

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### THE CHICKEN ORDER

You might have heard that there is a chicken shortage now. This has been caused by a combination of the disruption caused by the pandemic, the disruption caused by the Great Resignation, as well as an outbreak of avian flu. This leads us to the following true story that happened in Israel.

Eli lived in a close-knit neighborhood. One day before Yom Tov an email went out that people in his neighborhood were creating a group to make a bulk order of chicken. By joining as a group they could buy chicken at wholesale prices and save a significant amount of money. Soon, more than 50 families joined up to make this bulk poultry order. The chicken was going to be picked up from a processing plant that was about 45 minutes away. They needed someone with a vehicle big enough to pick up all the chicken.

Eli owned a 15-seater Ford Transit. Yaakov, an organizer of the group order, approached Eli and asked if he would be open to making the pickup.

"Would you be able to pick up the order? If you do so, we will pay you 1000 shekels for your time and effort. It would also be a huge favor for all of us." Eli agreed. He could use the extra money and was also glad to help.

"Oh, one other thing, would it be okay if you lay out the money with your credit or debit card, then when we come to pick up the chicken we will each pay you?," Yaakov asked.

Eli realized that this was a huge ask, but he agreed to this additional request. Soon after, Eli emptied his van of all of the seats. He drove to the chicken plant and the workers filled his van completely with all of the chickens.

In a short time, Eli was on his way back home to bring



## CELEBRATING JEWISH NATIONALISM

The Av Harachamim prayer said before Musaf on Shabbos remembers the thousands of martyrs who were murdered al Kiddush HaShem by the Crusades. These Kedoshim accepted the sword of the Crusades rather than accepting their cross. This prayer, in which we ask HaShem to remember these tzaddikim, is recited every Shabbos before Musaf. On those Shabbosim when we are m'kadesh the chodesh, this prayer is omitted. However, during the Omer it is said even on those Shabbosim. The reason for this is because these tragic events occurred predominantly during the Omer period. In earlier times there were also special Yotzros that were added to Shabbos shacharis commemorating the murder of those kedoshim.

To give insight into how these tragic events relate to the Omer, Rav Hirsch explains the purpose of the Omer count.

Upon our entry to our Land, the Torah forbade us to harvest the grain before the bringing of the Omer Korban. The Omer Korban was a flour korban brought on the second day of Pesach. No Jew was permitted to lay his sickle to his grain before that offering was brought. The reason for this prohibition was to bring home to the Jew that his national treasure is not our material security and independence. Before raising that sickle we remember how we were once slaves to Pharaoh. We had no homeland. We had nothing. It was only the generous Grace of HaShem Who gave our people an existence. Only after sharing this lesson with our children and families can we begin to take in our harvest.

the chickens to the members of his group bulk order. But on the highway, a police cruiser noticed that the passenger van was packed with boxes. It did not look typical to the officer, and the officer flashed his lights and ordered Eli to pull over.

Eli was unconcerned because he knew he had nothing illegal in his car.

The Officer opened the van and saw all of the chickens. "Where is the refrigeration system in this van?", the officer asked Eli. Refrigeration? This is a regular van that I use every day for carpool. I don't have any refrigeration. Well, the department of health requires that a poultry shipment needs to be done in a refrigerated vehicle. I'm afraid I will have to give you a citation and confiscate this food. But I was just picking up the chicken for my neighbors, I am not selling it. I didn't know about this law, I'm not a retailer, I'm just a regular citizen.

