



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE GRAND PRIZE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

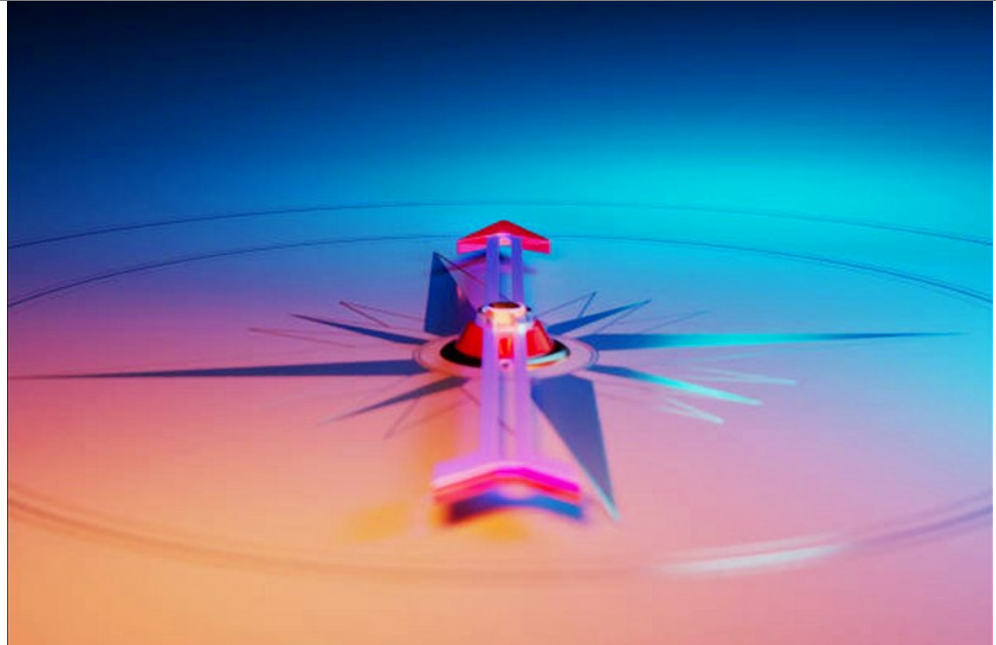
In this week's Parsha we find the great feud of Korach against Moshe. This leads us to the following story.

Eliezer was the organizer of a Chinese auction that supported a wonderful tzedakah organization. The auction had about 15 prizes. The grand prize was a used car.

Eliezer went to a local car salesman and asked if he would be willing to sell the organization a car for a good deal in order to use it in the auction. The car salesman said, "I heard about your organization. You are doing good work. Here is a relatively new used Camry. It is worth 30 thousand dollars. I will give you a deal and sell it to you for just \$25,000.

Eliezer was very grateful for the offer and purchased the car for the auction.

Eliezer was responsible for the printing and publishing of the promotional brochures for the auction. On the front page was a large picture of the grand prize Camry, with the text, "Used Camry worth 30,000" underneath it.



GOING BLUE

Regarding Korach's blunder of challenging Moshe Rabbeimu's authority, our Sages teach that 'His eyes tricked him'. They explain that his ability to see many generations forward is what misled him. His descendant, Shmuel Hanavi, the prophet Samuel, was going to exceed both Moshe and Aharon in greatness. He therefore extrapolated that he must have within himself greatness that exceeds Moshe and Aharon. This notion misled him to push forward in challenging them.

This mistaken advice that Korach received from his eyes takes us back to the end of last week's Parsha where we were given the gift of tzitzis. The Torah tells us that we should look at our tzitzis and when we see the blue thread it will remind us of HaShem and His Torah. The Torah teaches us that if we practice this we will be protected from following the advice of our heart and our eyes. Evidently, the gift tzitzis did not work on Korach.

It seems odd that immediately following this mitzvah the Torah demonstrates how the tzitzis failed to do what they were supposed to accomplish. As our Sages point out, it was specifically his eyes that misled him. Why were the tzitzis not protecting him?

It is ironic that one of the arguments that Korach made against Moshe was specifically regarding the function of tzitzis. He brought the greatest men of our nation in front of Moshe and asked him the following. If a person has a garment that is completely colored with the special blue color, will it require the blue thread as regular tzitzis? To which Moshe responded that of course it will require the same blue thread, irrespective of the color of the garment. With this answer Korach laughed saying that if one small thread is sufficient to fulfill the mitzvah, certainly if the entire garment is blue the mitzvah will be fulfilled.

