



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE VENDING MACHINE

By Rabbi Paysach Diskind

In Vebaarev Na IV page 365 the following Din Torah was presented..

Reuven, a young entrepreneur, started a vending machine business. He noticed that there was no such machine at a certain Tziyun (gravesite) of a great tzadik to which thousands of people flock annually on the yahrzeit of this tzadik. He set up three machines that dispense snacks and drinks. As the yahrzeit approached, Reuven went out to the tziyun to fill his machines. When he arrived he saw a large vending machine next to his that was loaded with snacks. Evidently, he had a competitor. Naturally, Reuven was incensed at the chutzpa of the owner of the new machine.



EMUNAH; USE IT OR LOSE IT

In Parsha Chukas when the Bnei Yisroel were punished with snakes biting the people, HaShem told Moshe to make a copper snake and place it on a banner. The Mishna in Rosh Hashanah explains that the point of this banner was to direct the people's attention Heavenward and subject themselves to HaShem and implore HaShem's recovery from their snake bites. When this was done the people recovered. Rashi (in Pesachim 56a) explains that this snake had medicinal power to actually cure ailments. It was for this reason that King Chezkiyahu ground it down. He saw that the people were no longer turning to HaShem in their time of need and turned instead to the copper snake.

The Sfas Emes therefore asks what was the point of creating a copper snake which had medicinal power if the curing power came from their turning their attention Heavenward and not from the copper snake?

The Sfas Emes draws explains that this event occurred at the end of their 40 trek through the desert. The first generation had already died out and this generation was preparing to enter the Land. In this new Land, there was going to be a new way of life that had to be learned. So long as they lived in the desert eating the Manna from Shamayim, drinking water from the Rock and covered by the miraculous Clouds of Glory they understood that they must constantly look Heavenward for their sustenance. However, all that was going to change with their entry to the Land. They were going to cultivate their land, till their soil, plant their seeds, harvest their produce, mill their grain, knead their dough, bake their bread and so on. In their new environment there was a

He called the number on the new machine but there was no answer. There was not even a voicemail on which to leave a message.

The day after the yahrzeit the competitor came out to collect his sales anticipating a large amount of cash. However, when he arrived and opened his machine, it was still loaded with snacks. He checked the machine and noticed that on the slot where the money is supposed to be placed there was an "Out of Order" sign.

After doing his homework and checking the security cameras he realized that our friend Reuven was the culprit. He immediately contacted Reuven and argued that he is responsible to pay the lost earnings. Reuven, however, argued that since he placed his machines at the location first, the competitor had no right to place his machine there. Furthermore, Reuven argued that he was only a grama, he did not cause direct damage, he only placed a simple note on the machine.

Was the competitor wrong for placing his machine next to Reuven's?
 Was Reuven justified in protecting his turf?
 Does Reuven need to reimburse his competitor for any losses?



No matter what is going on in my life, no matter how bad things seem, I can always find something to be grateful for, if I really try hard.



grave danger that they would no longer turn to HaShem for their sustenance since they took care of everything on their own.

It was for this purpose that HaShem instructed Moshe to create a copper snake with medicinal power to teach and to train the people that even when the source of one's cure comes from natural causes, one must still turn Heavenward for HaShem's assistance.

Emunah is the lifeblood of our people. Only with emunah are we able to maintain our close connection to HaShem. To have emunah is to have an awareness that HaShem is constantly with us. We behave differently, we speak differently and we even think differently when we maintain a heightened level of emunah.

The legs of a patient who is laid up in bed for a month atro-

phy and he will need to learn how to walk again. The Chazon Ish writes that emunah is just like those muscles. We need to constantly use our emunah. If we do not use it, it will atrophy.

