

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE FILIPINO CHEF

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, Yosef provides food for the shevatim, as well as for much of civilization. This leads us to the following true story.

Roni was the owner of an old age home in Israel. He was looking for a cook to prepare meals in his kitchen. One day, he saw an advertisement from a job placement agency, which stated they represented non-Jewish workers from outside of Israel who were familiar with all Jewish laws of managing a house and were available for hire.

Roni thought this was a perfect opportunity. He called the agency, and the agency owner, Elad, said they had a certain Filipino worker who was a renowned chef, an expert, and would be great for the role as the cook in the old age home. Thinking this was a great opportunity, Roni agreed to hire the Filipino worker, named Troy, for the year.

The worker, Troy, arrived, and he was indeed a great cook. The meals were amazing; everyone loved them. He was familiar with many halachos of Shabbos and was really useful. However,



THE ROOTS OF A COMMUNITY

As heard from Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky

The stories discussed in the Torah all relate directly to the formation of and the instruction to the people of Israel. The Torah does not record stories for any other purposes. With this in mind we must understand the significance of the last chapter of our Parsha.

The Torah tells how during the seven years of abundance Yosef collected tremendous amounts of produce to store for the seven years of severe famine. Within the first year of famine all the silver in Egypt and Canaan was brought to Yosef in exchange for food which had become scarce. Yosef then turned the silver to Pharaoh's coffers. In the second year of the famine when there was simply no money left to purchase food the people gave their livestock to Pharaoh. When there was absolutely nothing left except their land, they offered their entire existence to Pharaoh in exchange for their long-term support from Pharaoh. In other words the entire population accepted upon themselves to become slaves to Pharaoh and give their land to Pharaoh in exchange for his continued support through the rest of the years of the famine. Yosef then instituted a tax which required every person in Egypt to return 20% of all produce to Pharaoh.

There was however, one exception. The religious ministers of the society were provided support from Pharaoh. Since the ministers never needed to pay anything for their food they did not yield their fields or their autonomy to Pharaoh. As a result they were not enslaved to Pharaoh nor were they obligated to pay the 20% tax. During Yosef's tenure he confirmed the law of governmental support of all ministers as an immutable law within the laws of Egypt.

The question begs, why is the Torah sharing with us the details of Yosef's management of the famine? What lesson is this teaching us?

In this short paragraph the Torah is telling how the slavery of our people began and how

er, one day, after two weeks, Roni quietly watched Troy, the Filipino chef, prepare the food. To his astonishment, he saw the chef preparing a large pot of chicken, then he took a stick of butter, unwrapped it, and dropped the stick of butter into the chicken. Roni said, "What are you doing? Why are you putting that in?" Troy smiled and said, "Because butter makes it taste really good."

"So what? It's not kosher," Roni replied.

The Filipino man said, "What do you mean? It's kosher. The Torah says you can't have meat and milk. Butter is not milk."

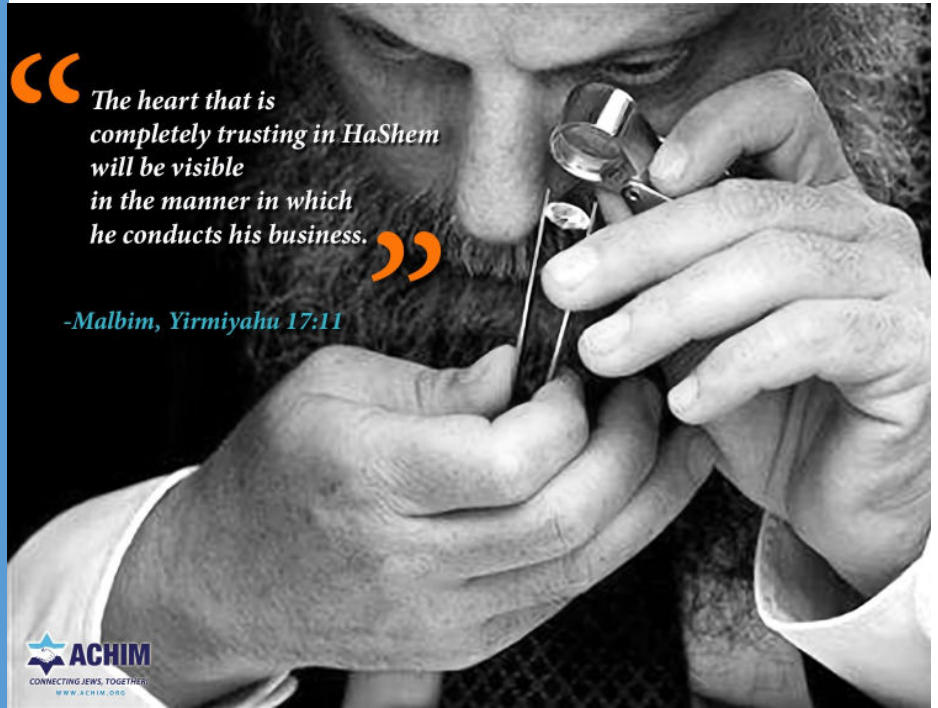
Roni realized that this person didn't really know or understand that it wasn't just about milk but all dairy, and it was clear that while he knew many halachos, he wasn't familiar with this one. He had made all the food and the pots treif, and he admitted that he had served this recipe before and had served treif in the past.

