

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE TZFAS TRIP

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

We are approaching the summer, when people often travel for a change of scenery. This leads us to the following true story.

Akiva wanted to take his family on a weekend trip to Tzfas one summer. He went online to book an Airbnb for the weekend. He found an apartment that looked nice and contacted the owner, named Tzvi.

Tzvi replied to Akiva that the particular apartment that he wanted was no longer available, but that he had just purchased and finished remodeling a new apartment that was not listed and that was available. Akiva expressed his interest and asked for pictures of the second apartment, and Tzvi sent them. The apartment looked perfect for their needs and Akiva agreed to rent the apartment for the weekend. Tzvi asked that they Paypal or Zelle him the money when they arrived at the apartment.

Akiva and his family made their way to Tzfas. Traffic held them up and they got to the apartment 30 minutes before Shabbos. Akiva got out of the car and ran into the apartment. After looking around Akiva realized that there were no mezuzahs in the apartment. Akiva thought to himself, "I know I agreed to rent this apartment, but it's missing mezuzahs. It's owned



OUTSIDE IN - INSIDE OUT

Our Parsha opens with Moshe instructing Aharon on the mitzvah of lighting the Menorah. The Midrash teaches us that Aharon was dejected that he did not participate in bringing an inaugural offering at the consecration of the Mishkan. All the other tribes (Shevatim) brought inaugural offerings in participation of the Mishkan's consecration. Aharon, however, had no offering to bring. To comfort Aharon, HaShem told Moshe to instruct him on the Menorah. He added "your contribution, of the Menorah, is greater than theirs".

The question is how does this resolve Aharon's dejection? Aharon had already been instructed on carrying out all the services in the Mishkan. The lighting of the Menorah was just one of those responsibilities. Furthermore, in what way is the Menorah greater than the offerings of the Shevatim?

In answering this question, the Ramban explains that this Parsha of Menorah is alluding to the Menorah of the Chashmonaim in the time of Chanukah. The Chashmonaim who were the descendants of Aharon recaptured the Bais Hamikdash from the hands of the Greeks during the Second Temple and re-inaugurated it with the lighting of the Menorah. That Menorah continues to live on in every Jewish home. The Chanukah Menorah represents the light of the Oral Torah which transcends both time and space. It is not limited to the confines of the Mishkan nor is it limited to the time of the Bais Hamikdash.

The words of the Ramban certainly answer why the Menorah was greater than the other offerings; the impact of the Menorah continues to nourish us still today, thousands of years later in exile.

Why, in fact, did Aharon not bring an offering like the other Shevatim and what was the function of the inaugural offerings that the Shevatim brought? After the Mishkan was established our ancestors encamped around the Mishkan

by a Jew so he has an obligation to put up mezuzahs right away. I can't stay in an apartment that has an obligation to have mezuzahs, and is lacking them. The lack of a mezuzah should void our agreement, just like if the apartment was missing another essential feature like no roof or no bathroom."

Akiva took the initiative and called an old friend of his who lived in Tzfas. Akiva told the friend about his predicament and the friend invited Akiva's family to stay with them. It would be tight but cozy.

Akiva spent a wonderful Shabbos with his family at his friend's house.

Right after Shabbos, Akiva gets a call from Tzvi. "Hi Akiva, I think you forgot to send over the money for the apartment rental, can you please do it now?"

Akiva replied, "I will be honest with you, we never stayed at the apartment. We came there right before Shabbos, and saw that there were no mezuzahs on any of the doors. We were unable to spend Shabbos there so we went to a friend. I'm sorry but I'm not going to be able to pay you".

Tzvi replied, "What do you mean?" You are exempt from a mezuzah because you planned on being there for less than thirty days and this is like a hotel". Akiva replied, "Yes I may be exempt, but you are the owner and you have an obligation to put one on". But Tzvi replied, "No, if this is designated as a hotel where people stay for short durations it is completely exempt from a mezuzah".

Akiva replied, "I was not aware of that detail, and it's possible that not everyone agrees to that. I am a simple Jew. As a matter of principle, I don't stay in an apartment that does not have a mezuzah, if it's owned by a Jew. I know that a home without a mezuzah is lacking important protection. I'm sorry I am unable to pay you".

But Tzvi retorted, "I could have rented the apartment to someone else. You agreed to stay and now I lost the fare".

