



## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### TWINS, PLUS ONE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, we find the mitzvah to emulate Hashem. Our Sages teach that this means just as Hashem is rachum, empathetic, so should we be empathetic. This means in general, every middah that Hashem has, we have a mitzvah to emulate as well. Our Sages teach that when we are similar to Hashem, that makes us close to Him. This leads us to the following true story.

There was once a young couple named the Schwartz's. For many years, they were unable to have children. Doctors informed them that there was little chance of conceiving naturally and suggested they consider adoption. With a heavy heart, the couple approached an adoption agency in Israel and began the process.

After some time, they were informed



### EVERY END HAS A BEGINNING

Our Parsha opens with the mitzvah of Bikurim. When we enter the Land of Israel and our fruit tree blossom we tie a ribbon around those first blossoms and dedicate those first fruits to be brought to Yerushalayim and be presented to the Kohein as way of expressing our recognition that everything we have from the very start comes from HaShem. We bow in gratitude to Him. This mitzvah is a source of much blessing for us.

The Midrash teaches that when Moshe was given the mitzvah of Bikurim he established the institution of davening three prayers daily, Shacharis, Mincha and Maariv. This Midrash needs understanding how do the daily prayers relate to Bikurim?

Shlomo Hamelech writes in Koheles, "A good outcome is a result of a good beginning." The outcome of any endeavor, whatever endeavor it may be, finds its source in the intent that lies in the beginning of that endeavor. The Midrash illustrates this point with the story of Elisha ben Avuah, the teacher of the great Rebbe Meir. Later in life, Elisha turned away from Torah and strayed far away. How did such a great person turn his back on the Torah he learned? Elisha's father dedicated his son's Torah education for the purpose that his son should become a world famous Rabbi who is gifted with special powers. He wanted fame and glory for his son. However, the actual purpose of studying Torah is to become humble. The Midrash explains that since the beginning of Elisha's Torah education was specifically for the reverse he turned away from the Torah he learned.

Similarly, the Gemara teaches that a year which begins with humility will be

that a young baby girl was available for adoption. However, there were numerous background checks and bureaucratic procedures to navigate, meaning it would be approximately a year before they could take the baby home. As the couple was waiting to be able to pick up the baby for adoption, they were met with a surprising twist. Mrs. Schwartz discovered she was pregnant and, to their astonishment, they were expecting twins.

As the day of the birth approached, the Schwartz's were faced with the reality of not just raising twins but possibly three children. They pondered if this would be overwhelming. Just as they were grappling with this, the adoption agency notified them that the baby girl was ready to be taken home.

Now, they were faced with a heart-wrenching dilemma. Should they adopt the baby, ensuring she grows up in a loving, Torah-observant home? Or, given that they now had twins, would it be too much for them? In addition, perhaps they should leave the baby available for another childless couple? But perhaps if they don't adopt the baby, no one will actually end up adopting her, or even if someone does, perhaps they would not raise her in a Torah home.

The Schwartz's were torn. Was it in their best interest, or the child's, to continue with the adoption? Was it better for them to raise all three children, or would it be more selfless to give another couple the opportunity to adopt?

What do you think?



rich at the end. If we begin the year with the humility and recognition that we must turn to HaShem for every breath of life and every turn of success, then, that year will in fact, be a year when HaShem showers us with blessings.

As we pass through time, one hour after another, one day after another, one week after another and so on we do not experience any sense of newness. Life becomes one long monotonous experience of passing moments with no one moment having any more significance than the next. However, as members of HaShem's people we know better. We know that when HaShem created the world the world did not take on its own inherent existence. Just as the world entered existence by the Word of HaShem, so does every moment that followed that first moment continue to exist because HaShem wills it into existence.

If we can fully appreciate this notion then suddenly every

moment is a new moment; it is a moment that was just created. It is a moment that just began and if we will implant in that new moment a recognition how HaShem brought that moment into being then we can anticipate great results from that new moment.