Roni was very upset and called the job agency. He told Elad, "I know I agreed to hire him for a year, but look what he did. He cooked treif for my people. So now, not only am I not going to hire him for the rest of the year, but I would also like a refund for the past two weeks."

But Elad didn't agree. "What do you think? Do you think he is a Torah scholar? He's familiar with the basic halachos, but that doesn't mean you could allow him to work unsupervised. What were you thinking without having someone watch him cook? He knew basic laws. So it's really your responsibility, and you are already committed for the rest of the year. Simply teach him about butter and make sure there's some oversight, and then you have him for the rest of the year."

Roni wanted his money back and wanted to back out of the agreement. Elad felt that he was not entitled to get his money back. What do you think? Was this considered a Mekach Taus, a faulty arrangement, or was it not, and does Roni deserve to get his money back?

See Upiryo Matok Vayikra page 163



Yosef built in the guarantee for our survival.

Once we know how all the Egyptians surrendered their personal autonomy to Pharaoh in exchange for continued support, we can begin to understand how our slavery began.

Once Yaakov died, we find that Yosef is no longer the viceroy of the land. He must beg by the members of Pharaoh's household to speak to Pharaoh on his behalf to bury his father in Canaan. Behold! He no longer had permission to take his father's body back to Canaan without getting permission.

Once Yaakov died the five remaining years of famine returned. Who will provide for Yosef's family? Yosef is already in no significant position of power. Those who are in power argued why should the Jews receive portions of food? What have they contributed to Egypt? They paid nothing at all. Quite the contrary, they came as guests with their livestock to Egypt and now they should expect free handouts?! While everybody else relinquished their land and autonomy the Jews did nothing. Let them become indentured to the native Egyptians.

Yosef anticipated this happening and was concerned that if our entire nation became indentured how would it survive the generations of slavery yet to come? What will become of our people living in this decadent society for so long?

To this end Yosef instituted the immutable law that the ministers of the nation receive complete support from Pharaoh. As a result of Yosef's immutable law, the tribe of Levi was exempt from becoming indentured. They had no need to give anything for their support; they were the ministers.

Yosef understood that the only path for our people's survival is through the walls of institutions of Torah learning. Levi's role was to create those walls of Torah study. Through their Yeshivos the connection our people had with HaShem remained strong and vibrant.

This final chapter of our Parsha teaches us the critical importance for every community to have a Torah center from which Torah study can flourish.

Have a wonderful Shabbos

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE GIANT JACKFRUIT

We know that when the Meraglim went into Eretz Yisrael, they brought back colossal fruit. A cluster of grapes needed eight people to carry it, and figs were so huge that only one could be carried. Do we have any fruit today that can give us the idea of a colossal fruit, or a colossal fig? Yes, please meet the giant Jackfruit.

The jackfruit, a colossal and unique tropical fruit, is the largest tree-borne fruit in the world. Originating from South Asia, particularly in countries like India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, this fruit captivates with its massive size, distinct flavor, and rich history. Let's explore the fascinating aspects of jackfruit that make it a remarkable culinary and nutritional wonder.

The Largest Tree-Borne Fruit. Jackfruit sets a record with its astonishing size. It can weigh up to 120 pounds and reach lengths of 3 feet, making it the largest fruit that grows on trees. This alone makes the jackfruit a marvel of nature.

A Member of the Fig Family. Would you believe that the jackfruit is actually a member of the fig family? Despite its unique appearance, jackfruit is closely related to figs and mulberries, belonging to the Moraceae family.

Packed with Nutrients. Jackfruit is not just large in size but also in nutritional value. It's a rich source of essential vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin C, Vitamin A, potassium, and dietary fiber. Its health benefits include anti-inflammatory and potentially anti-diabetic properties. This makes it an excellent choice for a healthy diet.

