



Like the First Time

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את שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו (ויקרא כו, ב)

I remember when I got my first cell phone. It was a small Nokia that I think had the game called Snake on it. It was simply that – a phone. It could be used to call someone and not much else. But it was my first cell phone and for the first little while it was exciting to own. As time marched on and the cell phone had its share of scratches, the delight I had when I spoke into it quickly waned. This was not a unique occurrence. People often lament their inability to re-experience familiar things as they were first experienced. When a person sits in a *sukka* that he built from scratch for the first time, the feeling is unparalleled; especially if he went back and forth to Home Depot enough times that the cashier knows his name. But the next year it is simply not the same.

Shabbos, as well, can sometimes seem that way. A person can one week have a transcendent experience in which he feels the *malachim* are departing at the door in deference to the *Shechina* which graces his home; while the next week he is wondering why the day feels no different than a Tuesday.

But *Shabbos* can be a consistent weekly venture to an oasis in which a person can draw from a deep spiritual well. Studies show that if a person wants to re-experience something, he should try familiar things but in a new way. That is why a hotdog in a restaurant is more exciting than one at home, or water served in a martini glass tastes better.

But to experience the spiritual aspect of *Shabbos* week after week, nothing needs to be changed during the *Shabbos* meals.

The *Seduro Shel Shabbos* writes that *Shabbos* generates its own *kedusha*. Our role is to prepare ourselves before *Shabbos* so as to allow the *kedusha* to saturate us. This is done by spending some time before *Shabbos* and repenting for any misdeeds throughout the week. When a person does this, the *kedusha* of *Shabbos* permeates him.

Then the *Shabbos* ends and we begin to look forward to the next *Shabbos*. But now the person is different; he is someone who experienced *Shabbos*. And he works hard the entire week so that when *Shabbos* arrives, he will be free of iniquity, and the *kedusha* of *Shabbos* will embrace him once again.

The *Seduro Shel Shabbos* points out that having *Shabbos* dictate one's actions throughout the week finds expression in this week's *Parsha*. את שבתתי תשמרו – If you want to experience *Shabbos* two consecutive weeks (שבתתי – many *Shabbosim*) without losing out on the experience due to the happenings of the week, then ומקדשי תיראו, fear losing the opportunity to re-experience the transcendent feeling of holiness throughout the week.

Choose Your Destiny

In the previous edition, “Yankele” was sent by his rebbeim to the chief rav of the city so that the rav could inspire him to change his ways and pay attention while his rebbeim taught. The rav asked Yankele to help him decide a case that was brought to him. A delegation of shoes had come to complain to the rav that although they both were made from hides, the shoes were not treated as the Sifrei Torah were.

“The delegation of shoes woefully described their sad lot. After being ‘shechted’, they were made into various kinds of footwear. Their lives since then consisted of constant exploitation and humiliation - always on the dirty ground, whether sandy or muddy, being abused, stepped-on and totally taken for granted by their wearers. Even when their owners removed them before going to bed, they would leave them outside of the bedroom because they said that they smelled badly. To add insult to injury, when they had been used and abused, literally to death, they were unceremoniously tossed onto the trash heaps of Kronik - degradation to the bitter end!”

“They contrasted their lives to those of their Torah cousins who were always on the receiving end of absolute honor and respect,” the rav continued. “They resided in magnificent, sometimes even ornate arks. Handled at all times with the utmost care and dignity, when they would be removed from their arks, everyone would stand reverently, and adoringly reach out to kiss their regal cloaks. Even when problems arose which could not be rectified, and the lifespan of the Torah had reached its end, they would be deferentially laid to rest in the same cemetery as their worshippers. In a word,” the rav concluded, “the shoes felt that they were owed some kind of compensation from the Torahs for having to suffer the cruel fate of living lives full of disgrace and shame - after all, they had all come from the same stock!”

The impetuous youngster, totally engaged in the story, jumped eagerly to advocate for the poor, downtrodden shoes who only wanted equality and fairness, but the rav grabbed his arm gently and ‘shushed’ him. “Yankele,” he said with a wise look. “Don’t be so quick to favour the shoes - let me show you the other side of the coin - you may in the end conclude that the Torahs indeed deserve their better lives. While it is true that the Torahs and the shoes grew up together, their developmental processes were drastically different. To become a shoe does not entail too much leather-work, nor does it require very much thought. The leather must be thick and strong and can be cut into moulds and mass-produced. To make skins into Torah-worthy leather on the other hand, involves a great deal of physical labour because the “klaff” must be thinner. Furthermore,” the Rav explained, “for the leather to become ‘kosher klaff’, the intentions of those working on it must be pure and deliberately *mitzvah*-driven. Therefore, despite the fact that the shoes and Torahs are initially of the same stock, the efforts undertaken and pain suffered by the Torahs when they embarked on their life’s journey, were far greater than those of the shoes!”

