

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



FILL YOUR CART!

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Ari once called his friend Dani, "I'm hosting a big event tonight, but I'm stuck at work. Could I ask you for a huge favor? Here's a list, could you please go to the grocery store and buy everything I need for the party? I'll pay you back tonight."

Dani replied, "No problem." He went to the supermarket and filled up the shopping cart according to the list. By the time he finished, the cart was completely full, about 2,000 shekels' worth of products.

As he approached the counter to check out, he heard an announcement over the loudspeaker: "Hello, this is Rami



HIS LITTLE HUT

The Parsha opens, "Speak to the Bnei Yisroel that they should take Me a terumah..." The simple meaning of this verse is that our people were about to undertake the construction of the Mishkan, and they needed to collect the materials from which to make it. The word terumah is designated for gifts that are given to the Kohein. These include terumas dagan, the gift of harvested grain; it includes various parts of the offerings that were given to the Kohein. The word terumah derives from leharim, which means to lift up or to elevate. This name is appropriate for these gifts, since we elevate the status of the gift by giving it to the Kohein. In fact, the sanctity of terumah is such that a non-Kohein may not eat it; the non-Kohein is on a lower level of sanctity. The usage of terumah in our verse indicates that the contribution one gives to the Mishkan elevates that gift to be worthy of housing HaShem's Presence.

The difficulty with our verse is that it should have been worded, "Speak to the Bnei Yisroel that they give Me a terumah," not "take Me."

The Midrash gives an analogy to explain our relationship to the Mishkan. A great king married off his only daughter to a prince. After the wedding, the prince wanted to go on his way with his new wife. The king, who was extremely close to his daughter, turned to his son-in-law

Levy, the owner of this supermarket. We're running a special promotion that we offer periodically. For the next three minutes, anyone with a completely full shopping cart can come to the checkout and receive their entire cart for free."

Dani happened to have a completely full shopping cart, and he was very excited, he had a chance to win. But then he thought, "all this 2,000-shekel merchandise will go to Ari. Why don't I keep this cart for myself, and then come back and fill another cart for him? I'll get 2,000 shekels' worth of groceries for free, and the second cart will be for Ari."

Then he reconsidered: "Maybe I can't do that. For the past half hour, I've been filling this cart with Ari in mind. Perhaps I can't suddenly decide that it's all for me and then start a new cart for him."

Or perhaps it doesn't make a difference that he originally had Ari in mind? After all, the groceries don't belong to Ari yet, and Dani has the right to keep this cart for himself and start a new one for Ari.

This question was brought to Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein.

What do you think?

See Chashukei Chemed Nedarim page 335

Let us return to the opening verse of our Parsha: "Speak to the Bnei Yisroel that they take Me a terumah..." The Sfas Emes explains that HaShem is instructing His people to actually take Him, to take HaShem Himself with them as a terumah, an elevation.

The words of the king to his son-in-law that the Midrash reads as follows. "Make a small hut in which 'Adar' (I will live).

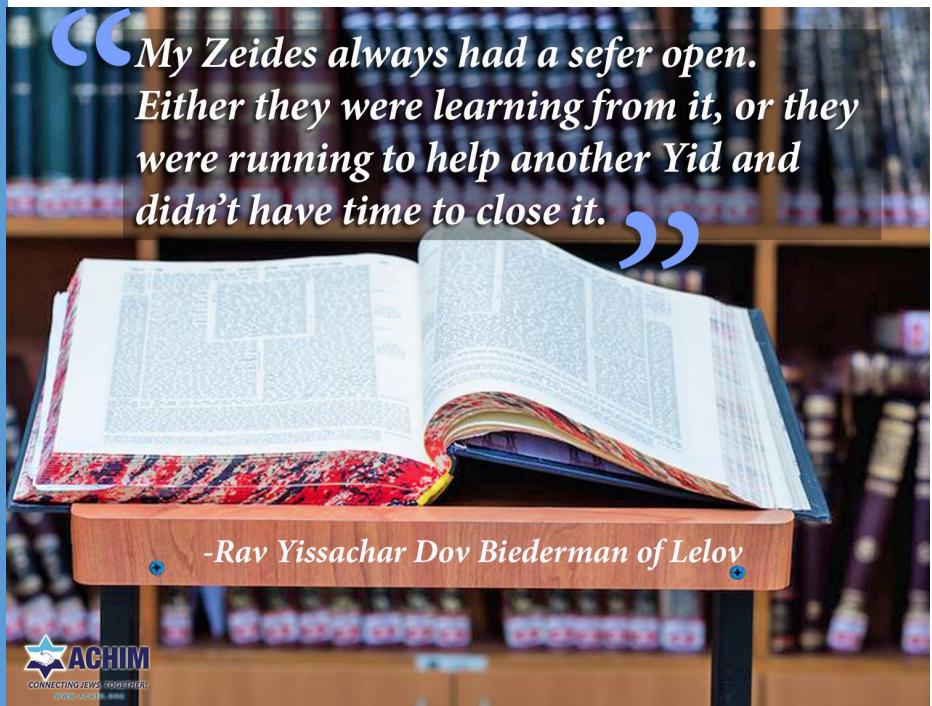
How well synchronized the parshios are with the time of year in which we read them. As we begin the month of Adar our Parsha hints to us that the time of HaShem's moving in with us will soon be realized.

