

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



NO RECEPTION

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Tzvi davened in a shul in his neighborhood. He noticed that although there was a sign, "all cell phones must be turned off before entering the shul," many people ignored this requirement.

Tzvi observed that many people would answer their texts or check their emails during davening. He once even saw someone watching a video, on YouTube, during chazaras hashatz. This greatly disturbed him. He was confident that not only did the cell phone use weaken his own davening, but it was surely weakening everyone else's davening as well.

One day Tzvi learned about a device called a cell jammer. It is a small machine that blocks all cell reception in a building.

Tzvi had a brilliant idea. He would buy the jammer (which was legal in his country) and secretly plant it in a room in the shul. This would block all cell service and it would restore davening to its proper place of respect. He knew that if he would speak to the president or gabbai about the idea, it would likely get caught in a bureaucratic back and forth, with some for and some against. Instead, Tzvi took decisive action and purchased the jammer for one hundred and fifty dollars on Alibaba.com



"FOR THEY TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER AGAINST YOU"

We read in the Haggadah how the mitzvah to remember our exodus from Egypt will still be relevant even after our final geula (redemption). The question is asked what significance will the Egyptian exodus have at that time. Even though the Egyptian exodus launched us into nationhood, we were re-enslaved by many nations later on. The final redemption, on the other hand, will be permanent. We will no longer be subjected to any other nation. We will have reached our destiny. Why should we continue remembering the original exodus?

It is important to appreciate that our Egyptian exodus was not the extraction of 2.5 million captives who were enslaved and were then freed. The exodus created a new unit that never existed before. We became the nation of HaShem. We became a nation like none other. Just as distinct as Man is over animals, so is the Jewish nation distinct over other nations.

Man's core essence is the manifestation of his Gdliness which animals do not have. So it is with the nation of Israel. As a nation we have a Gdliness that other nations do not have. This is reflected in the remarkable immortality of our people.

In explaining what it means to be the nation of HaShem the Maharal employs the following notion. There are many aspects to a person. However, all these aspects can be divided into two groups. There are those aspects that are the essential parts of him and those that are circumstantial. In the first group we would include his parents, his birthday, perhaps his name. These few aspects belong in the for-

After a short while the jammer was installed and the environment of the shul was dramatically changed. No one answered or sent text messages during davening because the phones did not work.

Tzvi felt very proud of himself for helping to restore the respect and sanctity of the shul.

One day the wealthiest member of the shul, Gavriel, was davening shacharis. He stayed for a while after davening and learned. After staying in the shul for a while he left for his home.

As soon as he left the area of the shul, he received 10 notifications. The first notification was from his stock broker who said to call him immediately. All the subsequent messages were from his stockbroker with increasing levels of urgency. Finally, one of the last texts said "I need to speak to you immediately because one of your largest stock holdings is about to crash and we need to sell it immediately."

Gavriel called his stockbroker, as soon as he saw the messages, but the stockbroker told him that it was too late. Gavriel had just lost more than a million dollars on his stock holdings, and he would likely never recoup that investment.

