

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



“THE WHISKEY COLLECTION”

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

We know that there is a mitzva to get rid of all of one’s chametz on Pesach. One way that we get rid of our chametz is by selling it to a non Jew. This brings us to the following true question.

A man whom we will call Yosef had a large collection of expensive whiskeys in his cellar. Every year when Pesach arrived, he sold his chametz,



ENSLAVEMENT

The Psalmist writes in Psalm 81 in the name of HaKadosh baruch Hu “*I am HaShem that lifted you up from the land of Egypt widen your mouth and I will fill it.*” The Talmud explains that this verse refers to our spiritual requests. Behold! HaKadosh baruch Hu is offering us to grant any request that we make of Him in the area of spiritual achievements. I was bothered why HaKadosh baruch Hu introduces His offer by identifying Himself as the One Who lifted us out from Egypt?

After experiencing two Seder nights I have come to a new level of appreciation of the gift HaKadosh baruch Hu granted us with our Exodus from Egypt.

The Torah teaches us that the Egyptians enslaved us “*b’forech*”. The Sages offer two definitions for this word. The first definition is with a *soft tongue*. This means that the Egyptians cajoled us into working for them. They praised us with nice words telling us how fortunate we were to commit ourselves to the State and to the welfare of our new country. In a soft way we became enslaved, we accepted upon ourselves the status of being members of the slave class. The second definition of *b’forech* is *back breaking labor*.

While these definitions seem miles apart on the surface, they are very closely related. Both definitions imply servitude. The first definition implies the mental state of slavery while the second definition implies the physical state of slavery.

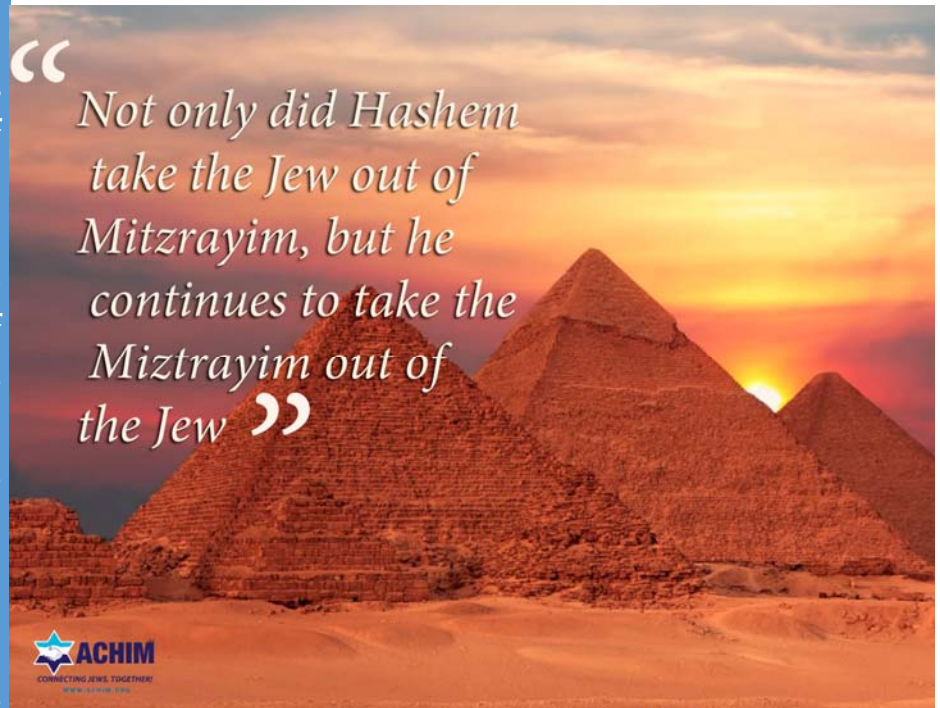
During our initial stage of enslavement we were brainwashed into believing that we were truly slaves. Of course once a person is convinced that he is a slave - he **becomes** a slave. The implication of being a slave is that he has no as-

and included his extensive whiskey collection in the sale.

One year a fire broke out in his cellar on Pesach. Luckily, Yosef had fire insurance. Once the holiday was over, the insurance company made a large payout to Yosef, based on the contents of his cellar. A large part of the payment was intended to cover the loss of the liquor. Yosef wondered if he was allowed to accept payment for the chametz.

He thought, "if I accept the money I will be benefitting from chametz. Also, this particular chametz didn't even belong to me; it belonged to the non-Jewish gentleman who purchased it from me. Additionally, if I accept this money, it will be clear that I never took the sale of the chametz seriously."

Yosef took his question to a Rav. Would it be permitted to keep the insurance money? What do you think?



