



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



SEFORIM & BROKEN GLASSES

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Mordechai was a yungerman, a kollel rabbi who loved to learn. He would often learn late into the night, long after Ma'ariv.

One day, a wealthy businessman named Aryeh came from chutz la'aretz. He listened to Mordechai's learning, saw how deeply engrossed he was, and how much he loved learning. Aryeh was genuinely moved. He wished he could feel that same sweetness in learning, and he wanted to have a portion in this Torah scholar's learning.

So he went over to him and said, "Shalom aleichem. I'm visiting from chutz la'aretz, and I couldn't help noticing and hearing your learning and the sweetness of it. Here is a check. Any time you need a sefer, please use this money to buy it. I want to sponsor any sefer you'll ever need."

Mordechai was very touched and thanked him profusely. The man left. Mordechai hadn't



ENDURING TRUST

Our Parsha opens with Yaakov leaving home, running away from his vengeful brother. His destination is Uncle Lavan who is a swindler of the highest order. Yaakov's hope is to find his wife at the home of Uncle Lavan. Just before crossing the border of the Land of Israel the sun sets suddenly and because of his fear of traveling at night he chooses to sleep on the road just as the sun sets.

In his sleep he beholds a prophetic vision where he sees HaShem standing over him. HaShem tells Yaakov that He will watch over him until he returns home. Yaakov awakens, recognizing that HaShem communicated to him that He will protect him the entire duration of his life until he will finally return home. Fortified with that boost of support Yaakov begins his journey to Uncle Lavan to find a wife and build a family of twelve sons who will be the progenitors of the Jewish people.

Every moment of living with Uncle Lavan was filled with challenges. Lavan's word was meaningless and was quick to swindle years of work from Yaakov before giving his daughter's hand in marriage. In spite of Lavan's deviousness, Yaakov never compromised his own integrity in dealing with Lavan. After 20 years of this Yaakov understood it was time to return to his parents in the Land of Israel.

From where does Yaakov draw such unswerving strength to remain loyal to his principles and to his integrity? If HaShem communicated with Yaakov con-

gotten his number or any other contact information. When he looked at the check, he was shocked to see that it was for \$10,000.

Shortly afterward, he bought the sefarim he needed. But even after purchasing everything, there was still a large amount of money left, close to \$9,000. Mordechai didn't know what to do with it. He knew the money was designated for sefarim, and he had already bought all the sefarim he needed, so he put the remaining money aside.

About half a year later, Mordechai's glasses broke. He went to the store to get them fixed and was told it would cost a few hundred dollars for his special lenses. Without his glasses, he was unable to learn properly, and he really didn't have the money to cover the cost.

Then it crossed his mind: "I wonder if I could use some of the money that was designated for sefarim to buy glasses. Even though he gave it specifically for sefarim, maybe the purpose behind it was to have a part in my learning. And now I can't learn without my glasses, perhaps I should be able to use that money to buy glasses so that I can continue learning."

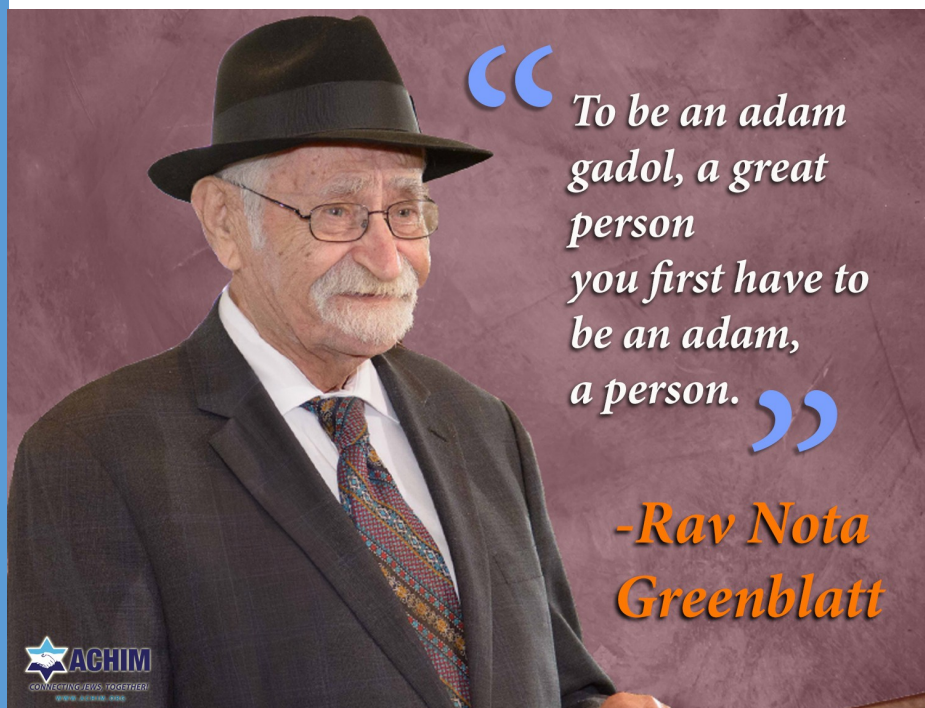
But Mordechai wasn't sure. He didn't want to make exceptions on his own, so he brought the question to Rav Zilberstein.

