

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### THE FORGERY

This week's Parsha talks about the relationship between Yisachar and Zevulun. Our Sages teach that the tribe of Zevulun would engage in commerce and support the tribe of Yisachar who were Torah scholars. They made an arrangement so that they would divide the rewards of Torah study equally between themselves.

This leads us to the following true story. Chaim was a fundraiser for a well known yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael. The Yeshiva was headed by a very well respected and renowned Rosh Yeshiva. For the purpose of our story let's call this Rosh Yeshiva Rav Avraham Katz.

One day Chaim traveled to the United States for a fundraising trip for the Yeshiva. Chaim made an appointment with Mr. Zucherman who was a renowned and respected philanthropist, and well known supporter of Torah institutions. Mr. Zucherman was fabulously wealthy and used his money very well to support Torah causes.

Mr. Zucherman met Chaim in his palatial home office. Chaim introduced himself and told him that he was collecting money for the Yeshiva of the gaon, Rav Katz.

Mr. Zucherman listened politely but replied as follows: "Reb Chaim, it's an honor to meet you and I wish you only success. But unfortunately I have already had a loss of a quarter of a million dollars because of Rav Katz and I'm afraid I'm unable to donate any more.

Please let me explain. About a year ago, Mr. Siegal, who is a real estate investor, came to me for a business loan for an exciting proposal about a real estate development project. Mr. Siegal described his idea and needed a loan of \$250,000 dollars for the project. He



### ONE IS HE IS ONE FOR ME

The Midrash in our Parsha shares the following story. As the shevatim surrounded Yaakov's bed before his leaving this world, Yaakov wanted to reveal the time when they would reach their destiny; the coming of Moshiach. To appreciate the scene we must recognize that with Yaakov on his bed surrounded by the 12 shevatim he was carrying the Shechina, the Presence of HaShem, similar to the Mishkan surrounded by the 12 tribes in the desert. As he lay there with the Shechina on him, he intended to reveal the ultimate time of Moshiach. However, the moment before he was to reveal it, the Shechina suddenly left him.

With the departure of the Shechina Yaakov assumed that perhaps one of his children was not completely dedicated to HaShem. He therefore asked them 'Is there anyone here who is not entirely committed to HaShem?' to which they responded in unison. "Shema Yisroel HaShem Elokeinu HaShem Echod", 'Just as you are completely with HaShem, so are we all together in complete dedication to Him.

To gain a fuller appreciation of this Midrash I wish to share the Chasam Sofer's insight to the Shema.

The four letter Name of HaShem which is the name that we are not allowed to pronounce, carries two essential meanings. The first meaning is HaShem transcends Time; He exists before the creation of Time, He exists within the frame of Time and He exists after Time expires. The second meaning is that He is the source of all existence. It therefore follows that if He is the source of all existence then it is evident that He is the only true existence; everything else exists only after He created them and nothing created Him.

took out a letter from your Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Katz. The letter described Mr. Siegel in glowing terms as a Torah scholar and a successful businessman. The letter said that anyone who assists Mr. Siegel on his real estate project will be blessed in every way. The letter further promised that the Rosh Yeshiva would personally be a guarantor for the loan in the case of any unforeseen developments. After seeing the Rosh Yeshiva's letter I gladly wrote out a check to Mr. Siegel for \$250,000.

Unfortunately the real estate project that Mr. Siegel was overseeing went south. About a month later, Mr. Siegel came to me and said the money was lost and he didn't see a way to recover it. Mr. Siegel is a respectable businessman, and I understood. These things happen in business. I told him the money was forgiven. I then remembered the letter he had shown me saying that Rabbi Avraham Katz was going to guarantee the loan. It crossed my mind to ask Rav Katz for the money, but I decided that out of respect for the Rav, I would forgive him the money as well, and write off the loss. So back to our matter at hand. I trusted Rav Katz's recommendation about investing with Mr. Siegel, but sadly my quarter of a million was lost. I'm afraid I'm unable to make another donation at this time."

Reb Chaim the fundraiser understood and parted ways with Mr. Zucherman, the philanthropist.

A few days later, Reb Chaim related Mr Zucherman's story to Rav Katz, the Rosh Yeshiva. When Rav Katz heard the story, he was silently stunned. Rav Katz knew Mr. Siegel but he never wrote a letter of recommendation to invest in his business. He certainly never guaranteed a loan to him. Without knowing any further details, it seemed that Mr. Siegel might not be the respected businessman people thought he was. It seemed that he was also a cheat and a liar. From the story it seemed that Mr. Siegel had forged a document with Rav Katz's name. Because of Mr. Siegel's forgery, Mr. Zucherman now lost trust in Rav Katz.

Silently to himself, Rav Katz considered picking up the phone and calling Mr. Zucherman immediately to tell him that Mr. Siegel forged his name and that he might be a liar and a cheat. But then he hesitated. What would be the purpose of telling that to Mr. Zucherman? Mr. Zucherman currently had a congenial relationship with Mr Siegal. Mr Zucherman already forgave the loan, and was not expecting the money back from Mr Siegal or Rav Katz.

