



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



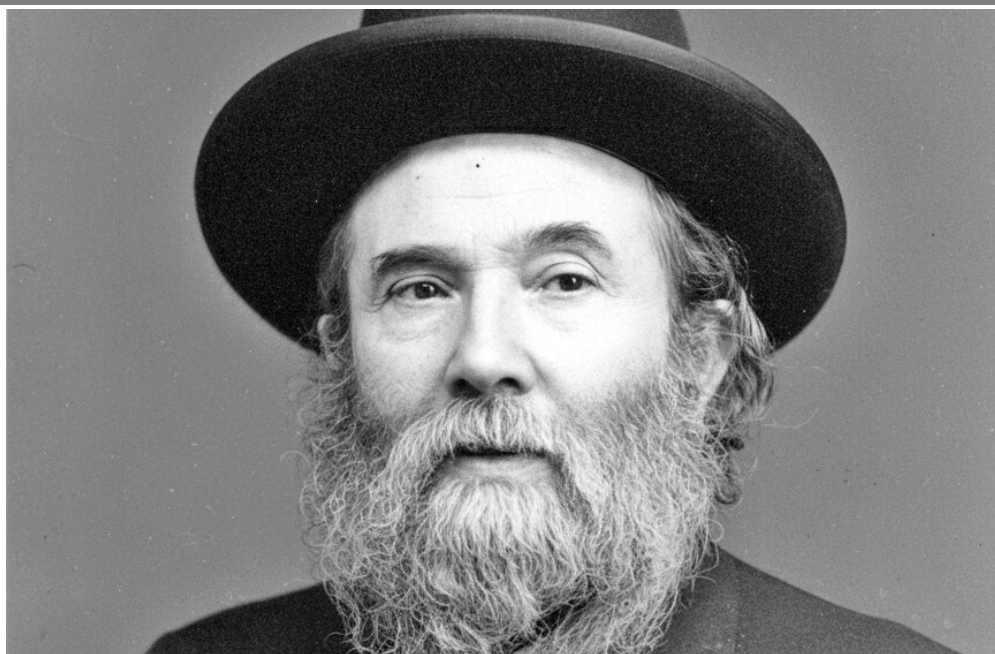
THE SPILL IN THE KUGEL

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

One Thursday night, a man named Chaim walked into a restaurant called ShaB-Bistro. It was a restaurant open on Thursday nights. It only served Shabbos food, like cholent, potato kugel, different types of chicken, and more. It was very popular. People came there to eat, and the store also sold that food for Shabbos.

Chaim saw a bunch of friends and started talking with them. He was holding a large cup of soda and standing near the buffet table, which had a very large tray of potato kugel. Suddenly, Chaim accidentally tripped, and his whole cup of soda spilled into the potato kugel.

Chaim was fine; he didn't get hurt. Everyone laughed and made a joke out of it. But then the store owner Eitan came out.



APPRECIATION

On the third day of creation when HaShem moved the waters to the side to reveal the dry land He also instructed the earth to sprout forth grass and herbage along with the trees and other plants. However, none of the plants actually grew out of the ground because they needed rain to begin that process and there was no rain until Adam was created. Once Adam was created on the sixth day it rained and finally all the vegetation began to flourish.

The Torah explains this phenomenon as follows. "Now the trees of the field were not yet on the earth and the herb of the field had not yet sprouted for HaShem had not sent rain upon the earth because there was no man to work the soil."

This is a very difficult verse to understand. Was Man the one who was going to work the soil? Before eating from the forbidden tree Adam did no agricultural work at all. Was he to develop all the vegetation upon the face of the earth?

Our Sages teach us the intent of this verse is that HaShem cannot bring down any blessing to this world without Man requesting it. The work which the Torah says Adam needed to do was a reference to his praying for rain. HaShem designed the world in a way that requires Man to first daven for what is needed and only then can that need be provided. HaShem wanted the earth to sprout forth vegetation but it required rain and since there was no Man to daven for rain, the sprouting needed to wait till Friday, when Man would arrive and would daven for rain.

He said, "I'm glad you're okay, but I don't think I can sell this potato kugel anymore. I charge five shekels per piece of potato kugel. This whole tray could have been sold as at least 100 pieces. So you tripped, and you caused me a loss of 500 shekels. I'd appreciate it if you could please pay me 500 shekels."

