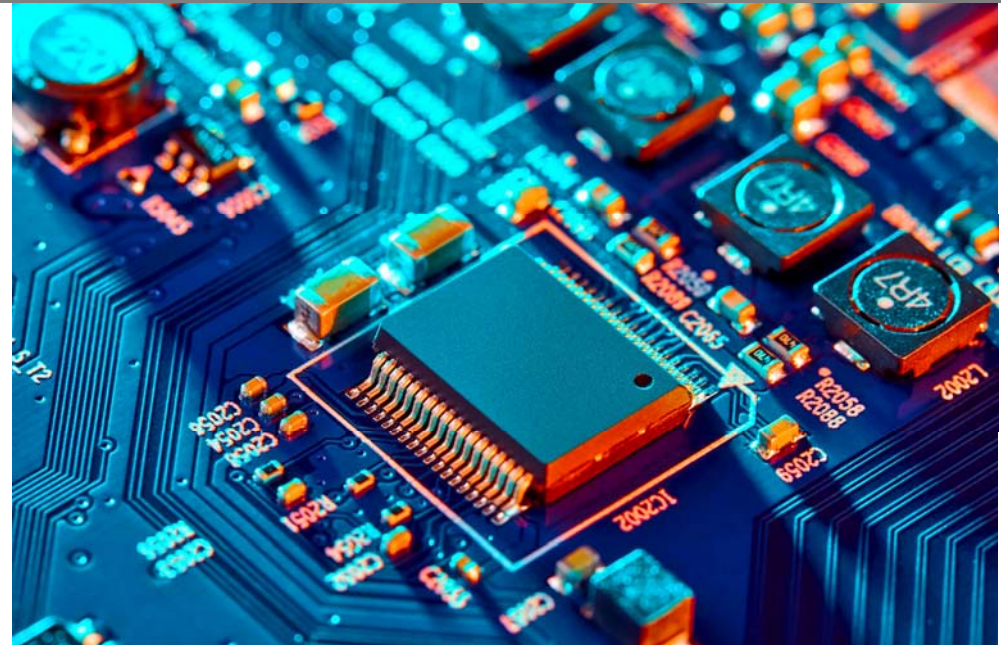


A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



CAN I SMASH THE WINDOW?

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, the Torah discusses the Asham Gezeila, a special offering that was brought if someone stole something, swore falsely about it and later wants to repent. (Vayikra 5,21)

As we know, it is forbidden to steal another's property. Included in the prohibition of theft is the prohibition to purposely damage or destroy another's property.

This leads us to the following true story.

Aron once went to a suit store to purchase a suit. He took several suits inside the dressing room, and tried them on.

Aron was not in a rush and took his time.

When he came out of the dressing room,

HARDWIRED

This week's Parsha, Vayikra, opens with the laws of the offerings that are to be brought in the Mishkan. Right from the beginning the Torah indicates that every Jew can bring an offering, whether or not he is righteous. The only Jew who may not bring an offering is the one who totally rejects HaShem. In the very same verse, however, the Torah indicates that regarding a non-Jew there are no qualifications; every non-Jew may bring an offering, the non-Jew who accepts HaShem as well as the non-Jew who rejects HaShem. The reason given why we accept the offering of the non-Jewish atheist is to bring him closer to HaShem.

The word 'korban' offering, derives from the word 'l'karev' which means to bring near. The reason for this name is because when one brings an offering in the Bais Hamikdash, he brings himself with his offering close to HaShem. Being in such close proximity of HaShem's Presence arouses in every person the inspiration which can carry him to levels of closeness to HaShem. This is the reason we accept the offerings even from an atheistic non-Jew. Perhaps he will be inspired through the experience.

So, why do we reject the offerings from the Jewish atheist? Perhaps he too will be inspired just as the non-Jew? There are plenty of stories of Jews who came back to HaShem later in life and even in the Holocaust there are stories of atheists who under the pressure of the war, returned to HaShem.

In the first verse that we will read in the Haftorah we find Yeshayahu telling his people in the name of HaShem "This nation I have formed for Myself, they shall relate My praises." This beautiful verse is followed by the prophet reprimanding them for closing the doors of the Bais Hamikdash and terminating the offerings. The message Yeshaya-

to his shock, the main lights of the store were closed and the door was locked. Not only was the door locked, but the metal security gate was pulled down in front of the door.

Apparently, the owner decided to leave early and didn't realize that Aron was still in the dressing room.

There was no phone to be found in the store. In desperation, Aron tried to figure out how he could leave. He realized that he could throw a heavy object through the front shop window.

Breaking the glass would cause hundreds of dollars of damage, but it was the only way he could leave without having to wait overnight until the owner opened in the morning.

Aron wondered if he was allowed to break the window to leave. He could just wait in the store until the morning and not break the window, but that would cause his family much worry.

Was he allowed to break the window in order to prevent his family from worrying about him?

