

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE AQUARIUM

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha opens with the mitzvah to establish Torah courts in every Jewish city. This leads us to the following true story.

It was the summer and the Stein family was excited to go on a summer trip. The Bergers, a kind family in another large Jewish community, were going to the mountains for the summer, and their home was going to be empty. The Bergers graciously allowed the Steins to stay in their home for a few days.

The Steins had a great time staying at the Bergers house. The Bergers had a large aquarium with eleven large exotic fish. Mr. Stein fed the fish exactly as he was told.

During their vacation, Mr. Stein noticed that one of the large fish had died. Mr. Stein was confident that it was not his fault, but he felt bad for the owners to come home to a dead fish.



OUR DESTINY IS OUR HANDS

In this week's Parsha Moshe instructs his people not to turn to sorcerers, astrologers and forms of magic to learn what the future holds in store for us. "You shall be wholehearted with HaShem. For these nations that you are possessing - they paid attention to astrologers, but as for you - HaShem has not given for you."

In explaining this verse the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh teaches us a significant distinction between the Jewish nation and the rest of the world. The entire material world is governed by nature. The "nature" that governs this world is not limited to the basic laws of physics and other sciences. Nature also includes those influences that the Zodiac and other astrological energies have on this world. The notion that the stars and heavenly bodies influence our world is replete throughout our Sifrei Kodesh. The Ohr Hachaim continues that although the Jewish people live in this world and ought to be subject to these influences, nevertheless, we are above that plane of existence. He references the verse in Psalm 8:7 in which the Psalmist describes Adam. "You give him dominion over Your handiwork, You placed everything under his feet." The Ohr Hachaim understands that we are the heirs to Adam in this role. HaShem placed all the forces of nature

Mr. Stein went to a nearby pet store that sold pretty and exotic fish and purchased a large fish the same size and color as the one that died. It was not cheap, but Mr. Stein felt it was the least he could do.

He placed the new fish in the tank. After staying for a few days, the Steins left the house. The Bergers returned home shortly after the Steins left.

Mr. Stein got a call from Mr. Berger shortly after they returned home.

“Do you have any idea what happened to our fish?”, Mr. Berger asked. “No, what do you mean?”

“Well, we had 11 fish when we left, but now there is just one big one left, and we can't understand what happened to the rest of them.”

In a flash, it was clear to Mr. Stein what had happened. The fish he bought must have eaten all the rest!

Mr. Stein wondered if he had an obligation to offer to pay for all of the lost fish. On one hand, they were lost because of the choice he made to buy a new fish and put it in the aquarium.

But on the other hand, he was only trying to help. And the damage was not caused by him directly. He bought a fish and gave it to the Bergers. The fish that belonged to the Bergers did the damage.

What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Shemos 103



under our feet. This includes the astrological forces as well. We are the ones who direct those forces. As our relationship with HaShem changes, those forces change accordingly.

Using this understanding, the Ohr Hachaim, explains that the larger world is justified to turn to those influences to seek their fate. They are governed by those forces. The Jewish people, however, are different. We are not influenced by those forces. Quite to the contrary, we are the ones who influence those forces. Those forces are dependent upon our relationship with HaShem. If we were to turn to these sources to learn our destiny, it would be a rejection of our role and a rejection of our relationship

to HaShem.

Several weeks ago we discussed how with our recitation of a bracha over an apple we are blessing HaShem. Just as the great rabbi blesses his student and in the merit of that blessing the student anticipates good fortune, so too, when we recite the bracha, HaShem's exposure in this world becomes increased. HaShem's ability to influence our world in a positive manner rests upon our relationship with Him! It is our responsibility to bless HaShem and in turn blessing comes to this world.

The next time you hear Americans singing 'G.D bless America' remember that Jews bless G.D.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

WOOL

This week's Parsha talks about the mitzvah to give reishis hazez, the first shearings of wool to a kohen. Let's take a deeper look at wool together.

Wild sheep are hairy and not really woolly. Sheep were domesticated and bred at least 4000 years ago specifically to be more woolly. Wool garments have been found dating close to three thousand years.

Wool has been used historically to make comfortable and insulated clothing. In addition to clothing, wool has been used for blankets, horse rugs, saddle cloths, carpeting, insulation and upholstery. Wool felt covers the hammers inside a piano. The ancient Greeks lined their helmets with wool felt, and Roman legionnaires used breastplates made of wool felt.

What exactly is Wool? Wool is the textile fiber obtained from sheep. Cashmere wool is different and comes from goats. Wool consists of protein together with a small percentage of lipids. In this regard, it is chemically quite distinct from cotton, which is mainly made of cellulose. Wool is generally a creamy white color, although some breeds of sheep produce natural colors, such as black, brown, silver, and random mixes.