Although there is no need to justify Moshe's answer, nevertheless, perhaps we can appreciate why Korach's argument is wrong.

The auction day came and the organization sold many tickets. They raised close to a million dollars on top of their costs to support the tzedakah organization.

The winner of the car was Gavriel. As soon as he won the car he brought it to his mechanic to look over. The mechanic checked out the car history and did a close inspection. It turned out that the car had been in a major accident in the past. Its engine was broken and repaired. This greatly reduced the car's value. The car was not worth \$30 thousand dollars like the Chinese auctioneers advertised. It was only worth \$10,000.

Gavriel approached Eliezer with the following concern.

"Eliezer I bought dozens and dozens of tickets for the auction and I put all of them in the car prize. I spent a lot of money on the tickets because I really wanted that Camry that was worth 30,000. However, it turns out that the car is actually worth just 10,000. Would it be possible for you to pay me 20,000 to make up the difference between the real value of the car, and the number that you advertised?"

When Eliezer learned that the car was worth less than he advertised, he felt terrible. It turned out he was ripped off by this used car salesman. He tried to get in touch with the car salesman but he suddenly disappeared.

Eliezer understood Gavriel's concern but wondered if he really had to pay the \$20,000 difference. On one hand, he advertised a car and he gave the winner the car. But on the other hand, he advertised that it had a value of \$30,000. Perhaps if the value was just \$10,000 he should pay the \$20,000 difference?

What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Bereishis 267



Allow me to diverge a moment in appreciating the role that garments play in our life. The first function of clothing is to cover our nakedness. Its second function is that we define ourselves through our clothing. Certain professions are actually identifiable through clothing. The status of a person is indicated through clothing. Naturally, our ego is greatly invested in our clothing.

Before Man makes any decision about what course of action he will take, he must first decide what is right and what is wrong. In other words, all decisions a person makes are based on how his moral compass is set. If his compass is properly aligned and 'good' points to 'Good' his decision will go in one direction. If his compass is improperly aligned his decision will go in the opposite direction.

The function of the tzitzis is to provide Man with a compass alignment system. When he looks at the tzitzis that are placed on the corners of his garment he remembers HaShem and his relationship to Him. This is why when he looks at them he will not follow his heart and his eyes.

When we appreciate our relationship to our clothing we recognize how closely the garment is to our ego. Imagine a fellow is wearing his blue colored double breasted three piece custom tailored suit. He looks in the mirror and is quite impressed with his image. Will the color blue be able to shake him into remembering HaShem and the relationship he has with Him? Will he remember that he must not speak lashon hara at the meeting he will be attending? Certainly not! The entire role of his beautiful blue suit is busy reminding him of his important upcoming meeting where he must impress others. Perhaps that is why the tzitzis are placed on the corners and not on the garment itself.

