

LIFE IS WHAT IT IS - ??

HOW ONE DECISION CAN AFFECT MANY!

My wife Debra and I had been away shopping for the day. It takes up the whole day as it takes us close to one and half hours to travel to the shopping centre and of course the same time to return. This means we often arrive home close on dark or after dark. We presently live on a farm, and sometimes that which we left in the morning is not always the same when we arrive home. We can find animals in a paddock that they shouldn't be in, as the saying goes, "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence". This was the case when we arrived home from our shopping trip. A decision by a calf to break through a fence into the next paddock had a domino effect. Allow me to describe what took place after we arrived home.

We had gone to bed and it wasn't long before we could hear a cow bellowing. This bellowing became persistent and it kept me awake. I knew something was wrong because of the nature of the bellowing and the persistence associated with it. I began to worry that something serious could be wrong. So at 1-30am I decided to get up, jump on the motor bike and with torch in hand go and see what all the noise was about. On shining the light on the bellowing cow I could see she was very agitated. The cow was going from calf to calf sniffing each calf to see which was hers. It was obvious she couldn't find her calf. She then began sniffing at the ground trying to pick up the scent of her calf, but she couldn't find it. The bellowing continued. It was obvious the calf in question was not with the herd, so where was it? I decided to go into the next paddock to see if I could spot the calf. This was no easy task as it was dark and all I had was a reasonable torch to shine around the paddock in an effort to look for the calf. I couldn't see it at first but continuing on over a hill I spotted it grazing away happily without a worry in the world. Mum was worried sick because she didn't know where her calf was, but calf had no concerns regards mum. None the less if we were to get any sleep that night I had to bring the calf back to its mother. Now I don't know how many of you reading this account, have experience in attempting the task ahead, but it was a very difficult one. Trying to get a lone calf out of an 80 acre paddock, in the dark, has its challenges. I began to drive the calf back towards the gate praying to HaShem that a small

miracle might unfold. I managed to get the calf about 100 meters from the gate when it decided it wanted to run back to the spot where I found it. After some fancy bike riding I convinced the calf to continue towards the gate. Fortunately the mother picked up what was going on and she began to walk towards us bellowing loudly and when she became closer the calf could hear its mother. The cow knew where the gate was and came to meet us as she continually called for her calf. The mother cow came through the gate “picked” up her calf turned around and took him back through the gate into the paddock he should never have left. Mission accomplished.

This one decision by a mischievous calf affected many others. This calf was not content to stay where it was “told”. It made a decision to do “its own thing” without regard to the consequences. A selfish decision caused many to worry and become anxious. Without the intervention that took place it could have easily been attacked by wild dogs, as it was alone next to the bush without the protection of the herd.

I wrote this account because it reminded me of the behaviour of many people. We often fail to consider the consequences of our decisions and actions. We can be guilty of making very selfish decisions that affect many others. How many times has a wayward person had to be rescued by those who love them? How many of those rescued show no real appreciation of the intervention? How often has a spouse showed little regard for the other in actions taken? Children repeat the behaviour of the calf on a regular basis. The calf can hardly be held responsible for its actions as it doesn't have the capacity to consider all the consequences attached to the decision, but most people cannot claim the same excuse or reason for similar behaviours or actions. Unfortunately people are becoming more and more self centred and self focused. We are no longer taught to consider the other, instead we are constantly told, “You deserve.....”. The boundaries and limits of our actions have almost disappeared to the point of “anything goes”. The instructions set down by HaShem are rejected on mass and we witness the consequences. The decision by people to ignore, reject and belittle the instructions of HaShem and move to “another paddock” is affecting many. The task of rescuing has become too great. The number of wayward “calves” is overwhelming and the “wild dogs” are having a field day. Yet there

is One who is always willing to rescue and He is calling out, just as the cow was calling out. I pray that we would follow the lead of the calf and respond to the call, a call that brings us back to the “fold” under the protection of HaShem. It is only when we come under the protection of HaShem and follow His instructions that we behave in a manner that does not adversely affect others.

May HaShem indeed have mercy on us all!

Rabbi Philip [Yochanan] Hammond. PhD.

Rabbi Hammond can be contacted at – uitam@unitedintorah.org