The Sefas Emes uses this notion to explain why Moshe established our three daily prayers once the mitzvah of Bikurim was given. Moshe understood that there are three significant parts to our day. There is the beginning when we first wake up. There is the middle of day when we are involved in our daily activities and finally there is the end of the day when night settles and we are able to contemplate what occurred during the day. Given the mitzvah of Bikurim which teaches us the power of dedicating the beginning of each endeavor, Moshe established the prayers for us to dedicate the coming of each new period of time to HaShem. The power of these prayers is that they dedicate the beginning of every period of our day with an awareness of HaShem. With every prayer we can anticipate a good result from each new period.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and a k'siva v'chasima tova.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE TUNA

When attending a bris, it's common to encounter platters of lox spread and tuna salad. While we might initially assume that salmon (the origin of lox) and tuna (the key ingredient in tuna salad) are similar in size, this is a misconception. Pink salmon are relatively modest sized fish, averaging around 20 inches in length. On the other hand, some tuna species can grow up to 15 feet, nearly three times as tall as a person! Let's delve deeper into the captivating world of the tuna fish.

Tuna encompasses over 15 species. Their sizes vary considerably, with the bullet tuna measuring around 1.6 ft at maximum, and the Atlantic bluefin tuna reaching a staggering 15 ft. The heaviest tuna ever recorded was an Atlantic bluefin weighing 1,508 pounds. Most tuna species have lifespans ranging from 15-30 years. However, the oldest known tuna, a Pacific bluefin, was estimated to be around 50 years old.

Found in tropical, subtropical, and temperate waters worldwide, tunas only avoid the cold Arctic Ocean. These fish spend a significant portion of their lives traversing the open oceans, undertaking remarkable trans-oceanic migrations in their quest for food. Some even complete annual migrations of over 9,000 miles! There's research suggesting that tunas might use the Earth's magnetic field as a navigation tool during these long journeys. These travels lead them from nutrient-rich cold waters, where they feed, to tropical regions for spawning and breeding.

Physiologically designed for life in the open sea, tunas boast streamlined, torpedo-shaped bodies, allowing for reduced drag as they move through water. Their robust crescent tails can propel them at speeds exceeding 47 mph! Due to their design and speed, the bluefin tuna is often likened to the "Porsche of the ocean" and described as a "perfect swimming machine." In fact, the word "tuna" originates from the Greek term "thynein," meaning "to rush or speed along."

To optimize energy during their lengthy voyages, tunas use a swimming technique known as porpoising. They generally cruise at speeds between 15-30 mph, occasionally coasting and slowing down to 3-10 mph before accelerating again. This method enables them to cover vast distances with minimal fatigue. Their energy-efficient anatomy and hydrodynamic form make them ideally suited for this swimming style.

Unique among fish, tunas are warm-blooded, enabling them to conserve the heat generated by their swift movements. This adaptation ensures their muscles remain up to 20°C warmer than the surrounding water, providing them with more power and stamina than their cold-blooded counterparts. It also empowers them to dive deeper in pursuit of prey.

For tunas, vision is paramount when hunting. Their eyes

have specialized structures to maintain warmth during dives into colder depths. Moreover, they possess exceptional hearing and an acute sense of smell. Tunas can detect the faintest trace of blood in the water, as dilute as 1 part in 1 million. Their significant visual abilities, enhanced by features that increase contrast and filter UV light, allow them to effectively chase swift prey like small fish, squid, and crustaceans, even in the dimly lit mesopelagic zone.

During their early stages, tunas grow at an impressive rate, with an average weight gain of about a pound per week in their first year. Their swift maturation and rapid growth spur their voracious appetite. With a high metabolism, they must consume 3-8% of their body weight daily to survive. For instance, a single yellowfin tuna might devour over 30 pounds of fish in a day.

To evade predators, tunas often congregate in large schools. These massive gatherings provide safety in numbers and enhance group awareness. Being solitary makes them easy targets; hence, the mob offers protection.

Remarkably, a mature female tuna can lay over 10 million eggs in a season, offsetting the fact that most of their larvae will succumb to predators. The hatched larvae swiftly develop into fry and feed on zooplankton. A few weeks later, the rapidly growing juveniles transition to coastal schools from their initial oceanic habitats.

