



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE BANK HEIST

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In the blessings to Binyamin, in this week's parsha, Yaakov says that Binyamin is a "Grabbing Wolf." This is a reference to different periods in the history of the tribe of Binyamin including the "grabbing" of spoils in Shaul Hemelech's time, and in the times of Mordechai and Esther. This leads us to the following true story.

Ari, who lived in Israel, went to the bakery on Friday afternoon and purchased two large cheesecakes. The bakery wrapped the cheesecakes in paper, making them look like two rectangular bars.

After Ari left the bakery, his next errand was to stop at the bank. He entered the bank carrying his cakes. Because there was a long line at the bank, he placed the cakes on a nearby shelf, keeping his hands over them.



BROTHERS HAVE A COMMON FATHER

There are two Hebrew words which on the surface seem synonymous but have distinctly different meanings. Both **הקבצו** and **האספו** indicate the notion of gathering together. The Malbim explains the distinction as follows. The former refers to a single unit that is not in its proper location. The meaning of it is to 'gather in' or to bring that unit into its proper place. The latter refers to gathering dispersed individuals to join as one unit. It should be translated as to 'gather together'.

Before Yaakov blesses his sons he calls them together. "Gather yourselves in and I will tell you what will occur at the end of days. Gather together and listen to Yisrael, your father." In the first verse Yaakov uses the former and in the second verse Yaakov uses the latter. The usage of these two words seems to have been confused. If Yaakov's sons are not united then he should first instruct them to 'gather together' and then instruct them to 'gather in'. If they are already united then for what reason does Yaakov instruct them to gather together?

Our Sages teach us that when Yaakov attempted to tell his sons what will occur at the end of days, HaShem withdrew Yaakov's prophetic vision and he had nothing to tell his sons. When that happened Yaakov understood that there must be some fracture between the brothers and they would not be worthy of the final redemption. He therefore instructed them to gather together and to listen to him, their common father. Therefore, in the first verse Yaakov thought that they were united together. The only thing they needed to do was to come close to Yaakov, hence he told them to gather in. When his prophetic vision alluded him and he thought his sons were divided he told them to 'gather together'.

At that bank, there were two crooks looking for an opportunity. They saw Ari with these paper-wrapped items and were certain they were large bundles of cash, especially since Ari was guarding them carefully.

One of the crooks approached Ari, holding a small bundle of cash, and said, "Excuse me, sir, I'm really bad at math. I have all these denominations—20s, 5s, and 10s—and I keep messing up the total for my deposit. Could you please help me count this cash?" Ari, happy to help, took the cash and began to count. It amounted to 1,000 shekels. Meanwhile, as Ari was counting the money, the other crook grabbed the unguarded cheesecakes and both fled on a motorcycle, disappearing into the city.

Ari lost his cheesecakes but was left holding the bundle of 1,000 shekels in cash. He realized he had been swindled but chuckled when he thought of the reaction the crooks would have when they realized they stole his cheesecakes and left 1,000 shekels in their place. Ari wondered what to do with the cash. Should he try to find the robbers? Could he keep the money? Did he have to return it to the bank? Did he have to donate it to public charity?

Ari wanted to know if he had the right to keep the cash or if he had to do something else with it. What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Vayikra 56



At this point all 12 sons recited in unison "Shema Yisrael, HaShem Elokeinu HaShem Echod". With complete conviction every one of his sons proclaimed together that they accept upon themselves the complete and unequivocal Sovereignty of HaShem upon themselves. With that assurance their unity is guaranteed. To the extent that all members of our people recognize HaShem as their absolute Sovereign, to that extent there will be unity among us and we will be worthy of our final redemption.

Just recently I heard the following story from Reb Aaron Lopiansky. Many years ago when Reb Aaron Lopiansky was flying to Israel he found himself sitting next to a member of a Christian brotherhood group. This group resembles the Amish in many ways. They live in upstate New York and have a very interesting community structure. The members of this group live in small communities of about 400 people each. Each community shares the work and the income. Everything is

shared, somewhat like a kibbutz. Reb Aaron's traveling neighbor told him that his father was the head of one such community and was asked to advise a kibbutz in Israel. The kibbutzniks wanted advice on how to make their kibbutz a more cohesive and unified group. He asked the kibbutzniks what they believe in. When they responded that they are not religious and do not have any belief he remarked "If you do not have a common father how can you be brothers?"

The wisdom of this insight is that even if all members of the kibbutz can unite for the common cause of the kibbutz, nevertheless, they are not inherently united. They are only united so long as each member sees how his personal vision or interests gain from the unity. The moment his personal interests and his personal vision direct him to break from the unity, he will certainly do so. If, on the other hand, their unity is because they all share a common belief, a common vision and live to achieve a common goal, then there will be no fracture since they share that common vision.

When every member of our people sees themselves as a son and daughter of our common Father our unity is unbreakable. May we merit that final redemption soon in our days.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

NERVES AND ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture has intrigued and benefited humanity for centuries. It involves the insertion of thin needles into the body at specific points. Let's explore the world of acupuncture, delving into its historical roots, its place in modern healthcare and scientific research, and how it works.

Acupuncture is believed to have originated in China around 100 BCE, during the time of the Maccabees and the Chashmonaim. It was a period marked by profound philosophical and medical advancements, and acupuncture emerged as a significant therapeutic method. Archaeological evidence from King Liu Sheng's tomb (around 100 BCE) includes gold and silver needles, possibly used for acupuncture. Ancient Chinese texts sometimes linked acupuncture with blood-letting. The focus in acupuncture evolved from puncturing for bloodletting to puncturing specific body points in acupuncture.