The astute and perceptive rav saw the look on Yankele’s face and knew that the boy had understood his ‘*masha*’. Those who work hard will ultimately be justly rewarded with the appropriate recognition and honor, whereas those who don’t put out the effort will not. Simply “being”, does not entitle everyone equally. The young lad came to understand that he could continue to fool around only if he was willing to live a meaningless, perhaps even a humiliating life, but with hard work, who could say what the limits of greatness would be!

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Questions

from
the **H.I.T.**

HOTLINE

During my *Pesach* cleaning I came across a cheque from someone who I had lent money to in the past. I am not sure if the borrower had already paid me back and did not take the cheque or if the debt is still outstanding. The borrower also is not sure. Am I allowed to assume that the money is still owed?

You would be allowed to assume the money is still owed. Having the cheque in your possession is sufficient grounds to make that assumption as long as either side does not know that the debt was already paid.

A source for this could be found in *Choshen Mishpat* (*siman* 59). The *Mechaber* writes that if someone lent money to his friend and has a document supporting this but is unsure if he was paid back and the borrower claims that he had indeed paid back the funds, then the lender is not entitled to collect the debt. The implication is that the lender cannot collect the loan only because the borrower is sure that he no longer owes anything. If the borrower is also unsure however, then the loan is considered outstanding and may be collected. The *Shach* (75, 65) agrees with this logic and brings

proof from the *Shulchan Aruch* (82, 2).

In my *Shul* there is a *Kohen* who has served in the IDF and had killed a terrorist. Is he allowed to *duchen*?

The *Mechaber* (128, 35) writes that a *Kohen* who kills intentionally may not *duchen*. What is the *halacha* if a *Kohen* killed an enemy soldier during battle? The *poskim* discussed this question after WWI. Practically, there are a number of reasons why it is permitted for the *Kohen* to *duchen*. The *Perisha* writes that the *halacha* which states that a *Kohen* who kills may not *duchen* (128, 35) only applies to a *Kohen* who killed a Jew. If the *Kohen* killed a non-Jew, however, he would be allowed to *duchen*. A second *sevara* comes from the *Pri Chadash* (128, 35) who writes that if a *Kohen* was forced to kill someone then he may still *duchen*. When a person is facing an enemy who is coming to kill him, there is no greater *ones* than this; as *Rav Ovadya Yosef zt"l* (*Yechave Da'as* II, 14) explains in a beautiful *Teshuva*. Therefore, the *Kohen* is allowed to *duchen*.

**To have your question
answered call**

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In this week's Parsha we are taught many of the laws given by Hashem that govern a Jewish person's life. Here are a sampling of laws that were designed by man.

- Teasing animals is allowed in most circumstances in Red Deer, Alberta unless the animal is a cat that happens to be caught in a trap. Teasing that animal will result in a fine of \$510.
- It is illegal to pretend to practice witchcraft throughout Canada.

However, practicing witchcraft would be permitted as long as it is not for pretend.

- One may not ride a bike one handed in Ottawa, Canada while carrying something (tefillin, a hat) in the other hand.

RIDDLE



In the *tefilla* of *Shabbos* we refer to *Shabbos* as חמדת הימים. Where is this hinted to in the *Torah*?

Please send in your answers to yrothbart@halachainstitute.com. Any correct answer that is received by Tuesday will be entered into a raffle to win a \$10 gift certificate to Miriam's Judaica.

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE: After meat a person cannot eat dairy dishes right away. There is a certain food that, after its consumption, a person may not eat neither meat nor dairy. What is the food?

ANSWER: After a person eats an *Afikoman* he may not eat anything. Another possible answer is that according to some *minhagim*, a person who eats fish may not eat meat or dairy without washing his hands first.

Thank you to all those who sent in an answer to last week's riddle.

WINNER OF LAST WEEK'S PRIZE: Sarah Teichman

Under the leadership of the Rabbonim of H.I.T.
Rabbi Yacov Felder, Chairman

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