

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

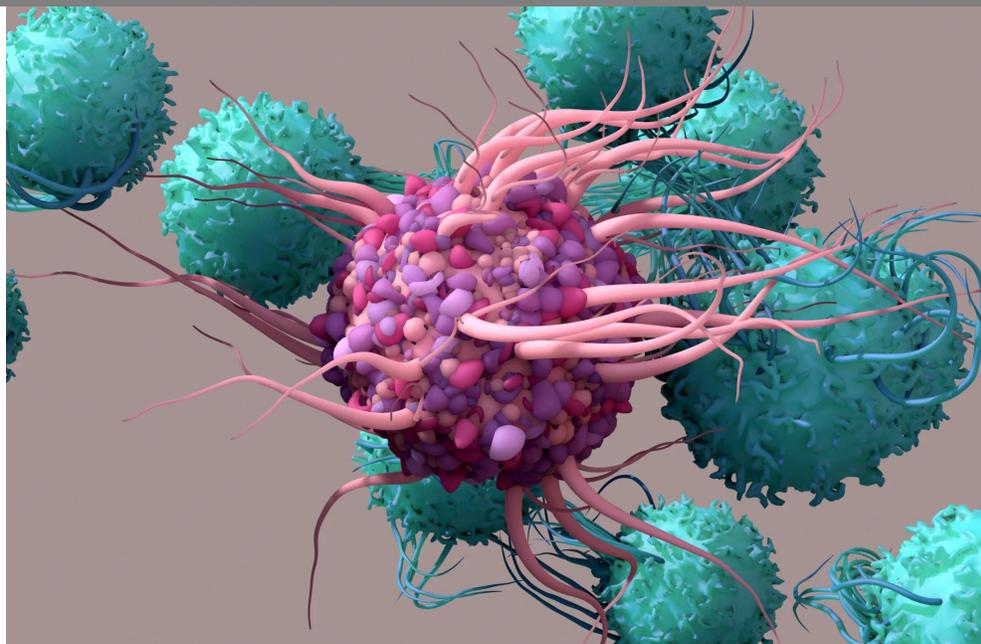


THE DUNKED GLASSES

Given that this week's Parsha is Re'eh which means 'see' we have a relevant dilemma that occurred two weeks ago in a Lakewood day camp.

Among the many campers were 10-year-old Dovid Cohen and his classmate Shmueli Weiss. As boys can sometimes get into quarrels, Dovid and Shmueli engaged in one such event. At one point, Dovid took Shmueli's glasses, ran into the bathroom with them, and flushed them down the toilet. Gone!

Shmueli tried getting them out but could not. Not only were the glasses gone, but the toilet was also jammed. After spending \$100 on a plumber, the camp director was able to retrieve the glasses, and the toilet was working again. Although the glasses were re-



CELL BIOLOGY & ELIMINATING THE VIRUS

It is remarkable to see the extent of the interest that the Torah takes for the worst criminals. Take for example a murderer who has perpetrated a crime that is punishable by capital punishment. The Torah requires the Jewish court to find ways to exonerate the killer and free him from capital punishment. (If he is a menace to society they are authorized to lock him up for the public safety.) The Torah actually offers mechanisms, legal loopholes, which the court can implement by which to disqualify the witnesses. Even though it is clear he perpetrated the crime we still try to save him. The reason for this is because HaShem loves every Jew. No matter how far a Jew may drift away from the path of Torah, HaShem has trust in him. Deep within every Jew is the spark that needs only to be ignited and he will return home.

There is, however, one exception to this rule. In our Parsha, we find the criminal called the meisis, the fellow who tries persuading his friend, his brother, his spouse to worship idolatry. Even though he is unsuccessful in persuading his target, nevertheless, just for trying to do so, he receives capital punishment. The Torah says about this criminal we should not try to exonerate him. We must do everything within our power to bring him to justice and carry out his deserving capital punishment.