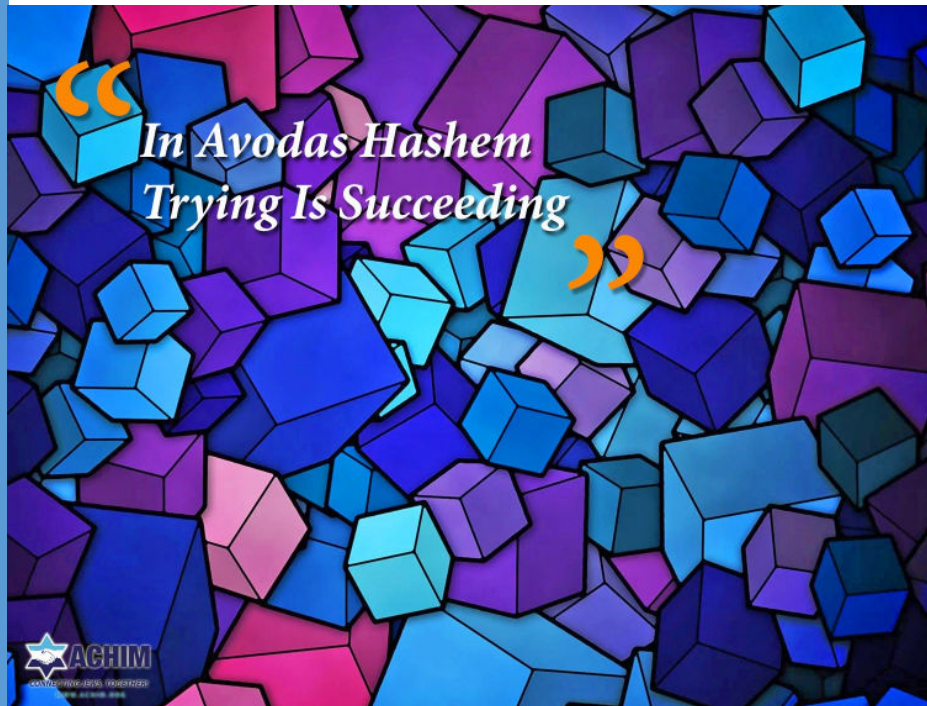
The officer said, "That is a good excuse, and perhaps the judge will be lenient on you. But in the interim here is your summons, the hearing is tomorrow."

To Eli's horror, the officer proceeded to confiscate the van and all its contents.

Eli went to the hearing the next day. The judge seemed sympathetic and said, "Since this is your first time, rather than the 1600 shekel fine, I will cut it in half. You need to just pay an 800 shekel fine". By the time the proceedings were over all of the chickens were no longer edible. Eli called Yaakov the organizer and shared this tale of woe. "Yaakov, I laid out all the money for the chickens, I laid out 10,000 shekels. I need to be reimbursed for that. I also was promised 1000 for my time and effort, I need to be reimbursed for that. I also need to be reimbursed for the 800 shekel fine. Yaakov was very sympathetic but thought out loud. "This is really a frustrating situation. We are dealing with three separate claims. Hmm, regarding the 10,000 that you laid out, you are asking for all of us to pay 10,000 for chicken we never got. The truth is we paid you to make the delivery so you are a paid watchman, a shomer sachar. A shomer sachar is responsible to pay if it was lost or stolen. I wonder if we have an obligation to pay you. Regarding the 1000 for the delivery, I wonder if we have to pay you because we never got our delivery. And regarding the fine, you were the driver so perhaps that is your responsibility. I'm not saying we won't pay, I'm just wondering if we really have to.

Eli heard Yaakov's argument but strongly felt that he should not be left responsible for the 10,000, because it was totally out of his control. For the 1,000 he felt he did the job as best as he could. And for the fine, again it was out of his control, and in addition, they all were in this together and they should share the responsibility to pay the fine.

Eli and Yaakov agreed to ask a Rav and do whatever the Torah requires them to do. This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? Should Eli be reimbursed for the 10,000 for the chicken? For the 1,000 for his work? For the 800 for the fine? See Upiryo Matak Bereishis page 181



But it goes far beyond that. Every nation measures their vitality in terms of their economic success and political prowess. While these are true measures of national vitality for all the other nations of the world, this is not the case with Am Yisroel. We have only one benchmark by which to measure our vitality; our relationship with HaShem and with His Torah.

Therefore, once we have brought the Omer offering and we have begun our harvest and we can feel our material strength, the Torah instructs us to count every day in anticipation for the receiving of our Torah. We should never fall into the deceptive notion that we have any national endurance without our connection to the Torah. All material wealth is ancillary to the Torah.