They agreed to bring this question to a Rav.

What do you think? Must Akiva pay the money for the rental, as he agreed, or can we say that the missing mezuzah invalidates their agreement because the rental was missing an essential feature?

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in a square with three Shevatim encamped on the East and three on the South and three on the West and three on the North. They represented a circle surrounding the Mishkan as the center. It is interesting to note that when all the points on the circle face the center, they are all facing different directions. The point on the west side of the center is facing east while the point on the east side is facing west. There are no two points focusing in the same direction even though they are all focusing on the same single central point. This is true with our relationship to the Master of our Universe. Every Jew is another point of that circle which surrounds HaShem. Every Jew is focused on drawing himself closer to Him. Since no two Jews are on the exact same spot, each one's focus will express itself in a slightly different way. Each Shevet had their distinct avoda, their unique approach in the service of HaShem.

Since every Sheivet has their unique direction in serv-

ing HaShem every Sheivet brought their own unique offering as an inaugural offering to express their unique direction.

Aharon and the Leviim were on a different plane than the Shevatim. They were the ones who served in the Mishkan. They were the ones who opened the opportunity for the Shevatim to bring their offerings. While the Shevatim were on the circle facing towards the center, Aharon and the Leviim were in the center facing out. It therefore follows that Aharon and his Shevet did not participate in bringing the inaugural offerings to the Mishkan. If so, then why should Aharon be dejected that he did not participate in the inauguration of the Mishkan?

Perhaps Aharon was dejected for not bringing an inaugural offering representing his role and mission. His mission was to be in the center and face the people. The prophet Malachi identifies the role of the kohein as the one who teaches the wisdom of Torah to the people, and for that role and mission he brought no equivalent as an inaugural offering. To resolve this dejection HaShem informed Aharon that his descendants will re-dedicate the Temple with the Menorah. So, while the Shevatim brought their offerings from their homes to the Mishkan, Aharon brought the Torah from the Mishkan to their homes.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

SLAV, QUAIL

At the end of this week's Parsha, we find the story of how Hashem provided the Slav to give meat to the Jewish people. The Torah describes how the Slav came in huge swarms. Our Sages teach that there was so much Slav, and they were so easily accessible that even people who were lazy or crippled were able to collect ten chamarim of meat. Rabbi Arye Kaplan writes that ten chamarim is today's equivalent of 1000 pounds of meat. The Netziv writes that the reason why they were able to gather so much is that the birds did not fly away, and they simply stayed on the ground together like a flock of sheep. (Hence the word Vayagaz, like flocks of sheep.) The Gemara in Yoma (75b) says that the Slav was very fatty. The Gemara also says that there are four main species of quail. The Chizkuni writes that the reason why Hashem provided Slav is because it has the flavor of both fish and meat, and the Jewish people complained for meat and fish. The Sharei Aron writes that the Slav were also similar to fish because they had a large "fin" like a fish.

So what is a Slav? The Radak and The Abarbanel write that the Slav is known today as "Qvailya". In modern times this is called a Quail. What is really fascinating is that all of the details that have been listed above have been observed by scientists today.

The truth is, as the Gemara writes, there are many different types of quail. Quail is actually a collective name for several genera of heavy, ground-living birds. Quail come from the family of birds called Phasianidae. Other birds in the same family are turkeys, peacocks, pheasants, partridges, and chickens. Until the discovery of the Americas, scientists knew of four main genera of quail, the Coturnix, Synoicus, Perdica, and Ophrysa. In the Americas they have classified eight additional genera. In total, scientists have classified close to fifty different types of quail, so it is of course not easy to know which precise type of quail the Bnei Yisrael ate.

The following is an exploration of eight different types of quail. As you can see in the pictures above, they are very beautiful and varied birds. We will see that they have many fascinating features. Many have the features that our Sages described.

Common quail. The common quail (Pic 1) migrates to the Mediterranean Sea area in very large numbers. They are heavily hunted when they pass through the Mediterranean area. In Egypt, hunters set up walls of vertical nets (Pic 2) along the Mediterranean coastline that cannot be seen by the quail. Very large numbers are caught in these nets. It is estimated that in 2012, during the autumn migration, 3.4 million birds were caught in northern Sinai and perhaps as many as 12.9 million in the whole of Egypt. In terms of its fat content, Quail is fatter than turkey and chicken, Quail has 2.3 calories per gram, while turkey has 1.9, and chicken has 2.2. In modern times, quail is not as fatty as duck which has 3.4 calories per gram.

