

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



## “PHOTOSHOPPING THE BAR MITZVA ”

In this week's Torah portion (Bereishis 44,20) we find that Yehuda told a lie. Yehuda told Yosef that Binyamin's brother was killed. Rashi writes that Yehuda did this because he was afraid that Yosef would ask them to bring him. Rashi later (Bereishis 50, 16) quotes our Sages that it is permitted to lie for the sake of preserving peace.

The following true dilemma tests the limit of the permissibility to lie for the sake of peace.

Eliezer was a professional photographer. He was hired to take pictures at the Bar Mitzva of the Shapiro family. The parents told Eliezer that it was critically important for them that he takes pictures of the bar mitzva boy dancing with their Rav. Eliezer assured them that he would do that.

At the bar mitzva, Eliezer was busy snapping away. He took what he thought was a great shot of the Bar Mitzva boy dancing with the Rav, just as the Shapiros requested.

Later that night Eliezer uploaded the pictures to



## THE CLOUD

In this week's Parsha, Vayigash, Yaakov and his family make their fateful move to Egypt to be with Yosef because of the famine that ravaged the land of Israel. It was fateful on account that this would be the beginning of a 210 year exile which would include over 80 years of bitter enslavement and would conclude with the Exodus. Before the making this move Yaakov sent his son, Yehudah, to establish an academy of Torah study so that when the family would arrive the Yeshiva would already be set up.

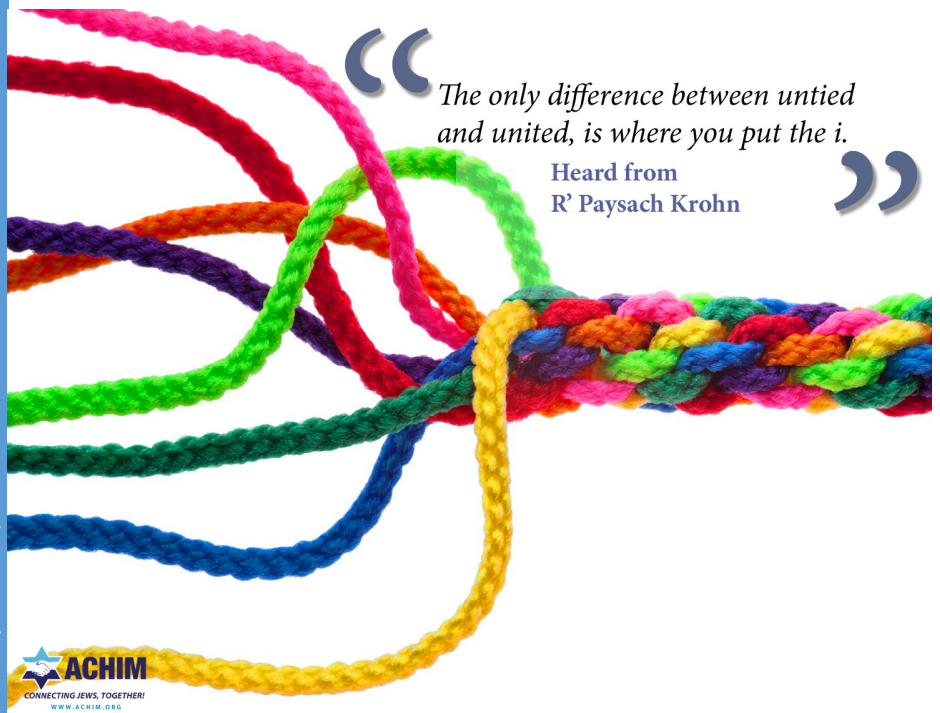
What was so critical about having a Yeshiva in place immediately? All the laws and traditions that Yaakov and his family observed could continue as usual without having the Yeshiva set up. Certainly there was a need for a Yeshiva to continue the scholarship of Torah and to maintain their observance but why the urgency and the immediacy?

To answer this question we must appreciate what the Torah means to us. It is commonly understood that our Torah is the constitution or by-laws of the Jewish people given to us by our Director. While this understanding is accurate, it is nevertheless incomplete. One primary description is missing. Let us return to this in a moment.

Every nation draws its existence from the land upon which it was born. The Estonian people are Estonian by virtue of the fact that they live in Estonia. If an Estonian will move off his land to America he continues to be an Estonian for the rest of his life. However, his children or perhaps grandchildren but certainly his great great grandchildren will not be Estonian. The process of assimilation will do its job and after a given number of generations this Estonian family will

## MITZVA MEME

“*The only difference between untied and united, is where you put the i.*”  
Heard from  
R' Paysach Krohn



his laptop. To his great frustration all of the pictures of the bar mitzva boy dancing with the Rav came out extremely blurry. It is possible that the settings on his camera (ISO too low, or aperture too wide) were not set right for those conditions. In either case, the pictures were entirely unusable.

But being proficient at Photoshop it was fairly easy for Eliezer to do a “headswap” and digitally recreate the shot. He was able to put the head of the Rav onto the body of a person dancing with the bar mitzva boy. After a half hour of work Eliezer was extremely satisfied with his Photoshop work. His new creation looked exactly as if the bar mitzva boy was dancing with the Rav. No one would be able to tell the difference.

Eliezer was about to email the gallery of the pictures to the Shapiros when we was struck with pangs of conscience. Was it permitted for him to send them the photoshopped image?

