

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



MATCHMAKER'S MATCH

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Our Sages teach that Ben Shemona Esrei Lechupa. A Man should start to look to get married at the age of 18. The halacha teaches that a man can delay this up until age 25 if he wants to continue to pursue his Torah learning. The Baal Haturim in this week's Parsha says that we find a remez, an allusion, to the concept of a man starting to look to get married at 18. In the context of talking about the Kohen Gadol the Torah says: **וְהָיָה אִשָּׁה בְּתוּלִיָּה יִקַּח כַּאֲשֶׁר יִבְרָא**. Simply, this means that a kohen should marry a besu-la, a woman who was not yet married. But on a deeper level, the word **וְהָיָה** is the gematria of 18. Therefore the verse can be read as "At 18, a man should take a maiden for a wife".

The mitzvah to get married leads us to the following true story.

Gavriel was a wealthy man. He had a cousin, Shoshana, who had no parents and he wanted to help her get married and start a family. He set up a meeting with Mrs. Katz, a local shadchan. "Mrs. Katz", he began, "as you know, the going rate for shadchanus, (the fee that one pays to a shadchan after a successful shidduch), is \$2000.

But my Shoshana is really a very special girl. She is extremely frum and she needs a very special, unique boy. She needs a real yarei shomayim (G-d fearing person). If you find a real yarei shomayim for Shoshana I will pay you double the shadchanus, \$4000. Mrs Katz was excited about the prospect and she pledged to get to work right away. She looked into



OUT OF THIS WORLD!

In this week's Parsha, Emor, we are given the order of the holidays. The Torah calls the holidays 'Moadim'; the singular is Moed. This word is also used in the name of the Mishkan, the Ohel Moed. In the latter Moed means the 'place of meeting' The Hebrew word 'vaad' is meeting, hence moed is makom vaad, a meeting place. In the former, by the holidays, moed carries the same meaning; a place of meeting. Instead of designating a geographic location it designates a time; a moment of time that is found on the calendar on which a meeting is established. The parties meeting together are HaShem and us.

Meetings can only be had between two or more parties who are on the same plane of existence. Even if a boss meets with his employee and they are not on the same level, nevertheless, they exist in the same plane. Both parties are human beings who are alive at the same time.

Could we fathom a meeting between a person and an angel? Certainly not! The two parties are not on the same plane of existence. (And if you will argue that there have been Sages who studied with angels, I will tell you that this was possible only because those Sages were, in fact, on the same plane as those angels.) If so, how can we understand a Mishkan as a meeting place of HaShem and His people? How can we understand the holidays as a meeting time for HaShem and His people? HaShem is the Creator and we are His creation. We are clearly on extremely different planes of existence.

The answer is that the Jewish people are out of this world. Our existence does not compute in the same way as other nations. All nations sprout from the land of their origin. The Ukrainian people began their existence in the geographic location of Ukraine. This is the reason why a native land is referred to by its people as their motherland or fatherland. The land gave birth to the nation. It is for this reason that if you exile an entire nation from its land, leaving nobody behind, that nation will cease to exist on foreign soil. Without

her files and found a young man who she thought might fit the bill. The young man's name was Chaim. Mrs. Katz met with Chaim and she was impressed with how Chaim constantly talked about his strong emunah in Hashem, and how he wanted to devote his life to bringing nachas to Hashem. To Mrs. Katz he seemed like a real yarei shomayim. Mrs. Katz then did a bit of research. She asked Chaim's friends if they would consider Chaim a yarei shomayim and they each enthusiastically affirmed that he was a yarei shomayim.

With those facts in hand, Mrs. Katz proceeded to arrange the shidduch. Shoshana went out with Chaim once. Then again, and then again. The two seemed extremely happy with each other and before long, Chaim asked Shoshana to marry him.

Chaim and Shoshana were ecstatic. Mrs. Katz was extremely pleased. She was also looking forward to getting the special bonus for the shadchanus.

Sure enough, Gavriel appeared at Mrs. Katz's home with an envelope, and handed it to her. Mrs. Katz opened it up and saw \$2000. "Ahem", she cleared her throat. "Thank you so much for this. But I thought we agreed that you would give me, double, \$4000, if I found Shoshana a yarei shomayim. I think it's clear that I fulfilled my side of the bargain. Look how happy she is with Chaim".

Gavriel responded, "Yes I was greatly hoping that Chaim was a yarei shomayim. But I have been keeping my eye out on him. I have been watching him and I see that very often he comes late to davening. And very often he rushes to the end of davening. To me, that is a clear sign that he is not a yarei shomayim. I look at people's actions, not what they say." But Mrs. Katz retorted, "You can't make that assumption. I asked all his friends and they all said he is a yarei shomayim. I spoke to him and his yiras shomayim practically oozed out of him. How can you judge him because he came late to davening? How can you judge what is really going on in his heart? But Gavriel said, "To me, coming late to davening is a sign of a lack of yiras shomayim and that is what I meant when I made my deal with you. If he does not come on time to davening that does not meet my definition of yarei shomayim and therefore I am sadly unable to pay the bonus".

