

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE HOVERBOARD

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

There was once a young boy named Avi Burger. One day, his mother, Mrs. Burger, made an incentive program with him: if he got ready for bed on time every day for 30 days, he would win a prize worth up to one hundred shekels. Avi was very motivated to win the prize, and sure enough, after a month, he had filled in all the days on his chart and was able to claim the prize. His mother was very happy, so she took him to the nearby toy store around the corner to buy a toy. They went, browsed through the store, and saw a very high-quality hoverboard marked at 80 shekels. Mrs. Burger was surprised that it was so cheap, but she bought it, and Avi loved it. He was so excited about his prize and used it constantly for two days. Mrs. Burger's neighbor saw the hoverboard and said, "Wow, where did you get that?" She replied, "I got it at the corner toy store, and it was actually relatively cheap, it was only 80 shekels." So the neighbor went into the store and wanted to buy one for herself. But she saw that the sticker price on the toy was actually 300 shekels. She spoke to the woman store clerk and asked, "Wasn't it 80?" The clerk said, "There must have been a mistake,



BEING SIMPLE

In explaining why the kohanim are prohibited from exposing themselves to the tumah of the dead, the Shem Mishmuel introduces a principle from the Arizal. The Arizal explains why Adam and Chava fell from their status of immortality by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. He explains that in the proximity of HaShem there is no evil whatsoever (Psalms 5:5). Death does not occur when one is with HaShem. The concept of evil actually exists only in the absence of HaShem. When Adam and Chava were created, they were creatures of the spiritual plane and were as one with HaShem. They were therefore not vulnerable to death.

It was when Chava was seduced by the serpent, who convinced her that she and Adam could rise to levels like HaShem, that she ate from the tree. She actually thought that by eating from the tree she and her husband would be able to serve HaShem with greater devotion. Her shortcoming was that she should have told herself, no matter what there is to gain by eating from the tree, I am not able to transgress the Will of HaShem. It was not the fruit of the tree that lowered Adam and Chava to becoming mortals. It was their lack of complete submission to the Will of HaShem. Once they subjected the Will of HaShem to their own understanding, they effectively disassociated themselves from being at one with HaShem. They acted on their own accord and not in accordance with HaShem's Will. Once they fell short in their complete submission, they were no longer attached to HaShem and were now subject to the powers of tumah, of death.

the price is 300.”
So the neighbor went back to Mrs. Burger and said, “I spoke to them. They said it must have been a mistake. The price is really 300 shekels.”

Now Mrs. Burger realized that she must have underpaid. So she went back to the toy store and said, “I bought this for 80 shekels, but I now hear that the real price is 300 shekels. What would you like me to do about the difference?”

The clerk said, “Well, the real price is 300. If you could bring in the extra 220 shekels when you can, I’d be very grateful.”

Mrs. Burger replied, “I never would have bought the toy for 300 shekels. The only reason I bought it was because it was 80. My whole budget was one hundred. If you’d like, I can return the item, give it back to you, and you can refund my money.”

The clerk weakly said, “No, please don’t return it. If you return it, my boss will see that we now have a used, open-box item and will ask about it. Even though I was not the one who put on the wrong sticker, I’ll get in trouble, and I’m afraid I may lose my job. So please don’t return it. Instead, I ask that you keep it for now, and over time, whenever you have a little extra money, please put it aside and maybe bring it back to us.”

Mrs. Burger said, “I don’t think that’s my responsibility. I’d either like to return it and get my money back, or I’d like to keep it. And if you’re afraid of losing your job, maybe you should pay the difference yourself.”

The clerk said, “No, I’m really afraid of losing my job. I beg you, please just keep it for now, and when you have a chance, please pay the difference.”

Mrs. Burger was unsure what to do, so she brought the question to Rav Zilberstein.

So, what do you think she should do?

Does she have the right to just keep it without paying the difference at all?