As Adar prepares the path for Nissan may we see that great moment for which we all anxiously await.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind

MITZVA MEME



with the following request: "I gave you my daughter, with whom I am very close. You are now leaving with your wife, and I do not want to hold you back. However, it is so difficult for me to part from my daughter, so I ask you to please build a small hut for me wherever you travel, so I can live nearby."

The Midrash teaches us that the Mishkan is the small hut for HaShem, the father of our new bride, the Torah. Naturally, the hut which we prepare to be the dwelling place of our Father-in-law must be an elevated place, worthy for HaShem. The Mishkan is therefore our way of elevating HaShem among us so that He can live near His Torah.



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE FIVE MINUTE WONDER: THE INCREDIBLE WORLD OF THE MAYFLY

When we think about a long life, we might imagine a tortoise living for a century or a human reaching eighty years. However, for one specific creature, a lifetime isn't measured in decades or years. It is measured in minutes. This creature is the mayfly, an insect that holds some of the most startling records in the animal kingdom.

The scientific name for the mayfly is *Ephemeroptera*. This name is a perfect description of their existence, derived from the Greek words *ephemeros*, meaning "lasting a day," and *pteron*, meaning "wing." True to their name, mayflies are famous for having the shortest adult lifespan of any animal on Earth.

While humans spend decades growing up and aging, the American sand-burrowing mayfly (*Dolania americana*, pictured left) has an adult life that is almost unbelievably brief. After reaching adulthood, this species lives for as little as five minutes. In that tiny window of time, it must find a mate, reproduce, and die. Even the longest-lived adult mayfly, a species known as *Povilla adusta*, only survives for about 48 hours.

You might wonder how they survive without eating. The answer is simple: they don't. Adult mayflies have non-functional, vestigial mouthparts. They physically cannot eat or drink. Instead, they rely entirely on energy reserves they stored up during their youth. Their adult form has a singular purpose, which is reproduction. Males often die immediately after mating, and females perish shortly after laying their eggs. They are born, they breed, and they starve, all within the span of a single sunset.

Although their adult lives are fleeting, mayflies spend a significant amount of time growing up underwater, often for months, and sometimes for years. Before they ever take flight, they live as nymphs in lakes and rivers. This youth stage is where the real growing happens. While most insects, like beetles or moths, might molt (shed their skin) four or five times, a mayfly nymph is different. These creatures may molt up to 50 times as they grow, constantly shedding their old shells to accommodate their expanding bodies.

The anatomy of a mayfly is designed perfectly for its specific lifestyle. If you look closely at a male mayfly, you might notice something odd about his eyes. Males of many species possess "turbinate" eyes. These look like large, turban-shaped structures split into two distinct parts. The top part looks exclusively upward to spot females flying against the backdrop of the sky, while the bottom part looks forward to help them navigate.

Their wings are also unique. Mayflies belong to a group called *Paleoptera*, which translates to "old wings." Unlike a housefly or a beetle, a mayfly lacks the mechanism to fold its wings flat against its body. Even when they are resting on a wall, their wings are permanently stuck upright, resembling the sails of a boat.

Below the wings, their bodies act as sophisticated flight instruments. Adults typically possess two or three extremely long tail filaments, called *cerci*. These tails are often longer than their actual bodies and act as stabilizers during flight, helping them balance in the air.

Underwater, the nymphs are just as specialized. Unlike fish, which have gills on their heads, mayfly nymphs breathe through tracheal gills located along the sides of their abdomen. Some species even flutter these gills to help them swim. Others possess large, tusk-like mandibles that they use to dig tunnels and burrow into the sediment of riverbeds. In rare tropical cases, some nymphs are even bioluminescent, glowing in the dark depths of the water.

