



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE KIMPETURIN HOME

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha, Nasso, teaches us that if the Sotah is found innocent, she will be blessed with a new child. This leads us to the following true story.

Sarah served as the administrator for a Kimpeturin Home, a convalescent home dedicated to supporting new mothers during their postpartum recovery. One day, Sarah received an anonymous phone call. It was from a blocked number, providing no indication of the caller's identity. The caller, a woman, queried, "Is there a Mrs. Cohen staying with you? I've heard she's facing financial difficulties, and I'd like to cover the cost of her entire stay."



GROWING IN A VOID

Gleaned from a talk from Rav Aaron Lopiansky

In order for a person to get the most out of the blessings HaShem showers upon him, he must work for it. If the blessing is showered upon him but he did not work for it, the blessing could be lost at best and may even damage him. Take for example the fellow who wins the lottery or an inheritance falls into his lap. Many people in this situation have ruined their lives because they were not ready to handle the blessing. Without the proper containers the blessing has no value. How does one get the proper container?

To become a container by which to hold the blessing one must develop a void within themselves that anticipates the coming blessing. Let us compare two talmidei chachamim. Both attend an in-depth shiur on a given sugya that they were familiar with. However, one had learned that gemara and spent much time on it. Naturally, he encountered difficulties and worked on them. The other fellow had not worked on that gemara. The shiur addressed all the difficulties which the former encountered. We can appreciate that the former gained much more from the shiur than the latter. Why? Because he prepared himself for the shiur. The lessons of that shiur became part of him. When he learned that sugya on his own, there were many voids, many spaces that were missing and needed to be filled in. When he heard how the shiur addressed those questions he appreciated how those empty spaces were suddenly filled with understanding. The lessons were now his. He will not lose that shiur. Whereas the latter enjoyed the shiur and could repeat but it was not his.

The birchas Kohanim is introduced in our Parsha. It is interesting to note the pattern which all three blessings follow. The first bracha begins with HaShem grant-

MITZVA MEME

Sarah quickly checked the registry and confirmed, "Yes, we do have a Mrs. Cohen, but her stay has been fully paid for." This news seemed to upset the caller, who hung up abruptly.

However, only two minutes later, Sarah discovered her error. Upon inspecting the ledger more closely, she realized there were two Mrs. Cohens at the Kimpeturin home. While one had indeed paid in full, the other had not. It dawned on Sarah that the latter was probably the woman the anonymous benefactor had intended to help. Due to Sarah's mistake, this woman had potentially missed out on a \$2,000 gift.

Regret flooded Sarah. She questioned whether she was obligated to cover the cost herself, given she was the one who had caused the woman to lose the benefit.

On one hand, it was an innocent mistake, and she didn't cause Mrs. Cohen the loss, she just accidentally prevented her from getting a benefit. But on the other hand, she did cause a needy person to lose 2,000 dollars.

What do you think?

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ing us blessing and concludes with His protection for that blessing. The second bracha begins with HaShem's enlightening us with His countenance and concludes with His granting that enlightenment to be ours. The third bracha begins with HaShem lifting His face towards us and concludes with His granting us peace. The pattern that emerges from all three brachos is that they begin with the gift and conclude with the mechanism by which we retain that gift securely.

Behold! The Torah recognizes that receiving blessings without a mechanism to contain it will be no blessing. So what is the solution? How does one, in fact, prepare themselves for the blessings?

As we study the various applications of birchas Kohanim we will discover how these brachos are distinctly different from the brachos that we are used to thinking of. When thinking about our relationship to blessings, we do not associate them as being part of our service to HaShem; it is just something

extra outside of that service. When we have a specific need, livelihood, health, children and so on, we find our way to a great rabbi for his blessing. However, as we take a close look at birchas Kohanim we find that it is part and parcel of the service of the Kohein in the Beis HaMikdosh. In the Amidah as well, we find that birchas Kohanim begins with the bracha of Avodah.

The avodah in the Beis HaMikdosh as well as the avodah in the Amidah revolve around our recognition of how there is nothing in our lives that has significance outside of our relationship with HaShem. The offerings that were brought in the Beis HaMikdosh were expressions of our directing our energies Heavenward towards HaShem. The bracha of avodah in the Amidah is also an expression of our yearning to draw ourselves closer to HaShem. By developing our avodah we create a space within ourselves that yearns to be filled with connection. That space provides the container to hold all the blessings that HaShem will bestow upon us.

The blessings with which HaShem endows us become ours forever when we see them in the context of our avodah and they will in turn generate yet more blessings.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE UNDERWATER WATERFALL OF MAURITIUS

If you like to travel, you've probably seen all kinds of waterfalls — like the world-renowned Niagara Falls or Banias in Eretz Yisrael. But have you ever seen an Underwater Waterfall?

