

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### ROBBING THE TZEDAKA BOX

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion opens with the gift that HaShem offers Pinchas, the Bris Shalom, the covenant of peace. Our Sages in Medrash Rabbah point out that we see from here that Shalom, peace, is one of the greatest of HaShem's gifts.

This leads us to the following true story.

A chesed organization very similar to Ahavas Yisrael, placed a tzedakah box near the cash register at an expensive kosher restaurant. The restaurant catered to a wealthy clientele. The tzedakah box was in a very good location and it earned the chesed organization a lot of money. It was not uncommon for the tzedakah box to earn \$500 one week in donations. It was the organization's most successful tzedakah box.

One day Aron, one of the waiters at the restaurant, called Rabbi Saltzman, the director of the chesed organization. After introducing himself, Aron told the director the following:



### IT'S THEIR TORCH THAT WE CARRY

In this week's Parsha, Pinchos, after counting the entire population of men over the age of 20, the Torah tells us how the Land of Israel should be divided. "To these (the individuals who were just counted) the land shall be divided according to the number of their names... according to the names of the tribes of their fathers shall they inherit." There seems to be two sets of people dividing the Land; the first is according to their names, the second is according to the tribes of their fathers.

Our Sages teach us that the nature of dividing the Land was unique in the following way.

Initially, those who left Egypt were supposed to enter the Land and inherit it, had they not rejected the Land when they sent the spies. In which case, every member of those people would receive one portion in the Land. However, since they rejected the Land and were doomed to die in the desert, only the next generation would enter the Land and they would inherit it.

We would have assumed that the children, those entering the Land, would each receive one portion just as their fathers would have done if they had entered the Land. However, this is not what happened. Instead, each one entering the Land took one portion and sent it back to their fathers and only then re-inherited for themselves.

Let us use the following illustration. Avi and Baruch were brothers among those who left Egypt. Avi had one son while Baruch had nine sons. Had Avi and Baruch entered the Land each of them would have received one portion. Unfortunately, they did not enter and only their children entered. Avi's only son received one portion and Baruch's nine sons received nine portions. Those ten portions were then sent back to their fathers, Avi

"I know that your organization has a tzedakah box in our restaurant. I want you to know that I often see the restaurant owner remove money from the box. When the owner wants to go outside for a smoke, he opens the tzedakah box, takes out a five dollar bill and buys cigarettes.

I would like to tell him to stop but I'm afraid that I may lose my job."

Rabbi Saltzman thanked Aron for the information and had the following dilemma.

How should he handle the situation? Should he confront the restaurant owner? But then the owner may get angry and forbid the organization from leaving the tzedakah box there.

Could he just forgive the loss of the money? In the big picture the organization was earning much more money than they were losing. It would seem to be "worth it" to just ignore the whole issue, and "keep the peace".

But on the other hand, did Rabbi Saltzman have a right to forgive the theft? It wasn't his money to forgive. Perhaps he should confront the owner.

Or perhaps he should remove the tzedakah box altogether to make sure there is no more theft.

What do you think he should do?

Forgive the owner and ignore it? Confront the owner? Remove the tzedakah box?

See Hebrew Veharev Na Volume Three page 165

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



and Baruch, who as brother's share equally what they just received. The reason they share equally is because even their right to the Land originates from their father. And so, those ten portions are split evenly between Avi and Baruch. They, although no longer alive, pass their acquisition in the Land back to their sons. We end up with Avi's only son receiving five portions and Baruch's nine sons receiving five portions which they will share evenly between themselves.

Our Sages refer to this unique division as follows; "Usually the living (children) inherit from the dead, in dividing the Land, the dead (fathers) inherited from the live." The reason for this unique division was because HaShem's Land was already given to our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov. It was already theirs before they took possession of it.

Even though the ones entering were more worthy than their fathers, nevertheless, their right to the Land was bequeathed to them from

their fathers. It was not their own accomplishment. This notion is true in every aspect of our relationship with HaShem. No matter to what level of greatness one generation may rise, even if it exceeds the level of their fathers, they nevertheless, merit to that greatness only through their fathers. Their fathers were the conduit through which the true greatness of our forefathers, Avraham Yitzhok and Yaakov, traveled. Within every member of our people there lies the kernels of incredible greatness, incredible closeness to HaShem and incredible closeness to every other person which we inherited from our forefathers. The achievements of later generations should be attributed to the generations that preceded them.

Consider all the generations that preceded us. How much sacrifice did our predecessors go through for us to arrive at this generation as Jews who still maintain a relationship with HaShem! Every one of those previous 100 generations continue to live on through our lives today.

How fortunate we are to carry on such a legacy!

Adapted from Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE CLIMBING PERCH, A FISH THAT CAN WALK OUT OF THE WATER AND CLIMB TREES

Have you ever heard of a fish that can walk out of the water and climb trees?

The Climbing Perch, also known as a Climbing Gourami is a fish that lives near Myanmar. It is a fish that often uses its gills, tail and spines to crawl out of the water. It travels inland, and can even climb trees!

How does it survive out of water? On each side of its head there is a built-in water storage tank. Before leaving the water, the little perch fills these two tanks with water. They are used to keep its gills wet. This water is aerated as it travels overland, and it breathes through this aerated water. The perch can stay out of water for as much as six days!

This fish has been given equipment very similar to a scuba diver. A scuba diver can survive underwater, by breathing from stored tanks of oxygen. Similarly, Hashem granted the perch the ability to survive on land, by breathing through stored tanks of water!

If the climbing perch does not find another body of water to jump into, it can then climb trees in search of pools of water in the crotch of tree trunks. It needs to replenish the water in its two storage tanks!

How does this fish climb a tree? It clings to the bark with its gill covers and uses its spiny fins to help it climb. Another fish called a mudskipper can also climb trees.

How wondrous are your creatures, Hashem!

(Based on The Wonders of Nature by Vance Ferrell)



## THE GIFT OF A HAPPY MOTHER

A young widow once came to seek the advice of Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l regarding a matter that weighed heavily on her heart.

Her husband had passed away at a young age, leaving her with four young orphans. "Please help me," she said to Rav Shlomo Zalman with an expression of deep anxiety. "My conscience is tormenting me. Days and nights I agonize over the possibility that I did not care sufficiently for my husband during his illness. I'm convinced that had I done more, I could have prevented the tragedy. I feel that perhaps I can make it up to him by taking on a mitzvah for the sake of his neshama. I have come to you for guidance as to what specifically I should undertake in order to give him a special z'chus."

"Your decision is indeed most commendable," said Rav Shlomo Zalman. "Chazal state: 'broh mezakeh abba — a child has the ability to affect z'chuyos for his deceased father'. I will direct you on a course that will accomplish this purpose. Please pursue the following three-pronged program:

"First, as soon as you leave my house, go directly to a toy store and buy the children toys and games; don't stint on the cost.

Second, make it a habit to take the children on trips and outings to places they enjoy.

Finally, try your best to overcome your feelings of grief in the presence of the children. Concentrate instead on creating a happy home environment.

Please, always bear in mind," Rav Shlomo Zalman said, "that happy children will do better in school, behave better at home and will be more successful in all their endeavors. If you stick to these guidelines, the children will, with HaShem's help, grow up to be thriving, Torah-true Jews.

"Indeed", Rav Shlomo Zalman concluded, **"being a happy mother, and creating a joyous home environment, is the greatest gift, the greatest z'chus that you can give to your late husband."**

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### THE ANSWER

Regarding the question of the counterfeit money, Rav Zilberstein answered that the store owner was not obligated to pay.

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