Why is this crime worse than every other criminal act? Furthermore, he is subjected to punishment even when he is unsuccessful in carrying out his evil design. How do we explain this?

rieved, they were nonetheless broken.

Here you have it. This quarrel cost \$100 for a plumber and about the same for a pair of glasses.

The director went to Dovid's parents and asked them to pay for the damage to the toilet. The parents, however, argued that they were not responsible for Dovid's actions. Shmueli's parents also went to Dovid's parents to ask them to pay for a new pair of glasses. Once again, Dovid's parents argued that they were not responsible for their child's negligent actions.

The camp director and Shmuli's parents argued that just as the Torah obligates someone for damages caused by their animal, they should certainly be required to pay for his children's damages.

But Dovid's parents were not convinced. They argued that Dovid acted on his own and he was responsible, not them

The case was brought to a Rav.

What do you think? Do Dovid's parents have to pay for the broken glasses and broken toilet?



“*I never regretted telling the truth.*”

-The Kotzker Rebbe”

The human body is made of 3.7 trillion cells. Each one has its own life with all the components necessary for it to live and reproduce. Every cell has a nucleus when it is born and keeps it throughout its life with the exception of blood cells. They sacrifice their nucleus to make more space for oxygen. This way they can deliver enough oxygen to the other cells in the body. This is quite generous of the blood cells. They do this because they know that without their sacrifice, the body will fail and its soul will leave and all the cells will die. This is how HaShem programmed it.

HaShem created a universe in which He is the Soul and the material world is the body. Just as the soul fills the body but cannot be seen, so it is with HaShem and His universe. Just as the body must be nourished with material nourishment to keep its soul intact even though the soul itself needs no physical nourishment, so it is with the universe. The uni-

verse requires the spiritual nourishment of Torah and mitzvos to keep its Soul intact, even though the Soul itself, namely HaShem, has no need for that Torah and those mitzvos.

The critical cells of this universe which maintain the Soul's connection are the Jewish people. Every Jew has his role to play in the welfare of the 'body'. If there is a cell that is faulty, it is still needed for the welfare of the body. We must do our best to rehabilitate that cell and bring it back to good health. We never want to eliminate any cell. Every cell is needed, even the faulty ones. However, if a cell begins to try to invite other cells into rebellion against the body, there is no solution other than eliminating it immediately.

Perhaps, the reason for the Torah's unforgiving attitude on the meisis is because he is the only criminal who perpetrates his crime for the sole purpose of sabotaging the welfare of the world and HaShem's connection with His universe.

Have a wonderful Shabbos,

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE DUCHIFAS, HOOPOE

In this week's Parsha, the Torah talks about animals that are kosher and animals that are nonkosher. The Torah gives a list of birds that are not kosher. One of these birds is called the Duchifas.

Rashi says that the Duchifas is unique in that it has a crest that is double the size of a normal bird. Rashi also calls it Heroopa in Old French. The Gemara in Chulin says that the Duchifas was the bird that helped King Shlomo find the Shamir, the special creature that could cut the stones for the Mizbeach.

Rabbi Arye Kaplan, in his Living Torah identifies the Duchifas as the Hoopoe. As Rashi wrote, this bird's crest is unique and larger than most other birds.

Let's take a deeper look at this fascinating but unkosher bird. The Hoopoe's scientific name is quite amusing. It is *Upupa epops*. This name is an onomatopoeia, meaning it is a word that imitates a sound. Both the Latin word *Upupa* and the Ancient Greek word *Epops* are meant to imitate the sound that hoopoes make, which is something like... up-up-up, poo-poo-poo, oop-oop-oop, or hooo-pooo.

The Hoopoe is a colorful, exotic-looking bird with a pinkish-brown body. It is about 10 inches long, but its wingspan is about 17 inches. Its wings are black and white striped. The movement of its wings has been described as resembling the movement of a butterfly's wings. The Hoopoe also has a long, skinny grey-black bill that curves downward.

