



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



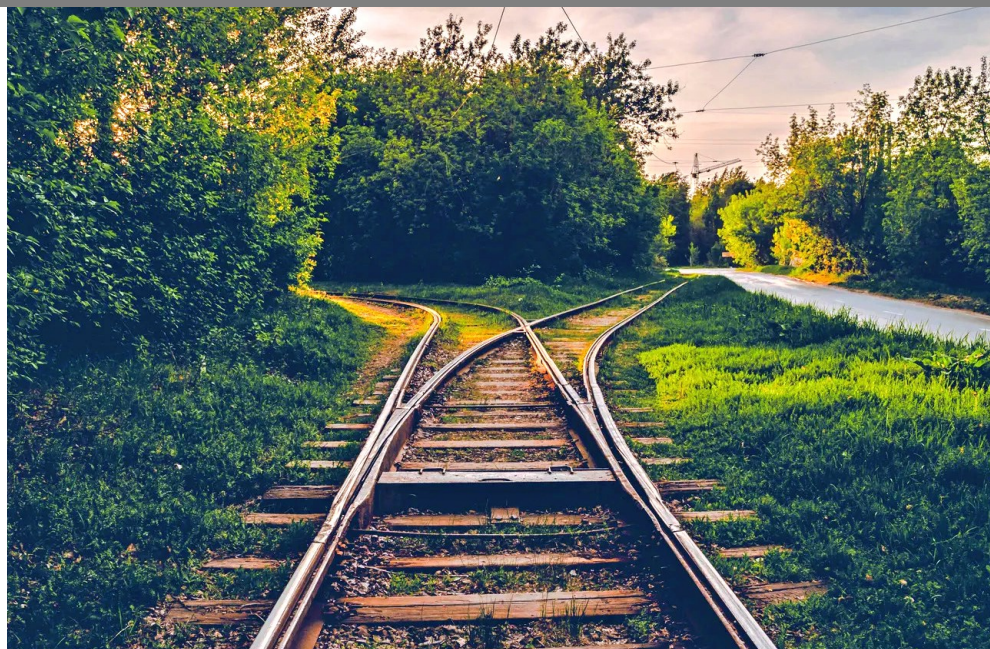
THE HERO

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, we learn about how the Philistines did not have any gratitude for the generosity of Avraham, who created wells for their welfare and public benefit (Rav S.R. Hirsch). The Philistines returned the good with evil and filled them up instead.

This leads us to the following true story. David, a wealthy NYC lawyer, was once waiting on the subway station platform. Suddenly he slipped on a wet surface and tripped. To his horror, he slipped off the train platform onto the tracks. He tried to quickly pull himself up and get off the tracks, but unfortunately his foot got stuck under one of the tracks. He tried to pull his foot out, but was unable to. Suddenly he heard the sound of the oncoming train. People on the platform started to scream for help. David was terrified as he watched the train's lights coming inexorably closer. David davened to Hashem. He hoped that someone on the platform would be inspired to rescue him somehow. In his mind, he committed to himself that if anyone rescued him, he would be eternally indebted and give them a cash gift of \$10,000 for their kindness.

Suddenly, a giant of a man appeared. He must have been at least seven feet tall. He



ONE QUESTION; WHICH DIRECTION

Parshas Toldos introduces us to the birth of Yaakov and Eisov, the central players of world history. Yaakov plays the role of the hero who will bring the world to its ultimate destiny when HaShem will be recognized and accepted by all. Eisov plays the role of Yaakov's nemesis. Eisov is the one who tries to block Yaakov, using his many tactics, from achieving his goal. Hashgacha had it that these two players be born to the same parents in the same womb at the same time - they are twins. Their dichotomous relationship is reminiscent of the two goats that were prepared for the Yom Kippur service. They were supposed to be the same height, same value and as much as possible to resemble one another. One of these goats would be brought before HaShem in the Bais Hamikdash and the other thrown down a cliff to appease the satan. The only distinction was the direction they were going.

