



## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### HOLY BOOK BINDING

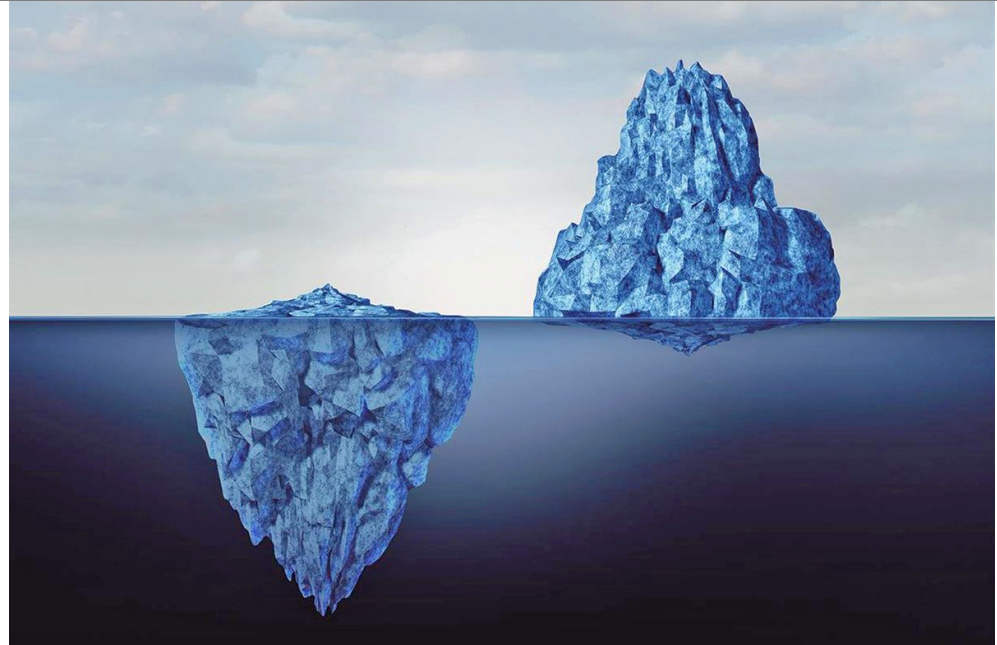
By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion once again makes a reference to the devotion of Yaakov to the study of Torah. The Torah writes, "And he slept in that place". (Bereishis 28,11). Rashi quotes our Sages, saying that this means that he went to sleep THERE, but for the 14 years that he was studying in the Beis Medrash of Ever he did not sleep. The Me'am Loez explains that this means that for 14 years he didn't make preparations to go to sleep. He didn't close his sefer and put on his pajamas and go into bed. He just studied until he dozed off at his sefer.

This leads us to a question that is somewhat similar to the one we had last week.

There was a shul that had a "Bedek Habayis" fund. The fund had \$5000 that they could spend on upkeep costs. The shul committee met to discuss what should be repaired.

Eliezer suggested that they should use the \$5000 to repair one of the Sifrei Torah. The shul had more than enough Sifrei Torah for their needs,



### TRANSPARENCY

Adapted from Rabbi Aaron Lopiansky's talks

This week's Parsha, Vayeitzei, opens with the scene of Yaakov sleeping on what will become the Temple Mount and dreaming. In his dream is a ladder on which angels are ascending and descending. The Midrash teaches us that these angels were fascinated by the image of Yaakov. In heaven his image appeared on the Throne of HaShem and down below they see him in complete physical form. The implication is that Yaakov is the ultimate image of what HaShem intended for Man to be. Somehow, Yaakov captured the essence of the perfect Man. What was Yaakov's quality that won him that title?

Our Sages teach us that the foundation of our people rests upon Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov. Each of these fathers contributed a specific quality and the combination of those qualities creates that foundation. Avraham contributed the quality of Chesed, kindness and care for the other person. Yitzchok contributed Gevurah, the ability to remain steadfast and to keep within the necessary parameters. Yaakov contributed Emes, truth.

What is this quality of Emes? In simple terms Emes is translated as truth but this translation leaves us wanting. Regarding Avraham and Yitzchok we can appreciate how Chesed and Gevurah are overarching qualities with many implications. They change the way we perceive our world. We see a world of kindness. We see a world in which there are boundaries. What does Emes contribute? Is there any implication on our worldview if we are truthful? On the surface it seems that it is just a quality of honesty.