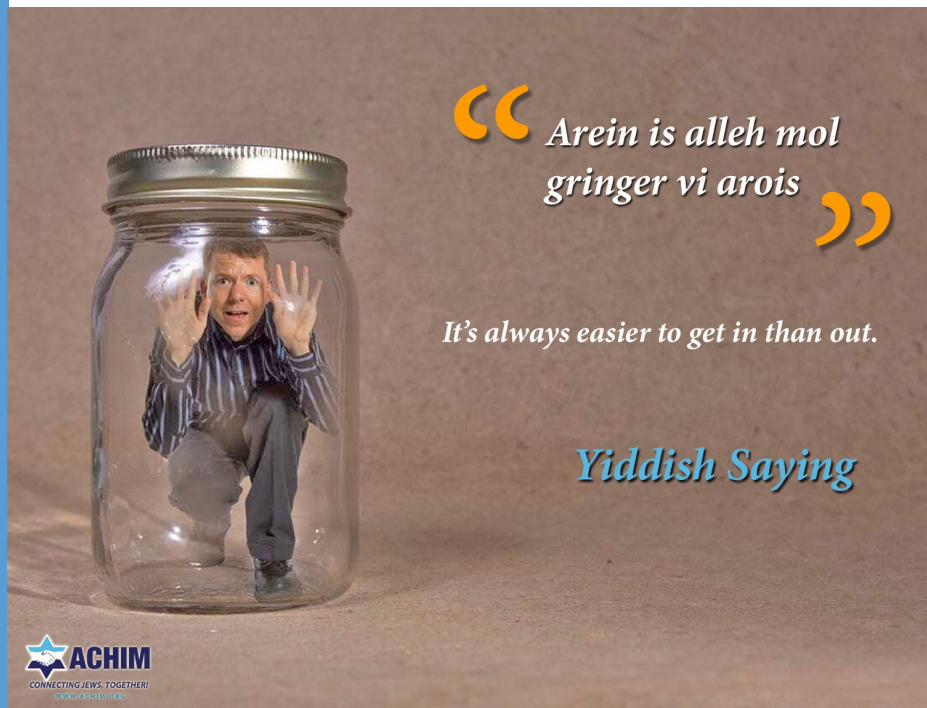
Gavriel was furious. He inquired around the shul why there was no reception, and he was told that there was a hidden cell phone jammer. After a bit of investigating Gavriel learned that Tzvi was responsible for the jammer.

Gavriel accosted Tzvi and told him that because he unilaterally placed the jammer in the shul, he caused Gavriel a loss of over a million dollars. "I expect you to make restitution for that loss, Gavriel demanded."

But Tzvi felt strongly that he was not obligated to pay Gavriel anything. "It is forbidden to text and use your phone in the middle of davening. It is forbidden to use your phone in this shul. You should not have been using your phone at all, so I had the right to block the messages."

They brought this question before Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? Is Tzvi obligated to pay for the loss caused by his installing a phone jammer?

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“ *Arein is alleh mol gringer vi arois* ”

It's always easier to get in than out.

Yiddish Saying



mer because his very existence is dependent upon these. Compare these with almost all of his other aspects that do not define his very existence. For example, his wife, his children, his siblings, his career and all those other components that only came after he already came into existence. As critical as they are in terms of defining him, they are not part of his core essence. Without the former he would not exist. Without the latter he would exist, albeit in different circumstances.

The Maharal continues, just as the birth of a person defines his core essence so does our Egyptian exodus define our core essence. It was our birth. Let us go one step further; just as the exodus defines our core essence, so does our being HaShem's people define our core essence. We can have an Arab nation that are not Muslims; in fact they only accepted it after some storyteller convinced them of it. We, on the other hand, are inextricably part of HaShem. Without HaShem

there is no nation of Israel.

The Maharal continues further. Regarding HaShem Himself the same is true. With our exodus from Egypt HaShem associated His Name to us. As we say in the Adon Olom, "and when all was done according to His Will then His Name was called King..." That Name 'King' is inextricably tied to His people. Just as the birth of a person defines his core self, similarly, the core essence of HaShem being King is defined by His nation. If there is no nation of Israel Hashem is not King.

The Maharal extends this insight to explain why an attack on the Jewish people is an attack on HaShem. If our own merits cannot warrant a salvation we can count on HaShem's Name to be saved because we are inextricably connected.

The reason the Egyptian exodus will always be relevant is because it was that event by which HaShem attached Himself to us and we to Him. The foundation of that final destiny is rooted in our Egyptian exodus.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and beautiful Yom Tov.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE POLAR NIGHT

We know that the plague of choshech was a time of permanent darkness. Is there anything in modern times that can give us a small taste of the plague of choshech? Allow me to introduce to you the Polar Night.

Imagine a place where the sun doesn't rise for weeks or even months. Welcome to the polar night, a time of stunning beauty and mystery found in the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Let's journey into this world of darkness and discover how people and animals cope with this unique experience.