Would there be a purpose in telling Mr. Zucherman that he never wrote the letter? On one hand it would clear his name and perhaps gain Mr. Zucherman's trust in Rav Katz.

But on the other hand, it would destroy Mr. Siegal's reputation. Perhaps instead he should call Mr Siegal and make sure that he never again writes a letter in his name. Perhaps he should leave Mr. Zucherman out of it, and not let others know what Mr Siegal did.

In short, can Rav Katz share the truth about what Mr. Siegal did and destroy his reputation, in order to clear his own name? This question was asked to Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein. What do you think?



*Life is the most difficult exam.*

*Many people fail because they are trying to copy others not realizing that everyone has a different test.*



The very name of HaShem therefore indicates that He is One and there can be none other. Hence, the Chasam Sofer asks what is the intent of the verse that HaShem is our G.D, HaShem is One. Why the redundancy? His very Name already indicates that He is One.

He answers that the second reference that HaShem is One is not intended to identify HaShem as being One. Rather, it is for us to articulate that in our life, in our ambitions, in our drives and goals He is One and there is none other. The verse therefore reads 'Shema Yisroel, HaShem Who is our G.D, He is the only destination of all of our dreams and aspirations.

In this light we can appreciate why this verse represents the Jew's acceptance of the yoke of HaShem's Sovereignty. With this statement the Jew proclaims that there is nothing in his life that does not move him in the direction of serving HaShem.

Rav Yitzchok Aizik Chaver draws the parallel of the human body

with its soul to the Jewish people with HaShem. The healthy body is one in which all the organs serve the greater body. The only way the soul can function as the life force of the body is when all the body parts are completely dedicated to serving the larger body and her soul. The moment one of the organs chooses to follow its own path and its own interests to the exclusion of the body, the entire body will weaken and the soul will depart. So it is with the Jewish people. Am Yisroel is our body, HaShem is our soul and every member of our people serves as a unique organ. We are the body of humanity who contain HaShem in this world. However, we can contain His Presence only when all the organs are completely dedicated to serving the larger nation and our Soul.

We can appreciate why with the departure of the Shechina from Yaakov did he suspect that the dedication to HaShem was diminished. In their response with the Shema they answered with unequivocal clarity they all accepted upon themselves the complete yoke of HaShem's Sovereignty.

As heirs to this great legacy, we can remember this scene twice daily when we recite the Shema and bring the Shechina into our lives.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### CAVES

This week's Parsha talks about how Yaakov was buried in Mearas Hamachpela, the cave of Machpela. (Top left) What was special about the cave of Machpela? The Pirke D'rabbi Eliezer quotes the following interesting story. When Avraham ran to feed food to his angelic guests, the Torah writes that "Avraham ran to the cattle". Why did Avraham have to run anywhere? Our Sages teach that when Avraham went to prepare food for his guests, one of the young cattle ran into a cave. Avraham ran in the cave after the calf and saw the bodies of Adam and Chava with lights lit near them. That is when he discovered the burial place of Adam and Chava and desired this cave as a final resting place for his wife and himself. Our Sages say further, (Zohar Chadash Lech Lecha) that the Cave of Machpelah, the burial place of our Forefathers and Foremothers is also a portal for all of us. When a soul leaves this world to enter Gan Eden, it leaves the universe through the portal of the Cave of Machepela.

So the Cave of Machpela is truly a wondrous cave. Lehavdil, let's learn a bit more about four other fascinating (albeit less holy) caves that Hashem created.

#### **Mutnovsky Volcano.** (Top right)

Ice caves form in the glaciers surrounding the Mutnovsky Volcano in Russia. Some of them are formed by vents that release volcanic heat and gases called fumaroles.

The image above is from the base of the Mutnovsky volcano in Russia. The half-mile long cave was formed by a stream that flows through glacial fields at the bottom of the volcano. The passage is usually too small to enter, but light snowfall and an unusually hot summer created these massive caverns with a nearly transparent roof, reminiscent of a stained-glass cathedral.

**The Crystal Cave** (Bottom right, observe the people to appreciate the scale.)

The Naica Mine caves in Mexico are home to some of the largest crystals ever seen. The Crystal Cave, where these crystals are located, is closed to the public because of its depth, heat and other issues. However, plenty of pictures have been taken to document this monumental crystal cavern. The Cave of Crystals is a cave approximately 1,000 ft below the surface in the limestone host rock of the mine. The chamber contains giant selenite crystals, some of the largest natural crystals ever found. The largest is 37.4 ft. The sele-

nite crystals were formed by hydrothermal fluids heated by the magma chamber below. The cavern was discovered while the miners were drilling through a newly drained area. The caves are closed to the public, and remain closed after a worker tried to enter the cave to steal some of the selenite, only to suffocate and die in the cave's humid and inhospitable atmosphere. Reports in 2017 stated that scientists had found "long-dormant microbes" in the crystals and removed them for further research.