Honestly, Emes only begins with honesty and integrity. From that point it goes much farther.

but one of them was pasul and needed many repairs. It was mainly taken out to dance with on Simchas Torah. There is a mitzvah in the Torah to write a Sefer Torah. They would be fulfilling this mitzvah by repairing this Torah scroll.

But Menachem suggested that rather than repair a Sefer Torah that they did not need, they should use the money to bind and repair the many Gemaras and Chumashim that were totally unusable, and the binding was falling apart. "Even though the Gemaras and Chumashim may not be as holy as the Sefer Torah, at least they will be used to study from every day", Menachem argued.

But Eliezer countered, "How can binding a Gemara be a priority over a mitzvah in the Torah to write a Sefer Torah?"

"Yes that is a Torah mitzvah", Menachem responded, "but the shul doesn't have an obligation, a chiyuv to write a sefer torah. We have an obligation to study Torah and we can do that with gemaras and chumashim."

This question was brought to Rav Zilbrstein.

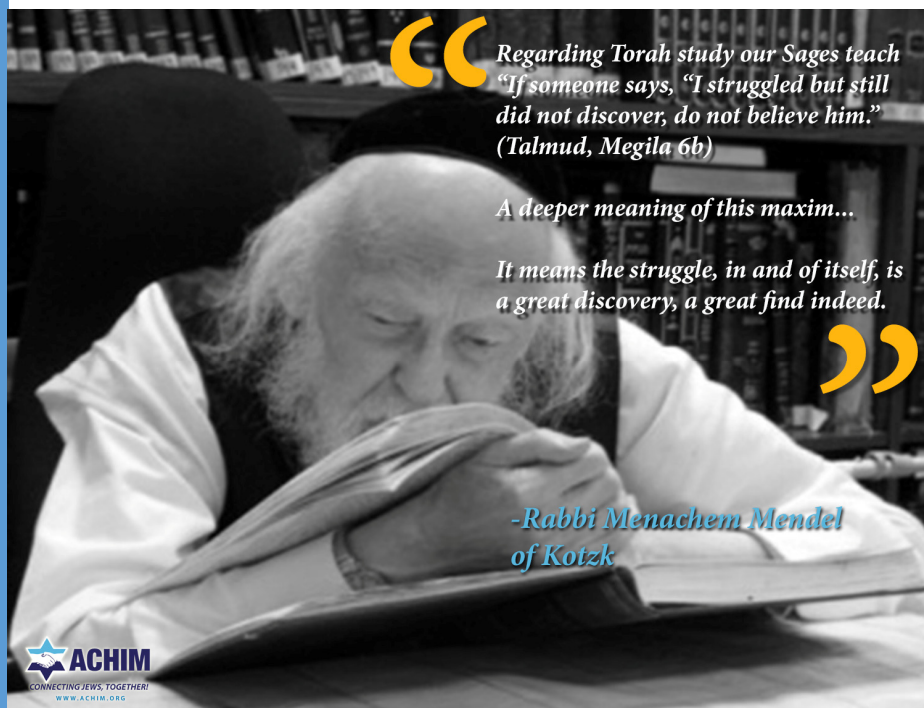
What do you think takes priority? Repairing and fixing a Sefer Torah, or rebinding Gemaras and Chumashim?

On a related, but separate note. Theoretically speaking, What if a Kehilla (community) was just starting. They do not have a Sefer Torah or any other seforim. They have enough money to buy either a Sefer Torah or seforim . Which would take priority, buying a Sefer Torah or buying a set of Shulchan Aruch that they can learn practical halacha from?

See Chashukei Chemed Yoma page 146

If you have a true mitzvah dilemma that you would like us to share, please email it to [rabbiweiner@gmail.com](mailto:rabbiweiner@gmail.com)

## MITZVA MEME



Regarding Torah study our Sages teach  
"If someone says, "I struggled but still  
did not discover, do not believe him."  
(Talmud, Megila 6b)

A deeper meaning of this maxim...

It means the struggle, in and of itself, is  
a great discovery, a great find indeed.

-Rabbi Menachem Mendel  
of Kotzk

Emes is when there is no discrepancy between the essence of the thing and the appearance of the thing. In other words, Emes is when there is absolute transparency. Take for example a rotten fruit. When the inside is rotten it appears rotten on the exterior as well. By simply looking at it you will recognize that the apple is inedible. However, if one is allergic to apples it will not change its appearance even though it may be fatal to eat.

