



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE PROJECTION

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

There was once a man named Yakov, who owned a large apartment building in Tel Aviv. One evening, he had to stay unusually late at work. As he was walking back to his car at night, he noticed something strange on the side of his building: a high-luminosity, high-definition laser projection coming from somewhere across the street.

When he looked closer, he saw that the projection was displaying a slideshow on a white wall of his building. The slideshow showed an advertisement for a certain company for about 20 seconds, then switched to another company for 20 seconds, and then to another. The ads were very well-produced, but no one had ever asked Yakov for permission to use his building in this way.

Curious, he decided to investigate. The next day, he went across the street to find the source of the projector and was directed to a



PROUD, BUT HUMBLE

In this week's Parsha Moshe continues to exhort his people to be strong in their loyalty to HaShem. He trains them in the ways of human nature how once a person becomes successful and finds himself in the lap of luxury he tends to quickly forget his beginnings.

In our earliest beginnings we were completely dependent upon HaShem. Before HaShem took us from Egypt we were actually slaves having no possibility of ownership. Once a person becomes affluent he wants to forget how dependent he was and therefore chooses to forget how much he owes to HaShem. Nobody likes to feel indebted to another.

We can therefore appreciate Moshe's teaching in the following verse. "Lest you eat and are satisfied and build big and beautiful homes and you settle down and your herds of livestock multiply and your gold and silver increases and all your assets grow and your heart becomes conceited and you forget HaShem Who took out of Egypt from the house of slaves... and you will say (regarding your magnificent wealth) in your heart 'My power and the might of my hand procured me this wealth'. But remember HaShem for it is He Who gives you the power to make wealth..." Moshe knows that there will be periods in our history when his people will experience

man named Mordechai. Yakov told Mordechai he was interested in advertising and asked what the rates were. Mordechai replied that it cost \$500 per week.

Yakov was intrigued and asked how long Mordechai had been running this business. Mordechai said he had been doing it for the past two years. Yakov quickly calculated: there were approximately five companies being advertised, each paying \$500 per week. That worked out to about \$260,000 over two years.

Yakov then said, "The truth is, it seems like you've made close to \$260,000 over the past two years. I actually own the building you've been projecting onto, and you never asked me for permission. I want you to pay me that money. If you had asked me beforehand, I would have charged you for the right to project onto my building."

Mordechai was caught off guard. "I didn't think you would mind," he said. "Besides, I didn't put anything permanent on your wall, it's just light, no paint or physical marks. There's no damage." He added, "I'm sorry I did it, but I'm not going to pay you the money."

The question was then brought to Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein:

Is Mordechai obligated to pay Yakov, the owner of the building?

What do you think?

On one hand, he did not ask permission from the owner, and he did use his property. On the other hand, the owner wasn't using it at all, and the wall was just sitting unused, and it wasn't permanent.

See V'haarev Na, Volume Four, Hebrew edition, page 53

MITZVA MEME



much affluence and he understands the challenges that it brings. He therefore warns them to beware.

In his drashos (drasha 10), the Ran takes note of Moshe's warning; Moshe does not say that 'it is HaShem Who gives you wealth' but rather 'it is HaShem Who gives you the power to make wealth'. The implication is that the notion that the Jew says in his heart is accurate. The Jew whose heart has turned arrogant will say that 'it is my power that procures me this wealth'. And that remains a truth. It is truly his power and the might of his hand that procured this wealth. The only detail that Moshe qualifies is that this power is not his own, rather, it was a gift given to him from HaShem.

Moshe is teaching us a tremendous lesson in how we need to view our successes and accomplishments. The businessman who builds a large firm and finds much success can take the credit for all that he has built. It is truly the accomplishment of his intellect and his hard work but he must not forget that it is HaShem Who gifted him that intellect.

The heart of Man turns arrogant to protect him from feeling indebted. Moshe acknowledges that Man is the one who made his wealth and he may be proud of it. However, as much as he is proud of his accomplishment he must first acknowledge that HaShem is the One Who gave the gift upon which all his success rests. So long as he remembers the Giver of the gift, he will recognize his indebtedness.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

DRAGON IN THE TREES: MEET THE AMAZING FLYING LIZARD

Way up in the treetops of Southeast Asia, something strange is happening. You're walking through the forest, and suddenly, whoosh!, a streak zips from one tree to another. You might rub your eyes and look again. Was that a dragon? Sort of.

It wasn't a fire-breathing beast from fairy tales, but a real animal called *Draco volans*, known as the flying dragon. It doesn't breathe fire or hoard treasure, but what it can do is just as magical: it glides through the forest air, drifting from tree to tree like a tiny hang glider. In the world of reptiles, *Draco volans* is a high-flying superstar.

Let's take a closer look at one of nature's most jaw-dropping little wonders.

A Lizard with Wings? Okay, not wings exactly, but close! The flying dragon is a member of the Agamidae family of lizards. It measures about 22 centimeters long from nose to tail, that's about the length of a pencil. Its body isn't bulky or scary. In fact, it's pretty lightweight and slender. But when it's time to move, the magic begins.