What do you think?

Is the donor allowed to designate how the money must be used? And if he is, is Mordechai allowed to use money given for sefarim, given for the sake of learning, to buy glasses instead?

See Veharev Na, Volume Four, Hebrew edition, page 475.

MITZVA MEME



“To be an adam gadol, a great person you first have to be an adam, a person.”

-Rav Nota Greenblatt

stantly reminding him and instructing him what to do, it would be understandable. However, Yaakov received no such supportive prophecies. The only communication Yaakov had while living at Uncle Lavan was to confirm his decision to return home. From where did he draw his strength?

That single prophecy he had when he slept on the road to Uncle Lavan is what supported him the entire 20 years. Yaakov needed to be told only once and he trusted HaShem for the subsequent 20 years. Once he knew it, he trusted it.

This life of Yaakov is the microcosm of the latter part of Jewish history. Our Sages teach that Yaakov's life corresponds to the Jewish people's final exile. Starting from the destruction of the second Temple until the arrival of

Moshiach our history runs parallel to the life of Yaakov.

When considering the past 2,000 years of Jewish history whose pages fill the Kinos book of Tisha b'Av, one wonders how we survived all that time? Not once during those 2,000 years did we receive a Divine communication that HaShem is controlling the situation. From where did we get the strength to endure?

If Yaakov's life runs parallel to Jewish history then perhaps it is Yaakov's enduring trust that gives his descendants their enduring trust in the prophecies that were given to us before our current exile began. In the books of our prophets HaShem communicates to us tremendous words of encouragement. Although those words were shared with us 2,500 years ago, they were written and passed down to us for us to draw strength and continue our path until we arrive home.

May HaShem bring alive those prophecies and finally bring us all home soon in our days.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE RASPY RASPBERRY

To most people, a raspberry is just a pretty berry. But to the eye of one who appreciates the genius of Hashem's creation, the common raspberry is a biological masterpiece and a traveler that has conquered the world.

Let's look closer. Have you ever wondered why we spell it "raspberry" but pronounce it "raz-berry"? That silent "P" is a fossil, a remnant of how language evolves over centuries.

Etymologists, the detectives of language, trace the name back to the Old English and Old French words *raspis* or *raspe*, meaning "rough" or "hairy" (like a raspy voice). If you run your fingertip lightly over the surface of a raspberry, you will feel microscopic hairs. If you touch the wood it grows on, you might get snagged by a prickle. It is a "raspy" fruit. It is related to the verb "to rasp," which means to scrape with a rough tool, like a metal file.

However, humans are efficient creatures. Saying "rahspberry" requires an awkward acrobatic feat for our tongues, blending the "sp" and "b" sounds. Over hundreds of years, English speakers naturally smoothed the pronunciation to "raz-berry," dropping the hard stop of the "P" to make the word flow. We changed the sound, but we kept the spelling as a nod to its rough roots.

While the "rough" theory is the most accepted, there is a fascinating alternative. In the 15th century, there was a rose-colored, sweet wine known as *vinum raspeys*, meaning rough wine. It was made not only from grapes but from the rough wood of the grape stems. Some historians believe the berry was named after this wine due to their shared deep red hue and sweet-tart profile.