Chaim was shocked. "Five hundred shekels for one potato kugel? I could probably make it myself for ten shekels by just buying the ingredients. Five hundred shekels is way too much."

But Eitan said, "I hear what you're saying, but that's how much money you made me lose."

Chaim replied, "I could pay you for the cost of the ingredients and a little for the labor. I can pay you for what a potato kugel costs in another store, but 500 shekels is way overpriced."

They agreed to bring the question to a rav.

So what do you think? In such a case, does Chaim have to pay 500 shekels because that's the amount the owner lost? Or should it be a smaller amount, maybe just the cost of a whole kugel sold in a store?

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Is this not remarkable! With all the creative energy HaShem used in creating the world, HaShem needed Man to daven for the rain. Why did HaShem set up the system in this way?

The purpose of creation was to give Man the opportunity to build a relationship with HaShem. Any successful relationship is predicated upon the appreciation that one has for the other. Therefore HaShem designed the world that no goodness could be showered down to earth unless the recipients would appreciate it. Davening is the first step in appreciation.

If this lesson is taught so early in the Torah I feel it is necessary for me and Reb Yitzi to express our appreciation to the Torah Institute for printing TableTalk for the past two years and to the dedicated staff who make this possible. There are currently 1100 copies printed every week and every one is taken. I also wish to express our appreciation to the corpo-

rate sponsors and to the weekly sponsors who help cover the cost of creating and printing TableTalk.

Torah Institute's success in educating their children in the ways of Torah goes beyond their very dedicated staff. I believe it lies in its roots. Our Sages teach that the intent and commitment that is invested in the beginning of any endeavor directly affects the outcome.

The roots of Torah Institute lie in the creation of Shearis Hapleita which was founded in 1951 by Rav Yitzchak Sternhell who survived the Holocaust. Rav Sternhill was a talmid of the Minchas Elozer the Munkatcher Rov and was a talmid chocham of the greatest proportion. Upon arriving to Baltimore after the war he committed himself to replanting the Yiddishkeit that was destroyed in Europe on the shores of America. With tremendous mesiras nefesh he founded Shearis Hapleita, the forerunner of Torah Institute and ignited the Baltimore community with his passion and mesiras nefesh for Yiddishkeit. Without his input the Baltimore community would not be the same and with this week's lesson in mind we must appreciate Rav Sternhill's contribution to our lives and the lives of our children.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and a beautiful Yom Tov.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE MANED WOLF: NATURE'S FOX ON STILTS

Imagine you're walking through the sweeping grasslands of South America. The sun is dipping low, painting the tall grasses with golden fire. Out of the shadows, something stirs. At first glance, you think, "Ah! A wolf!" But wait. The legs are way too long. The body is lean and fiery red, the face almost fox-like. What is this creature?

You've just met the maned wolf (pronounced mane-ed). It's got the name of a wolf, the look of a fox, the diet of a fruit bat, and the gait of a giraffe. It's a walking riddle wrapped in golden fur. And the more you learn about it, the more incredible it becomes.

The very first surprise about the maned wolf is its identity. Despite its name, it isn't really a wolf. It isn't a fox either, though it could easily pass for one at first glance. In fact, scientists have placed it in a category all its own. It's the only member of its genus, *Chrysocyon*, a name that means "golden dog." This makes the maned wolf something truly unique in the animal kingdom, a lone branch on the canid family tree, sharing distant kinship with wolves, foxes, and dogs, but belonging to none.

Why call it "maned" then? The name comes from its striking feature: a ridge of long, black fur running down its neck and shoulders. When threatened or excited, the maned wolf can raise this mane like a punk-rock mohawk, instantly making itself look taller, tougher, and far scarier. Imagine being a small predator eyeing this red-and-black stilt-legged animal, only to watch it suddenly double its intimidation factor with a snap of its fur.

If you spot a maned wolf in the wild, the very first thing you'll notice, before the fiery fur, before the mohawk mane, is those legs. Long, impossibly slender, and jet-black, they give the maned wolf its unforgettable nickname: the "fox on stilts."

