

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### WHERE IS THE OTHER ONE?

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

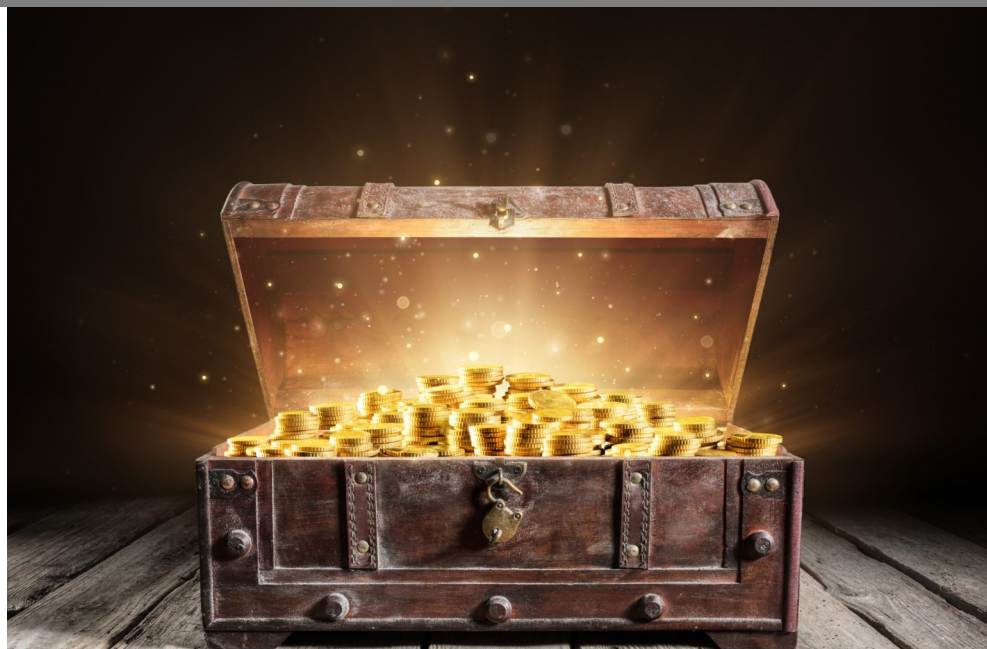
This week's Parsha makes a reference to the importance of doing business honestly as it says, "You should do what is just in His eyes." (Shmos 15,27) The Mechilta says that this is a reference to the importance of doing business honestly.

That leads us to the following story.

Avi was once visiting San Diego, California. They have an amazing zoo there, as well as a beautiful Sea World. San Diego is close to the Mexican city of Tijuana, and Avi decided that he would like to visit the Mexican border city. After crossing the border, Avi made his way to an outdoor market. He came to a shop that sold assorted second-hand items like used candelabras, used watches, used pillows, and used pots.

After perusing the store, Avi's eyes rested on what looked like a bag of tefillin. The tefillin were lying haphazardly on the floor. Pointing to the tefillin bag, Avi asked the owner, "sir, where did you get that bag from." The man was evasive. He said, "I have my ways. That is not your concern."

Avi's sixth sense told him that something was off. Avi asked the man if he could look at the tefillin. The man passed it to him. Avi asked if



### THERE ARE TREASURES & THERE ARE TREASURES

In our exodus from Egypt there were two occasions where HaShem opened up the treasure chests of Egypt for His people to help themselves. The first occasion was shortly before their departure when HaShem requested from His people to please "borrow" gold and silver from their Egyptian neighbors. The second occasion was after the actual exodus and after they exited the Red Sea when the Sea ejected the dead Egyptians out of water with their richly adorned horses and chariots.

There were several differences between these two treasures. The verse in Shir Hashirim compares the first treasure as buttons of silver and the second treasure as columns of gold. The treasure by the Sea was greater than the first both in terms of the amount of the treasure and in terms of the value of the treasure.