You might ask, "An underwater waterfall, how is that possible?" Well, sort of. Let's travel to the island of Mauritius (Pronounced Muh-ri-shus), which is a small island, slightly east of the African island of Madagascar. Mauritius was also made famous by being the only known habitat of the extinct dodo, a flightless bird.

How did Mauritius get such a strange name? In 1598, a Dutch squadron under Admiral Wybrand van Warwyck landed there and named the island Mauritius, in honor of Prince Maurice van Nassau, governor of the Dutch Republic. So Mauritius comes from Maurice.

Off the coast of Mauritius, there is — what appears to be — a waterfall submerged in the ocean itself. The truth though is, what you see falling is not really foaming water, but rather falling sand and silt. It might be more precisely called an underwater "Sandfall".

How does this work? From the island's shore, there is a gradual slope where the lip of the plateau of the island goes to a depth of about 450 feet. But all of a sudden, there is a precipitous 2.5-mile drop to the ocean floor.

The "waterfall" is sand and silt deposits sliding down the slope and then dropping into the 2-mile abyss. The sand and silt on the ocean floor run off in a

way that makes it look like they're pouring down a waterfall. It also makes it look like the entire island is being sucked down a vast drain.

The marine landscape also presents several stunning shades of blue.

What is really fascinating is that although it looks like this water will suck you down, and it seems that it would be extremely dangerous to find yourself in the water by this 'waterfall' in the ocean, the truth is, however, that it is completely safe to swim in, surf on, or ride a boat on it. There's no strong current or water vortex waiting to drag you down. It is just sand falling down the lip of the plateau.

It's difficult to see the underwater waterfall from the shore. To truly see what appears to be the flowing water, you need to be above the water, looking down. The good news is that tourists are welcome and helicopter tours are available to help them see the spectacular effect.

The Le Morne Brabant area (which contains the waterfall and more) is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Mah Rabu Masecha Hashem, Kulam Bechachma Asisa! How wondrous is your creation, Hashem!

(The picture on the bottom right is how this waterfall appears from space)

THE BUILDER

Upon arriving in the Holy Land after having gone through indescribable suffering in Auschwitz and other concentration camps, Harav Yechezkel Shraga [Lipshitz] Halberstam settled in the city of Ramleh, prior to his eventual move to Yerushalayim. Despite the fact that his stay in the city was temporary, and notwithstanding his frail frame and poor state of health, he resolved and succeeded to build, with his own hands, a mikvah that conformed to all the stringencies of his great-grandfather, the Divrei Chaim, the renowned Sanzer Rav.

Why did he have to build it himself? He did this because of a miracle that occurred on the very first day of his arrival in Auschwitz. Standing in line, waiting for his turn to be scrutinized by the arch-murderer, the notorious beast Dr. Mengele, an S.S. officer passed through the line trying to verify who among the new arrivals was an experienced craftsman in any of several fields — construction, electric, plumbing, etc. Needless to say, everyone wished to qualify, realizing that it would provide them with more of a chance to be directed to the right, rather than to the gas chambers. Unfortunately, few succeeded, since the S.S. officer posed technical questions to weed out the pretenders.

Reb Yechezkel Shraga decided to claim expertise in the field of construction. He persuaded a young man standing alongside him, who was actually employed in that field, to teach him any simple concept that comes to his mind regarding the building trade. The man readily agreed and taught him the basics of constructing a ninety-degree angle.

When the S.S. officer passed by, Reb Yechezkel Shraga claimed to be a building tradesman, and miracle of miracles, the very question the officer posed was the formula for creating a right angle. The strategy succeeded; he was taken from the line and assigned to a building brigade. Remarkably, the officer commented, "All you dogs are liars. This fellow is the only honest man in the group, an experienced construction tradesman." At that moment Reb Yechezkel Shraga vowed that if Hashem would spare his life and he would see the light of freedom again, he would do everything within his power to utilize his "new professional building skills" to construct a mikvah with every halachic requirement, including those stringencies of his great-grandfather.

And so, that is why the mikvah in Ramleh was built by the great architect, Harav Yechezkel Shraga [Lipshitz] Halberstam, to the pride and joy of all the city's residents.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the car that was repossessed, Rav Zilberstein wrote that the owner of the car did the wrong thing by not telling his friend that the car may be repossessed. Nonetheless, the owner of the car is not obligated to pay for the money, as it is not usual to leave so much money in a car.

The week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of
Yehudah Munk z"l
יהודה בן יחיאל אריה הכהן ז"ל

By Mrs. Suzette Munk and family

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