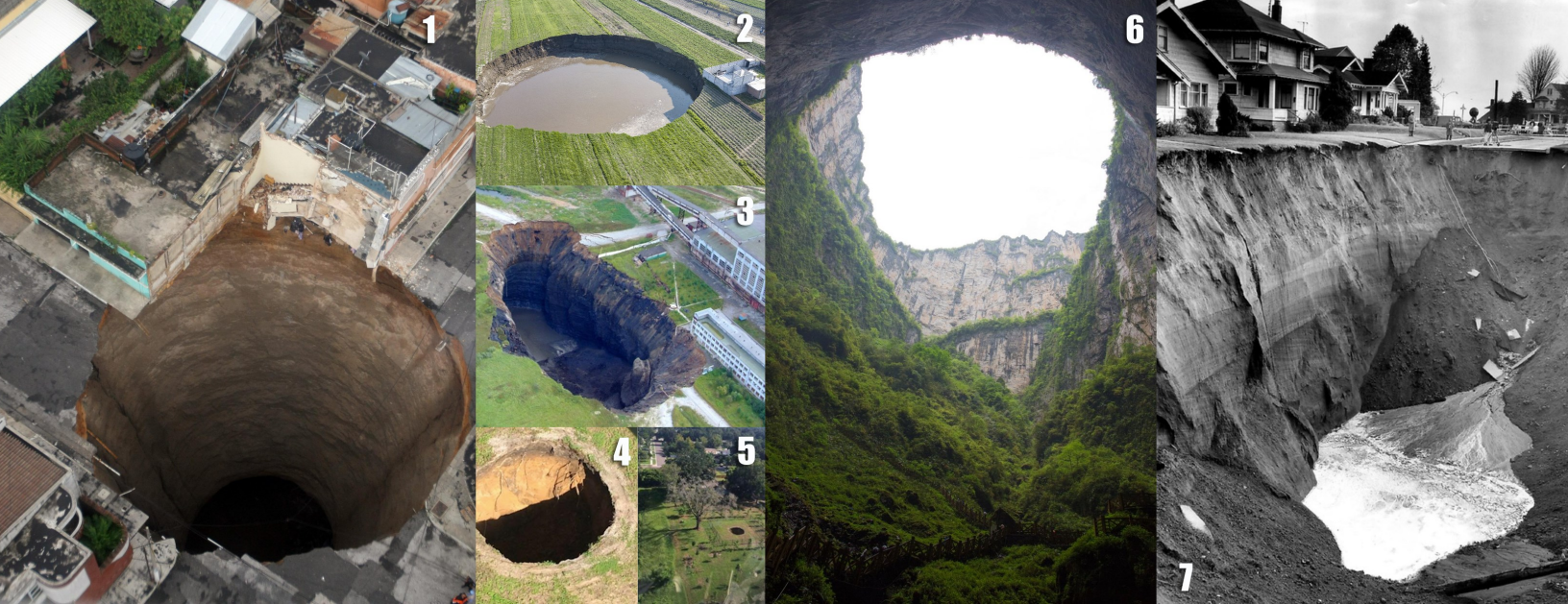
Korach was focused on the performance of the mitzvah but did not heed the additional instructions on how to properly utilize the tzitzis. He lost sight of its purpose.

Perhaps the Torah placed the mitzvah of tzitzis immediately before Korach's misleading eyes to make this very point.

We will not succeed at aligning our moral compass while looking at ourselves.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

SINKHOLES

In this week's Parsha, Moshe tells Korach that he will be swallowed with a briaah, a new phenomenon that never existed before. The Ibn Ezra asks, what was so novel about the ground opening up? Grounds open up in countries all over in the form of sinkholes, and people fall into them.

The Ramban answers this question by saying that the pihartzetz, the mouth of the ground that appeared in the time of Moshe was unique and miraculous. What happened there is that the ground opened its mouth and swallowed Korach and his family and then closed up again like a mouth. That was unique. Usually, sinkholes open up permanently and don't close.

The Maharal answers this question by writing that this hole in the ground was unique in that it led directly into Gehinnom. Other sinkholes may be deep, but they don't lead directly to Gehinnom.

With this in mind let's explore the phenomena of sinkholes. Most sinkholes are caused by what is called the karst process. This is the chemical dissolution of carbonate rocks. The formation of sinkholes involves natural processes of erosion of slightly soluble bedrock (such as limestone) by percolating water. These are common where the rock below the land surface is limestone, carbonate rock, salt beds, or rocks that can naturally be dissolved by groundwater circulating through them. As the rock dissolves, spaces and caverns develop underground. Sinkholes are dramatic because the land usually stays intact for a while until the underground spaces just get too big. If there is not enough support for the land above the spaces, then a sudden collapse of the land surface can occur. These collapses can be small, or they can be huge and can occur where a house or road is on top.

Sinkholes are usually circular and vary in size from tens to hundreds of meters both in diameter and depth, and vary in form, from soil-lined bowls to bedrock-edged chasms. Sinkholes may form gradually or suddenly, and are found worldwide. In the US, the most damage from sinkholes tends to occur in Florida, Texas, Alabama, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania.

Let's look at a few dramatic examples of sinkholes around the world.

The Puebla sinkhole (Pic 2) is located in the town of Santa Maria Zacatepec, in Puebla, Mexico. The sinkhole first appeared on May 29, 2021, with a diameter of 15 feet; by June 10 it had grown to 400 feet with a depth estimated at 50 feet. The sinkhole opened in a field on the afternoon of May 29, with a diameter of 15 feet.

Homeowners Magdalena and Heriberto Sánchez reported hearing a loud sound before finding the pit. The couple, who lived with their two children, ages 13 and 11, were forced to flee their modest home. Two dogs fell into the pit a few days later when the sinkhole had grown to 400 feet wide, but the dogs were rescued a few hours later. The government has warned that tourists should stay away from the area and has even prohibited the flying of drones over the area.