Both Mrs. Katz and Gavriel agreed to bring the question to a Rav. What do you think?

Should Mrs. Katz get the bonus because on the outside it appeared that Chaim was a yarei shomayim and that is the best that anyone can really do? Or should she not get it, because it was clear that the metric for yarei shaomayim in Gavriel's eyes, was coming on time to davening? It was clear that that is what he intended. Or can we argue that we don't care about the definition that Gavriel had in his heart, the main thing is what the term Yarei Shomayim means objectively?

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When our friend's success leaves within us no residue of jealousy we know that we are approaching loving our neighbor as we love ourselves.



Ukraine, Ukrainians will cease to exist after just five generations. If you take a tree out of its soil, it will die.

We, on the other hand, were born within a different country. We became a nation on Egyptian soil. Only after our exodus from Egypt as a nation and traveling 40 years did we enter our Homeland. The Land of Israel is not our motherland, Egypt is actually our motherland. The occurrence of our beginning is as possible as growing a tree in thin air and then planting it! It defies all the laws of botany. This is why we can exist 50 generations after our Homeland is emptied of her children. We do not need our Land to grow just like we did not need our Land to sprout.

If we do not draw our existence from our Land then what is our source of existence? Correct! Our source of existence is supernatural, it is HaShem Himself Who brought us into existence and it is HaShem Himself Who continues to maintain our existence.

Behold! The laws of Nature which HaShem established by which He runs and maintains His world were suspended regarding His people.

We are under His direct Guidance like no other nation. Naturally, He has expectations for us for which we are responsible to meet. In the event we fail, He has ways to encourage us and to prod us on to live up to those expectations. The more we can appreciate this incredible relationship the deeper our joy of being a member of our people would be. Imagine! The Creator Himself attached His Own Personal Guidance to us!

Given our unique relationship with HaShem perhaps we can appreciate the possibility of having a meeting place and a meeting time with Him. Our Creator is with us on a constant basis. He has taken on our existence as His Personal responsibility. Not only is it comprehensible, it should be expected.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind

Correction: To correct a misunderstanding in the first Rashi of Kedoshim that was reflected in last week's TableTalk. The first Rashi of Kedoshim indicates that Kedoshim was said 'with hakheil'. Rashi's intent is that it was said in the presence of the entire nation including women and children. Rashi did not intend to say that it was said by the King at the Hakheil ceremony.



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

FASTING

This week's Parsha talks about the mitzvah to fast on Yom Kippur. Let's look at fasting a bit deeper. What exactly happens to our body when we fast? The Gemara in Brachos 17a says: When Rav Sheshes would sit in observance of a fast, after he prayed he said as follows: Master of the Universe, it is revealed before You that when the Temple is standing, when one sinned he offers a sacrifice. And although only its fat (Chelev) and blood were offered from that sacrifice on the altar, his transgression is atoned for him. And now, I sat in observance of a fast and my fat and blood diminished. May it be Your will that my fat and blood that diminished be considered as if I offered a sacrifice before You on the altar, and may I find favor in Your eyes.

The Gemara is saying that when we fast our blood and fat is minimized. Is that literally true? Let's look at this deeper. When you don't eat for a while, several things happen in your body. Many metabolic adjustments occur during fasting. Metabolic changes that come with the fasting state begin after absorption of a meal (typically 3–5 hours after eating).

After hours without food, the body exhausts its sugar stores. These sugar stores are glucose and blood sugar. Instead, the body switches from burning blood sugar to burning fat in the liver. This switch is called metabolic switching. (Note that it is interesting that scientists use the term to burn fat, which is reminiscent of the burning on the mizbeach. Also note that Chelev is the hard type of fat, called Suet, near the liver.)

Additionally, when you fast your body changes hormone levels to make stored body fat more accessible. The blood levels of human growth hormone (HGH) may increase dramatically. Higher levels of this hormone facilitate fat burning and muscle gain, and have numerous other benefits.

Insulin is a hormone that lowers the level of glucose in the blood. When the body switches to a fasting state, blood levels of insulin drop significantly, which facilitates fat burning.

This metabolic switching to a fast state, in which our bodies burn fat instead of sugar, is part of the reason why some people practice intermittent fasting to control their body weight. (One fascinating thing is that many people who practice intermittent fasting do what is called the 5:2 Diet. This means they fast two days a week and eat the other five. Many non-jews who do this diet fast on Monday and Thursday! The Gemara in Taanis 12a says that fasting on Monday and Thursday was a practice taken on by select tzadikim.)

Based on all of the above we see that fasting minimizes parts of the blood, and also minimizes fat. We should appreciate the fact that the Sages of our Gemara were able to identify this metabolic process so precisely!

Scientists have observed that periodic fasting can also have some other positive effects on our bodies.

When we fast the body induces important cellular repair processes, such as removing waste material from cells. The cells in the body initiate a cellular "waste removal" process called autophagy. This involves the cells breaking down and metabolizing broken and dysfunctional proteins that build up inside cells over time. Increased autophagy may provide protection against several diseases, including cancer and neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's disease.