From its birthplace in China, acupuncture spread to neighboring regions, reaching Korea in the 6th century, and later Japan. By the 17th century, it had made its way to Europe, eventually crossing into the Americas. By 2017, the global acupuncture market was worth over \$24 billion. Europe led the acupuncture market in 2017, followed by Asia-Pacific and the Americas.

The popularity of acupuncture has seen ups and downs, influenced by various political and scientific factors. In China, its practice was subjected to the changing tides of political ideologies and scientific thought. In fact, acupuncture declined in China in the 18th century due to the rising popularity of prescriptions and medications, and in 1757, a Chinese book declared acupuncture a "lost art."

Acupuncture involves the strategic insertion of fine needles into the skin. Practitioners target specific points believed to be pivotal in managing various health conditions. Acupuncture needles are typically made of stainless steel. Needles are generally single-use to prevent contamination. Needle lengths range from 13 to 130 millimeters. Needles can be manually manipulated by spinning, flicking, or moving up and down. Veterinary acupuncture is even used on animals.

Central to traditional acupuncture are the traditional Chinese medicine concepts of qi (life force), meridians (energy pathways), and specific acupuncture points. The principle of balancing yin (passive) and yang (active) energies is also integral to acupuncture and is considered essential for maintaining health and wellness. To the Chinese, acupuncture was not just a treatment of the body but a way to harmonize the body with the universe. Please note that no scientific evidence supports traditional Chinese medicine concepts like qi, meridians, and acupuncture points. In fact, many practitioners have abandoned traditional concepts like qi and meridians.

Let's now shift to talk about Acupuncture in modern healthcare. Today Acupuncture is commonly used alongside other medical treatments, particularly for pain management. It's seen as a complementary therapy that can enhance the effectiveness of conventional treatments. Government programs like Medicaid and Medicare pay for acupuncture for pain relief. The CDC recommends considering acupuncture for certain kinds of pain, rather than painkillers. Apart from pain relief, acupuncture is employed for a range of conditions, from mental health issues like anxiety to physiological problems like fibromyalgia.

Why exactly does Acupuncture work? To be totally honest, we do

not yet know. Acupuncture's effectiveness from a scientific perspective involves a combination of physiological, neurological, and biochemical explanations. While there is ongoing debate and research in this area, several theories have been proposed to explain why acupuncture might be effective.

Neurological Theory: One of the most widely accepted explanations is that acupuncture stimulates the nervous system. The insertion of needles is believed to trigger the release of neurotransmitters and neurohormones in the brain, affecting both the central and peripheral nervous systems. This can lead to the activation of mechanisms that relieve pain and improve organ function.

Endorphin Release: Acupuncture is thought to stimulate the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. Endorphins are part of the opioid peptide system, which can help reduce pain and induce a feeling of well-being. This is one reason why acupuncture is often used for pain management.

Anti-Inflammatory Effects: Research suggests that acupuncture can reduce inflammation. By stimulating specific points, it may trigger the release of immune-modulatory factors or influence the body's inflammatory responses, thereby reducing inflammation and aiding in the healing process.

Improved Blood Circulation: Acupuncture is believed to enhance blood circulation. Improved circulation can help reduce inflammation, promote tissue healing, and provide relief from pain.

Regulation of Neurotransmitters and Hormones: Acupuncture can influence the regulation of various neurotransmitters and hormones, such as serotonin and dopamine, which play a role in mood regulation, pain, and stress response. This might explain its use in treating conditions like anxiety, depression, and stress.

Gate Control Theory of Pain: This theory suggests that acupuncture works by closing the "gates" to pain signals in the nervous system. The idea is that stimulating nerves closes a neurological "gate" in the spinal cord, preventing painful sensations from reaching the brain.

Impact on the Connective Tissue: Some research proposes that the mechanical action of the acupuncture needle may stimulate the connective tissue around the needle, leading to changes in cellular activities that could contribute to the therapeutic effects.

Placebo Effect: It's important to acknowledge the role of the placebo effect in acupuncture. The patient's belief in the treatment can significantly contribute to the perceived or actual improvement in their condition. However, studies have shown that acupuncture can have effects beyond the placebo effect in certain conditions.

Psychological Impact: The process of receiving acupuncture, which often includes a holistic assessment and a calming environment, can have a positive psychological impact on patients, contributing to their overall well-being.

Thank you Hashem for creating our incredible nervous system, and thank you Hashem for sharing your wisdom with our medical practitioners.

WHY SHOULD SHE HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER DAVENING TO HEAR

The walk from Rav Dovid Feinstein's home to the yeshivah was not a short one, and on Shabbos morning, he tended to walk to the yeshivah alone. A talmid had an especially sensitive family-related shailah, which needed both privacy and time, and he saw the opportunity. He waited outside Reb Dovid's apartment on Shabbos morning and walked with him to the yeshivah, sharing the particulars of the question.

Reb Dovid listened, then answered. When his answer was complete, the talmid kept walking alongside him, but Reb Dovid gently stopped him. "You should go home and tell your wife what we said. Why should she have to wait until after davening to hear?"

(From Reb Dovid, By R' Yisrael Besser, Published By Artscroll Mesorah and Reprinted With Their Permission)



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the Chef who put butter in the chicken, Rabbi Zilberstein writes that it was the fault of the nursing home owner for not supervising the Chef and not the fault of the job agency. Therefore the nursing home owner is not entitled to a refund and not allowed to back out of the deal.

This week's TableTalk is sponsored by Yehuda and Yael Weisbord לעילוי נשמת
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אביבה בת מורינו הרב שמואל יעקב

May her holy Neshama have an aliyah



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