

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



## THE REFUND REQUEST

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion discusses how Klal Yisrael united as one to donate resources to build the Mishkan. Achim, too, will soon be holding their annual fundraiser.

This leads us to the following true story.

In Yaakov's community, the local chesed organization was holding a raffle as a fundraiser. The prize was \$50,000 and only 1000 tickets would be sold. Each ticket cost \$100 dollars.

Yaakov heard about the fundraiser and realized that not only was it a worthy organization, but he had decent odds of winning. In haste, Yaakov made a call to the organization and gave his credit card number and ordered a ticket for \$100.

The next day, Yaakov thought about it and felt bad. He wasn't used to giving so much money to charity and he really couldn't afford it. He bumped into his friend Aron at the supermarket



## NO JEW IS SUPERFLUOUS

In this week's Parsha, Terumah, HaShem instructs His people to contribute a terumah, a contribution, to the building of the Mishkan. Our Sages point out that the people were being asked to participate in three collections. One contribution was for the material with which to build the Mishkan. This included the gold, the silver, the copper, the different types of wool and so on. The second contribution was for the communal offerings. These include the two daily offerings, the musaf offerings and other offerings that were required of us as a nation. The third contribution was for the production of the silver rings which made up the base of the Mishkan.

It is noteworthy to contrast the difference between the first and the last collection. Both collections were for the construction of the Mishkan. The first collection was purely optional. "Every person should give according to the generosity of their heart..." If someone's heart was closed they contributed nothing. The last collection which was also for the Mishkan, for the base of the Mishkan, was mandatory. Every man must contribute a half shekel, which was a weight of silver. Nobody was allowed to give less than or more than that amount.

If both of these collections were for the building of the Mishkan why was there a need for two separate collections and why such differences between them?

The function of the Mishkan was to be an edifice built by HaShem's people through which He would express His Presence among His people. With the Mishkan in their midst, every Jewish family radiated kedusha, their home was hosting HaShem's Shechina.

Every vessel, every curtain, every hook of the Mishkan contributed to that Presence. The

## MITZVA MEME

and told him the story of the ticket that he had purchased. "I feel bad about spending so much money, would you want to split it with me?"

"Sure", Aron said, " I'll split the ticket", and Aron gave Yaakov a fifty dollar bill to pay for half the ticket.

A week later, to Yaakov's great shock he got a call from the administrator of the organization. In fact, Yaakov was the winner of the raffle and he won the prize of \$50,000 in cash.

Immediately, Yaakov went over to his friend Aron's house. "Aron here is a complete refund of your \$50 dollars. I decided that I want to back out of our arrangement.

"Why not, what happened?", asked Aron. "Well, when I said I would split it I had no expectation of ever winning. I thought I would just be splitting the cost. But now I realized that I was actually splitting the \$50,000 dollars. I never wanted to do that."

"Wait a minute, do you mean you won?", asked Aron.

"Yes. I did. But please take your money back. You never made an acquisition in the ticket, and I'd be grateful if you'd just take the refund of your money without a complaint."

Aron was very reluctant but agreed to go to a Rav to ask his opinion.

Do you think Yaakov is allowed to do what he did? Can Yaakov just refund Aron his money back and keep the winnings for himself?

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material that was contributed in the first collection went to those details. Every person relates differently to HaShem and hence every person contributed differently to the Mishkan. Some gave gold and others gave wool. Some donated their skill and others donated their labor. Just as relationships differ from person to person, so did their contribution differ.

However, when it came to building the base of the Mishkan, there every Jew had to be represented equally. HaShem's Shechina cannot find its base in this world until every Jew is present. And there is no difference between one Jew and the next with respect to the building of the base of the Mishkan.

If there are ten simple Jews in one room, kaddish may be recited. If, however, there are only nine Jews, even if they are the greatest Torah scholars including Moshe and Aharon, kaddish may not be said. Kaddish needs a minyan of ten Jews. The Mishkan needs everyone. Just

as every Jew counts for the minyan, every Jew counts for the Mishkan.

The amount of silver needed to make the base of the Mishkan was exactly the amount that was contributed through the half shekel. The reason why every person contributed just a half shekel and no more was so there would be room for every other Jew. Nobody can replace another Jew. Every Jew is needed and no Jew is superfluous.

In the former Soviet Union there was no opportunity for Yiddishkeit to flourish. There was no opportunity for the Jews to be Jews. So in the 1980's, when the Director of history made global upheavals through which a half million Russian speaking Jews came to America, it was evident that He wanted every Jew to be here. He wanted every Jew to count. It was with this inspiration that Achim was founded to facilitate that opportunity and realize that potential.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### ANIMAL ALTRUISM

Do animals perform acts of kindness and acts of altruism? According to our Sages they do. Rashi quotes our Sages that the Chasida, the stork, is called "the kind one", because it cares for members of its own kind. However even though it's called a kind one, it is not kosher because it does not extend its kindness beyond its own species.

Scientists have explored the kindness and altruism in several species of animals.

Red squirrels and lemurs will adopt their relatives if the mother dies while caring for her young. Similarly walrus have been seen adopting orphans who lost their parents to predators.

Like red squirrels, dogs will take in orphans in need of a parent's care and attention. However, unlike red squirrels, dogs don't necessarily care whether the animal is a family member or even a member of the same species. Dogs have been documented adopting kittens, baby foxes, tiger cubs, fawns, ducklings, lambs and more. This behavior is selflessly altruistic, as the dog couldn't expect any benefit from caring for a member of another species. In addition, wolves and wild dogs bring meat back to members of the pack who were not present at the kill. Even in harsh conditions, the breeding pair of wolves are given the greatest share of food to continue to produce pups. Interestingly the Maharsha says that the word dog in Hebrew, kelev, comes from the word, Kulo Lev, Totally Heart.