Montezuma quail. In the presence of humans, Montezuma quail (Pic 3) crouch motionless in tall grass instead of running. They may allow an

approach as close as a yard before flying. They take off with a "loud, popping wing noise". On rare occasions, they can be caught by hand.

Japanese quail. The domesticated Japanese quail (Pic 4) is the quail most likely to be eaten today. It is used for research purposes in state, federal, university, and private laboratories, in fields such as genetics, nutrition, physiology, pathology, embryology, cancer, behavior, and the toxicity of pesticides. Japanese quail eggs have orbited the Earth in several Soviet and Russian spacecraft, including the Bion 5 satellite and the Salyut 6 and Mir space stations. In March 1990, eggs on the space station Mir were successfully incubated and hatched.

California quail. The California quail (Pic 5) is a highly sociable bird that often gathers in small flocks known as "coveys". These birds have a curving crest or plume, made of six feathers, that droops forward. It is black in males and brown in females. This could be what was described as the "fin" of the bird. Interestingly, one of their daily communal activities is a dust bath. A group of quail will select an area where the ground has been newly turned or is soft, and using their underbellies, will burrow downward into the soil some one to two inches. They then wriggle about in the indentations they have created, flapping their wings and ruffling their feathers, causing dust to rise in the air. They seem to prefer sunny places in which to create these dust baths. The California quail is the state bird of California.

Blue quail. The blue quail (Pic 6) is colorful. Its legs are yellow. The color of the eyes are red. The male's plumage is mostly dark slaty-blue, the male has a black beak, a brown head, and a black and white throat. There is a white patch on its breast. Its flight feathers are brown. The forehead, sides of the head and neck, and flanks of the female are orange-buff. Its crown is brown, with black mottles.

King quail. King quails (Pic 7) are unique because the males will fight for the right to mate. The winner will then mate with every female in the group. Females will lay their eggs anywhere on the ground, not necessarily in a nest, like other birds.

Painted bush quail. This quail (Pic 8) is darkish brightly colored with a deep red bill and legs. These colors are eye-catching even when the bird is in flight. Females are very assertive when defending their young. They will attack dogs and even humans that intrude. Their chicks are said to be able to fly at a very early age.

Singing quail. The Singing quail (Pic 9) is found in Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. The singing quail has a loud, far-carrying, rhythmic song. It commences with a series of hesitant, plaintive whistles, which increase in frequency and pitch into a rapidly delivered series, of varying pitch and may be sung by several members of a covey.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous and beautiful creations!

WHY WE CAN'T HAVE ZEMIROS TOGETHER

Our Torah Sages were extremely sensitive to the feelings of others.

After Rebbetzin Tamar Shteinman's passing, several Shteinman grandchildren regularly came to sing Shabbos zemiros with R' Aharon Leib Shteinman on Friday nights.

However after seven years of these enjoyable visits; he shocked them with an unexpected request. "I'd prefer if you don't come over to sing anymore," he said.

Why? "I'm afraid that Rebbetzin Yisraelzon, upstairs — whose husband, R' Yosef, passed away last week — will hear the zemiros and they will bring back warm memories of Shabbos meals with her husband and cause her pain. I prefer to sing the zemiros myself, in a low tone, rather than risk the possibility of causing pain to an almanah (widow)."

Only later, after finding out that Rebbetzin Yisraelzon had several of her own grandchildren eating the meal and singing zemiros with her did R' Aharon Leib agree to let his grandchildren continue to enliven his Shabbosos with their niggunim.

However, he stipulated that before coming, they should first try to discreetly ascertain that there were Yisraelzon grandchildren upstairs, eating with their widowed grandmother.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the Filipino "Shadchan", Rav Zilberstein answered that the father should give him a gift to express his sincere gratitude but he didn't have to give \$2000 for shadchanus. This is because all the shadchan did was give an idea and did not do the work, so it is not clear that he did this to get paid. In addition, it is not the practice among non Jews to expect shadchanus, so in this case we can follow the expectations of non-Jews.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in memory of
Mrs. Pearl Edelman

On the occasion of her first yahrzeit 17th of Sivan
By her loving family and her friends

