

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE ARSON

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Eldad lived in Tel Aviv and opened a motorcycle store. He had a grand opening, and many people were excited to see the new store. Shortly after the opening, two tall, rough-looking men came into the store. "Tell me, do you do repairs on motorcycles?" the larger one asked. Eldad replied, "We only sell motorcycles; we don't do repairs." The big man responded, "But if I really wanted you to do a repair, could you do one?" Eldad said, "I guess if I really needed to, I could. But really, our focus is to sell motorcycles, not repair them."

"Good, that's what I want to hear. You see, my buddy and I control the market in this part of the city, and we are the only engine repair shop in the area. If you do repairs, you're going to have a problem with us. Do you catch my drift?" the man said. Eldad nodded his head, but inside, he was defiant.

After the two big men left, Eldad thought to himself, "How dare these gangsters tell me what to do? I wasn't planning to offer repairs, but now that they tried to stop me, I'm specifically going to do it."



OUR IMMORTALITY

Our Parsha begins with the restriction on kohanim (priests) not to come in contact with a deceased person as this would render them tamei (spiritual impurity). This is a unique prohibition for kohanim only, other members of the Jewish people may become tamei. The Midrash explains this prohibition as HaShem telling His kohanim "As long as you will be seeing Me I do not want you to look at the face of a dead person." The Midrash is implying that there is a conflict between serving HaShem and looking at the face of the dead. What is the problem?

In Devarim Moshe tells his people "You (the nation of Israel) are attached to HaShem your G.D, all of you are alive today". The second part of this verse seems out of place. How does our being attached to HaShem relate to our being alive today. Are not all nations alive today and yet they are not attached to HaShem?

The Ohr Hachaim explains this with the Halacha regarding the prohibition of erasing the Name of HaShem. There are seven names referencing HaShem for which we are prohibited from erasing. This includes any suffixes to that Name. In other words, any letters that are added to the end of the Name indicating possessive such as 'my G.D', or 'our G.D' these additional letters may also not be erased. However, any letters that are added before the Name such as 'with G.D' or 'in G.D' are not included in the prohibition and may be erased. The reason for this difference is that once the Name is written it brings kedusha to the letters of the Name and that kedusha continues to anything that is connected to it. However, the letters that precede the Name were already written before the kedusha occurred and therefore do not receive the kedusha from what follows them.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that HaShem is the source of life, all of existence ema-

Sure enough, Eldad advertised that he also did motorcycle engine repairs, and many people brought their motorcycles in for repair. He hired a mechanic to take care of these repairs. One night, Eldad got a call from the fire department: "Please come down to your store; somebody burned it down in the middle of the night." Eldad sped to the store, but it was too late. His entire store was burned to ashes, including all of the motorcycles that were brought in for repairs. Eldad called the police and told them about the tough-looking gangsters, but the police said they didn't have enough evidence to bring them in.

A few days later, his customers asked for their bikes. Eldad told them the whole story and explained how these gangsters burned down his store. But his customer replied, "Why did you have to start up with these tough people? If you hadn't, we would still have our motorcycles."

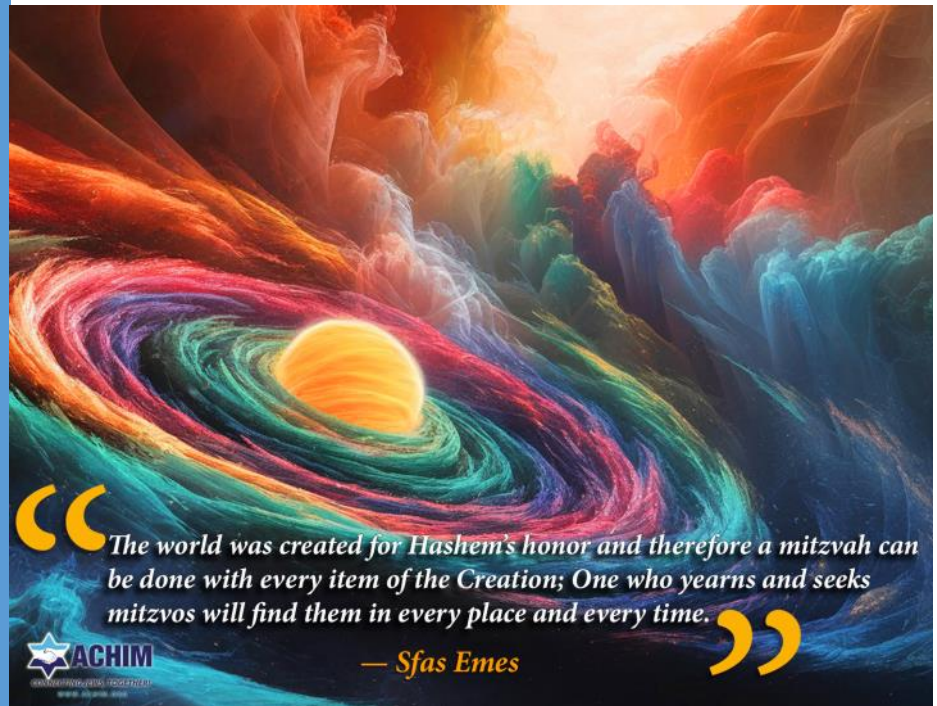
"It's not my fault; it was their fault," Eldad replied. "How could you blame me for a crime that they did?" "Also, how could I have known that they would react so violently?"