Hoopoes live in Europe, Asia, and Africa, but there have also been rare sightings in Alaska. Most European and north Asian birds migrate to the tropics in winter. In contrast, the African populations are sedentary all year. Spain has by far the biggest European population of Hoopoe.

Hoopoes have two requirements when looking for a habitat. They need bare ground where they can forage for food and vertical surfaces like trees, cliffs, or walls with holes in them where the birds can nest.

What makes the Hoopoe look so exotic is the crown, or crest, on its head. This crest is pinkish brown, and it consists of 28 feathers. The bird raises this crown when it is excited. The crest also opens up into a fan shape whenever the bird lands and then quickly closes again.

The Hoopoe is a bird of prey, and its diet is almost exclusively animals. Large insects, their larvae and pupae, are most important. They prefer to eat insects, ideally about an inch long, but they will also eat small reptiles, frogs, berries, fruit, and seeds. They will walk through wide open areas, periodically sticking their long bills all the way into the ground to search for bugs. Their bills are surrounded by strong muscles that allow them to open their mouths underground. Interestingly, Hoopoes are particularly enthusiastic foragers inside animal droppings and dung heaps, where they search for beetles.

The female Hoopoe incubates her eggs for two weeks. During that period, the female stays in the nest, and the male brings her food. Once the eggs are hatched, the chicks will stay in the nest for about a month. During that time, the mother bird rubs a bad-smelling oil into the chick's feathers to help protect them from predators, prevent disease, and act like an antibiotic. The liquid smells like rotten meat. The babies have a unique defense method to scare away predators like foxes. The babies shoot streams of their feces towards predators while hissing loudly like a snake to scare them away. This is the reason why "stinkbird" is one of its nicknames.

The Hoopoe is not a very sociable bird. The Hoopoe is also a territorial animal. Territory is usually populated with a single mating couple. Males will readily fight with human intruders to defend their territory. Fights can be very violent, and the Hoopoe can cause serious eye injuries to humans that can lead to blindness.

Hoopoes like taking sand and dust baths, as well as sunbathing. When they sunbathe, they lay on the ground with their wings spread out and their tail spread on the ground, and their heads tilted back, with their beak pointing up.

Snakes, large birds of prey, and foxes will eat Hoopoes, but if they survive, Hoopoes can live for up to ten years.

The Torah lists this bird as forbidden to eat, but tellingly, the Ancient Egyptians considered this bird sacred. Interestingly, in May 2008, The Hoopoe (this bird listed as forbidden to eat) was chosen as the national bird of Israel in conjunction with the country's 60th anniversary,

I WAS CONFIDENT THAT I WOULD BE HEARING FROM YOU

Shmuel Kramer ran an exciting day camp for elementary school age boys. There were 106 happy campers in his camp. For a day trip they went to Sky Zone and because they had so many campers Sky Zone gave them a significant discount for admission. Shmuel paid in advance for all 106 campers.

As the nice fellow Shmuel is, he informed the parents that if they wished to send any siblings along with the campers they could do so and he would pass along the discount to them. In fact quite a number of brothers joined them at Sky Zone. They all had a fun time and returned home at the expected time. After all the campers were gone, Shmuel remembered that he had not paid the extra admission for the siblings. When they arrived at Sky Zone all the boys, including the siblings all went in. There was no discussion about payment because all the campers had been paid for in advance. In the hustle and bustle of unloading the buses, organizing the children and getting them set up Shmuel had forgotten to pay for the extra siblings who had not paid.

He felt horrible and called up Sky Zone immediately. He explained what had happened and that he would like to take care of the additional money that was still owed.

The manager told him that he also realized that there were extra children who were not accounted for. "I knew that this is a Jewish camp. I was confident that I would be hearing from you once you realized the mistake."



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the trip to Afula, Rav Zilberstein answered that the passenger had to pay the driver because he had already committed to paying for that trip.

This week's TableTalk has been dedicated to the memory of
Meir ben Eliyahu