But these legs aren't just for show. They're the perfect tools for life in the tall grasslands and savannas of South America. Standing up to three feet at the shoulder, the maned wolf is the tallest wild canid in the world. That height gives it an excellent view over the sea of grasses that cover its home. With those stilts, it can scan for danger, spot prey, and keep an eye on its surroundings.

Those legs do more than elevate the view. They're built for navigating marshes and swampy terrain too, carrying the wolf lightly across soft ground. And when fruit hangs from low branches, the maned wolf doesn't have to struggle, it can just reach right up for a snack. This isn't just height; it's multitasking height.

Watching a maned wolf walk is a marvel in itself. Because of its long legs, it has a pacing gait, moving both legs on one side of its body together, just like a giraffe. Combined with its slow, stealthy steps while hunting, the effect is mesmerizing.

When you picture a wolf, you probably imagine a fearsome hunter chasing down deer or elk. The maned wolf, however, rewrites that script entirely. This is no ferocious carnivore. Instead, it's an omnivore, a creature that eats a mix of plants and animals.

Sure, it'll hunt small prey like rodents, rabbits, birds, and

insects. But nearly half of its diet is made up of fruit and plants! Its favorite treat? A tomato-like berry called the wolf apple, or lobeira. This reddish fruit is so beloved that scientists often find its seeds scattered far and wide in the wolf's droppings. In fact, the maned wolf is a crucial seed-spreader, helping plants reproduce and ecosystems thrive.

Even more fascinating, eating wolf apples might protect the maned wolf from parasites, especially nasty kidney worms. The maned wolf gets a healthy meal, and the plant gets its seeds distributed, a win-win partnership between species.

As magical as the maned wolf may seem, it comes with one very stinky superpower. Its urine has a powerful, musky odor that many people say smells uncannily like marijuana. This pungent scent has earned the maned wolf another nickname: the "skunk wolf."

But this isn't a weird party trick. The smell has a purpose, leaving strong scent markers on plants and rocks to claim their territory. The message is clear: "This area belongs to me. Stay away!" In a wide, open grassland where wolves may never even see each other, these chemical signals are the perfect long-distance communication system.

Here's another way the maned wolf breaks wolf stereotypes: it doesn't live in packs. Unlike gray wolves, which form tightly knit family groups, maned wolves are shy, solitary creatures. They spend most of their time alone, hunting and roaming their large territories.

Does this mean they never connect? Not at all. Maned wolves are monogamous, meaning they form lifelong pairs. A male and female may share a territory, though they usually travel separately. When pups are born, both parents play a role, with the male often bringing food to the den. It's a quiet kind of family life, but one built on partnership and devotion.

And how do they communicate across those big grassland distances? Not with the eerie howls of true wolves. Instead, they let loose a powerful "roar-bark", a booming, guttural sound that echoes across the night. Deep and dramatic, it's the perfect soundtrack for the shadowy figure it belongs to.

Every part of the maned wolf's body is tuned to its environment. Its giant ears, like furry satellite dishes, can swivel to pick up the faintest rustle of a rodent moving underground. Its long legs keep its head above the tall grasses and let it wade through swamps. Its stealthy walking style allows it to creep up silently before springing with a pounce.

Even its fiery red coat has a function. Against the tall golden grass of South America, that reddish fur blends surprisingly well, camouflaging the wolf as it stalks at dawn or dusk. From mane to tail tip, the maned wolf is a masterpiece of creation.