Before Adam and Chava ate from the Tree, the world was completely transparent; anything evil was recognizable as such. To do evil was as uninteresting as eating a rotten apple. That changed when the nachash, the serpent, convinced Chava that there was much benefit to eating from the Tree and that nothing terrible will happen. Once Chava listened to the nachash and was attracted to eating from the Tree, the Tree suddenly became attractive. It lost its transparency and she was able to eat it. She convinced herself that she would not have an allergic reaction.

We find this phenomenon in the world of business. Let us take a world renowned business analyst whose insight is always accurate. When the underwriter hires him to analyze a business they need to know if he has any interest in the business. The reason for this concern is that when there is a personal gain at stake our judgement becomes skewed and transparency becomes opaque.

The quality our father Yaakov bequeathed to his children was the ability to see through any coverings. His quality was Emes. It began with Yaakov's acute honesty and integrity but from there he was able to lift the veils which block the person from seeing what really lies inside. With his worldview he was able to see the true value of his actions. Yaakov was not subject to the lure that distracts us from seeing clearly.

Perhaps Yaakov was the perfect Man because he brought his worldview to the way HaShem intended it to be.

How fortunate we are to have inherited a worldview in which we can recognize the true worth of the world around us and what is good for us and what is not.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE MANATEE

When Columbus came to America on his second trip (in 1493), he wrote that he saw Merpeople and that they “looked ugly”. What he really saw were manatees. These are the large “sea cows” which feed on vegetation in rivers not far from the ocean. Manatees are large, fully aquatic, mostly herbivorous marine mammals. At seven feet tall, they weigh 1,400 pounds. They are called sea cows because they are slow plant-eaters, peaceful and similar to cows on land. They often graze on water plants in tropical seas.

A manatee may be confused with a walrus, but they are from entirely different families. A manatee is related to the elephant, and the walrus is related to the dog family. Like an elephant, a manatee is an herbivore and only eats plants. Like a dog, a walrus is a carnivore and eats meat.

Adult manatees have no incisor or canine teeth, just a set of cheek teeth. These teeth are repeatedly replaced throughout life, with new teeth growing at the rear as older teeth fall out from farther forward in the mouth, somewhat as elephants' teeth do. At any time, a manatee typically has no more than six teeth in each jaw of its mouth.

Manatees spend approximately 50% of the day sleeping submerged, surfacing for air regularly at intervals of less than 20 minutes. The remainder of the time is mostly spent grazing in shallow waters at depths of 3 - 6 ft. When awake, Manatees go to the surface of the water every three to five minutes to breathe although they can remain underwater longer, holding their breath for up to 20 minutes. When they do take a breath, 90 percent of the air in their lungs is replaced. (This is in contrast to humans who tend to replace about 10 percent of the air in their lungs.) Generally, manatees swim slowly at 3 to 5 mph. However, they have been known to swim at up to 20 mph in short bursts.

With low metabolic rates and minimal fat protection from cold water, manatees stick to water that is 60 degrees or warmer. They may look fat and insulated, but the large body of the manatee is not made of blubber but mostly made up of their stomach and intestines!

Manatee brains are smooth, unlike our own that have the familiar ins and outs of cortical folds. Also the ratio of their brain to their body size is the lowest of any mammal. They may not be as clever as dolphins, but manatees

can learn basic tasks, are extremely sensitive to touch and can differentiate colors. They are capable of understanding discrimination tasks and show signs of complex associative learning. They also have good long-term memory. They demonstrate discrimination and task-learning abilities similar to dolphins in acoustic and visual studies.

Manatees are herbivores and eat over 60 different freshwater and saltwater plants. Using its upper lip, an adult manatee will commonly eat up to 10%–15% of its body weight. This means they eat about 110 pounds of plants per day! Consuming such an amount requires the manatee to graze for up to seven hours a day.

To be able to cope with the high levels of cellulose in their plant based diet, manatees utilize hindgut fermentation to help with the digestion process. This means that the cellulose in the stomach is digested with the aid of symbiotic bacteria. Horses actually use the same process.