The 2010 Guatemala City sinkhole (Pic 1) was a disaster on May 30, 2010, in which an area approximately 65 ft across and 300 ft deep collapsed in Guatemala City's Zona 2. A reporter for the local daily newspaper reported that the ground collapsed suddenly, taking a three-story house that was used as a factory, and possibly a security guard, along with it.

On November 11, 1957, in a quiet residential neighborhood along Ravenna Boulevard in the city of Seattle, a gigantic hole opened up and engulfed a portion of the street, a large chestnut tree, and a 30-foot telephone pole. (Pic 7) The massive crater was measured 60 feet deep, 120 feet in width, and over 200 feet long—consuming more than a thousand cubic yards in all. The disaster is believed to have been triggered by a broken sewer line. While no casualties were sustained, residents of 10 nearby homes were evacuated out of their back doors to safety.

Xiaozhai Tiankeng in China (Pic 6) is the world's deepest sinkhole at somewhere between 1,677 and 2,172 feet deep. Sometimes referred to as the Heavenly Pit, the massive sinkhole was formed on top of a cave and features a 5.3-mile underground river that runs through it. The impressive geological wonder has a 2,800-step staircase carved into its side in an effort to attract tourists to the area.

The Berezniki's sinkhole (Pic 3) began in 1986 in Berezniki, Russia. It grows worse with each passing year. Currently it's over 600 feet deep, 240 feet long and 12 feet wide. 10% of the world output of potash (an important ingredient in fertilizer) comes from this area, and the sinkhole is very close to destroying the mine's sole rail line.

In March 2013, in a town near Tampa Florida, 36-year-old Jeffrey Bush was asleep in his bedroom when the floor collapsed beneath him and he fell inside. (Pics 4,5) His brother, Jeremy Bush was inside the home when the incident occurred, but failed at his attempt to rescue him. Jeffrey Bush's body was never recovered.

MASTERING THE SONGS

Rabbi Dovid Trenk derived great pleasure from the albums produced by his friend and fellow talmid of the Mirrer Yeshivah, Reb Shmuel Kunda. R' Kunda was the multitalented Illustrator, Author, Songwriter, Singer, and Voice Actor behind the dozens of albums and children's tapes that include, When Zaidy Was Young Part 1 and 2, Boruch Learns His Brochos, The Magic Yarmulke, A Ton of Mon, Boruch Learns About Shabbos, The Longest Pesach, There's Zaidy, Zaidy's Great Idea, Where's Zaidy, The Talking Coins, The Royal Rescue, and The Miraculous Menorah.

R' Shmuel Kunda was born in Shanghai, China, and later came over to the United States. He lived most of his life in Boro Park, Brooklyn, and later resided in Lakewood, NJ, and Cleveland at the end of his relatively short life.

Rabbi Trenk felt that R' Kunda's albums mixed timeless chinuch with content that was entertaining and fun. He would always encourage Reb Shmuel. However, because Rabbi Trenk himself wasn't that musical, he never learned the songs from the album.

However after Reb Shmuel suffered a stroke, that changed. Reb Dovid would go to the hospital to visit his friend. Before going to the hospital he made sure to prepare himself. He set aside time to "learn" all the songs on the Kunda albums. He didn't just master the tunes, but he mastered all the words. He was going to be mevaker choleh, and he would bring joy to the patient. Mastering the songs would bring the patient joy.

So on Rabbi Kunda's most difficult days, Reb Dovid would be sitting near him hoarsely singing, "Kippah kippah, I wish you could talk and not leave me in doubt," or, "Jump on the trolley, you'll feel so jolly, riding' the trolley, from Henry Street to East Broadway...;" As Rav Trenk would sing, Reb Shmuel would nod along, smiling.

He brought joy to the patient.

(From Just Love Them, The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Trenk, By Rabbi Yisroel Besser, Published By Artscroll Mesorah. Reprinted With Permission From The Copyright Holders)



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the renter who overstayed his visit, Rav Zilberstein answered that the owner would have to give the last two days for free even though the visitor stayed for extra days.

This week's TableTalk is dedication to the memory of

Shmuel Fleischman z'l

שמואל יודל בן בנימין יעקב

By his family