These two children shared a great strength that would impact world history. Their point of departure was only the direction they would use this strength. Like two powerful magnets, they shared the same strength but one was stationed on the right pulling the left towards him and the other was stationed on the left pulling the right towards him.

The Sheim Mishmuel explains that both Yaakov and Eisov were blessed with the ability to connect the two opposing worlds of the spiritual and the material. Yaakov positioned himself in the spiritual world and pulled the material world upward. Eisov positioned himself in the material world and pulled the spiritual world downward.

With what force were these two children blessed with? How does one connect these two opposite worlds?

jumped onto the tracks next to David and scooped David up in his massive arms. It looked like an adult carrying a small child. The giant carried David back to the subway platform and climbed up after him. The train passed by safely. David sat with his back against the wall to catch his breath and wait for his adrenaline to settle down.

Everyone began to cheer about the heroism of the giant. A small group of people crowded around the hero. But he just stood there nonchalantly as if he didn't do anything significant. "What is your name?" someone asked. "Anthony," he replied. "Do you appreciate that you just saved someone's life?" another asked.

Anthony just shrugged. "I will be honest with you, I work as a dishwasher in a Manhattan restaurant. Last night was a jam-packed night, and I have a ton of dishes to wash. I get paid ten dollars an hour. I figured that if the train ran over that Jewish man, I would be stuck on this platform for at least five hours. I would miss five hours of work and lose fifty bucks. Who is going to give me back that fifty lost bucks? So in order to make sure I don't have any work delays, I made sure the man was not in front of the train."

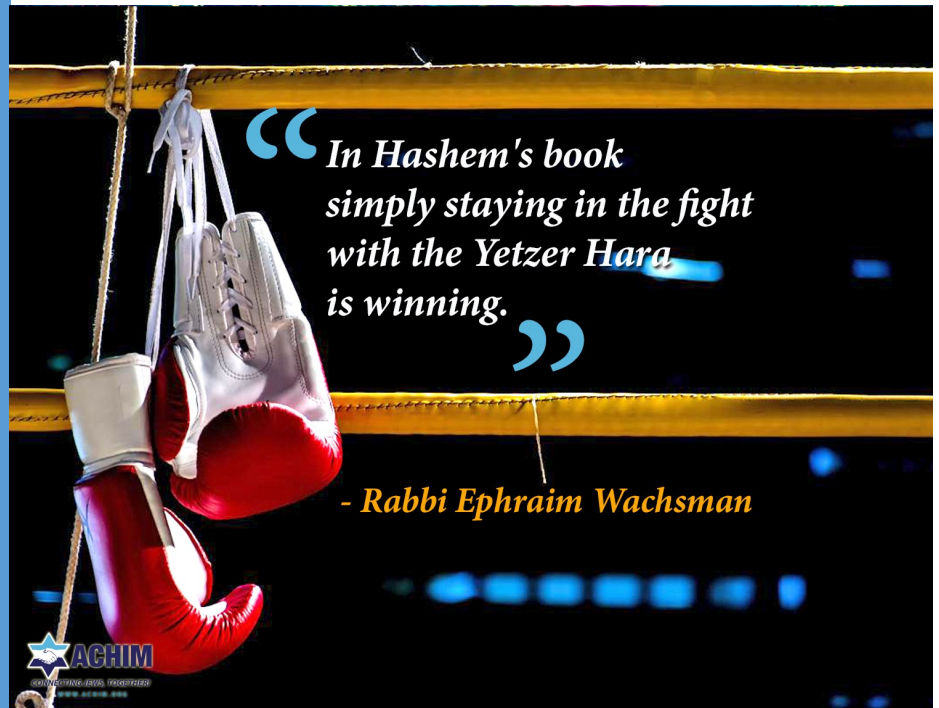
David, who was sitting nearby, could not believe what he had just heard. Anthony, his rescuer, was not motivated at all by humanitarian altruism. He just did it for himself to ensure that he would keep his fifty bucks.

Suddenly his feelings of gratitude toward the man completely faded away, and instead, David felt disgust toward Anthony.