Many marine creatures, including dolphins, sharks, and larger fish, consider tuna a delicacy. Dolphins, for instance, might herd tunas to the surface, while sharks target passing schools. Even billfish like marlins chase tunas, though sometimes the roles are reversed. However, the most significant threat to tunas is human intervention. These fish are in high demand in commercial fisheries, with hundreds of thousands of tons harvested each year.

The canning of tuna, which began in the early 1900s, evolved into a thriving global industry. During WWII, canned tuna was a dietary staple. Today, canned tuna remains one of the most consumed seafood products globally. The worldwide tuna industry is worth over \$42 billion annually. Regrettably, due to overfishing, many tuna populations are dwindling. All three bluefin species face potential extinction, with the southern bluefin being critically endangered. Some tuna fisheries are also controversial for their inadvertent harm to dolphins and other marine creatures. This is because tunas often associate with dolphins, using them as indicators of food sources closer to the surface.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world.

## RAV CHAIM & THE ENLISTMENT OFFICE

Rabbi Shaya Epstein was Rav Chaim Kanievsky's driver. "On many of our trips," Rabbi Shaya Epstein recounted, "Rav Chaim Kanievsky would converse with me in his usual friendly, unassuming manner. In the thirty-two years I had the honor of driving him, he shared a few personal stories. "Once he recounted his experience as a young man when he had to go to the enlistment office to request a deferment from army service. "The first time I went there," he said, "I sat in the waiting area with a Gemara. I got completely engrossed in learning, and before I realized what was happening, they had closed for the day and inadvertently locked me into the building. I had to climb out through a window because the door was double-locked. Although it was only a few blocks from the Lomza Yeshiva, I had no idea how to get back. A kind passerby helped me find my way. "If I fill up part of my brain with the names of streets, it would be at the expense of a bit of Torah!" "He added, "From my youngest years, I always davened that nothing but Torah should go into my head!"

Rabbi Aharon Leib Shteinman described a related incident. After the founding of the State, all bachurim were required to appear before the Lishkat HaGiyus (Conscription Office). Bachurim who were fit to serve in the army were allowed an annual deferment to continue their Torah studies, based on the agreement worked out between the Chazon Ish and Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion. Those deemed unfit for service were given a permanent deferment.

It was Rav Chaim's turn to be interviewed. "Which yeshiva do you attend?" asked the screener. "Lomza Yeshiva in Petach Tikva," Rav Chaim replied. "On which street is this yeshiva located?" Rav Chaim replied that he wasn't sure of the address or the name of the street. "Which intersection is it near?" He replied that he wasn't sure about any of the street names. "But I know how to get there from Bnei Brak by public transportation." The screener pressed Rav Chaim several times, insisting that since he had been studying in the yeshiva for several years, he had to know the name of the street it was on! Rav Chaim repeatedly replied that he had no idea. After several more similar questions and answers, Rav Chaim was issued a permanent deferment; they did not feel such an absent-minded young man would be an asset to the army.

Rabbi Aharon Leib pointed out that the army screeners were accustomed to bachurim concocting a variety of stories to exempt themselves. Therefore, the army trained professionals to ascertain if the interviewee was being truthful. But they probably never encountered answers as confounding as those sincerely given by Rav Chaim Kanievsky!

(From Rav Chaim, By R' Naftali Weinberger, Published By Artsroll, and Reprinted with Their Permission)



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the noisy sleepwalker, Rav Zilberstein (Upiryu Matok Shemos Page 399) wrote that it is for sure wrong of the seller not to tell the buyer about the condition of the neighbor. However, after the fact, once the sale was done, the buyer would be unable to demand his money back in a Jewish court, because there are opinions that hold that Mekach Taus, a faulty sale, only applies when there is a flaw in the actual product, not things that are external to the product. If the product itself is flawless, then an external problem cannot be considered a Mekach Taus. Also, there is an opinion that it is not a Mekach Taus if the buyer could have discovered the flaw through a simple investigation or by asking the neighbors.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of my dear parents who are raising me and my siblings on the derech haTorah.  
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