

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### PURIM DELIVERY

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

We were just uplifted and sanctified with the light of Purim.

Achim, an outreach organization which I have the wonderful opportunity to work with, will be running its annual fundraiser soon.

In this spirit, I'd like to share a question that just came up over Purim that relates to the mitzvah of reaching out to our fellow Jews.

Chava's cousin, Stacy, was not observant. Chava decided that she would mail her cousin a nice mishloach manos package. It was filled with delicious treats and food that Chava knew Stacy liked.



### PLACING THE THRONE

This week's Parsha, Ki Sisa, opens with HaShem instructing Moshe to count the Jewish people. However, instead of counting each person directly, he is instructed to collect a half shekel from each member and then count the shekalim, thereby indicating the number of people. The reason for this unique method is "that there should be no plague when the people are counted." The implication is that there would be a plague if the people were counted directly. Why? If there is a mitzvah to be counted why should they be subject to a plague?

The very first words a Jew says upon awakening is "I am indebted to You, Sovereign of the Universe, for returning my soul back to me even though I do not deserve it. How great is Your trust!" Behold! Every Jew recognizes his undeservedness to have his soul returned! Why do we not deserve our soul?

Of course the answer is simple - what did we do to deserve it in the first place? Our every moment of life is a gift. Even if we do nothing wrong and do everything right, HaShem does not owe us anything. We are the ones who owe everything to Him.

All that said, there is still something that makes us worthy of life - being a member of the Jewish people. Perhaps we do not deserve it, nevertheless, our life brings value to the HaShem's Universe. HaShem made this Universe as a place where He can rest His Presence or His Shechina. That Shechina needs a seat, or perhaps a Throne. That Throne is exactly the role that we, His people, play. We are the nation that provides a place for HaShem's Throne to exist in this world. This placement of this Throne requires the entire nation, it cannot be placed on specific individuals even

Chava shipped the package by UPS and the package arrived at Stacy's home right before Purim.

Stacy received the mishloach manos on Purim and was truly thrilled. She called Chava to thank her for the very thoughtful package. She then said, I particularly loved the cookie tin that the foods were packed in. The tin is so adorable.

After Stacy hung up, Chava had the following questions. She sent all the foods in a cheap pink tin cookie jar that she bought at a homegoods store

Chava never toiveled the tin. Was it ok for her to send the mishloach manos in a metal container if Stacy may use it without toiveling it? Did she perhaps do the wrong thing by sending her the mishloach manos in a container that may be used and was not toiveled?

Then Chava wondered, after the fact, if it does need tevila what is the best way for her to fix the situation?

Should she tell Stacy to toivel it? Should she ask Stacy to send it back to her? Should she tell her to throw it out? Or can she just leave it as it is?

What do you think?



if those individuals are great tzadikim.

One more note before we get back to the count. Every single Jew has their role in the nation. No Jew is redundant. Just as in the Sefer Torah one letter cannot be missing, so too, the nation is incomplete when one member is missing. This means that even if a single person may be unworthy of life, nevertheless, inasmuch as they play a critical role in the formation of our people, they are needed for the maintenance of HaShem's Universe - they serve as the support for His Throne.

When people are counted directly each person is viewed in isolation as a unique number and they become detached from the unit. Even though it is in the service of a mitzvah, nevertheless, they are no longer seen in the context of the national unit, rather as individuals. They are therefore subject to plague, Heaven forbid, because there are few people that can claim their right to life on their own merit. We all need to view ourselves in the

context of the nation to secure our worthiness to life.

Later in the Parsha the Torah teaches us the recipe for the k'tores (the incense), which is the holiest of all the offerings brought in the Mishkan. It is made of 11 ingredients. With one exception they are all pleasant smelling spices. The chelbena, however, was foul smelling. The Talmud learns from the k'tores "that a union of Jews that does not include the sinners of our people is not considered a union." Just as the k'tores was rendered invalid without the inclusion of the chelbena so too anytime there is an exclusion, that union remains incomplete.

One might think that it is better to have a limited set of some Jews that are all righteous than having an unlimited set of all Jews if it is a mixture of righteous and unrighteous. The k'tores teaches us the fallacy of this thinking. The reason it is wrong is because HaShem's Throne needs a complete nation upon which to rest even if it is not perfect. In fact, when all Jews are included the righteous will lift the unrighteous just as the 10 ingredients lifted the chelbena and our people will be complete and the Throne will be in place.

Have a very safe and a very wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE SONG OF THE DONKEY

The Donkey. What is the song that the Donkey sings? The Donkey is saying: "Yours, HaShem, is the greatness, and the might, and the splendor, and the victory, and the glory, for everything in the Heavens and earth [is Yours]; Yours, HaShem, is the kingship, and the exaltation over all." (Divrei Hayamim 1, 29:11) The donkey sings about his loyalty to HaShem who is the king. Donkeys, more than any other animal, have been used as pack animals for the past five thousand years. This is still true today in many poor countries. Why is a donkey used as a pack animal and not a horse?

Let's quickly compare a donkey to a horse.