So how does one develop and maintain their emunah? By using it on a regular basis. He suggests an example, if one needs a pair of shoes he should turn to HaShem and request, "HaShem, I need a pair of shoes." Once he expresses his request from HaShem, he should go out and buy the shoes he needs. Once he gets the shoes he should express his appreciation "I thank you HaShem for these shoes." Initially, it may sound strange. However, if we give this consideration we will realize that it is absolutely accurate. HaShem does provide us with our biggest needs to our smallest needs. If we practice this habit we will embed within us a genuine sense that HaShem is always with us and that when things do not work out it is because HaShem did not want us to have it. We will discover how much calmer we will be in accepting unexpected changes. The notion that HaShem is always with us will become a natural understanding for us. It will become part of our worldview. This is the accurate Jewish worldview!

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

BIRDS OF BALTIMORE: THE AMERICAN ROBIN

Two weeks ago, we learned about the Mockingbird, one of the birds of Baltimore. Let's now learn about another fascinating Baltimore bird, the Robin.

The American robin is one of the most beloved and popular birds in America. This is true for a variety of the following fascinating reasons.

Symbol of spring: The American Robin is often regarded as a harbinger of spring. Their migration patterns mean that they often arrive in their summer breeding grounds at the end of winter, so seeing a robin is often associated with the arrival of warmer weather. It is one of the earliest bird species to lay its eggs, beginning to breed shortly after returning to its summer range from its winter range. Their song period is from late February or early March to late July or early August; some birds, particularly in the east, sing occasionally into September or later.

Familiarity: Robins are common across North America and can be found in a wide variety of habitats, including forests, parks, gardens, and suburban and urban areas. This means that many people grow up seeing robins regularly, which fosters a sense of familiarity and affection. In fact, according to the Partners in Flight database (2019), the American robin is the most abundant landbird in North America (with 370,000,000 individuals).

Distinctive appearance: With their bright red or orange bellies, robins are easy to identify and appreciate, even for people who aren't bird enthusiasts. The American robin has a brown back and a reddish-orange breast, varying from a rich red maroon to peachy orange. The bill is mainly yellow with a variably dark tip. The red belly of an American Robin is not only for show. It also serves a functional purpose in attracting mates. Birds with brighter bellies are often more successful in finding a mate. Like most other migratory birds, robins don't maintain pair bonds and often take on new mates each spring. Females tend to be duller in color than males, with a brown tint to the head, brown upperparts, and less-bright underparts. Here is an interesting sidenote: Some Robins are albinos. Partial albinism is relatively common in American Robins, where the bird has some white feathers in places where they are usually colored. Full albinos are rare but do occur.

Song: The American Robin has a beautiful and melodious song, which is often one of the first bird songs heard at dawn and the last at dusk. You may be familiar with their song. Their song has been described as a carol, saying "cheer up, cheer up, cheerily". The cheerfulness of their song further endears them to people. They usually sing from a high perch in a tree. The male American robin, as with many thrushes, has a complex and almost continuous song. It is commonly described as a cheery carol, made up of discrete units, often repeated, and spliced together into a string with brief pauses in between. The song varies regionally, and its style varies by the time of day. The American

robin also sings when storms approach and again when storms have passed. In modern times, urbanization has changed these birds' behavior. Bright lights are making city robins sing their morning songs much before the crack of dawn, and their songs are becoming more high-pitched to overcome the din of traffic.

Accessibility and friendliness: Robins are friendly around people and are known for their relative fearlessness around humans. Robins seem to like people and will even follow gardeners around. Some robins will even accept food by hand too. They often build their nests close to, or even on, human homes, which allows people to observe them up close, enhancing their appeal. The American robin does not shy away from nesting close to human habitations. The nest is most commonly located 5 - 15 ft above the ground in a dense bush or in a fork between two tree branches, and is built by the female alone. The way they make their nest is fascinating. They create a cup-shaped structure, using grass and twigs, then line it with mud to strengthen it, and finally, use soft grass or other plant fibers for the inner lining.