Wool is produced by small cells located in the upper layer of the sheep's skin, called follicles.

Why is sheep's wool used to make clothing more than other animal hair? This is because wool has several qualities that distinguish it from hair or fur:

1 . It is crimped. Crimp refers to the waviness of the wool hairs. Wool fibers also have a unique surface structure of overlapping scales called cuticle cells. The cuticle cells anchor the fiber in the sheep's skin. Wool's surface is very different from typical synthetic fibers, which have a very smooth surface. Wool's scaling and crimp make it easier to spin the fleece by helping the individual fibers attach to each other, so they stay together. This cannot be done with other hairs.

2 . In addition, the crimp causes the wool to hold air, which causes the fabric to retain heat and keep people warm. Wool is still able to keep you warm even when it gets damp.

3 . The opposite is also true. Wool has a high specific thermal resistance, so it impedes heat transfer in general. This can keep you cool in the summer. This effect has benefited desert peoples, like Bedouins who use wool clothes for insulation in the heat. Wool absorbs and releases water vapor as humidity rises and falls, which is why it works so well as a natural insulator.

4 . Wool is highly elastic as well as durable. Wool can be extended to

up to 70% of its natural length and when the tension is released, it returns to its natural length.

5 . Wool is fire resistant. Wool ignites at a higher temperature than cotton and some synthetic fibers. It has a lower rate of flame spread, a lower rate of heat release, lower heat of combustion, and does not melt or drip. It forms a char that is insulating and self-extinguishing. Because of this wool is usually specified for garments for firefighters, soldiers, and others in occupations where they are exposed to the likelihood of fire.

6 . Wool is wrinkle-resistant. That's ironing one less thing for you to think about.

7 . The exteriors of wool fiber are hydrophobic. This means it repels water. However, the interior of the wool fiber is hygroscopic; this means it attracts water. The inside of wool fibers readily absorb moisture, Wool can absorb almost one-third of its own weight in water.

Wool straight off a sheep is known as "wool in the grease". This is because wool contains a high level of valuable lanolin. Lanolin is also called wool yolk, wool wax or wool grease. Lanolin is a wax secreted by the sebaceous glands of sheep. Lanolin and its many derivatives are used extensively in both the personal care and health care sectors for high-value cosmetics, facial cosmetics, lip products and topical liniments. Lanolin is also found in lubricants, rust-preventive coatings, shoe polish, and other commercial products.

Before wool can be used for commercial purposes, it must be scoured, a process of cleaning the greasy wool. This may be recognized as the melacha of libun. Scouring may be as simple as a bath in warm water or as complicated as an industrial process using detergent and alkali in specialized equipment.

In the middle ages, wool production was a significant source of income to the English crown. The importance of wool to the English economy can be seen in the fact that since the 14th century, the presiding officer of the House of Lords has sat on the "Woolsack", a chair stuffed with wool. The smuggling of wool out of England, known as owling, was at one time punishable by the cutting off of a hand. In 1699, the English crown forbade its American colonies to trade wool with anyone but England herself.

Today Australia and New Zealand are leading producers of wool.

QUALITY DOES NOT COME FROM QUANTITY; BUT QUANTITY DOES GROW FROM QUALITY

A few years after Reb Avrohom Wolff, zt"l had established the Bais Yaakov in Bnei Brak, he was approached by a small group of parents whose daughters had just graduated from elementary school in Rechovot. The parents were hopeful that they would be accepted into the Bais Yaakov of Bnei Brak. This presented a problem, however, since both of the existing classes were already full and Rabbi Wolff was committed to keeping classes small. The fact that the girls came from Rechovot added a further difficulty because the Bnei Brak municipality would not allow an additional class to be created for non-residents. The parents were at a loss as to what to do. If there had been more girls, the problem could have been solved by creating a Bais Yaakov in Rechovot, but the small number of girls was discouraging the parents from this option. Because the two sides could not find a solution, it was agreed to go to Jerusalem and ask the Brisker Rav's advice.

Rabbi Wolff went on behalf of the seminary along with the parents' representatives. The Brisker Rav opposed expanding the existing classes in Bnei Brak, advising instead that a Bais Yaakov be set up in Rechovot after all. He shared the principle: "Quality does not come from quantity; but quantity does grow from quality." And indeed, with Rabbi Wolff's assistance, the parents established a school in Rechovot with only a few students. Over the years, it grew in size, and as a result, thousands of girls received a proper Torah education in their hometown.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the man who screamed "terrorist" in the restaurant, Rav Zilberstien wrote that he was not obligated to pay for the meals or the damage. See Upiryo Matok Shemos page 54

In recognition of the endless gratitude to HaShem for everything that He has done for me and my family.

Milana Rabinowitz

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