**Loyalty.** Donkeys are loyal and dependable. Once a person has earned their confidence they can be willing and companionable partners and very dependable. Furthermore, donkeys are not easily frightened as horses are.

**Adapted for harsh conditions.** In contrast to a horse, donkeys adapt to the harsh wilderness, and steep mountains. They can sleep anywhere. Horses are not well suited for harsh conditions.

**Strong.** Donkeys are very strong. A donkey is stronger than a horse of the same size.

**Maintenance.** Unlike horses, donkeys can thrive on a small amount of food, which makes them very economical to keep. In many cases they need to eat only half as much as a horse. They also take less time to eat.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky therefore writes that the donkey's song is teaching us that just as the donkey willingly carries a heavy burden out of loyalty to its master, we can learn from him to be willing to bear a heavy burden out of our loyalty to HaShem.

Furthermore, the donkey subsists on little, and will live almost anywhere. It does not spend much time eating. Indeed, its song says it does it joyfully because it sees serving its master as a privilege. The donkey is a symbol of single minded devotion to duty and not focusing on pursuing its own pleasures. This is a lesson for us to be willing to suffice with little, and not pursue the luxuries of food and home. There is no greater pleasure than

to have the opportunity to bring satisfaction to our Master.

The song of the donkey also speaks of its humility. The donkey sings that its great strength does not come from itself, but from HaShem. "Might comes from you", says the donkey. In contrast to the horse, the donkey exhibits humility and sings about humility. This is a lesson for us, that we should be humble, and not take credit for our blessings.

The picture we have of the donkey is an animal who is strong and hardworking, it is loyal to its master, it is neither arrogant nor materialistic and it is single focused and does not sway from its duty. It is therefore appropriate that the donkey is the symbol of the tribe of Yissachar, the tribe of Torah scholars. The donkey teaches us the character traits needed to excel in Torah learning: to toil hard, to be humble, to live simply, and to singularly focus on achieving new goals.

What is interesting is that archeologists say that donkeys were first domesticated in Egypt. In the Torah the Egyptians are compared to stubborn donkeys. That is why there is a mitzvah to either redeem the firstborn donkey by giving a sheep to a Kohen, or to kill it. This mitzvah is a reminder of the Makas Bechoros. In this song, the donkey sings that HaShem is king. This is reminding us that at the end, after all the miracles of Egypt, the donkey, the symbol of stubborn Egypt, acknowledges HaShem as king. This will be true for all nations one day.

One final point. The donkey sings about "the exaltation over all". Our Sages say this means that all leadership ultimately gets chosen by HaShem. The donkey singing about how HaShem will choose a leader is also a reminder that HaShem will one day choose a leader, who will bring redemption to the entire world. That leader, Mashiah, will ride on a donkey. The donkey is a symbol of chomer, or material. Mashiah riding on a donkey can be a symbol that Moshiah will arrive through natural and not supernatural means. The donkey's song is therefore a constant reminder of redemption that will surely come soon in our days.

A VIDEO ABOUT THIS CAN BE SEEN AT [BIT.LY/PEREKSHIRAVIDEO](https://bit.ly/perekshiravideo)

# TOTAL DEDICATION

Purim is a time of Kimu Vekiblu, when the Jewish people joyously rededicated themselves to accepting and learning the Torah.

-Rav Yechezkel Abrahamsky lay deathly ill in Sha'arei Tzedek Hospital, barely responding. The hospital's director, Prof. Mayer, encouraged the talmidim who were staying with the Rav to speak divrei Torah near him so that he could hear them. Although they could see no visible reaction, whenever they would learn near him the monitors that he was hooked to indicated that these periods of learning strengthened him and gave him energy.

-Rabbi Shimon Schwab related how he was once told by a young man, "At my school we are currently 'doing' Bava Kama." Rabbi Schwab replied, "When I went to yeshivah we did not 'do' Bava Kama but Bava Kama "did something to us."

-Reb Isser Zalman Meltzer would say about Rabbi Shach, "If you could see inside his veins, you would not see blood; you would see Rashbas and Rav Akiva Eigers!".

-Why are there so many kollelim nowadays?" . The wealthy Mr. Tauber asked Harav Aaron Leib Steinman, "There were never that many back in the good old days." "I would like to ask you a question," responded the Torah giant. "Why are there so many wealthy Jews nowadays? It never used to be like that. The answer to why there is much more wealth today is because there are so many kollelim that need to be supported. If there were less kollelim, there would be less wealthy Jews."

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Pictured: Rav Yechezkel Abrahamsky, Rabbi Shimon Schwab, Reb Isser Zalman Meltzer, Rav Aaron Leib Steinman



## THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the cake, Rav Zilberstein writes that he can cut it in half and fulfill his mitzvah. Please consult your Rav for any matters of practical Halacha.

This week's edition of TableTalk is dedicated in honor of  
the 51st anniversary of the bar mitzvah of Gregg Levitan  
גרשון ראובן בן ישראל דוב  
by his wife Rachel

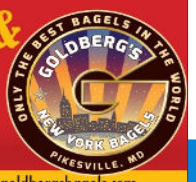
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