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hu is telling his people is that although they are not living up to their national mission now, as they are not relating the praises of HaShem, nevertheless he knows that they will discover themselves and return to their mission at some later date, because that was the reason for HaShem's forming them into a nation. HaShem's plan will certainly come to fruition.

Behold! Yeshayahu is telling his people that although the gates of their offerings have been closed they will still be inspired to return and their mission will be achieved. How will that happen? Because HaShem formed this nation for the sole purpose of singing the praises of HaShem. The Jewish people have been hard-wired, and in the core of their guts they yearn to sing the praises of HaShem. In the core of every Jew there lies a spark of HaShem's Holiness. It just needs the right moment, the right experience and it jumps into action.

If a Jew, who is carrying a spark of HaShem rejects HaShem, bringing an offering in the close proximity of the Bais Hamikdosh will not add anything more than he already has. We therefore do not accept his offerings - nothing will be accomplished. If, however, this Jew travels through an experience which speaks to his inner core, even if that experience is far from HaShem's Presence, that holy spark which lies deep inside of him will jump into existence.

Before bringing the final day of our exile, when HaShem will open His great arms to embrace us. He wants the spark of every one of His beloved children to jump into action. He wants to inspire us to His closeness and endearment. The current odyssey on which all of mankind has embarked presents so many challenges to every single person. Each of these challenges are opportunities that can open the Jew to his core inner spark.

As we read Yeshayahu's opening verse this Shabbos, may we discover the incredible potential that lies within every Jew to draw ourselves close to Him even without the Bais Hamikdosh and even without a shul or a minyan.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

FROGS JUMPING EVERYWHERE

The Yom Tov of Pesach is coming up. One of the Plagues brought upon the Egyptians was Tzefardea, frogs.

Let's learn a bit about some fascinating aspects of frogs.

The South American false-eyed frog is an interesting creature. Generally about 3 inches long, it is brown, black, blue, gray, and white! Drops of each color are on its skin, and it can suddenly change from one of these colors to the others, simply by masking out certain color spots. The change-color effect that this frog regularly produces is totally amazing.

The frog will be sitting in the jungle minding its own business, when an enemy, such as a snake or rat, will come along. Instantly, that frog will jump and turn around, so that its back is now facing the intruder. In that same instant, the frog changed its colors! Now the enemy sees a big head, nose, mouth, and two black and blue eyes!

All of this looks so real - with even a black pupil with a blue iris around it. Yet the frog cannot see any of this, for the very intelligently-designed markings are on its back!

The normal sitting position of this frog is head high and back low. But when the predator comes, he quickly turns around so that his back faces the predator. In addition, the frog puts its head low to the ground, and raises his hind parts high. In this position, to the enemy viewing him, he appears to be a large rat's head! The frog's hind legs are tucked together underneath his eyes and they look like a large mouth! As he moves his hind legs, the mouth appears to move! The part of the frog's body that once was a tadpole's tail, now looks like a perfectly formed nose, and it is in just the right location!

To the side of the fake face, there appear long claws! These are the frog's toes! As the frog tucks his legs to the side of his body, he purposely lifts up two toes from each hind foot, and curls them out so they look like a couple of weird hooks. And the frog does all of this in one second!

At this, the predator leaves, feeling quite defeated. But that which it left behind is a tasty, defenseless, weak frog which can turn around quickly, but cannot hop away very fast. The frog will never see that face on itself, so it did not put the face there. It was the One intelligent Being Who designed that face.

The leopard frog lives in moist grass among the edge of ponds and wears a green coat to blend with the grass, but it also has irregular blotches of brown on its back which are the color of the shadows among the green grasses.

Horned toads in the Southwest have a color so similar to that of the desert sand that the animal is not seen until it moves.

The golden toad lives in the cloud forest high in the mountains of Costa Rica. Bright orange in color, this little frog is easy to see when it comes out in the open. Yet, all year long, it is not seen. Then, after the first heavy rain of the spring, the males, which are even more brightly colored, gather in pools of water and sit quietly waiting. Then the females arrive. Thousands of golden toads will be together in a few locations. Within less than a week, mating will be over and they will disappear into the forest, where they will be hidden for the rest of the year. But for the brief time that they were all together, they are in such large numbers that there are too many for their predators to eliminate them.

I WASN'T WORRIED BECAUSE I KNEW HOW THE JETS GAME ENDED

Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twersky once shared the following story.

I'm sure you've had days when Murphy's Law is in full swing. Anything that can go wrong, does. These are days when we realize we would have been better off pulling the covers over our heads and staying in bed till four in the afternoon. I had a morning like that in Manhattan.

Flat tire, stopped by a police officer for driving ten miles above the limit, not finding an open parking lot, and so on. By noon I was fit to be tied. I felt that the only thing that could get me out of the quicksand was an AA meeting. A call to the local AA office produced no less than four meetings within a six-block radius.

