

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



REMOVING HER NAME

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about Nedarim, making vows. Making a pledge to give tzedakah to a shul is a form of a vow. This leads us to the following true story.

Akiva Berger, a successful businessman, was married to Shira. They had several children. One day he decided to donate the paroches, the special curtain in front of the Torah in a new shul. The paroches was beautiful. The front of the paroches was embroidered, in Hebrew, "Donated by Alkiva and Shira Berger, as a merit for the refuah shelaima (complete recovery) for all the sick among the Jewish people". The paroches looked beautiful, and both Akiva and Shira were very proud of it.

A few years passed and sadly Akiva and

PSYCHE OF THE PAST

In this week's Haftorah the prophet Yirmiyahu reprimands his people shortly before the Babylonian exile in the name of HaShem. In the form of paraphrasing "How did you forsake Me to replace Me with pagan gods. Has any nation forsaken their native god in exchange for a god that is foreign to them? Their gods are helpless and hopeless and yet those nations never forsake them. You, on the other hand, have Me as your G.D, I have taken you from Egypt and given you the Land of Israel. I have taken care of you and provided all your needs...how you adopt foreign gods for yourself? "

The prophet's reprimand is truly startling. How do we understand the psyche of our ancestors? What were they thinking? The Talmud teaches us that in the period of the first Beis Hamikdosh the drive and passion for idolatry was beyond our comprehension. That must certainly be factored into the equation if we can hope to understand their actions. Nevertheless, after factoring that in, how do we make sense out of their rejection of HaShem? What is the answer to the prophet's startling question?

The Torah instructs us how to deal with a prophet who is an established prophet and tells the people to commit idolatry. Even though he has been established by the Jewish court as a genuine prophet and we must listen to whatever he tells in the Name of HaShem, nevertheless, when he tells us to serve idols we must put him to death. In effect, the Torah is telling us that HaShem will never deliver such a prophecy and the prophet is lying and should therefore be put to death.

The Torah then presents the obvious question; why does HaShem allow this

his wife needed to get divorced. After a while, both Akiva and Shira remarried.

One day Akiva was in shul and realized that the paroches said that it was donated by him and his ex-wife.

He was no longer married to Shira, and it was embarrassing to him to have his ex-wife's name next to his.

He asked the gabbai if they might be able to remove his ex-wife's name from the paroches.

"How can you do that?" the gabbai pushed back. "When you added her name, you gave her that zechus. How can you take that away from her?" But Akiva argued that he paid for the paroches, and he didn't want his ex-wife's name on it anymore. "I only added her name to it because I was married to her. I am no longer married to her, so I do not want it to be on anymore".

The gabbai was unsure what to do and brought this question to Rav Elyashiv.

What do you think? Can Akiva say that he only added her name to it, assuming he was married to her? Or do we say that once he gave her the zechus, he can't take it back, just like one can't take back a present that he gives?

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prophet to say this prophecy if He did not order him to say it? The Torah answers that HaShem is allowing this prophecy to be said to test us if we love HaShem with all our heart.

Behold! If we would truly love Him with every fiber of our self, we could never forsake HaShem. As compelling an argument could be made to forsake HaShem, namely, having a completely bonafide prophet telling us in HaShem's Name to worship idolatry we could never accept that prophecy.

As powerful as the yeitzer hara for idolatry was, and it was truly strong, nevertheless for the one who loved HaShem he could never reject Him. Consider any yeitzer hara; does it have the power to override the love one has for their child?

If this insight is accurate the implication is that our exile came about from a shortcoming in our love of HaShem.

As I am now in the Land of Israel for over a week I have come to see the incredible love HaShem showers upon us. One needs only to tour our beautiful Land and keep it in context that for 2000 years we were sent away from this Land. We were sent to the furthest corners of the civilized world. We lived amongst our worst enemies. For any rational thinking person there was no hope for us to ever return home. And now after our most devastating loss, less than 80 years ago, He brought us home. He allowed us to develop His Land. He is allowing us to build an infrastructure that will be able to handle transit for millions of people in Yerushalayim! Travel through to this beautiful Land and look at what He continues to give us. The growth and progress filling the mountaintops surrounding Yerushalayim is endless.

As we move into the greater levels of mourning with the beginning of the month of Av let us discover the endless expressions of love HaShem is displaying to His people, perhaps we can be touched to feel a reciprocal love towards HaShem. As we allow that inspiration to carry us to higher levels perhaps we can then harness it to greater levels of commitment and finally overturn the damage that was done by the diminished love of our ancestors.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE RED-LIPPED BATFISH

Humans wear lipstick to look pretty and attractive to each other. But have you ever seen a fish with lipstick?