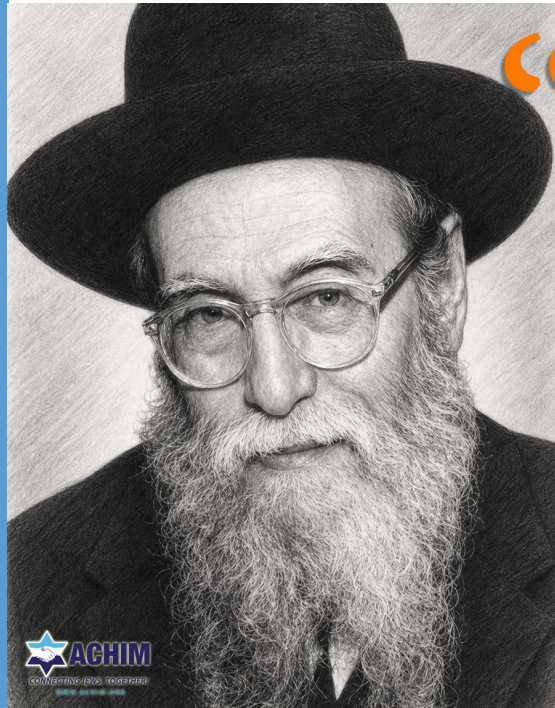
Does she have the right to do what the clerk said, to keep it for now and pay later when she can? After all, she is keeping it even though she has not fully paid for it.

Should she return it and get her money back, even if that risks causing the clerk to lose her job?

Should she insist that the clerk pay the difference? Or maybe you have another suggestion.

What do you think the right thing to do is?

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“Come to davening two minutes earlier. You have no idea how much every small improvement in Davening can change your entire life.”

-Rabbi Shlomo Brevda when when asked for advice on how to deal with a pressing problem.

This quality of submitting one's understanding entirely to HaShem is referred to as t'mimus, simplicity. The notion of being simple with HaShem is to accept whatever HaShem decrees and whatever HaShem commands. This does not mean that one should not advance their own wisdom, insight, and intelligence. Rather, one should pursue the study of the wisdom of Torah, and when he encounters a question that seems to challenge why he should do what HaShem commands, at that point he should be simple and ask no question. Just as the patient who goes to his heart specialist and challenges the doctor as to why he may not eat salt. The patient, who might be wise, albeit not in the field of medicine, sees this ban on salt to be absurd. However, if he will only recognize that the doctor knows much more than himself in the field of medicine, he would be a fool not to follow the doctor's instructions. Similarly, when one recognizes the true relationship that exists between himself and HaShem, he will naturally and completely submit his

own lack of understanding to that of HaShem's.

When a person lives with this recognition and subjects his limited understanding to HaShem's infinite understanding, he opens himself up for HaShem to enter his persona and is at once together with HaShem. Such an individual will not encounter death. As the Arizal teaches, there is no death in the proximity of HaShem. We find this notion with Yaakov Avinu. The Torah calls Yaakov an “ish tam,” a simple person, meaning that he was an individual who was thoroughly submissive to the Will of HaShem. It is no wonder that our Sages teach that Yaakov did not succumb to death.

The Shem Mishmuel thereby explains that the kohanim, who were to be the paradigm of servants of HaShem, needed to maintain their complete submission to HaShem. Although they were mortal, nevertheless, they needed to refrain from coming in contact with the power of tumah, which is strengthened by man's lack of submission.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE ULTIMATE RUNNER: WHY THE DEER OUTLASTS THE CHEETAH

Our sages teach, "Ratz kaTzvi," which means we should run like a deer to fulfill the will of our Father in Heaven. When you think about the fastest animal on earth, the cheetah probably comes to mind right away. The cheetah holds the world record for top land speed. So, why did our sages tell us to run like a deer? What makes the deer or gazelle so special?

When we look closely at the science of animal movement, we will find that running in the wild requires survival skills, agility, endurance, and terrain mastery. In all these categories, the deer is extraordinary. Let us explore exactly why the amazing ability of the deer makes it a superior runner in the marathon of life.