There was also another difference. Our ancestors engaged in collecting the first treasure only because HaShem asked them to please do so. The Midrash indicates that they were not interested at all in collecting the gold and silver from their neighbors. They were more focused on getting out of Egypt than collecting treasures. Hence, their entire engagement was purely to fulfill the Will of HaShem. By contrast, the treasure by the Sea was quite the opposite. Although HaShem had the Sea spit out all of Egypt's treasures and allowed His people to take it for themselves, nevertheless, He did not instruct them to take it. They were simply fascinated with the treasure. In fact, Moshe had difficulty pulling them away from collecting the treasures when it was time for them to continue their journey.

he could try them on. The man shrugged. Avi put the tefillin on his hand and then on his head. Wearing both, Avi asked, "how much do you want for these?" The man sensed that Avi wanted them eagerly and asked for a high price. Avi did not have a lot of money on him, but he did not want the tefillin to remain in this shopkeeper's possession. He had an idea.

Pointing to his unadorned right hand, Avi asked the man, "tell me, where is the other one for the right hand?"

The owner said he had them in the back. The man went to the back to search for the other tefillin but came back empty-handed. "I could have sworn there was another one, but this is what I have now," he said.

So Avi said, "Listen, if you don't have the other one, then this is defective. I will give you 20 dollars for these." The man, realizing that he had a defective set of tefillin, agreed to settle on the price of 20 dollars.

Avi walked out of the store, happy that he had rescued the tefillin from a state of disrespect. But then Avi had second thoughts. He knew that tefillin did not have another one for the right hand. So he really tricked the man into giving it for a very low price. Did he do the wrong thing? On the one hand, the man himself was sure that there was another one, and in his opinion, it was defective. But on the other hand, by Avi asking about the other one, he led the shopkeeper on to tell him that he had another part.

Avi had another question: Was he allowed to keep the tefillin? Perhaps they were stolen from a Jew in Tijuana, and perhaps Avi had a responsibility to try to make an effort to locate the owner.

Avi had a third question. Was he allowed to use them to make a bracha on them? Even if he gets them checked and sees that they are in good order, he doesn't know who created the tefillin. Perhaps a non-Jew or someone not fit to make tefillin made them.

These questions were presented to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Shemos Page 149

“Thanking for the small things is bigger than thanking for everything.”

*Adapted from the lessons of Rav Meir Yechiel Miller, Rabbi Avigdor Miller's grandson*



Hence we have two incidents where our people were engaged in material acquisition at the very beginning of our nationhood. One was an act of pure service to HaShem and the second was purely for their own interests. It is fascinating to see how these two acquisitions played out. The gold and silver of the first acquisition was used in the construction of the Mishkan, while the gold from the second acquisition was used in the construction of the Golden Calf.

Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky zt'l once shared with me the following thought. "Money is interesting; without money one cannot live, but woe for the person who loves money." The depth of Reb Yaakov's thought is that money has no inherent value. There is no purpose in money other than what one can accomplish with it. With money one can pay the bills, educate their child, buy food, build a school, support a community and so on. However, it is purposeless for one

to collect money purely for the sake of increasing his portfolio. Hence, the one who loves money connects himself to something which has no value. How sad.

The treasure we acquired before our exodus was for a higher purpose; it was to fulfill the Will of HaShem. That treasure actually had an inherent value - it was the fulfillment of HaShem's Will. It is therefore no wonder that it was the vehicle by which our people connected to HaShem by building the Mishkan.

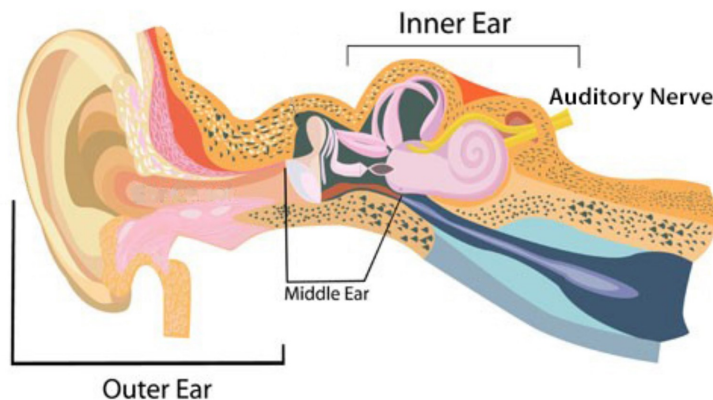
The treasure we acquired by the Sea served no purpose whatsoever. There was no food bill, no tuition, no clothing bill, no Hatzaloh and so on. We had everything covered. There was no need for that treasure. The only reason to collect that treasure was because the people loved the money. It is therefore, no wonder that this treasure was the vehicle by which our people rejected HaShem by creating the Golden Calf.

