

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### THE HEFKER SALE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha the Torah writes, "and you shall be clean in front of HaShem and from Israel". (Bamidbar 32,22)

Our Sages teach that this verse means that not only should one avoid sin, one should also avoid anything that makes people suspect that he did a sin.

An example the Gemara gives is that of the Kohen in charge of counting the coins in the Beis Hamikdash. He would wear clothing that had no pockets. This way no one can suspect him of taking any money improperly.

This leads us to the following interesting question.

A shul had a policy that if clothing or books were left in the shul for more than 30 days, they became ownerless. Every year the shul had a sale of the books and clothing that were left there over the past year.

One day Yehuda went to his friend Tzvi's house. On the shelf of Tzvi's house was a sefer. The sefer



### UNDERSTANDING OUR TEARS

Although we will be reading the double Parsha of Matos Maasei, I have chosen to address The Three Weeks of Mourning in which we now find ourselves. I would like to share an insight from Rav Moshe Shapiro, whose memory is a blessing.

There is no experience which defines one's existence greater than their birth. You can take away any experience or occurrence from a person's history and he will still remain who he is, albeit, somewhat altered. The only exception is his birth. The birth of a person is the core of his existence and he is inextricably attached to it. The same is true with our exodus from Egypt, which was essentially the birth of our nation.

No matter where the path of history has taken our people, no matter what losses we suffer, no matter how many times our path seems to change, nevertheless, we will never lose our exodus. Our exodus from Egypt is the core of our existence.

Before taking us out from Egypt, HaShem used five expressions by which He described our approaching redemption. "I will take you out..." "I will rescue you..." "I will redeem you..." "I will take you to be Mine" and finally "I will bring you to the Land". In HaShem's original plan, the entry to the Land was to be part and parcel of the exodus from Egypt. Upon leaving Egypt they began their journey to Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. Once they departed from Mount Sinai, they would have entered the Land three days later, had they not sent the spies. Had the journey gone as planned, the exodus of Egypt would have then included the entry to the Land. Just as our exodus was inextricably part of our existence, so too, the entry would have been inextricably part of our existence. Just as our birth could never be taken away, so too, our Land could never be taken away.

looked oddly familiar. Yehuda opened the sefer to the second to last page and found his handwriting in it. It was notes he had written around a year ago. Yehuda realized that this was his long lost sefer.

Yehuda asked Tzvi where he got the sefer. "Oh, I bought it at the shul sale. Every year they sell seforim that were left around the shul."

Yehuda responded, "Actually this is my sefer. Look, it has my handwriting and my notes."

"Yes", Tzvi replied, "but I paid for it. It is mine now."

Yehuda retorted, "What do you mean you paid for it? It was my book. What right do you have to buy my book?"

Tzvi responded, "But the shul's policy is that lost items are ownerless".

Yehuda replied, "Yes, but this is definitely my book. The shul doesn't have a right to sell my book."

Yehuda decided that he was going to keep the sefer.

After walking out of Tzvi's house he wondered if he did the right thing. On one hand, he knew for sure that it was his book.

But on the other hand Tzvi bought it from the shul. The shul had a policy that all leftover items become ownerless. Perhaps if Yehuda used that shul, he was implicitly agreeing to the policy.

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstien.

What do you think? Can Yehuda keep his book?  
See Chashukei Chemed Bava Basra Page 526

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



When our forefathers rejected the Land and were then doomed to die in the desert without entering, they snapped off the entry to the Land from the exodus. No longer would our conquest of the Land be an inextricable part of our existence. Alas, we became a people that have no place. Our existence was now limited to our exodus. In fact, for the majority of our history we have lived in lands that were not ours, in lands that did not want us.

HaShem told His people after their rejection of the Land "You have cried a meaningless cry on that night of tisha b'Av, in the future you will cry a meaningful cry". The message of HaShem's rebuke was that crying is reserved for when one is lost, when they have no place to be. "You, my dear people, have a place to be if you only wished to be there. You have no right to cry. However, now that you have rejected My Land, you will no longer be guaranteed of a Land. You will, in fact, have no Land for the major part of your history. Your crying will be justified."

Everybody has a space in which they live. This space consists of their family and their close friends. When one loses a member of their space, their loss is expressed in mourning. Their crying becomes their expression of being lost. This is why our Sages teach us that the word for crying "boche" derives from "m'vucha" which means to be lost. Crying is the expression of loss of direction and a loss of space. I have no place to be, I have nowhere to go.