What is Polar Night? Polar night occurs during the winter months north of the Arctic Circle and in the summer south of the Antarctic Circle. It's a period when the sun does not rise above the horizon for over 24 hours. In fact, at the North Pole, polar night can last for an incredible 179 days. The northernmost town in the United States, Utqiagvik, Alaska, experiences roughly 65 days of polar night each year.

However, the polar night isn't entirely pitch-black all the time. There are different phases of twilight, such as civil, nautical, and astronomical twilight, that bring some light to the region. The closer you get to the poles, the longer the polar night lasts.

The Challenges of Polar Night: Living through polar night is not without its challenges. The lack of sunlight can affect circadian rhythms and disrupt sleep patterns. This can lead to insomnia, depression, and alcohol use disorder. People might also struggle with cabin fever from being cooped up indoors for too long. Imagine the lack of sunlight messing with your sleep schedule, making you feel sluggish. This can lead to a condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), bringing on feelings of low energy and depression.

In places like Utqiagvik, Alaska, residents experience around 65 days of polar night each year, with temperatures dipping as low as -18°F in January. In other areas, such as the Norwegian town of Kautokeino, temperatures can plummet below -40°F .

Despite these challenges, many people living in polar regions find ways to embrace and even enjoy the polar night. They use light therapy lamps, maintain regular routines, stay physically active, and engage in social activities to stay healthy and happy.

Nature's Spectacle. One of the most magical aspects of polar night is the incredible natural light displays it offers. The Northern Lights, or aurora borealis, are a breathtaking phenomenon that can be observed in the pristine darkness of the polar night. The colors dance across the sky, painting the night with hues of green, pink, and purple.

Polar night also offers perfect conditions for stargazing. Astronomical twilight provides nearly pitch-black skies, making it an ideal time to observe constellations and other celestial wonders.

Life in the Polar Night. Life in polar regions continues as usual during polar night, but with some adjustments. People bundle up in warm clothing and well-insulated homes to stay safe from the cold. In Scandinavian countries, saunas and cold plunges are popular ways to cope with the long polar night.

Communities often organize events and activities to bring people together and keep spirits high. Some residents even find the perpetual twilight energizing, allowing them to feel more connected to nature.

Polar night is a time that can challenge and inspire in equal measure.

IN THIS WAY, YOU CAN EVENTUALLY KNOW ALL OF SHISHAH SIDREI MISHNAH BY HEART

A few years after the passing of the Gerrer Rebbe, The Beis Yisroel, a taxi driver picked up a Gerrer chassid and told him a story. Decades earlier, as a young man, he had driven the Gerrer Rebbe, who asked him what he was thinking about as he drove. The driver answered honestly. 'I am thinking about getting to the destination as quickly as I can so that I can collect the fare and pick up another customer.'

'But how do those thoughts benefit you?' the Rebbe asked. 'Why not use this time to think about ideas that can make your life better?'

'Like what sort of ideas?' the driver asked, intrigued. The Rebbe informed the driver that Rabbi Pinchas Kehati (pictured) had recently begun to publish a weekly digest of Mishnayos, a perek each week explained very clearly. 'If you learn Mishnayos in the morning, before work,' the Rebbe said, 'you can review and memorize them all day when you are in the car. In this way, you can eventually know all of Shishah Sidrei Mishnah by heart.'

The driver turned around to face his passenger, a proud smile on his face. 'Today, I am in the middle of Mikvaos, and I already know all of Shishah Sidrei Mishnah by heart,' he said proudly."



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about gneivas daas, regarding whether it's okay to have a plaque commemorating the generosity of the donor of the library, Rav Zilberstein wrote that it is not gneivas daas because most people wouldn't do what he did. His effort to try to do teshuva and donate to the library is indeed generous.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated by Yossie & Hinda Davis and Family in memory of
Mrs. Rosalie Kallner
Shaina Rochel bas Ephraim Fishel
whose Yartzeit is Shivi Shel Pesach.



K&F
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
406 W. Pennsylvania Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204

Brad E. Kauffman Esquire and Kauffman and Forman P.A.
specializing in corporate and construction law,
estates, wills and trusts and business litigation.