What's good for the body is often good for the brain as well. Intermittent fasting improves various metabolic features known to be important for brain health. In one study, fasting improved alertness, mood, and subjective feelings of well-being, possibly improving overall symptoms of depression, and boosting cognitive performance. Studies in mice and rats have shown that intermittent fasting may increase the growth of new nerve cells, which should have benefits for brain function.

What is the etymology of the word "fast"? This can teach us some important insights. I remember when I was 5 years old I asked my mother on Tisha B'av. "Why is it called a fast day? It should be called a slow day because it is so boring". This cute anecdote reflects the fact that the word fast has three distinct uses in modern English. Fast, as in to move fast. Fast as in to break a fast. And fast like steadfast or fasten, which means to be firm and strong. What is the connection between all these three usages?

The original word comes from the German word *fastu* which means firm and strong. That gives us the English words *fasten* and *steadfast*. The term *fast* meaning to avoid eating, came from the *steadfast* self-control needed to avoid eating. In more modern times, the word *fast* which meant strength, also meant speed because a strong *steadfast* horse was speedy and fast. So all three usages of the term *fast* come from the same source.

The fact that the word *fast* means to be strong with oneself, alludes to one of the ideas behind why we fast on fast days. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch writes that we fast on days that we are supposed to do *teshuva*. Why fast? Fasting is a demonstration to oneself that we have the ability to control our strongest and most visceral desires. We are demonstrating to ourselves that just as we are able to control our impulse to eat we also have the power to control our other material impulses that lead us to sin. By fasting we show that we have the strength to be *steadfast*.

As an interesting aside, we know that the word *breakfast* comes from *break-fast*, because we are breaking our fast. Where does lunch and supper come from? Some etymologists say that lunch is short for *luncheon*. *Luncheon* comes from the Old English word *nun-chin* meaning 'noon drink'. Supper comes from the words *soup* and *sip*. This is because soup was the traditional evening meal of French workers.

THE BRISKER RAV: I HAVE BEEN CAUGHT TRANSGRESSING A TAX LAW

When it came to feeling the other person's pain the Brisker Rav was the master. A certain Jew, the father of many children, some still very young, made his living importing and exporting fabrics. One day, he was arrested by the local police and wrongfully accused of evading taxes. The threat of harsh punishment hung over him, since, in those days, penalties for tax crimes were particularly severe. He was in danger of being sentenced to exile and hard labor for a period of years. Upon hearing about the situation, the Brisker Rav was very concerned. Anti-Semitism was rampant, and the chances of this poor Jew getting a fair trial were next to nil. Immediately, the Brisker Rav called in a Jewish lawyer, one of the most important lawyers in the field. After the two were safely behind closed doors, he confided, "To my great distress, I have been caught transgressing such-and-such a tax law. I will soon be called to appear in court for it; what should I do?" The lawyer, although he was among those who had left the fold and was leading a totally secular life, turned white when he heard these words. He knew what terrible punishments were in store for the Rav of Brisk for such a crime. After a long silence, he whispered to the Brisker Rav, that according to his extensive experience in such cases, there was little hope. "You should hope, Brisker Rav, for a lenient sentence," he said. But after a few minutes of contemplation, he said, "But there is still one possible way out. It is very dangerous, but for you I would be willing to attempt it. "Those in charge of the archives at the courthouse trust me; I have spent years working in the judicial system. My suggestion is that I find a fitting time to go in there, find the file containing the court case, steal it and destroy its contents. This is the only way to save you from a heavy sentence. ' "Indeed," he added, "there is a heavy risk involved. Woe to me and my family if I am caught. My career as a successful lawyer will be in ruins, and I will be liable for criminal charges and strict punishments. Even so, to save the Brisker Rav, I am prepared to risk my life." The Brisker Rav then revealed that it was not he who had been caught, apologizing and explaining that he felt he needed to misrepresent the truth, because otherwise the lawyer never would have offered his plan. Now the lawyer's attitude changed. He was not prepared to take such risks for just anybody! The Brisker Rav, however, having discovered a way to save the man, refused to give up; he spoke at length with the lawyer, mentioning that indeed the poor man's troubles were really his, since he felt them as deeply as if they had been his own. With much persuasion, The Brisker Rav managed to convince the lawyer to make the attempt. The Brisker Rav promised him that he would not be caught while carrying out his plan, and gave him a berachah that nothing bad would happen to him. With the berachah and a promise that as a shaliach for such a great mitzvah he would surely come to no harm, the man stood by his word, and at an opportune time, he removed the file and burned its contents. The man's case disappeared into oblivion, and he retained his liberty. As a result of the lawyer's daring action, the case never came to court, and his life was saved."

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the office summit, Rav Zilberstein answered based on a similar psak from Rav Elyashiv, that if it is a one time thing, then it would be better to get the cheaper hechsher and use the money for something that might have a deeper impact.

To clarify the answer shared last week about the driver paying the fine, the reason why the driver had to pay the fine and not the others, is because for the others it was a "gramma rechoka" but he was the one who directly caused the fine.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of the bar mitzvah of our cousin
Chaim Dov Munk.
Yaakov and Chani Glazer

