, purple, violet, brown, gray, black, and can even be colorless. Sapphires of other colors are called "fancy sapphires". **(Top, third from left)**

If a red colored sapphire is really a ruby, then what is a pink colored stone? Is it a ruby or sapphire? In this case a pink-colored corundum may be classified either as ruby or sapphire depending on the locale. In the United States, a minimum color saturation must be met to be called a ruby, otherwise the stone is referred to as a pink sapphire.

A pinkish orange variety of sapphire is called padparadscha, which means "color of lotus" in Sanskrit. **(Top right)**

Sometimes a sapphire stone can have two colors in the same stone. This is called a "parti sapphire". **(Bottom left)**

A rare variety of natural sapphire, known as color-change sapphire, exhibits different colors in different light. Color change sapphires are blue in outdoor light and purple under incandescent indoor light, or green to gray-green in daylight and pink to reddish-violet in incandescent light.

Some sapphires exhibit a phenomenon known as the "star effect". This phenomenon is caused when materials within the sapphire create a star pattern of light on the top of the gemstone. Star sapphires are highly sought after and prized by collectors. **(Bottom, second to left)**

Sapphires and rubies are often found in the same geographical settings, but they generally have different geological formations. For example, both ruby and sapphire are found in Myanmar's Mogok Stone Tract. However the rubies form in marble, while the sapphire forms in granitic pegmatites (igneous or magmatic rock with a very coarse texture).

Madagascar is the world leader in sapphire production. In North America, sapphires have been mined mostly from deposits in Montana.

The sapphire deposits of Kashmir, in the border area between India and

Pakistan, are well known in the gem industry. They have a superior vivid blue hue, with a mysterious and almost sleepy quality, described by some gem enthusiasts as "blue velvet". The unique blue appears lustrous under any kind of light, unlike non-Kashmir sapphires which may appear purplish or grayish in comparison. A sapphire from Kashmir is much more valuable than from other areas.

Sapphires are the third hardest mineral in the world. Diamond is the hardest, then moissanite (a diamond colored mineral discovered by Henri Moissan in 1893 in Canyon Diablo, Arizona) and then sapphire. Because of the remarkable hardness of sapphires they are also used in some non-ornamental applications, such as infrared optical components, high-durability windows, wristwatch crystals and movement bearings, and very thin electronic wafers, which are used as the insulating substrates of special-purpose solid-state electronics such as integrated circuits and GaN-based blue LEDs.

In 1916 a Polish chemist named Jan Czochralski invented a method to create artificial sapphires. Many methods of manufacturing sapphire today are variations of Czochralski's process. The availability of cheap synthetic sapphire unlocked many industrial uses for this unique material.

Synthetic sapphire—sometimes referred to as sapphire glass—is commonly used as a window material, because it is both highly transparent and extraordinarily scratch-resistant. In fact in 2014 Apple consumed one-fourth of the world's supply of sapphire to cover the iPhone's camera lens and fingerprint reader. The Apple Watch Series 3 features lab-created sapphire crystal in its screen to make it more scratch resistant.

Synthetic sapphire is combined with zirconia and aluminum oxynitride to make shatter resistant windows for armored vehicles. It is also used to make bullet resistant military body armor suits.

Synthetic sapphires are also used to make lasers. **(Bottom, third to left)** There is an interesting historical side note to the Jewish origin of the laser. The first laser was built in 1960 by a Jewish man, Theodore (Ted) H. Maiman. **(Bottom right)** Growing up, Ted's father let him understand that he hoped his son would become a medical doctor. This way he would follow the footsteps of his famous ancestor, the 12th-century philosopher and physician Moshe Ben Maimon, the Rambam. Ted did not become a medical doctor but he created a tool used by millions of doctors, the Laser. The word "laser" is really an acronym for "light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation".

A laser needs to have a "gain medium", a mechanism to energize it. The first laser made in 1960 by Theodore Maiman used a rod of synthetic ruby as its gain medium. Today however, Titanium-sapphire lasers are popular due to their rare ability to be tuned to various wavelengths in the red and near-infrared region of the electromagnetic spectrum.

TWO MAKOLETS

For many years Rebbetzin Batsheva Kanievsky shopped in the Vizhnitz Makolet, (small grocery store) which was a 10-minute walk from her house.

Then the Gross Makolet opened up near the Lederman Shul, a minute from her door. At first, she continued shopping in the Vizhnitz Makolet, ten minutes from her home.

However, upon further reflection, she feared that the proprietor of the new Gross Makolet next door might be offended.

But how could she leave her old grocery without insulting its proprietor? The Rebbetzin solved this dilemma by evenly splitting her purchases, and buying her groceries from both of the stores.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about holding a cell phone while davening in the airport, pretending that he was on the phone, Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered that he is allowed to hold something that will help him daven properly.

This printing of this week's TableTalk is dedicated
by Boris and Yelena Malachevsky

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