When visiting a shiva house we express our prayer that HaShem should grant consolation to the mourners. The word used to refer to HaShem is "HaMakom" which means The Place. This unique Name of HaShem is chosen for this prayer because HaShem is The ultimate Place. He provides Place for the universe itself. The universe also takes up space and who provides her that space? HaShem! We express our prayer that HaShem Who is the Place of space should provide you as well with a place.

May HaShem, The Place of the universe, grant all of His people the comfort of bringing us back to His Place, soon in our days.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE BLACKPOLL WARBLER; A TINY BIRD WITH ENORMOUS GOALS

If you had to take a guess about which bird can take the longest, non stop, over-water flight, which bird would you guess? You would probably guess a large strong bird like an eagle or a hawk.

But in fact, one of them is a tiny bird called the Blackpoll Warbler.

This little bird weighs only three-quarters of an ounce! That is less than the weight of a AA battery. Yet this bird, every fall, travels from Alaska all the way to the eastern coast of Canada or New England. There it stops over and gorges on food, stores up fat and then waits for cold weather to arrive. When the cold comes, the tiny bird heads south. In its little mind, it is planning to go to South America. But it gets there by first going over the ocean toward Africa! Out over the Atlantic Ocean it flies at an altitude of up to 20,000 feet [6,096 m] in the air! There are three things about this that have puzzled scientists: 1) How can it keep its warmth at such a height? 2) The little wings must beat constantly, yet there is very little oxygen! 3) In addition, at such high altitudes it is more difficult for beating wings to make progress, there is so little air for them to push against!

At some point in its travels, the Warbler encounters “and hitches a ride” with a wind blowing toward South America. It then turns and heads toward that continent. That wind tends to be found only at such great heights. Think about this. Who taught this to the little bird?

This journey is about 2,400 miles over trackless seas, and requires about 4 days and nights of constant flying. They travel at a speed of about 27 mph. This is among the longest distance non-stop overwater flights ever recorded for a migratory songbird.

No one is there to tell the bird where to go, the height at which to fly, or where to turn. No one is there to feed its tiny three-fourth's ounce body during the trip. It dare not land on the water. Its tiny brain must guide it by day by the sun moving across the sky, and at night by the stars; double navigation!

The trip is so intense for the bird that by the time they reach South America, they lose 4 or more grams, or more than 20 percent of their body weight.

It seems almost beyond comprehension, yet the little bird does it. And its offspring takes the same trip, without ever having been taught the route or shown any road maps.

Your wisdom is beyond understanding, Your engineering beyond comprehension, Your gifts are beyond deserving.

(Based on The Wonders of Nature by Vance Ferrell)

**Hint:** They split what we doubled

**"IT IS NEVER K'DAI TO EMBARRASS SOMEONE, EVEN IF IT MEANS THAT WE WON'T SAY TACHANUN"**

Shloime Mandlebrodt was a newcomer to the neighborhood of Bayit V'gan. He once had to say Kaddish in observance of a yartzeit. Living near the Kol Torah Yeshiva, he walked into the yeshiva and asked if he would be able to daven for the amud as is the custom on the day someone observes a yartzeit. Shloime didn't know that this was quite unusual in the yeshiva.

Therefore when he was told that he could do so, and walked up to begin leading the davening, the yeshiva boys looked quite surprised. It was obvious that Shloime was not comfortable with davening for the amud.

Shloime also knew that his chassidish accent was different from what the boys were used to hearing. He was only davening today because he had to. In a barely audible voice he began Ashrei.

Some of the younger bachurim tried to hide their amused smirks as Shloime continued davening. But the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, didn't flinch when he heard the unusual accent. He had enormous self control and outstanding middos. At the end of Shemoneh Esrei, the congregation waited for Tachanun to start, but Shloime jumped right into Kaddish.

He did this because according to some who daven nusach Sefard (including many chassidim), one does not recite Tachanun at Minchah.

Rav Shlomo Zalman did not look startled about the fact that Tachanun was skipped, although the bachurim did.

After Kaddish, the boys began to recite Tachanun on their own, but Rav Shlomo Zalman quickly motioned to them to stop.

When the davening was finished, Shloime thanked the Rosh yeshiva for allowing him to daven. After Shloime departed, the talmidim asked Rav Shlomo Zalman what they should do about the fact that they had not said Tachanun.

The Rosh Yeshiva smiled in his inimitable way. "Bachurim, it is never k'dai (worthwhile) to embarrass someone else, even if it means that we won't say Tachanun that day."

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**THE ANSWER**

Regarding the question of the tzedaka box that had money stolen from it, Rav Zilberstien said that the charity administrator had an obligation to move the tzedakah box to a spot where it would not be a temptation for any theft. This is true even if the location was earning very much money.

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