Culinary Flexibility. The fleshy texture of jackfruit allows it to be a versatile ingredient in both sweet and savory dishes. It's used in a variety of recipes, from curries and tacos to ice creams and desserts.

Unique Flavor Profile. Ripe jackfruit offers a unique taste and aroma. Its flavor is a blend of pineapple, mango, and banana, while its aroma is often described as a mix of bubblegum and fruity fragrance.

An Ancient Fruit. Jackfruit has a rich history, with evidence of its cultivation in India dating back more than 5000 years. It has since spread globally, courtesy of traders and explorers.

Sustainable and Eco-Friendly. As a crop, jackfruit is quite sustainable, as it requires minimal water and minimal pesticides.

The "Miracle Fruit". In many cultures, jackfruit is revered as "the miracle fruit" due to its large size and ability to provide sustenance. It is considered a key player in combating hunger and malnutrition in tropical areas.

Edible and Nutritious Seeds. The seeds of the jackfruit are also edible and nutritious. They can be boiled, roasted, or ground into flour, offering a rich source of protein and other nutrients.

Longevity of Jackfruit Trees. Jackfruit trees are known for their longevity, living up to 100 years. This ensures a sustainable and long-term source of fruit.

Fruit Production. A mature jackfruit tree is an abundant provider. With the capacity to produce around 200 fruits per year, and older trees yielding up to 500 fruits annually. It is therefore a significant source of sustenance in the regions where it's grown.

Uses in Traditional Medicine. In Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine, the jackfruit tree, including its bark and roots, is used for treating various ailments such as diarrhea, fever, and skin diseases.

A Plant-Based Meat Alternative. In recent years, jackfruit has gained popularity as a plant-based meat substitute. Its fibrous texture makes it an ideal alternative for pulled beef or shredded chicken in vegan and vegetarian dishes.

Composition and Structure. The structure of a jackfruit is complex and fascinating. It's a multiple fruit, formed from the fusion of hundreds to thousands of individual flowers, making it as intriguing botanically as it is nutritionally.

Tree Characteristics. The jackfruit tree itself is a majestic sight to behold, with a height reaching up to 63 feet with a robust trunk. Its reddish-brown bark, milky sap, and large, glossy leaves add to its distinct appearance.

Final Fun Fact: The largest recorded jackfruit weighed a staggering 324 pounds. I bet if you carried that, you could not carry much more!

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

EVERY JEW IS A BEN MELECH

Rav Aharon Schechter, the late Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Chaim Berlin personified the idea of the greatness of the human being, and how every Jew is a Ben Melech, the child of the King of the Universe. When one looked at Rav Aharon Schechter, with his beaming face, and regal stature, surrounded by an entourage of students, one truly sensed that they were in the presence of modern-day royalty.

Once at a chassunah, there was a huge crowd and the Rosh HaYeshiva could not get through to the front to dance with the chosson. A few bachurim started asking the crowd to move to let the Rosh Yeshiva through. When one bachur put his hands on one of the people blocking the way to gently move him, the Rosh Yeshiva exclaimed, "Not with the hands! Not with the hands!!" Everything had to be done with malchus, and a melech doesn't push people.

Rav Aharon Schechter taught there is a kavod ho'odom in wearing shoes and it is a pechisus to walk around without shoes. Even in the airport, the regal Rosh Yeshiva was makpid not to take off his shoes at the security checkpoints. Once, when a security guard demanded that he remove his shoes in order to pass through security, the Rosh Yeshiva asked why. The security guard responded that they are nervous that someone may have explosive powder in his shoes. The Rosh Yeshiva responded, "Maybe I have explosive powder in my pants pockets, but you still let me keep my pants on!" After some more back and forth, the security guard let the Rosh Yeshiva through without taking off his shoes.

Retold By Rabbi Aharon Dovid Singer



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the sefer that was faxed and wasted all the person's paper and ink, Rabbi Zilberstein writes that the owner of the fax machine does have the right to demand compensation for the paper and ink. However, for the sake of honoring the Torah, it would be best if he did not consider it as damage. It would be best for him, to see it as an opportunity and that he received a free Torah sefer. So, while he has the right to demand compensation, it would be best if he does not insist on this right.

This week's Table Talk is sponsored by the Daniel and Copeland families l'ilui nishmos
Yitzchak Yisrael ben Rafael Noach Yosef
and
Yisrael ben Yom Tov Lipman,
whose yahrzeits were this week on 7 Teves.



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