Rats also exhibit selfless behavior. Experimenters placed rats into pairs and provided one of the rats a choice: open one door and get a food morsel for yourself; open another and both rats receive a reward. Out of fifteen rats tested, all but one made unselfish choices consistently. The rats in fact selected the altruistic outcome around 70 percent of the time. These findings are in line with other studies that show that rats seem to have each other's back. They will attempt to free a trapped comrade and exhibit pain and anxiety responses at the sight of another rat in distress.

Vampire bats have a fast metabolism and will die if they don't feed eve-

ry day or two. One might expect that it is every bat for itself come meal time. However, bats will share their food supply not only with juveniles but also adults who are sick or weren't fortunate enough to find their own grub. A successful hunter will regurgitate enough blood into a hungry bat's mouth to allow the roostmate to live another day. They often form a buddy system.

Dolphins not only come to the aid of one another, but also to the aid of other species, including humans. There have been numerous stories of pods of dolphins rescuing humans from sharks, such as surfer Todd Endris who survived an encounter with a great white shark in 2007 or long-distance swimmer Adam Walker, who was stalked by a shark. Dolphins support sick or injured animals, swimming under them for hours at a time and pushing them to the surface so they can breathe. Similarly humpback whales have been observed protecting other species from killer whales.

Harpagifer bispinis, a species of fish, live in social groups in the harsh environment of the Antarctic Peninsula. If the parent guarding the nest of eggs is missing, a (usually) male replacement unrelated to the parents guards the nest from predators and makes sure that no fungal growth that would kill off the brood, occurs. There is no clear benefit to the male replacement.

Some termites and ants will sacrifice themselves to save the rest of the colony. If they are in a losing fight with a potential threat to the colony, they release a sticky secretion or explode in a poisonous spray by fatally rupturing a specialized gland. This altruistically defends the colony at the expense of the individual insect.

In numerous bird species, a breeding pair receives support in raising its young from other "helper" birds. The helpers will help the couple with the feeding of its fledglings. Some will even go as far as protecting an unrelated bird's young from predators.

Thank you Hashem for filling the world with your Kindness.

## THE TORAH WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU

I heard the following story from Reb Moshe Carlebach shlit'a who was a rebbe in Ohr Sameiach over 35 years ago. This story has occurred repeatedly throughout our nation's history. When the Torah is kidnapped from the members of her nation, she always comes back to them. This is the story of the Jews from the former Soviet Union from whom the Torah was taken and burnt. The grandmothers and grandfathers davened that their children not be lost to their people.

Frank, a college student living on the end of Long Island, had a friend who spent a summer in Israel and was becoming interested in learning more about his Jewish heritage. Although Frank had no interest in going to Israel he nevertheless kept up with his friend. Upon learning that his friend was considering becoming more observant, Frank told him not to go overboard. "They are brainwashing you." His friend challenged him. "You only say that out of ignorance, perhaps you are the one who is brainwashed." They decided that Frank would go to Israel for a week and meet with his friend.

His friend was learning at Ohr Samayach in Yerushalayim. The Yeshiva welcomed Frank for that week and he met with some of the Rabbis and attended some classes. By the time the week was over, Frank felt that he needed more time. He spoke to his parents who were not at all happy with the turn of events but allowed him to stay one more week on condition that he returned immediately after the week.

That second week turned into a third week and naturally, Frank's father became irritated. After spending three weeks at Ohr Samayach Frank decided that he needed to stay an entire year. When he sent his parents the message that he planned on staying an entire year, Frank's father sent him a letter stating that if he did not return immediately he would be cut out of the family for all matters. His father was totally unaccepting of Frank's decision.

After giving some thought to the prospect of being disowned by his family, Frank committed himself to staying no matter what consequences would follow. He was now alone without his family.

True to his word, Frank's father did not communicate with him for the entire year. He did not know what he would do the following year but he continued his studies at the Yeshiva. At the end of the year Frank received a package from his father. It was a sefer, a book of Torah discourses, written by Frank's paternal grandfather who died before the War. Frank's father went through the Holocaust and rejected Judaism and everything it represented. When he moved to America he settled on Long Island far from any Jewish community. He was set on erasing everything Jewish from himself and his family. Now that Frank had made the choice of returning to his roots, his father recognized that he was unsuccessful in his attempt to abort Judaism from his family.

On the opening page of the sefer, Frank's grandfather had written a quote from the Prophets "This Torah will not leave your mouth, your children's mouth and your grandchildren mouth, it will be with you forever."

Frank's father underlined that quote and accepted him back into the family once again.



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question of driving with a Jewish taxi driver close to Shabbos, if it is clear that the driver will drive back on Shabbos, Rav Zilberstein answered that it would not be permitted because it is a Chilul Hashem. It would convey a lack of respect for Shabbos. On another note, regarding the question of two brothers arguing about donating a kidney, a similar case actually occurred in Baltimore. The case was where two brothers argued about donating a kidney to their brother. In that case Rav Yaakov Hopfer paskened that the older brother should be allowed to do it, like we see by the mitzvah of Yibum that it falls to the older brother first.

ACHIM will be running their annual crowdfunding campaign this coming Wednesday afternoon and Thursday. We look forward to your support of Achim and TableTalk.

Look out next week for the annual special edition of

# MONEYTALK

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