When you look at a raspberry, you aren't looking at one fruit; you are actually looking at a cluster of dozens of fruits. A single raspberry is composed of 100 to 120 tiny, individual spheres called drupelets. Each one of those little juice-filled beads is a separate fruit with its own seed, and they are all held together by microscopic hairs and natural sugars.

This structure leads to the raspberry's most defining characteristic: the hollow core. When you pick a blackberry, the torus (the receptacle stem) breaks off and stays inside the fruit. But when you pick a raspberry, the drupelets pull away from the torus, leaving that signature hollow cone.

Today, we view raspberries as a delicious treat, but for most of human history, they were viewed as powerful technology. If you opened a medicine cabinet in the Middle Ages, you wouldn't find pills; you would find raspberries.

In medieval Europe, the fruit was used more for medicine and dye than for casual eating. Monks in monasteries would brew syrups from the berries to mask the bitter taste of herbal remedies given to the sick. But the plant itself was the real star. As early as

the 16th century, raspberry leaves were brewed into teas believed to aid in everything from digestion to the pains of childbirth.

To understand the "rasp" of the raspberry, you must understand its family tree. The raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) belongs to the Rosaceae family. This makes it a close cousin to apples, pears, strawberries, and, of course, the rose. This relation explains the armor the plant wears. The "thorns" on a raspberry cane are actually modified hairs, stiffened and sharpened to protect its precious cargo from hungry herbivores.

The raspberry is more than just defensive; it is incredibly resilient. A well-cared-for raspberry plant is not a temporary visitor in your garden. It can live and produce fruit for decades. The roots are perennial, surviving under the frozen ground of winter, while the canes are biennial, growing leaves the first year and fruit the second. A single raspberry bush is a powerhouse. It can produce thousands of berries in a single growing season.

This hardiness allowed the raspberry to travel. Red raspberries originated in Europe and northern Asia, while black raspberries are native to North America. It was the ancient Romans, with their obsession for agriculture, who helped spread the red variety across their empire. Wherever the Roman legions marched, they brought the taste of home, planting raspberries in the corners of Europe where they had previously only grown wild.

In the Victorian era, flowers and fruits were used to send secret messages. In this "Language of Flowers," the raspberry symbolized "sweetness of temper." To give someone a basket of raspberries was to tell them they were kind and gentle. In French aristocratic kitchens before the Revolution, raspberry desserts were the height of fashion, prized for their vivid color and the short, fleeting nature of their growing season.

Today, the raspberry is a global citizen. While it started in the forests of Europe and Asia, it was brought to the Americas by European settlers in the 18th century. Commercial farms sprang up in New York and Pennsylvania in the early 1800s, turning a wild hedgerow treat into a staple of agriculture.

Currently, Russia holds the title of the world's largest producer, growing more raspberries than any other country. But the variety is expanding. We now have golden raspberries (pictured right), a mutation that stops the red pigment from forming. These were once considered rarer and more prestigious than red varieties in Europe, a "fruit of gold" for the wealthy elite.

A raspberry is an aggregate fruit, a cluster of over 100 tiny, individual successes and a survivor that traveled via Roman roads and crossed oceans with settlers.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world.

I PREFER TO SEE A MIKDASH ME'AT BUILT IN ALL ITS GLORY, FULL OF PEOPLE LEARNING TORAH

When Yeshivat Porat Yosef was being built in the Old City, near the home of Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl, much thought and discussion went into the planning. Naturally, among the many considerations, there was one particular weighty concern: what the neighbors would say.