Robins help us in the following way: American Robins play a significant role in controlling pest populations. A single robin can eat up to 14 feet of earthworms in a day, and they also consume many insects, making them natural pest controllers. Robins are skilled hunters. In addition to hunting visually, they also have the ability to hunt by hearing. Experiments have discovered that they can find earthworms underground by simply using their listening skills. It typically will take several short hops and then cock its head left, right or forward to detect movement of its prey.

American Robins mostly eat insects and worms in their spring and summer diets, and eat fruits in the fall and winter. Sometimes, Robins can get drunk when they eat fermented berries. When drunk, the robin may smack another robin for no reason, and then fall ten feet to the ground. When tipsy, it may also perch at an odd angle, its eyes are closed, then flutter its eyes, straighten up, then close its eyes and slowly tilt to the other side.

American Robins are known to migrate at night. They do this in flocks and can travel an average of 100 miles per night. However, not all robins migrate - some populations stay in a single area year-round if food sources remain abundant. Robins that do migrate can cover a lot of ground: Records show that some birds have traveled up to 3,000 miles, from Iowa to Alaska, during their spring migration. Males arrive first: During migration season, male American Robins usually arrive at the breeding grounds before the females. They do this to establish and defend territories before the females arrive.

The longest known lifespan of an American robin in the wild is 14 years; the average lifespan is about 2 years.

BEARD, BEARD, WHERE IS YOUR JEW?

Elimelech Gavriel Tress, widely known as Mike Tress, was a prominent Jewish American leader and a revered figure within Agudath Israel of America. Born in the United States in 1909 to immigrant parents, Mike dedicated his life to the preservation of Jewish heritage and the upliftment of his community. Despite not having formal rabbinical training, his impactful work earned him the esteemed title of "Reb Elimelech" and the endearing nickname "Mike."

In his early years, Mike recognized the urgent need to counteract assimilation and strengthen Jewish identity, especially during the tumultuous era surrounding the Second World War. As a visionary leader, he founded various youth organizations, providing a vital platform for young Jewish individuals to connect with their roots and embrace their cultural heritage.

Mike's most notable role came as the national president of Agudath Israel of America, a position he held from the 1940s until his untimely passing on July 9, 1967. Under his inspiring leadership, Agudath Israel of America flourished and became one of the most influential political, communal, and cultural representations of Orthodoxy in the United States.

During his tenure as president, Mike selflessly dedicated his resources to finance Agudath Israel's activities and support Jews fleeing Europe during the horrors of the Holocaust. He abandoned his successful career as a businessman, utilizing his personal fortune to aid those in desperate need. (Pictured, bottom, Mike in Europe.) Through his tireless efforts and engagement, Mike played a pivotal role in rescuing numerous European Jews, offering them a lifeline during one of humanity's darkest chapters.

The Satmar Rebbe (Pictured, top) was very fond of Reb Elimelech "Mike" Tress. A couple of his Chasidim complained to him once that they didn't understand why the Rebbe was so close to Mr. Tress, considering that he didn't have a beard.

"After 120 years", began the Rebbe with a smile, when Mike will appear before the Heavenly Court they will ask him 'Yid Yid, where is your beard?' However when it will be your turn the Court will say 'Beard, Beard, where is your Jew?'"

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the baby gift, Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered, "It would seem to me that the friend (the messenger) is responsible to return the value of the gift to Shoshana to be returned to the other semi-nary girls. They can then decide what they want to do. Shoshana does not have the authority to decide what to do with their money."

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of Nossie Munk z'l
נתן שלום בן יהודה הכהן ז"ל
Beloved son, beloved husband, beloved father and beloved brother

By Mrs. Suzette Munk and family
Nossie was totally dedicated to the needs of klal Yisroel



K&F
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
406 W. Pennsylvania Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204

Brad E. Kauffman Esquire and Kauffman and Forman P.A.
specializing in corporate and construction law,
estates, wills and trusts and business litigation.