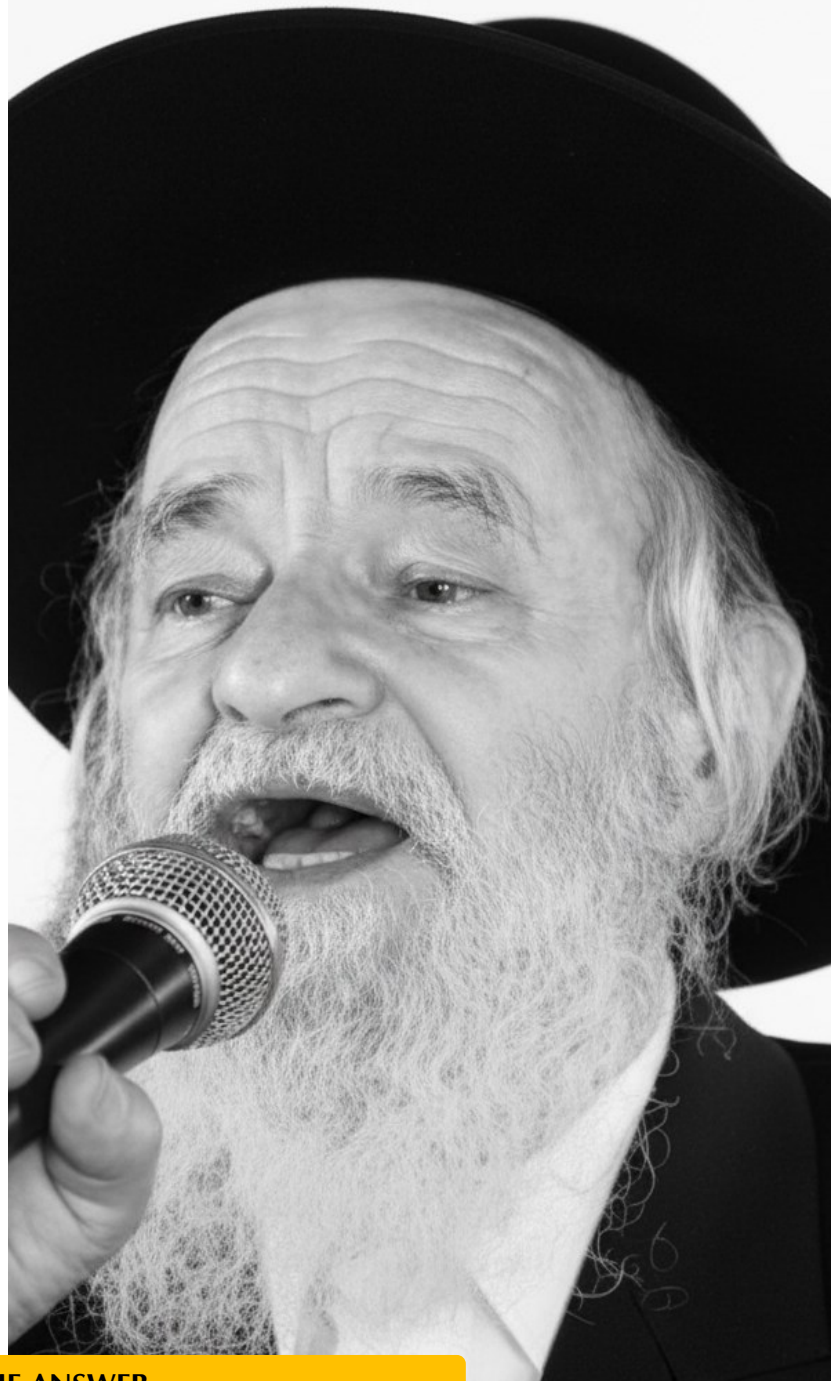
**HE ASKED FOR A CHAIR, CLIMBED ONTO
THE FENCE, AND JUMPED DOWN INTO
THE COURTYARD**

Reb Yaakov Galinsky once tried to help a boy gain acceptance into a certain yeshivah. The committee turned him down.

Reb Yaakov was already ninety-one years old, frail and weak, but giving up was never his way. He hired a taxi to the yeshivah, determined to plead the boy's case in person. When he arrived, he found the gates locked, since classes had not yet begun.

So what did he do? He asked for a chair, climbed onto the fence, and jumped down into the courtyard. From there, he went straight to the Rosh Yeshivah to beg him to reconsider, and to accept the boy.

(From Rav Yaakov Galinsky, by Rebbetzin G. Lehrer)



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the money in the mikva, Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein (V"N Volume 4 Hebrew Edition) answered that this is considered "raglayim le-davar" and he is allowed to "oseh din leatzmo" and keep the money.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in loving memory of
Stanley First
Shimson Leib ben Rafael

By his son Jonathan First



Brad E. Kauffman Esquire and Kauffman and Forman P.A.
specializing in corporate and construction law,
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