But they replied that he should have avoided confrontation with such people, and now that he specifically defied them, he was responsible for the loss of their bikes.

This question was brought to Rabbi Zilberstein: Was Eldad responsible to pay for the motorcycles? On one hand, he didn't start the fire, but on the other hand, he should not have provoked the gangsters.

What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Devarim



“The world was created for Hashem’s honor and therefore a mitzvah can be done with every item of the Creation; One who yearns and seeks mitzvos will find them in every place and every time.”

— Sfas Emes



nates from Him. Even His Name cannot be erased. Moshe is telling his beloved people; “You are connected to HaShem, the source of all existence that knows no end to existence, and therefore you are all alive today!” The ‘today’ refers to every day on which this verse is read, from the day Moshe spoke these words to his people to the day that the readers of TableTalk read this at their Shabbos tables. We are always very much alive today!

Western society perceives Man as a member of the animal kingdom with an added quality of spirituality. Just as every animal has its unique character, Man too, has his own unique character; his spirituality. However, the Torah teaches that the reverse is true. Man is a member of the spiritual world, the world of angels and other such entities, however, Man has a unique character that he finds himself in the material world.

If Man is essentially an animal he is mortal and will die in a matter of time as do all members of the material world. If how-

ever, he is a member of the spiritual world he is not subject to mortality. When the time for his travels in the material world will terminate he will then continue his journey in the next plane.

To properly serve HaShem one must be a member of the spiritual world. Members of the material world cannot elevate this world into higher realms.

Perhaps the Midrash is reflecting this notion. HaShem tells the kohanim “As long as you will be seeing Me in your service to Me, you may not look at the face of a deceased” because by doing so you will be influenced to perceive Man as mortal.

The kohanim who are the messengers of our people to connect us to HaShem must not encounter the notion that Man is mortal. Every Jew must be cognizant that with our Torah we are attached to HaShem and to our immortality.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

QUINOA

Some of us may have eaten quinoa over Pesach. What exactly is quinoa? Quinoa (pronounced 'KEEN-wah'), known scientifically as *Chenopodium quinoa*, is more than just a staple in health food stores—it's a crop with a rich history that spans thousands of years. This pseudocereal, which is closely related to beets, spinach, and tumbleweeds rather than cereals like wheat or oats, was first domesticated in the Andean region of South America. There, it was initially nurtured to feed livestock around 5,000 years ago before becoming a vital human food source approximately 3,000 to 4,000 years ago in the Lake Titicaca basin.

The Inca Empire, recognizing its exceptional nutritional value as a source of protein, minerals, and vitamins, dubbed quinoa "chisiya mama" or "mother of all grains," despite it technically being a seed. This mighty seed thrived in the harsh climates of the high Andes, often flourishing where most plants would falter, a testament to its resilience and versatility. Quinoa was one of the most prized foods of the Inca Empire in present-day Peru and Bolivia.

After the Spanish conquest of South America, the crop fell out of favor due to suppression of Incan foods and traditions. It almost went entirely extinct. However, quinoa managed to survive and was kept alive by indigenous Andean communities. It wasn't until the 20th century that quinoa regained popularity and spread beyond its native regions. In the 1970s-80s, organizations began promoting quinoa due to its resistance to droughts, frosts, and poor soil conditions. From the 1980s onward, quinoa cultivation expanded across over 70 countries outside of South America. Its resilience and efficiency in water usage make it a suitable crop for areas susceptible to drought, aligning with global efforts to adapt to changing climate conditions. Quinoa also shows remarkable resilience to salinity. Quinoa has been studied by NASA as a potential crop for long-term space missions due to its high nutritional value, ease of growth, and versatility. Its ability to thrive in harsh conditions makes it an ideal candidate for space farming.

The early 21st century saw a dramatic spike in quinoa's global demand as it achieved "superfood" status because of its very high nutritional content. From 2006 to 2014, quinoa prices tripled amid rapidly growing popularity. Rising exports from Peru and Bolivia allowed quinoa to become an international commodity and dietary staple worldwide.

Quinoa's journey from a local farm crop to a global superfood is nothing short of remarkable. Its cultivation spread from small family plots in the Andean mountains to over 70 countries worldwide, including the United States, Canada, France, and several African nations like Kenya.