But David felt conflicted. The man did just save his life when no one else did. There is a mitzvah of Hakaras Hatov, to feel and express gratitude towards another who helped you. David wanted to know if he still had a responsibility to feel indebted and grateful towards Anthony, even though it was clear that Anthony didn't specifically care about saving his life. Should David still give him the significant cash gift of \$10,000 that he originally intended to give? Should he give him nothing but suffice with a polite thank you? Should he give him a small amount of money?

How should David react and relate to his rescuer?

See Upiryo Matok Bereishis page 455



There is a principle in halacha called ikur and tofel; primary and secondary. The primary units of the army are the soldiers on the front, the secondary units are the chefs and cooks who prepare the meals for the soldiers. The banana is primary and its peel is secondary. The banana has inherent value. The peel has no inherent value; its purpose is to serve the banana.

In Halacha we attribute the ikur as the object of halacha and the tofel is disregarded. One example is determining the bracha that is recited for a certain food. The ikur establishes the bracha. Another example; If one carries a single grain of barley on Shabbos they have not desecrated Shabbos because one grain is insignificant. If one carries a spoon, they have desecrated the Shabbos. If one uses the spoon to transport that one grain of barley then the spoon is the tofel and the grain is the ikur. In that case a desecration has not occurred because the spoon is tofel to the grain and the amount of grain is insignificant.

Behold! A golden spoon worth much money becomes less meaningful than a single grain of barley when it is used to serve the barley.

Everything Yaakov did was for one purpose; to bring Glory to HaShem - there was no other purpose. Any involvement in the material world was driven by that single purpose. The material was tofel to the spiritual. He was thereby able to elevate the entire material world heavenward.

Eisov, like Yaakov, also did everything for just one purpose but the purpose was in the opposite direction. Any involvement in the spiritual world was driven by that single purpose. The halacha questions that he asked his father were driven for material gains. His desire for the blessings was to further his material aspirations. Eisov made the spiritual tofel to the material. He was thereby able to shlep the spiritual downwards.

As children of Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov we are blessed with the power of establishing what is the ikur and what is the tofel. With that incredible power we are the ones who change the direction of world history.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE AMAZING PINEAPPLE

Pineapples are popular fruits. Let's learn some details about this fascinating fruit.

To begin, the pineapple is neither a species of apple or pine. How did it get its name, pineapple? Let's back up a little and learn about the history of the pineapple. The pineapple is indigenous to South America. It originated from the areas between southern Brazil and Paraguay. There is evidence of use as far back as 1200 - 800 BCE. That is around the time of Rus and Boaz. The pineapple was cultivated by the Mayas and the Aztecs. By the late 1400s, cropped pineapple was widely distributed in the Americas, and it was a staple food of Native Americans.

The first European to encounter the pineapple was Christopher Columbus. Columbus brought the plant back to Spain and called it *pica de Indes*, meaning "pine of the Indians". The European looked at the pineapple as a form of a pinecone because there is a resemblance between the pineapple and a pinecone. The term Pine Apples was first recorded in 1664. In those days, pine cones were called pine apples, so they called this new fruit a pineapple.

There is a lot more fascinating history behind the fruit but let's first talk about the fruit itself. Do pineapples grow on trees like apples? No! Pineapples grow out of the center stem of a small leafy shrub. How does the pineapple fruit develop? This is quite fascinating. First, the plant grows many individual overlapping flowers. When creating its fruit, it usually produces up to 200 flowers. Once it flowers, the ovaries of each flower become a berry. The individual berries of the flowers then fuse together to create one fruit (called a multiple fruit). Pineapples are really berries that have fused to form a large juicy fruit. (See the images above, left to right to see the sequence from flowers to many fruit, to one fruit.) The world's largest pineapple ever recorded weighed a whopping 18.3 pounds. In the wild, pineapples are pollinated primarily by hummingbirds or bats. In the Philippines, the long leaves of the pineapple plant are used to make clothing of a light and breezy quality, which is ideal in the hot tropical climate of the islands.

The pineapple plant is a perennial, which grows to as much as 5 feet tall. It has 30 or more narrow, fleshy, long leaves that are about 3 feet long, with a thick stem. The leaves have sharp thorns along the edges.