The Sprint Versus The Marathon. The cheetah possesses explosive, unmatched speed, reaching up to seventy miles per hour. However this velocity comes with a severe biological limitation. This top speed lasts for only twenty to sixty seconds. The cheetah is built entirely as a pure sprinter. Its body overheats rapidly during a chase, and its muscles quickly flood with lactic acid, forcing the animal to halt and recover. If the hunt fails, the cheetah rests and tries again later. In contrast, Deer and gazelles are built for the marathon. A Thomson's gazelle can maintain speeds of thirty to forty miles per hour for several miles without stopping. When experts look at what makes an animal truly great, they emphasize sustained dedication over a fleeting burst of energy. The deer exemplifies a creature capable of maintaining a rigorous pace over massive distances. Intensity for a single minute is impressive. Energy lasting for miles is legendary. The endurance of deer is powered by an elite biological engine. They have massively oversized hearts and lungs relative to their body weight. These organs are paired with enlarged windpipes that allow them to gulp huge volumes of oxygen with every breath. This specialized anatomy keeps them in an aerobic state far longer than Cheetahs. Furthermore, a deer's resting heart rate is remarkably low. When shifting into high gear to escape danger, their cardiovascular system pumps oxygen to their muscles with near-perfect efficiency. A deer can maintain continuous movement far longer than animals relying on short explosive bursts. Deer are built for repeated escapes across vast open spaces.

Agility and Terrain Mastery. A cheetah requires relatively flat ground to achieve its top speed safely. But a deer thrives in complex, treacherous environments. Their specialized hooves, powerful gluteus muscles, and long legs give them superior traction. They possess the amazing ability to pivot instantly. Many fast animals are built solely for straight-line pursuit. Deer are famous for zigzagging and making sudden cuts while mov-

ing fast. This sharp turning at high speeds can deeply confuse predators and create openings to escape. Some of the fastest animals perform best only in wide open spaces. Deer comfortably sprint through dense woods, thick brush, rocky hills, and narrow gaps while effortlessly avoiding trees. They adapt their path flawlessly without losing momentum. Think of the difference between a race car and a soccer player. One relies on moving straight ahead. The other relies on movement intelligence. Mud, snow, and steep inclines are places where deer remain fast and stable.

Instant Acceleration and Vertical Power. A deer can explode into motion from complete stillness in a split second, going from grazing peacefully to full escape mode almost immediately. That rapid acceleration matters heavily in the wild. Deer also run in three dimensions. Many species leap high fences, bound over logs, clear wide streams, and launch across rough terrain. A white-tailed deer can easily clear a seven-foot obstacle from a standstill. Their stride includes immense vertical power alongside horizontal speed. Gazelles and certain deer species utilize a highly unique bounding movement called stotting or pronking. During this motion, all four feet leave the ground simultaneously, launching the animal high into the air. While airborne, the animal can quickly scan its surroundings, clear tall brush effortlessly, and choose an entirely new direction upon landing.

Motivation. Most importantly, we must consider the motivation behind the run. A cheetah runs to secure a meal. A deer runs to survive. Every time a deer breaks into a sprint, it is running for its very life. The motivation driving the deer is absolute, uncompromising, and deeply urgent. Deer live in a constant state of alert readiness, prepared to run at any moment.

So why did our Sages say to run like a deer instead of a cheetah? Perhaps it's because running like a deer means much more than simply being the fastest creature on the track. The deer represents a fuller, more complete kind of movement. To run like a deer means to have endurance over the long haul, to be extremely responsive to act, to remain agile through difficult obstacles and to keep going when challenged by dangerous terrain. A cheetah may win the short race, but the deer will undoubtedly win in teaching the lesson of how to truly keep moving forward.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

MY FATHER TAUGHT ME THAT ONE MUST 'BREAK DOWN WALLS' TO HELP OTHERS

R' Menachem Porush (pictured top) told over the following story:

One Friday, I was called to come to the Brisker Rav's (pictured bottom) home. When I arrived, he told me of a certain talmid chacham who was in very difficult financial circumstances. He had called me to ask me to find a way to help him out of his crisis.

"I have no rest over this," he said.

We discussed various solutions to the problem, and afterwards I went home. About half an hour before Shabbos, I received another urgent message to come to his home, and of course I made my way there as quickly as possible.

The Brisker Rav then told me that he had just thought of someone who might be able to help in the matter, and that we should write him a letter requesting help. I sat and began writing, taking dictation from the Brisker Rav.