On one hand, here was an accurate representation of the bar mitzva boy dancing with the Rav. It looked entirely realistic. The family never asked for a specific pose and this would meet their needs. In addition if the family learned that their requested pictures did not come out, they would be disappointed and very upset for a very long time. If they were never told about it, they would never be upset about it. They would be blissfully unaware. But being told that it was photoshopped would make them feel that they missed out. Perhaps this would be a perfect example of being able to change the truth a bit for the sake of peace.

On the other hand, this picture was not an authentic representation of the simcha. He created it on his laptop. Perhaps that would be an example of gneivas daas, of tricking his customers.

Did Eliezer have an obligation to tell the Shapiros that the picture was photoshopped? Was he allowed to give them the pictures without mentioning anything, if that will make them happy? Should he tell them the truth and make them upset? Maybe here was example of "it's better not to know."

See Veharev Na Volume Two page 496

*You can email me at [rabiweiner@achim.org](mailto:rabiweiner@achim.org) for the answer*

be lost to their Estonian heritage. Assimilation is a natural process that cannot be stopped. It is the function of the Law of Entropy. As long as the source of a nation's existence remains intact the nation will continue to exist. However, once the nation is detached from their source they will sooner or later dissolve.

This leads us to the riddle of the endurance of the Jewish people. How do we continue to exist over 2,000 without a land, without a unified body? For 2,500 we have been dispersed throughout the globe. If it is not our land then what is the source of our existence? The answer is the Torah. Our connection to the Torah is the life source of our people in a very direct way. We are therefore able to move anywhere on the globe and continue being a thriving community. If you live off your computer you can appreciate the difference between the desktop and the laptop. You can further appreciate the

difference between working off the cloud and working off the laptop. When all your work is on the cloud you can use any computer anywhere to access your work.

The existence of our people comes from our relationship with HaShem. The energy of this relationship flows through the Torah. Our connection with the Torah transcends the mere collection of our traditions, laws and ethos. It is the core of our existence.

Yaakov understood that to survive the difficult 210 year exile they were about to enter, it was critical to maintain an unbroken connection to the Cloud. He therefore sent Yehudah ahead set up the Yeshiva before the family came down.

The lesson of this Parsha is relevant not only to the existence of our people but for the existence of every Jew. A daily dose of Torah study brings the student of Torah remarkable energy which is expressed in his daily relationships with others and with himself. When the Torah is studied properly there is an inner happiness and satisfaction within oneself. It comes from that same connection to the Cloud.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

Sharks, as well as many other vertebrates that live in the water, can locate other creatures with the aid of electroreception. This means they can detect electrical impulses.

Sharks detect bioelectric fields with sensory cells, called ampullae of Lorenzini.

When a fish moves, its brain sends out a tiny nerve impulse to the muscles that contract. Those impulses create an electric field that extends into the water and can be detected.

Sharks detect these bioelectric fields with their ampullae of Lorenzini. The ampullae look like black pores on the shark's snout. These pores are distributed symmetrically across the shark's head, allowing the shark to easily determine the direction where the electric field originated. Each pore is full of sensory cells surrounded by a specialized jelly. When exposed to a bioelectric field, the sensory cells are stimulated, alerting the shark to a potential food source.

## ELECTRIC SHARKS!

Electroreception is found typically in animals that live in salt water. Even if humans had the ability to detect electric fields emanating from contracting muscles, it probably wouldn't be very sensitive. Air isn't a very good medium for carrying electric fields. However, salt water is because it has a higher concentration of ions.

Sharks have the most sensitive electroreception abilities in the animal kingdom. They can detect an electric field as weak as five billionths of a volt per centimeter, which is significantly weaker than the electric field produced by a ticking wristwatch.

**SHARKS CAN LOCATE OTHER CREATURES FAR AWAY WITH THE AID OF ELECTRORECEPTION. THIS MEANS THEY CAN DETECT ELECTRICAL IMPULSES EMITTED BY ANOTHER CREATURE'S BRAIN!**

# THE HOLY FUNDRAISER

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler had once succeeded in obtaining for his Gateshead Kollel what was then a very large contribution of £400. Subsequently a representative of Gateshead Yeshiva solicited a contribution from the same benefactor, who responded that he had already given to the Kollel. Since there was always some fear on the part of the Yeshiva that the Kollel would draw away money from the Yeshiva, the matter created some tension. The Vaad of the Kollel voted not to return the gift on the grounds that it had been given personally to Rabbi Dessler. But Rabbi Dessler felt that the principle of avoiding any trace of machlokes (dispute) with the Yeshiva was more important than the money. He then insisted that the gift that he solicited for his Kollel be handed over to the Yeshiva. The Vaad of the Kollel complied. (From Rav Dessler, By Rabbi Yonason Rosenblum, Published by Artscroll Mesorah, page 209 )

**RABBI DESSLER FELT THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF AVOIDING ANY TRACE OF DISPUTE WITH THE YESHIVA WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE MONEY. HE THEN INSISTED THAT THE GIFT THAT HE SOLICITED FOR HIS KOLLEL BE HANDED OVER TO THE YESHIVA.**



We are often asked if Achim is a Kiruv organization.

Our answer; On a daily basis we request from Hakadosh baruch Hu "*Veyached l'vaveinu l'hava es Shemecha.*"

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

This is what Achim is all about.

## OUR SPONSORS

**Benjamin Jessurun**  
**443-833-5520**  
bjessurun@allstate.com



**Allstate**®  
You're in good hands.

Auto  
Home  
Life  
Retirement