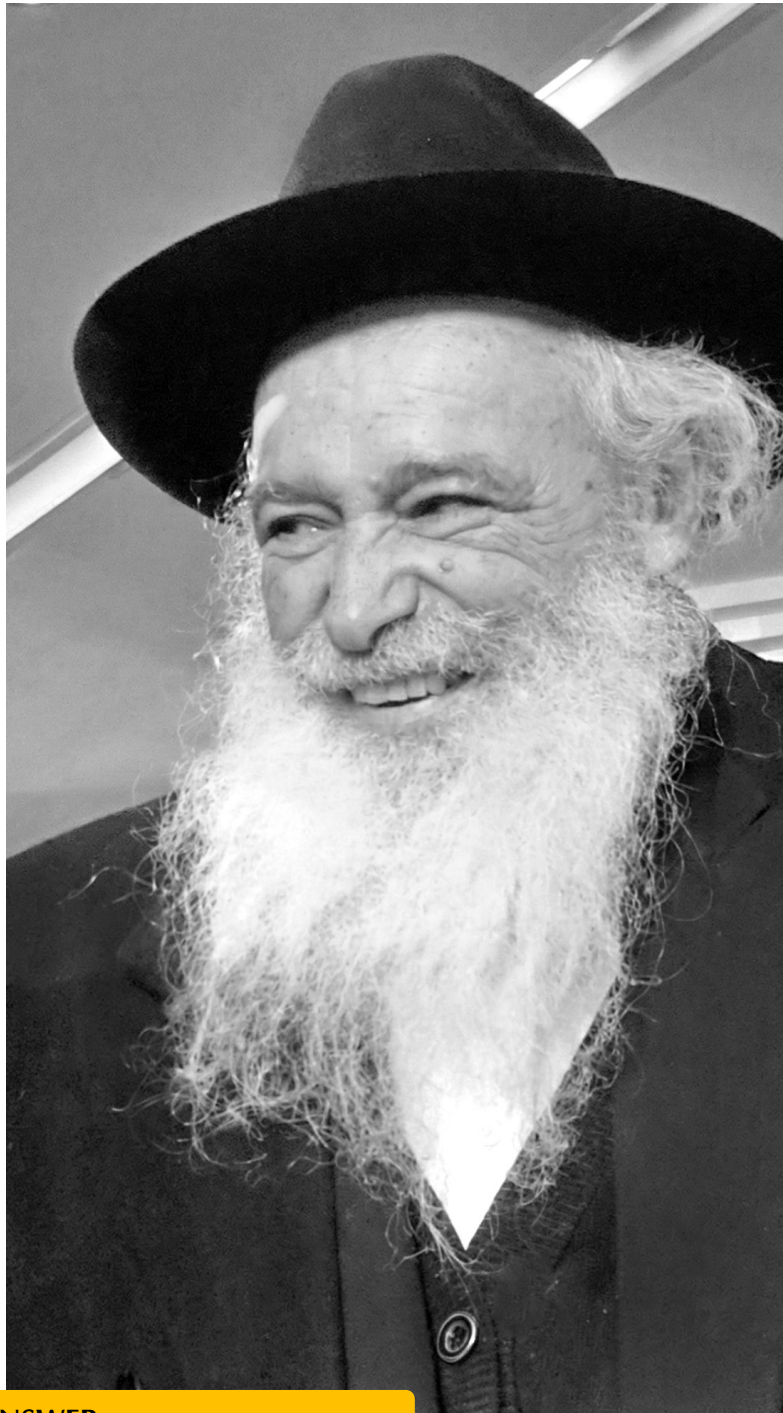
In those days, one could look out the window of Rav Nebenzahl's home and see the Kosel, the place from which the Shechinah has never budged and to which all of Klal Yisrael looks. One option suggested for building the yeshivah would completely block the Kosel from his view.

Those involved in the building project imagined that Rav Nebenzahl would request that they choose a different option so that the yeshivah building would not block his view of the Kosel. To their surprise, he was actually in favor of the plan that would block the Kosel from his view.

"I prefer to see a mikdash me'at built in all its glory, full of people learning Torah, than to look at the results of the terrible destruction of the Beis HaMikdash."

When he said this, it was clear to them how deeply the anguish of the Churban, the long galus, and the pain of the Shechinah touched his heart.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the sukkah that was built on the street, Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein writes (Veharev Na Volume Four Page 479) that although it is forbidden to construct a sukkah on a public sidewalk, after the fact you are still yotzei because land cannot be stolen in this manner. Nonetheless, even though you are yotzei, that does not mean the sukkah is considered the owner's property. If, in this case, the sukkah prevented people from walking on the sidewalk, it is considered part of public property, and the dog owner would not be liable for any of the damages. He would only have to pay for the hana'ah (benefit) the dog received from eating, meaning the value of a meal for a dog.

This week's Table Talk is dedicated in memory of
חיה לאה בת שמואל
whose 7th yahrzeit was ראש חדש כסלו

by Dr. and Mrs. Michael Ring



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