When I finished the job, I could not resist asking him:

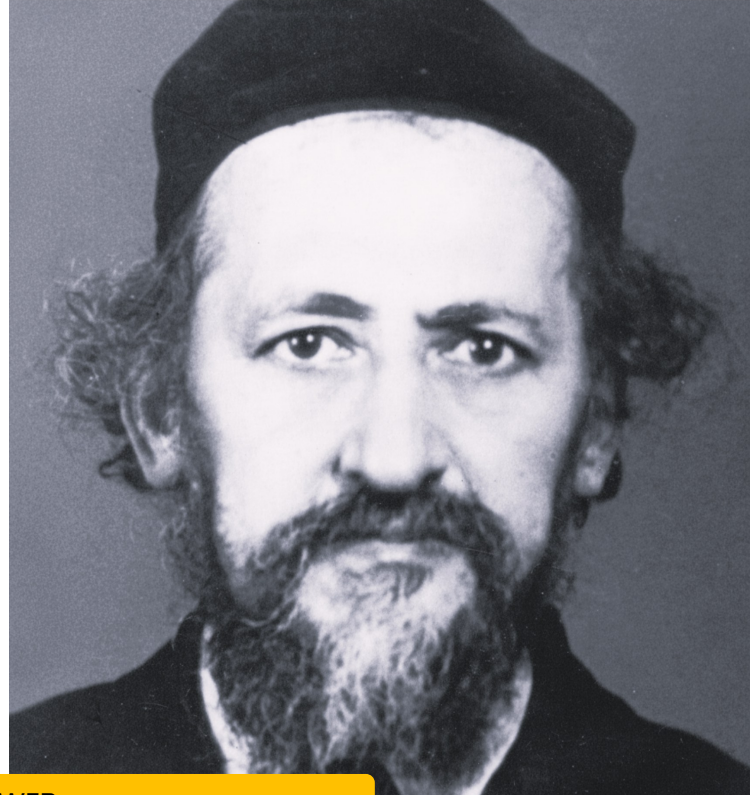
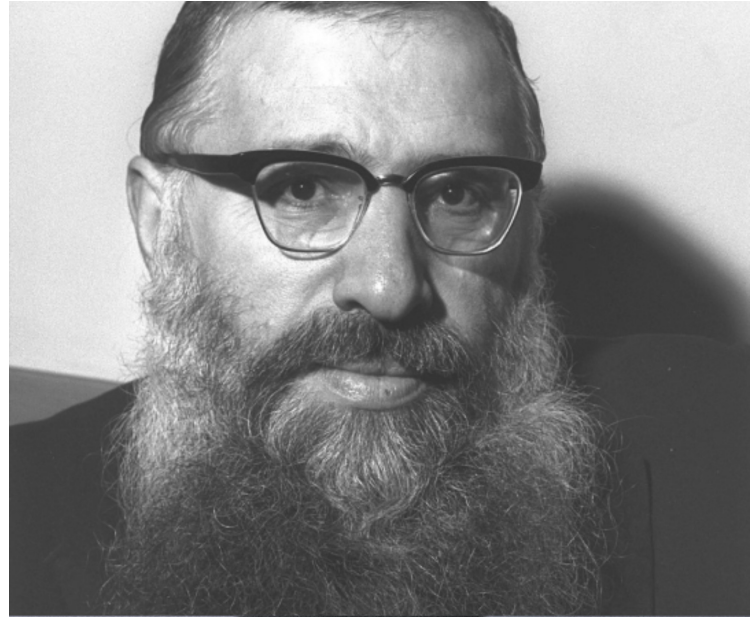
"Please explain, Rabbeinu. There are only a few minutes left before Shabbos. It is clear that we won't be able to send the letter now, since the post office closed hours ago already. Why, then, did you find it necessary to call me now? If I would have come and written the letter immediately after Shabbos, it would have been delivered at the same time!"

The Brisker Rav raised his eyebrows at the question. He looked at me with eyes full of warmth and kindness.

"R' Menachem, I am surprised at you. Am I so sure I will live until tomorrow?! Everything I am able to do, I must do immediately, without delay."

And then he added, "My father taught me that one must 'break down walls' to help others."

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the letter bought by the collector, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama 601) answered that while the seller should have destroyed the letter as soon as he was done with it, after the fact, since this is many years later, the letter can no longer be credibly misused. Therefore the letter is now hefker and if the seller sold the letter, he can keep the money himself.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in memory of
Mindel Fayga Bas Shmuel Pinchos
who loved everyone and who was beloved by so many.

Sponsored by her extended family



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