

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL!

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about the mitzvah to keep Shabbos. We know however, that for a matter of pikuach nefesh, a matter of life and death, we are allowed to violate Shabbos.

Last week we discussed a story about a woman with Alzheimer's. Let's explore another story that involves a Jew with Alzheimer's. May Hashem bless all of us with good health!

Mr. Klein was an elderly man who lived in a nursing home in Eretz Yisrael. He had no immediate relatives who lived in Eretz Yisrael with him. He did have a cousin who lived around five miles away from the nursing home. Sadly, as Mr. Klein got older, he developed Alzheimer's. Sometimes Alzheimer's patients have a tendency to wander off.

One Shabbos, when everyone was preoccupied, Mr. Klein decided that he was going to visit his cousin. He headed off to his cousin's home without telling anyone. It was a nice day, and although it was a very long walk, Mr. Klein didn't mind. He arrived at his cousin's home on Shabbos afternoon and had a very nice visit.

Mr. Klein's cousin, Yanky, thought it was strange that Mr. Klein visited him, but he didn't think anything was wrong.

Meanwhile, at the nursing home, shortly after Mr. Klein was discovered missing, the nursing home staff went into a pan-



PLEASE MOVE OVER AND MAKE ROOM

In this week's Parsha, Emor, we are given the mitzvah to be m'kadesh HaShem, to sanctify HaShem's Name, in public. What is kiddush HaShem and how does one accomplish it? Kiddush HaShem is achieved when HaShem's absolute Oneness and His infinite Greatness becomes manifest in this world. This certainly occurs when HaShem performs wondrous miracles, but how can a simple mortal Jew accomplish such a mighty feat?

To further punctuate this question consider the following. When a person fills his heart with the awareness of HaShem he has definitely elevated himself. However, with respect to HaShem's manifestation in this world very little has been accomplished. This is because Man and his heart and all the possible accomplishments he may achieve are so small and so finite that even when he fills every part of his being with HaShem, it only limits HaShem's Presence to the small and limited confines of his being.

The only way for Man to bring elevation to HaShem is if he enlarges the space in his life and in his heart enough to fit HaShem. This can only happen when Man realizes how small he really is and that he is only one tiny piece of HaShem's infinite Being. Once he reaches this awareness he is then ready to place his own being into that infinite space. And once that occurs and he then fills every part of himself with HaShem, then true elevation of HaShem in this world occurs.

It is somewhat paradoxical. The smaller man sees himself, the greater his capacity becomes to elevate HaShem in this world. As if to say that so long as Man sees himself important and significant there is no room for HaShem.

ic. They immediately called the police to look for the wandering elderly man. At least five squad cars spent the entire afternoon patrolling the area looking for Mr. Klein. They were unsuccessful. The nursing home director and staff spent the entire afternoon searching the area in cars to find Mr. Klein because they felt this was pikuach nefesh. Unfortunately it was without any success.

As soon as Shabbos was over, Yanky nonchalantly drove Mr. Klein back to the nursing home. When Mr. Klein waked in, the nursing staff breathed a collective sigh of relief. But the relief of their anxiety was soon converted into great frustration.

The nursing home director, who was an observant Jew, angrily turned to Yanky. "Why didn't you think to tell us that Mr. Klein was with you? We spent the entire day looking all over for him. The entire staff dropped everything and was searching for him. The police were driving around town the entire day."

Yanky was confused. "Why should I call on Shabbos? Who was in danger? Mr. Klein was safe with me in my living room."

The nursing home administrator replied, "You don't understand! It was pikuach nefesh because the whole staff was unable to attend to the other sick patients in the nursing home, everyone was looking for Mr Klein. Furthermore, so many of the police's resources were tied up looking for Mr Klein, which could potentially be harmful if there were any other emergencies. And finally, because you didn't call, you caused much more chillul Shabbos by having Jews drive around the whole day looking for him." Yanky wasn't so sure and brought this question to Rav Zilberstein.