Although the mitzvah to count every day applies only when we were in our Land, nevertheless, our Sages instructed us to continue counting even as we have no Land, even as we can-

not even own a piece of property as was the case for many centuries. For what purpose were we to count? We were certainly not going to believe that our vitality was our material wealth; we had none. We had no Land, we had no grain, the only thing we had was our treasured Torah.

In the early 1800's the Reformers began compromising our Torah for what they thought would increase their political acceptance in the German nation. As we look today with the hindsight of 200 years we see how fatally wrong they were.

With our current hindsight and Rav Hirsch's insight we can appreciate why even in our homeless, impoverished state how critical it is that we count the days up to Shavu'os. More than Land, more than property and even more than life and family itself stands our loyalty to Torah.

True patriotism and Jewish nationalism can be expressed solely by our loyalty to HaShem and to His Torah.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



# SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

## SMOKE

This week's Parsha says "In a cloud, I will appear above the Ark Cover". Rashi quotes our Sages that one understanding of this verse is that "the kohen gadol may only enter the Holy of Holies with a cloud of smoke of the incense on Yom Kippur".

Let's discuss smoke. What exactly is smoke, and what causes smoke? Smoke is a collection of tiny solid, liquid and gas particles. Although smoke can contain hundreds of different chemicals and fumes, visible smoke is mostly carbon (soot), tar, oils and ash. Smoke occurs when there is incomplete combustion (not enough oxygen to burn the fuel completely). In complete combustion, everything is burned, producing just water and carbon dioxide. When incomplete combustion occurs, not everything is burned. Smoke is a collection of these tiny unburned particles. Each particle is too small to see with your eyes, but when they come together, you see them as smoke.

Let's look at burning wood as an example. Wood is made up of water, volatile organic compounds – a compound is volatile if it evaporates (becomes a gas) when it is heated, carbon, minerals in the tree's cells, like calcium, potassium and magnesium (which are non-burnable and become ash).

When you put wood on a hot fire, the smoke you see is the volatile organic compounds (hydrocarbons) evaporating from the wood. They start to evaporate at about 149°C. If the fire is hot enough, the hydrocarbons will burst into flames. Once they burn, there is no smoke because the hydrocarbons are turned into water and carbon dioxide. After the fire has been burning for a while, most of the hydrocarbons (gasses and smoke particles) have been released, and all that is left is charcoal, which is almost pure carbon with some minerals. The hot charcoal slowly burns with a red glow. There are no flames because charcoal will only produce carbon dioxide, which cannot be burned any further, unlike other vapors. Very little smoke is produced at this stage. The quicker a fire is reduced to glowing charcoal, the hotter it will be and the less smoke it will produce. The carbon combines with oxygen to produce carbon dioxide until all that is left at the end of the fire is the ash – the minerals.

Why does smoke rise? When igniting a fire, fuel and oxygen combine to release heat, light, carbon dioxide, water vapor, etc. The heat-energy generated in this process heats up the air around the flame which in effect reduces its density. Heated air around the flame rises up and the surrounding air, which is colder/heavier, moves down into its place moving the heated air upward. This causes the flame to shoot up like an air-filled bottle would if you held it underwater and let it go. Buoyancy kicks the flame upwards and the heated air rising up is also why the flame flickers. So, buoyancy and gravity are the reasons a flame reaches upwards. Simply said, smoke rises for the same reason hot air rises.

What makes some smoke white and other smoke black? It depends on the type of fuel and how hot it's burning. In general, a hotter fire will convert more fuel into elemental carbon, which forms into tiny particles that absorb light and appear in the sky as black smoke. A cooler combustion—or one that doesn't work as efficiently—yields less-pure forms of carbon. These tend to reflect light, making the smoke look white.