Please meet the red-lipped batfish. It is called that because of its unusual bright, almost fluorescent, red lips that look just like it is wearing heavy layers of red lipstick. Is there a makeup artist down there? Some have joked that it looks like a child who got into her mother's makeup drawer.

Let's look at this fascinating fish a bit closer as it has several very unique features.

The red-lipped batfish reaches up to 16 inches in length. It is completely unique to the Galapagos Islands, and it is found nowhere else. The Galapagos islands are to the west of Ecuador and Peru. The red-lipped batfish is a bottom dweller and is usually found within the sandy bottom of reefs or on the ocean floor. It can be found at depths of 10–250 ft in the Pacific Ocean around Galapagos, or around the edges of coral reefs up to about 400 ft deep. Interestingly the red-lipped batfish's scientific name is *Ogcocephalus darwini*. Why Darwini? It is named after the scientist Charles Darwin who derived his theories based on his work in the Galapagos.

The body color of the red-lipped batfish is light brown and greyish on its back, with a white stomach. On the top side, there is usually a dark brown stripe made of

brown dots, starting at the head and going down the back to the tail. The snout and horn of the red-lipped batfish are a brownish color. Despite its otherwise relative drab coloring, its lips are almost fluorescent red.

The red-lipped batfish has another unique trait. Although it is capable of swimming along the seabed in search of food, it prefers to use its fins like legs. These 'legs' are used to walk and perch on while it surveys its surroundings.

Like many deep sea fish, red-lipped batfish are voracious carnivores. It is a piscivore (eats fish) and insectivore, mainly feeding on other small fish and small crustaceans like shrimps, mollusks, crabs, and worms. Because it is a voracious carnivore, It also has another unique trait. You might notice a sizeable thin protrusion from its head. This structure is a fleshy appendage known as an illicium. This is employed like a fishing rod to lure prey in. The illicium contains a chemical-emitting lure that helps it attract the small fish and invertebrates on which it feeds. The red-lipped batfish has no known predators.

So let's discuss the proverbial elephant in the room. Why does this fish need such bright red lips? Scientists are not entirely sure. Some marine biologists believe that the bright red lips of the red-lipped batfish are used to help attract mates. Not unlike people.

INCREDIBLE EMPATHY

A talmid (student) of Rabbi Dovid Trenk was trying to get a child into school, but it was proving difficult. After several tries, he learned why the administration was hesitant to accept the young boy. They had learned that the father sometimes wore blue jeans, a look they associated with a different approach than the one they were trying to imbue in their talmidim. They were kind, but firm, and suggested that he "apply to a school more in line with his lifestyle." The father felt badly, and he shared his anguish with his rebbi, Rabbi Trenk.

A few minutes later, Rabbi Trenk stood at this talmid's door, carrying an envelope. Inside was a picture, an old black and white shot of a teenage boy with a big smile. It took the host a moment to realize what he was looking at. - "It's Dave Trenk, age seventeen," said Rabbi Trenk proudly, "in jeans, he's wearing jeans, do you see?" And then Rabbi Trenk turned and he was gone, because while he couldn't get the boy into the school they had wanted, he could put things in perspective and give them a reason to smile and feel good about themselves.



A young Lakewood father passed away suddenly, and the levayah (funeral) was painful and heart-wrenching. Speaker after speaker addressed the son of the niftar, who was a struggling teenager, telling him how he would have to rise up to the occasion and continue in his father's way.

Without being asked, Rabbi Trenk jumped up after one of the maspidim and gave a derashoh of his own. "The niftar had a zechus, what a special young man he left over; what a great boy, I know how he learns, how he davens. His father was so proud of him and he is so proud of him and he will be so proud of him."

Rabbi Trenk hugged the new orphan and sat down, his message complete.

(From Just Love Them, The Life and Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Trenk, By Rabbi Yisroel Besser, Published By Artscroll Mesorah)

Pictured: Top three pictures, Rabbi Trenk as a young man. Second from bottom, Rabbi Trenk and Rav Shragie Neuberger talking with Rav Yaackov Ruderman.



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the books, Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered that the Jewish publisher should pay once again for the expedited air shipping. Regarding the issue of what the seforim store owner should do with the books, Rav Berkowitz said that they should be discarded and not sold to another bookstore.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in memory of

Natella bas Yerofey

By Lev and Olga Kreymer