How fortunate we are to live in a community which appreciates the value of money and builds magnificent institutions of Torah, of Avoda and of Gemillas Chasadim.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### EARS AND HEARING

After learning about our amazing eyes, let's now turn to our amazing ears. Why do we hear? We hear sound because of vibrations that reach our ears. We recognize those vibrations as speech, music, or other sounds. To achieve this, Hashem gave us ears with three parts; the outer ear, the middle ear, and the inner ear.

The outer ear—the part of the ear you see made of cartilage—acts as a funnel to bring sound waves into the ear canal. Then, the sound waves travel through the ear canal to reach the eardrum.

Inside the middle ear, the eardrum vibrates from the incoming sound waves and sends these vibrations to three tiny bones in the middle ear called the malleus, incus, and stapes. These are the smallest bones in the human body, and all three together could fit on a penny. These bones amplify, or increase, the sound vibrations and send them to the inner ear.

The inner ear contains a snail-shaped chamber called the cochlea that is filled with a fluid called endolymph. Sound vibrations create waves in the cochlear fluids. As the waves peak, they cause tiny hair cells to bend, which converts the vibrations into electrical signals. These tiny hair cells are called stereocilia (types of receptors that can detect sound). There are about 20,000 sensitive hair cells inside the cochlea.

The auditory nerve then carries the electrical signals from the inner ear to the brain. The brain interprets the signals as a sound that you recognize and understand.

The hair cells inside the cochlea are incredibly delicate. If these hairs are damaged or destroyed by excessive noise exposure, the aging process, toxic substances, or lack of adequate blood supply, the result is hearing loss. Because these delicate hairs do not grow back, unfortunately, most hearing loss is irreversible.

The human ear is uniquely able to identify familiar sounds and tones. It can distinguish between a vast range of pitches and intonation. It can detect small changes in pitch as little as one-tenth of a percent. In addition, humans can detect individual sound sources and distinguish them from ambient noise.

Our ears can hear frequencies ranging from 20 hertz to 20,000 hertz (although this range shrinks as a person ages.) Although some animals can hear sounds that humans cannot, humans can hear a wider range of frequencies than any animal. How does this work? There are a few ways to measure how "good" our hearing is. One way is to look at the range of low to high sounds we can hear. Although humans cannot hear all frequencies, we can hear sounds both higher and lower in frequency than the notes on the piano. A keyboard covering the entire frequency range that a young human ear can hear (from 20 to 20,000 Hz, or roughly 10 octaves) would require about 120 keys instead of the 88 found on a grand piano. However, some animals can hear much higher frequencies than people can. Cats and dogs can hear frequencies twice as high as humans (about 40,000 Hz). Mice hear in the ultrasonic range (up to about 80,000 Hz) but cannot hear frequencies below 1,000 Hz, which are essential for human speech and music. Humans can hear sounds both in the higher and lower frequencies.

One interesting outcome of our ear detecting such subtle changes is that we can identify a wide range of emotional states just from the sound of someone's voice.

We know that we have five senses, sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell. Hearing is actually the fastest of all the senses and typically takes just 3 milliseconds to process. Here is a good way to appreciate this. When you watch a video, the screen projects a series of still frames one after the other, but you perceive it as continuous motion because each frame is only

shown for about 40 milliseconds. Hearing on the other hand is much faster with a time resolution of just 3 milliseconds. The sense of touch can only manage 50 milliseconds. Smell and taste are the slowest and can take more than a second to react to a new sensation.