Along each side of its body, *Draco volans* has thin membranes of skin called patagia. These are stretched out over elongated ribs, five to seven of them. When the lizard wants to take flight, it spreads those ribs wide like a folding fan, and the patagia pop out into curved "wings."

But here's where it gets really clever. Once in the air, *Draco* doesn't just glide passively. It actually uses its forelimbs to grab the edges of the patagium, forming a kind of steering system. This isn't just a parachute, it's a gliding wing the lizard can control, twist, and angle for smooth, precise landings.

It's not true flight like a bird or bat, *Draco* can't flap its wings, but it's far more than a fall. Scientists call this kind of movement gliding, and *Draco volans* is one of the best at it.

These flights aren't long and slow like an eagle soaring on the wind. They're quick, elegant bursts, usually lasting just a few seconds. On average, a glide covers about 8 to 9 meters, which is roughly the length of a big car. The longest carefully documented glide in the wild? About 12 meters! Some older reports say members of the *Draco* genus have glided nearly 60 meters, but those are rare and not well-studied.

Still, even the average glide is impressive. For a lizard no bigger than your forearm, sailing between trees like that is an acrobatic masterpiece.

And it sticks the landing, too. Just before touching down, *Draco volans* folds its wings, reaches out with its hands, and lands hand-first on the tree bark, then brings in its hind feet, safe and sound.

Why glide? Great question! Flying dragons don't glide just for fun. Every glide has a purpose.

First, gliding helps them move between trees quickly without climbing down to the ground, where predators may be waiting. It's a smart way to stay safe while traveling. Second, it helps with territory. Males typically claim a small home range that includes one to three

trees. Females' ranges may overlap with several males, so movement is essential.

And third, gliding is key during social interactions, like avoiding rivals, chasing females, or putting on a show.

Flying dragons are native to the forests of Southeast Asia, including parts of Indonesia and the Philippines. They're not mountain creatures or swamp dwellers, they're tree-lovers through and through. In fact, *Draco volans* is what scientists call arboreal, which means it lives in the trees.

Most of its time is spent clinging to tree trunks, branches, and bark, especially on the forest edge where sunlight can shine through. One field study in Borneo found that *Draco* lizards typically perch around 6 to 7 meters off the ground. That's about the height of a two-story building!

Male *Draco volans* lizards are known for their bold social displays. They have a bright yellow dewlap, that's a flap of skin under the throat, which they extend to signal their presence. They also flash their wings and bob their heads in a territorial dance to ward off other males or attract a mate.

Males are smaller than females in body length, a rare case of reversed size roles in lizards, but they make up for it with showmanship. In one Borneo study, scientists documented multiple displays, territory patrols, and stand-offs between males. Drama in the treetops!

When they're not flying or showing off, flying dragons are very hard to spot. Their bodies are patterned like bark, letting them blend into the tree trunks they call home. This camouflage protects them from birds and other predators.

Flying dragons don't eat anything too fearsome. Their diet is mostly made up of ants, with a few termites thrown in for good measure. They hunt right on the tree trunks, flicking out their tongues to snatch up their tiny prey. No fire, no fangs, just efficient insect control in a scaly package.

You might think a flying lizard would need to carefully warm or cool its body. But *Draco volans* is surprisingly laid-back when it comes to temperature. Studies show its body temperature closely tracks the air around it. It doesn't bask like a sun-loving iguana, nor does it cool off in water. It simply matches its forest environment, another tool from Hashem, for life high in the trees.

Despite its dramatic name, the flying dragon isn't dangerous. It has no venom, no harmful bite, and no threat to people. Some rumors have called it "poisonous," but there's no truth to that. It's just a shy, insect-eating reptile with a knack for gliding.

Whether it's sailing through the branches or vanishing into bark camouflage, the flying dragon is a marvel of the natural world.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

WITHOUT SAYING A WORD

In 1945 my father, Rabbi Hirsch Diskind, still a single man and a talmid of Rav Hutner, was the mashgiach and dorm counselor) at Baltimore's Talmudical Academy High School. In addition, he also taught the 8th grade Hebrew studies class.

Rabbi Elliot Berlin, one of his eighth graders, shared the following memory with my nephew:

"One morning an electrician entered the eighth-grade classroom to wire up an intercom system. As he entered, he realized that his work would disturb the class and immediately apologized. He told Rabbi Diskind, that he would come back later. But the kids jumped up, saying, 'No, no, you can come in now.'

"Your grandfather did not say one word. He sat down, took off his glasses, and tears ran down his face. עלבונה של תורה

"He did not say one word to us. I can still see it today, 70 years later. Until that point, Gemara was for me just another subject. After learning by your grandfather, it was learning Torah. It was a whole different outlook."

יהי זכרו ברוך

Paysach Diskind



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about whether a man could leave his Tefillin behind, Rav Elyashiv (Veharev Na Volume Four, Hebrew Edition Page 105) answered that all the people in the city in Russia were considered אנוסים (prevented by circumstances beyond their control) and therefore were exempt from the mitzvah of Tefillin entirely. However, this man, who had Tefillin and could put them on, was not an אנוס and was obligated. Therefore, he would not be permitted to leave his Tefillin behind, since the others actually did not have an obligation.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in memory of
Dina bas Yitzchak
By her children Gidon and Eliana Israilov



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