Why is smoke inhalation poisonous? When you inhale smoke from a fire, you're really inhaling a combination of a bunch of toxic products. The 'smoke' is mostly carbon monoxide, but also contains cyanide. Carbon monoxide is poisonous because it interferes with the body's de-

livery or use of oxygen. Cyanide is a poisonous chemical gas that prevents your body from absorbing and using oxygen. In the case of a home fire, many homes contain a lot of synthetic materials such as rubber, plastic or foam. When those materials burn, they can cause house fire cyanide poisoning."

Are there any positive uses for smoke? There are several. Smoke is used for fumigation for pest control. Smoking is a form of slow cooking. Smoking food can be used to preserve the food. Smoke can be added to add flavor to food. And smoke can be used to burn incense (or tobacco, cannabis, etc.).

Smoke is also used extensively by the military for communication, as well as to create a smokescreen for defensive and offensive capabilities. Smoke is used in communication when forces use marking smoke to identify targets or friendly forces during close air support, and attack helicopter operations. Marking smoke also supports prearranged battlefield communications for link-up operations.

A smokescreen is smoke released to mask the movement or location of military units such as infantry, tanks, aircraft, or ships. With modern technology there are now new forms; they can screen in the infrared as well as visible spectrum of light to prevent detection by infrared sensors or viewers, and they are also available for vehicles in a super-dense form used to block laser beams of enemy target designators or range finders.

Historians say that the early Japanese were one of the first to use smoke as part of warfare. The Ninjas also often employed smoke bombs as a diversionary tactic. The original Ninjas utilized eggshells to house the components for their smoke bomb. They would take eggs and drill a hole in the top and the bottom to allow the egg yolk and contents to drain out. They would then seal the bottom hole with wax, and fill in the eggshell with a combination of gunpowder and other ingredients that would increase the flash, increase the plume of the smoke, and ingredients that would potentially irritate the eyes of any opponents that were nearby. Ninjas would then carefully pack the homemade smoke devices into their pouch to be used in case of emergency or an attack. Smoke bombs could be utilized in a defensive fashion if a Ninja was caught during a mission and needed a quick escape. If the Samurai were closing in on them he could take a moment to throw the smoke bomb on the ground, obscuring the vision of the pursuers, while taking the moment to flee and perhaps even throw some caltrops (an area denial weapon) on the ground to further hinder any pursuers.

The smoke bombs were also utilized in an offensive fashion as a Ninja who might be lying in ambush throws the smoke bomb in the field of vision of his or her target before striking. The chances for success of assassinating a target would be greatly increased when the target and any bodyguards or protection he might have is unable to see.

There is also a psychological factor to the use of the smoke bombs for the Ninjas. Ninjas could utilize a smoke bomb and seemed to disappear as they would run and hide during that flash. This tactic contributed to the common misconception of the era that Ninjas, or Shinobi, were supernatural beings that possessed superhuman abilities.

**“JUST GO TO YOUR KINDERLACH. IT WILL BE OKAY.”**

If there was an opportunity to do good for someone, Rav Dovid Trenk grabbed it. One morning, Reb Dovid waited on line in a crowded Lakewood supermarket. The harried-looking woman ahead of him on line took a phone call from her babysitter, who was screaming in a voice audible to the other customers, “I need to leave, I can’t stay here anymore, I’m not watching the children for one more minute. They are out of control. You had better get home.”

The woman froze, panicked. It was almost her turn, and she needed the groceries in her house, but she was worried about her children.

“Just go,” came a voice from behind her, “just go to your kinderlach. It will be okay.”

A few minutes later, Reb Dovid pulled up at her home, carrying in the boxes he had packed himself, leaving her not just with the grocery order, but with words of chizuk and encouragement.

From Just Love Them, The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Trenk, By Rabbi Yisroel Besser, Published By Artscroll Mesorah, Reprinted With Permission From The Copyright Holders



THE ANSWER

**Regarding last week’s question about the bagel truck, Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered that the non Jewish driver should avoid driving the truck during Pesach.**

This week's TableTalk is dedicated as an iluy for the neshama of our dear father and grandfather

**Rabbi Aria Leib Newman**

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