We can hear sounds even when underwater. It works like this. Sound travels in waves through the air when you're on dry land. When those waves reach your ear, they vibrate the tiny audio bones in the inner ear. Now go underwater. The sound waves don't move through the air but through the water. Sound waves travel five times faster in water than in air. Underwater, however, those sound waves don't vibrate the ossicles bones in your inner ear. Instead, they go straight to the skull bones, vibrating the heavy bone you can touch behind your ear. Since you are not using the bones of your ear, you can hear higher frequencies underwater, but you lose lower ones.

When we are awake, we hear ambient sounds. But did you know that we hear sounds even while we are asleep? Your ears don't stop hearing when you sleep. Our ears still hear 100% of the sounds around us when we are asleep, even if we're not aware of it. Our brain is responsible for processing all the sounds around us and making sense of them. The sleeping brain continues generating neural responses to surrounding events, but the sleeper is merely in "standby" mode as the brain continues to monitor for relevant signals.

A newborn's hearing apparatus is slightly immature and responds best to high-pitched sounds. Therefore, babies this age seem to respond best to a higher-pitched voice, which is why most people naturally raise the pitch of their voices and exaggerate their speech when talking to a baby.

The inner ear also contains what is called the vestibular organ. This is responsible for balance. So ears don't just help you hear; they also help you keep your balance. In the inner ear, three small loops are above the cochlea called semicircular canals. Like the cochlea, they are also filled with liquid and have thousands of microscopic hairs. When you move your head, the liquid in the semicircular canals moves, too, and helps you keep balance when in motion. Amazingly, this is reflected in the Hebrew word for ears. *Oznayim*, ears, has the same root as the word *Moznayim*, a balance scale.

Not only do our ears adjust to different sounds, but they also adjust to different pressures. Our middle ear has a certain amount of pressure around it, and a small tube, called the Eustachian tube. This tube connects our ear to the back of our throat and helps keep air pressure equal on both sides of the eardrum. This ensures that the pressure does not build up when the surrounding air pressure changes (like on an airplane or somewhere else at a high altitude). The Eustachian tubes then open to relieve some of the pressure when we swallow, which equalizes the pressure inside and outside our ears. That's what makes them "pop."

We have two ears for a reason. Humans can sense the direction of a sound source without moving their heads. Having two ears helps us figure out which direction sounds are coming from. If you listen with only one ear, it's hard to decipher where a particular sound is located. But when both ears operate together, we can distinguish the direction and location of a sound source.

What is Earwax? It is our ears' self-cleaning and self-defense mechanism. Ear wax helps protect the ear and its structures from dirt, bacteria, and other foreign objects. It is also antifungal and antibacterial, preventing harmful material from entering the ear canal. The movement of our jaw helps thin layers of wax to fall away and clean our ears in the process.

## COMPLIMENTS TO THE CHEF

On Shabbos, we eat delicious foods in honor of the Shabbos. When Rav Avigdor Miller would eat the Shabbos food, he would compliment his wife and praise each dish as if it was the first time he had ever tasted it. But, when he did it, it never sounded habitual.

For example, he would praise the challah for its aesthetic design as well as for its taste. He had a selection of warm accolades that he would say to his wife. He would say:

"The challah is a masterpiece. It is so beautiful, and it should be showcased."

"It is a shame to cut it."

"Oisnam gut [exceptionally good]."

"A-1."

"The challah was wunderbar [amazing]."

"It has a geshmaker taam Gan Eden [a delicious sample of the delights of Garden of Eden]."

"The Challah is mamash vi der maan [the challah is simply like the manna.]."

Rav Miller didn't just thank her in general but for each specific thing.

For example, he would say, "Here we have potatoes and parsnip! And leek! Look at the lima beans. And each one is a delicacy."

A grandson once observed the Rebbetzin's pleasure in the way Rabbi Miller delineated every item in the vegetable soup, thanking her for each in excitement.

(From Rav Avigdor Miller, His Life and Revolution, By Yaakov Y. Hamburger, Published By Judaica Press, Preprinted With Permission From The Copyright Holders)



## THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the shawarma incentive, which was designed to ensure that people shopped in a state of hunger and therefore spent more, Rav Zilberstein wrote that "it is fitting to avoid doing this" because it is causing people to lose money.

In memory of our dear Mother and grandmother  
Mrs. Pearl Newman  
אסתר פערל בת הרב משה דוד

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