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Not only did Hashem
take the Jew out of
Mitzrayim, but he
continues to take the
Miztrayim out of
the Jew”



piration to become a free man.

Take a person who was born in slavery and has lived in slavery for years just like his father and grandfather. Let us approach him and offer to fill his greatest wish. What requests can we anticipate? He may ask that his owner should treat him nicely or perhaps he will ask for a new mattress but he will never ask to be freed. He recognizes that he is a slave and that is his very essence. Just as the peasant does not aspire to marry the princess he does not aspire to freedom.

At some point in time during our enslavement HaKadosh baruch Hu inspired us with the desire for freedom. He lifted us out of our slave self-image and we recognized that we were worthy of becoming the beloved people of the Creator of the world.

It was at that point in time that we began to cry out for freedom. It was then that we felt the bitterness of being enslaved. The emotional pain that the free man has when becoming enslaved is far greater than the back breaking work that he is subjected to.

Let us return to my difficulty with Psalm 81. Perhaps after this year's Seder we can appreciate that without HaKadosh baruch Hu's lifting us out from the servitude of Egypt we would have no aspirations to reach for spiritual heights; we would remain with our slave mentality and aspire only for physical accomplishments. We would have no appreciation for the finer achievements of life. Therefore, before presenting us this magnanimous offer, He reminds us that He lifted us out of the physicality of Egyptian culture and we are capable of much higher aspirations.

May HaKadosh baruch Hu inspire us to capture the spirit of our beautiful holiday and look up to those goals that wait for us to accomplish. All we need to do is aspire and ask; HaShem will fill it.

Have a beautiful Yom Tov and a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

The many modern fruits of bionics includes flight (Allen 2010; Piotrowski 1987). This science is not new: As far back as Noah people built water dams after watching beavers. German scientists modeled their first jet plane after the shark's efficient body design that allows it to rapidly travel through the water. Early jet planes were even painted to look like sharks. Siepen put it well, "man still has much to learn from birds about flying. Men shape their planes like birds and soar in imitation of them, but tailspins and other calamities unknown to birds are inseparable from man's adventures in an element not his own, be he ever so skillful" (Siepen 1929, p. 767). Ever hear of a bird crashing to the earth due to wind shear or ice? Even though we have copied birds, we have a long way to go before our copy is perfected to a level equal to the abilities of birds and other flying creatures.

Many creatures are designed to run, fly, glide. These are all engineering marvels that humans have now effectively copied. Airplanes require ingenious feats of engineering, but, compared to birds, they are poorly maneuverable. The initial idea of flying came from birds, however many flying improvements were inspired by other flying creatures as well.

Dragonflies can carry as much as fifteen times their own weight as they travel through the air, yet most high performance aircraft cannot lift much more than their own weight. Intrigued, scientists studied dragonfly wings and

ANIMAL FLIGHT

found that they function by generating lift as a result of producing an airflow "whirlwind." Efforts are now being made to apply this principle to aircraft by designing wings that produce greater lift by "whirling the air" (Allen 2010, p. 116–117; Yulsman 1984, p. 87).

Owls use special curved feathers on the front row of their wings that change the direction of the air as it flows past, allowing them to fly at slower speeds than most other birds. Slower flight is also quieter—obviously of great value in hunting prey at night. Owls can sneak up on small game, such as rabbits and mice, with nary a whisper and frisk away what will shortly become a meal. For this reason, the study of owl flight has had a major influence on airplane and helicopter design, enabling them to not only fly faster in normal air travel, but also to fly at much slower speeds. The advantages are enormous: a few of the more obvious ones include less noise, shorter runways, and less costly airports.

We are very impressed with our modern, efficient jet engines, but octopi have effectively used jet-like propulsion millennia before us. Their system expands a muscular "sack" in their streamlined body to suck water in, then vigorously contract it to force a water jet spray out of a small, well-designed opening. This spray has enough force to propel them forward.

THE BETTER HIDDUR

In advance of Pesach each year, Rav Avraham Pam joined a distinguished group of Torah Vodaath alumni in overseeing the baking of the matzos which they would use for the Seder. One year, a new bakery opened which employed a number of hiddurim (halachic stringencies) in the baking process. Some members of the group thought that it would be an excellent idea to use the new bakery for their baking. They presented the suggestion to Rav Pam who said, "just as there is a mitzvah to be mehader (make use of stringencies) in the matzos, so too, is it a mitzvah to be mehader in helping another Jew to earn a livelihood." They remained at their original bakery. (Rav Pam, By Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, Published by Artscroll Mesorah)



Achim in a Nutshell:

"Veyached l'vaveinu l'ahava es Shimecha."

"Please bring our hearts together so that we can love Your Name".

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