Because adult mayflies have no mouthparts to bite and no stingers to defend themselves, they have developed a different survival strategy: "predator satiation." This is a fancy way of saying "safety in numbers." Mayflies emerge in synchronized billions, overwhelming their predators. There are simply too many insects for the birds, bats, and fish to eat.

However, this strategy can have chaotic side effects for humans. In areas along the Mississippi River or in countries like Hungary, mayfly emergences can be massive. They are phototactic, meaning they are attracted to light, which lures billions of them into cities, gas stations, and well-lit streets.

The resulting piles of dead insects can be hazardous. In places like Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, the carcasses on bridges and roads can become so deep and slick that municipalities are forced to deploy snowplows in the middle of summer to clear the roads and prevent car accidents. (Pictured, right) These swarms are so dense that they can reflect radar waves. On National Weather Service Doppler radar, a mayfly hatch often looks exactly like a heavy rainstorm or a "bloom" expanding across the map.

For the predators, it is an all-you-can-eat buffet. During a massive hatch, bats and birds will gorge themselves so heavily on the insects that they physically become too heavy to fly, grounded by their own gluttony.

Despite the mess they can cause on roads, humans should be happy to see mayflies. They are a primary "indicator species." Most mayflies are incredibly sensitive to pollution and low oxygen levels. If you see mayflies living in a river or lake, it confirms that the ecosystem is healthy and the water is clean. If the water were polluted, they would be the first to disappear.

They are also essential to the food web. Nymphs act as the "cows" of the river. They graze on algae and detritus (rotting plant matter), converting that waste into high-quality protein. When fish eat the nymphs, that energy moves up the food chain. This makes them the single most important insect in freshwater ecosystems. This is because mayfly nymphs act as the primary "energy bridge" in the river, grazing on microscopic algae and rotting plants that fish cannot digest. They convert this inedible matter into high-quality protein, effectively unlocking the river's energy for larger predators. Since these nymphs live underwater year-round in massive numbers, they provide a constant, essential food source that supports the entire fish population.

There are over 3,000 known species found on every continent on Earth, with the exception of Antarctica. Some are giants, like the *Hexagenia limbata* or the *Tisza mayfly* (*Palingenia longicauda*), which can have wingspans up to 8 centimeters (3.1 inches).

A single female can lay up to 8,000 eggs. While some drop eggs from the air, others crawl underwater to glue their eggs to rocks, often drowning in the process to ensure the next generation survives. These eggs are incredibly hardy; they can enter "diapause," a state of suspended animation, waiting months or even years for the right conditions. This allows them to survive droughts or freezing winters. Some hardy species even defy the cold entirely, hatching in winter and crawling out onto the ice in sub-zero temperatures.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

WRITE THE WORDS ON THE BOTTOM FIVE ROWS OF THE PAGE

Rav Yaakov Edelstein often told the following story during the week of Parashas Shoftim, which commands that when we lay siege to a certain city, we may not damage the surrounding trees: **לא תשחית את עץ עץ** You shall not destroy its trees (Devarim 20:19).

Chazal explain that this isn't just a prohibition against chopping down trees but against causing any wanton destruction, which is referred to as the prohibition of "bal tashchis." Don't damage something that gives you benefit or destroy something that has a purpose. Be sensitive to every detail in our world; even a pad of paper or a disposable cup.

"When I was young, the Chazon Ish told me to write down several lines that he would dictate to me, word for word. He told me to take a pad of writing paper from his desk and start writing.

He saw me place the pen on the first line of the page, and then he stopped me and said, 'Not like that. Write the words on the bottom five rows of the page.' Why? So that the sheet of paper would remain attached to the pad at the top and could still be used after he cut off the bottom five rows.

I learned from him how one needs to be sensitive to the environment, to material objects."

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the man stealing the Sefer Torah, Rav Zilberstein (Chashukei Chemed, Bava Kama, p. 372) quotes Rav Chaim Kanievsky that the reason one normally cannot interrupt in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei, even to prevent a great loss of money, is because it is disrespectful to Hashem. In this case, allowing the Torah to be stolen would be disrespectful, and interrupting would be a way to show Hashem more respect. Therefore, one is allowed to interrupt in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei to prevent the desecration of the Torah and Hashem's honor.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated l'iluy nishmas Mr. George Gelberman upon his second yahrtzeit
מנוח שמחה אברהם בן דוד זיל

By his family.



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