Manatees are slow moving and very curious and friendly creatures. This slow-moving and curious nature, coupled with dense coastal development, has led to many violent collisions with propeller-driven boats and ships, leading frequently to maiming, disfigurement, and even death to manatees. As a result, a large proportion of manatees exhibit spiral cutting propeller scars on their backs from boats. Why are manatees frequent victims of boats? Manatees hear on a higher frequency than would be expected for such large marine mammals. Many large boats emit very low frequencies which confuse the manatee and explain their lack of awareness around boats. Research has shown that when a boat has a higher frequency the manatees rapidly swim away from danger. In addition, Manatees are quite buoyant and use their unique diaphragm and breathing to control their buoyancy. The fact that they are so buoyant and the fact that their average speed of 3 to 5 miles per hour means that manatees are way too slow to escape from the path of a speeding boat.

Manatees have no natural predators in the wild but humans have played a large part in making all three of its species at risk of extinction. About half of West Indian manatee deaths are caused by humans, and most are due to boat collisions. Thank you Hashem for showing us your wisdom!



**IF, BECAUSE OF ME, ONE STUDENT MISSES A SINGLE SENTENCE THAT HIS REBBE SAYS, THEN MY VISIT WAS DOUBLY NOT WORTHWHILE."**

Every minute of Torah study is incredibly precious. These two beautiful anecdotes illustrate how our leaders cherished every minute of Torah study.

One day, on the eve of a departure overseas, Rav Nossen Tzvi Finkel, Rosh Yeshivah of Mir was in a poor state of health. He had advanced Parkinson's disease, but he still bore the responsibility of raising the funds for the Yeshivah. Despite the fact that he was traveling that evening, and that he was feeling unwell, the Rosh Yeshivah was scheduled to deliver a shiur at the Ramat Shlomo branch of the Mir and he refused to miss giving his shiur. The trip to Ramat Shlomo itself was very demanding of him and he stumbled several times just on the way to the car parked directly outside his door.

However, because of the haste surrounding the upcoming trip, somebody made an assumption that there would be no shiur and the Ramat Shlomo branch was not informed that the Rosh Yeshivah was coming. So sadly, when the Rosh Yeshivah entered the Beis Medrash there were only shtenders to greet him; all the students were attending their regular shiurim elsewhere.

Someone proposed to Rav Nosson Tzvi that the boys be gathered quickly to hear the Rosh Yeshivah, but Reb Nosson Zvi would not hear of it. "It would cause bitul Torah (wasted time from learning)," he declared. "If, because of me, one student misses a single sentence that his Rebbe says, then my visit was doubly not worthwhile." The Rosh Yeshivah turned around and went back home, without giving the shiur.

Rav Yisrael Belsky and his Rebbetzin were very devoted to each other. The Rebbetzin knew that Rav Belsky viewed teaching Torah as his life's mission and did everything possible to ensure that his teaching not be disturbed. In the introduction to his Einei Yisroel on Chumash, Rav Belsky writes: "I have omitted the customary note of appreciation to my wife for her help and encouragement in this endeavor, as this pales into insignificance before the lifetime of menuchas hanefesh, simchas hachaim, chochmas nashim (peace of mind, joy of life, and a woman's wisdom), not to mention her limitless concern for my well-being and that of our children with which she has enriched our lives. She has illuminated our home with the glow of middos tovos and yiras Shamayim. May HaShem reward her appropriately.

In illustrating his wife's devotion to his teaching, Rav Belsky related that once his wife went into labor while he was in Yeshivah teaching Torah. When she called the Yeshivah and asked to speak to him, she was told that he was in the midst of delivering a shiur. "Never mind, then. Please don't bother him," she said, "I'll call back later." She then called a taxi and took herself to the hospital. She reached him by phone after the shiur. Rav Belsky hurried to the hospital and arrived ten minutes before his wife gave birth to a healthy baby girl.

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## THE ANSWER

Regarding the question of which is a greater merit, the Sefer Torah or supporting a Torah scholar, Rav Zilberstein answered as follows: The Halacha is that one is allowed to sell a Sefer Torah to support a Torah scholar to learn Torah. This teaches us that supporting a Torah scholar is a greater merit than the Sefer Torah.

May the enhancement to the kedusha of Shabbos brought about by this issue of TableTalk be a zechus for a refuah shleima to Moshe ben Rachel among all the other cholei Yisroel.  
Enjoy TableTalk!

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