Unlike an apple tree, a pineapple plant can only produce one pineapple at a time. This means that it produces one pineapple every year. A pineapple plant can stay alive and continue giving fruits for up to 50 years, so that's 50 pineapples in total!

Chicken with pineapple is called Hawaiian chicken, and pizza with pineapple is called Hawaiian pizza. What is the connection between pineapple and Hawaii? Did pineapple originate in Hawaii? Nope. But there is a fascinating history behind the pineapple's connection to Hawaii. We mentioned that the Spanish first brought the pineapple to Europe from South America. Pineapples were very costly to import into Europe, and they became a symbol of wealth. In Europe, pineapples became a significant cultural icon of luxury. As late as the 1700s, pineapples imported from the Caribbean islands could fetch incredible prices, sometimes going for the equivalent of \$8,000 in today's dollars. They were initially used mainly for display at dinner parties, as a centerpiece for large meals, rather than being eaten, and were used again and again until they began to rot. In the early 1900s, people also started to bring pineapples to the homes of friends and family members as a sign of love and hospitality.

In order to find other places to cultivate the pineapple, the Spanish introduced the pineapple into Hawaii in the 1700s. In fact, interestingly, the Hawaiian word for pineapple is "*hala kahiki*". In Hawaiian, "*hala*" means fruit, and "*kahiki*" means foreign. So "*hala kahiki*" translates to "foreign fruit", because it was imported from the Americas.

The Spanish also introduced the pineapple into the Philippines, which was a Spanish colony. James Dole moved to Hawaii in 1899 and created a 60-acre pineapple plantation. This developed into the Dole Food Company. James Dole introduced machine canning of pineapple, and in the 19th century, because of these technological advances, Hawaii was the leading exporter of canned pineapple. However, today, Hawaii produces only one-tenth of one percent of the world's pineapples. Today the Philippines is the top exporter of pineapples in the world, followed by Costa Rica, and Brazil, all of which are former Spanish colonies. So when we think of pineapple as Hawaiian, it is really simply a vestige from the early 1900s.

Here is a fun fact, pineapple is the main ingredient in cocktails such as the *pica colada*. In fact, the literal translation of *pina colada* is strained pineapple.

Also, pineapples regenerate! You can plant the top of the pineapple crown to grow a new plant. Just slice off the top of a whole pineapple, and place it in a glass of warm water. After a while, you will see tiny shoots forming, and this is when it is ready for planting in soil. Eventually, the plant will continue to grow, and sometimes it can reach up to 6 ft tall!

EATING IS THE HARDEST OF ALL

Rav Mendel Kaplan (pictured) would describe to his students how difficult it is to eat correctly. He would say: "The easiest thing to do is to learn; davening is harder than learning, and hardest of all is eating. If someone is truly great, he will be able to give his eating as much sanctity as his Torah study".

In a similar vein, The Alter of Slabodka developed countless stratagems to increase his self-control and self-discipline. With regard to eating he would eat primarily small, bony fish. When asked to explain, he would reply that eating small fish with bones forced him to eat slowly and deliberately and not eat like a glutton."

Once the Alter detected within himself a strong physical desire for fruit soup. As an act of self-discipline, he never again ate it.

This was also manifest in areas outside of eating. The Alter had a special garment set aside for anger. If he ever felt a need to express anger, he would first put on the special garment set aside for that purpose.

In a similar vein, in the Kelm yeshiva, they developed a regimen for fighting against desire known as "shviras haratzon", breaking the will. Kelm talmidim (students) made a practice, for instance, of never opening a letter on the day it was received, no matter how intensely anticipated it was.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the parking ticket, this question was asked to two Rabanim, Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein, and Rav Nissim Karelitz. Rav Zilberstein answered that the driver would not have to pay for the fine because the taillight was the responsibility of the company. However, Rav Karelitz answered that the driver would have to pay the fine because he was the one who did the infraction that attracted the police officer.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of
Fred and Anna Shaposhnikov and their children
for everything they do for Klal Yisroel

By Yehuda and Mira Labovitz