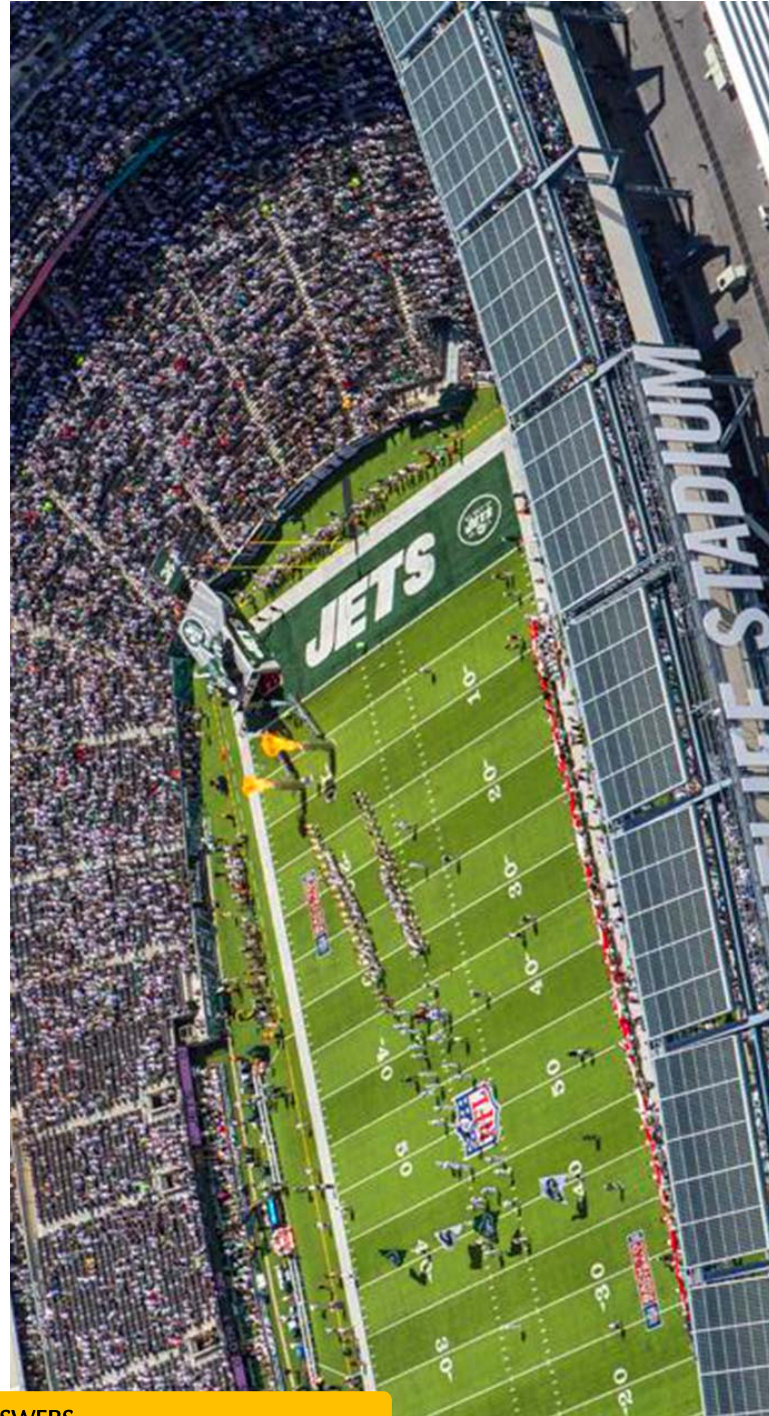
At the meeting I attended, the speaker was a young woman of thirty-five. She had started drinking at twelve and drugs at fifteen. This led to delinquent, decadent behavior. In spite of suffering the consequences of living on the street, she was a slave to her drug addiction. At twenty six she found her way to Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, and at that time she was nine years clean and sober. I had heard similar stories countless times, and this one did little for me. But I have never been to a meeting in which I didn't take away something of help. What I took away from this meeting has served me well for the rest of my life.

Toward the end of her talk, the woman said, "I must tell you something else before I finish. I am an avid football fan, a Jets fan. I never miss watching a Jets game."

One weekend I had to be away, so I asked a friend to record the game on her VCR. When I returned, she handed me the tape and said, 'By the way, the Jets won. "I started watching the tape, and it was just horrible. The Jets were being mauled. At halftime they were behind by twenty points. Under other circumstances, I would have been a nervous wreck. I would have been pacing the floor and hitting the refrigerator. But I was perfectly calm, because I knew they were going to win. The young woman turned to the group and concluded: Ever since I turned my life over to G-d, I no longer get uptight when things don't go my way. Just like the video of the Jets, I may be twenty points behind at halftime,' but I know it's going to turn out okay in the end."

This incident has helped me overcome many difficult times.

From The Rabbi and The Nuns By Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twersky, Published By Mekor Press



THE ANSWERS

Regarding the question about the car thief who stole a car that had a bomb in it, Rav Zilberstein writes that he is not obligated to pay the owner for the car. This is because he stole a car that was about to blow up and he stole a "broken vessel".

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