But what makes quinoa truly fascinating are its unique bio-

logical and nutritional properties. The plant itself grows from 3 to 6 feet tall, with broad, hairy, lobed leaves, and a woody central stem that can appear in hues of green, red, or purple. It produces small, inconspicuous flowers that self-fertilize, although cross-pollination can also occur, showcasing a natural adaptability for reproduction.

Nutritionally, quinoa is a powerhouse. It is packed with protein, offering all nine essential amino acids, making it a complete protein source, which is rare in the plant kingdom. This characteristic is particularly important for vegetarians and vegans who might struggle to obtain sufficient protein from plant-based foods alone. Quinoa is also rich in fiber, B vitamins, and minerals such as magnesium and iron, maintaining its status as a highly nutritious food.

One of quinoa's superpowers is its adaptability not just in agriculture, but in the kitchen. It can be cooked like rice, added to soups, used as a base for salads, and even incorporated into breakfast cereals. Its versatility is complemented by its ease of preparation, typically ready to eat in just 15-20 minutes. Furthermore, quinoa is gluten-free, making it a fantastic alternative for those with celiac disease or gluten intolerance. Beyond being gluten-free, quinoa is also hypoallergenic, making it a safe choice for people with food allergies or sensitivities. This makes it an accessible and nutritious option for a wide range of dietary needs.

Quinoa is also renowned for its ability to contribute to a feeling of fullness, making it an excellent ally in weight management. This is largely due to its high fiber content, which slows down the digestive process, promoting a prolonged sense of satiety. This helps reduce overall calorie intake by curbing unnecessary snacking and overeating. Also, its high protein content further enhances its ability to keep you feeling full. Proteins are known to influence appetite-regulating hormones, increasing levels of hormones that promote satiety while reducing levels of those that stimulate hunger. Incorporating quinoa into meals can provide sustained energy and keep hunger at bay, making it easier to adhere to a healthy eating plan.

Quinoa can be transformed into a delightful, crunchy snack by popping it like popcorn. To do this, heat a dry skillet over medium-high heat, then add a small amount of raw quinoa. As the quinoa heats, it will begin to pop, just like popcorn, though the grains are much smaller. The popped quinoa has a light, airy texture and a nutty flavor, making it a perfect addition to yogurt, salads, or simply enjoyed on its own as a healthy snack.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

THE CHIDA'S SECRET MESSAGE

The Chida, Rav Chaim Yosef David Azulai was once traveling by boat on his way to England. On his boat there was a fellow in the cheese business who was also on his way to England with much cheese to sell. When this fellow discovered that the Chida was on board he approached him for a favor. "I would like you to write a letter of approbation that you know that my cheese meets all the requirements necessary to be kosher". Naturally, the Chida told him that he could never write such a letter as he did not know him nor did he know anything about the cheese he had with him. The businessman was not about to give up such an opportunity so he threatened the Chida that if he would not produce such a letter his wife would become a widow.

The halacha does not require one to give up their life for this issue so the Chida decided to write the requested letter.

In his letter he indicated that the cheese that this merchant is selling is absolutely kosher. However, before signing the letter he added a verse from Parshas Bo

וַכַּח וְתֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ מִתְּנִיכֶם חֲגִרִים נְעִלְכֶם בְּרַגְלֵיכֶם וּמִקְלַכֶם בְּיַדְכֶם שְׁמוֹת

Which translates "and so you shall eat it with your belts tightened and your shoes on your feet and you walking sticks in your hand, the book of Shmos"

The businessman was overjoyed, confident that he could now sell to the Jewish market.

Upon arriving in London he went to the local Rov and presented him the letter from the Chida. After studying the letter for a moment he told the businessman to leave town quickly. The Rov understood what had happened.

His students asked how he knew this. The Rov pointed out that first of all it is very strange that the Chida should write that it should be eaten in the same manner as the Pesach offering. Furthermore, he added, why did the Chida indicate that this verse is in the book of Shmos. Anyone who is worthy of honoring this letter knows where this verse is found.

Shmos can also be understood as an acronym "study the Torah two times and the Unkelos once". The Rov continued "if you look at the Unkelos on that verse it reads ' **חֲרִיצִיכֹן יִהְיוּ אֲסִירֵיךָ.** "

These Aramaic words have an alternate meaning "your cheeses are forbidden"

Behold! HaShem protects His people by providing us wise leaders.



From Parparos laTorah by Menachem Beker Shemos page 56

THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the broken vase in the airport, Rav Zilberstein answered that when someone buys something, the seller has to offer some kind of service, like to bag it or wrap it. In this case, the service the seller should offer is to clean it up after the man paid for it. Because the Jewish man does not have a duty to sweep it up, it would not be a chillul Hashem if he just leaves. It is only a chillul Hashem if you are doing the wrong thing, not if you are doing the right thing. The seller's demand was likely motivated by hatred of Jews, and the Jewish man does not have to comply with such demands.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of the birth of

Leah Simcha Labovitz

born to Ben and Laura Labovitz

by Yeudah and Mira Labovitz



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