#### **The Benagil cave** (Bottom center)

The Algarve region in Portugal, where the Benagil cave is located, is prone to various seaside grotto formations because of the rock face's relative solubility in water. This specific cave near Lagos is accessible only by water. The Benagil cave is a fascinating rock formation with a big eye in the middle. It's the most famous sea cave in the Algarve.

The hole in the ceiling of the cave allows the sun to shine at the little beach inside the cave. Its beauty is hard to describe and the best way to understand it is to go there and see for yourselves! The colors of the cave are, just like the entire coastline around it, unique and typical for the Algarve.

#### **Waitomo glowworm caves** (Bottom left)

Deep underneath the hilly landscapes of North Island, New Zealand is hidden an amazing cave lit with glowworms.

The Waitomo Glow-worm Cave is home to thousands of glowworms that light up the cave ceiling like a starry night sky. This species of glow-worm, *Arachnocampa luminosa*, which is found exclusively in New Zealand, emits a blue-green glow that illuminates the underground cave river. What causes the glowing? Excretory organs. These insects produce a silk-like thread used to trap flies and other bugs for them to prey on. This insect hangs glistening silken strands from the ceiling of the cave and glows to attract unsuspecting prey. And the hungrier they are, the brighter they glow.

The cave system was first extensively explored in 1887 by English surveyor Fred Mace and local Maori Chief Tane Tinorau. However, the local Māori people had known about the caves for quite some time. Tourists started visiting in 1889 when Tinorau and his wife began leading tours. Today, many of the cave guides are descendants of the Maori Chief Tinorau and his wife.

## THIS PROJECT WOULD DIRECTLY BENEFIT THE ORPHANAGE

In 1878 Reb Yehoshua Leib Diskind (Pictured, bottom) moved from Brisk and became the Rov of Yerushalayim. Due to persecution and disease there were a number of homeless children whom Reb Yehoshua Leib brought into his home. As the need increased he established an orphan home, today known as the Diskin Orphanage. (Pictured, center) His second wife brought much money into their marriage which he used for the benefit of his orphanage.

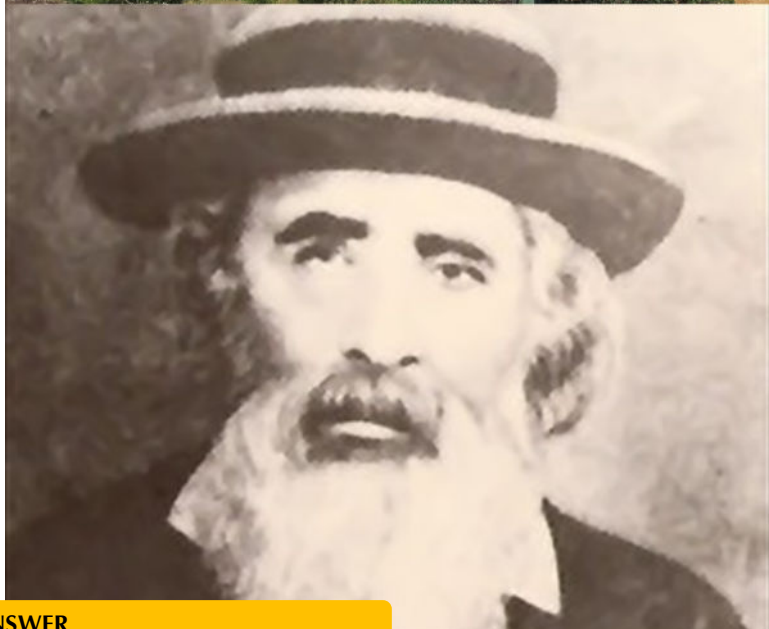
During his tenure as Rov he recognized that the people were not checking their mezuzos and started a campaign to do so. Unfortunately, most of the residents of Yerushalayim were greatly impoverished and they simply could not afford the cost to check their mezuzos.

Rav Yehoshua Leib decided to use the funds of the orphanage to cover this cost. The directors of the orphanage, however, were not agreeable to use funds that were dedicated for the orphanage for this other project.

Reb Yehoshua Leib told them that this project would directly benefit the orphanage and would actually save the orphanage lots of money. The Torah states that if we keep the mitzvah of mezuzah carefully it will extend our lives. "Let us check the people's mezuzos and lower the need for bringing more children into the orphanage"

Reb Yehoshua Leib prevailed.

This story was retold by Rav Moshe Heinemann to Paysach Diskind



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the man who innocently said Kadish for his dog, Rav Aharon Yehuda Leib Shteinman answered that the members of the shul should not stop the man, and they should continue to say amen to his Kadish. The Kadish is still a praise to Hashem, and the man's mistaken intention that it is for his dog, does not take away from the Kadish. The members of the shul should offer to teach him the true meaning of Kadish and be mekarev him to return to Hashem. That will have the effect of truly making a Kidush Hashem and a Kadish for Hashem's name. (See Upiryo Matok Bereishis Page 43)

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of  
הרב יחיאל אריה בן הרב עזריאל הכהן מונק  
From his grandchildren

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