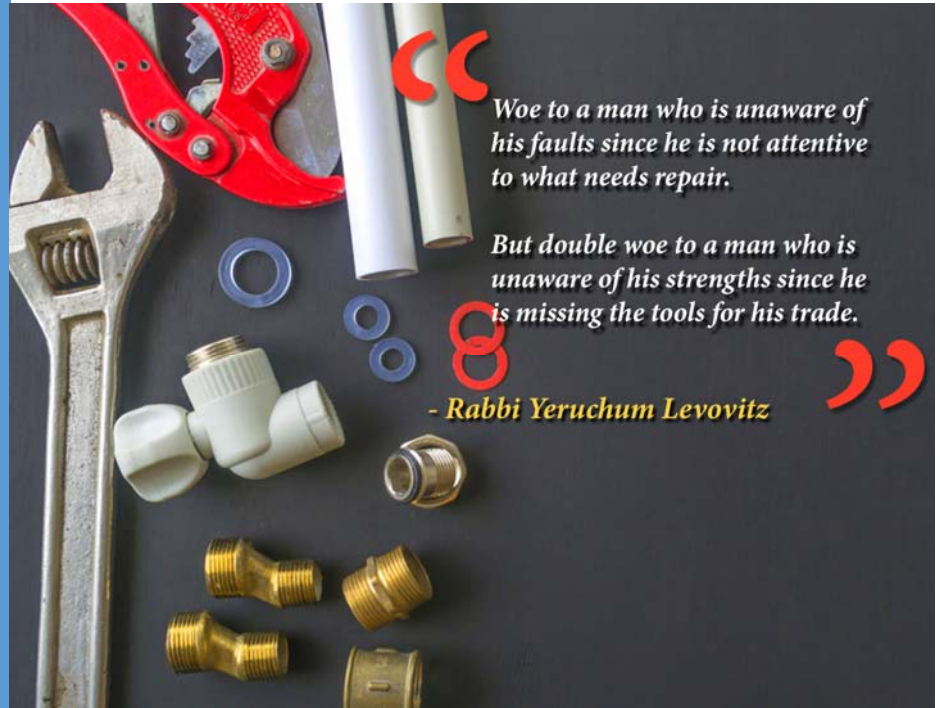
What do you think? Should Yanky have called the nursing home on Shabbos when Mr. Klein arrived?

On one hand there didn't seem to be an immediate pikuach nefesh issue. But on the other hand, because the nursing staff and police's resources were preoccupied, that put the whole nursing home and the whole community at risk. In addition, because he didn't call, he caused many more Jews to drive on Shabbos.

What do you think? Was he supposed to call?

See Chashukei Chemed Yoma page 554

If you have a true mitzvah dilemma that you would like us to share, please email it to rabiweiner@gmail.com



All this, perhaps sounds very far away, but how do we put this in practice? Certainly if we were to give over our very life in exchange for the honor of HaShem that would be a meaningful expression of our recognition of HaShem's infinite Greatness. But in our daily lives is there any way in which this mitzvah has a practical application?

The Rambam writes that the way a Jew accomplishes kiddush HaShem is by performing any mitzvah for the sake of HaShem exclusively, with no other intent or interest at all. Such a mitzvah constitutes kiddush HaShem.

How do we understand this simple formula as being kiddush HaShem?

When one performs an action, that action is the expression of the motivation that drove the person to perform it. So when I buy flowers on Friday, those flowers are either an expression of my affection I

have to my wife or the affection I have to the Shabbos or both, depending on what motivated me to buy them.

When I perform a mitzvah, it too, is the expression of the motivation that drove me to perform it. If I did the mitzvah for the respect I would earn from it then the mitzvah is an expression of my interest in gaining respect. If on the other hand, there was no personal interest or gain from the mitzvah. If I recognized my smallness compared to HaShem's infinite and absolute Greatness and I wanted only to make Him proud by living up to His expectations, then that very same mitzvah becomes a manifestation of HaShem's Greatness.

In all candor, although I write that it is a simple formula, it is actually quite hard to do any mitzvah purely and exclusively for HaShem with no other intent. The implication is that if there is anybody who knows about my performance and it brings me satisfaction, that would detract from the mitzvah's purity. Although it is difficult, it is nevertheless achievable.

May HaShem grant us the ability to make ourselves small enough to fit Him into this great world of His.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE PORCUPINE FISH

HaShem gives every creature the tools it needs to survive and defend itself. Let's look at the porcupine fish. It is also known as a blowfish, balloonfish, globefish, and pufferfish.

The porcupine fish is a small tropical fish which goes about minding its own business until an enemy arrives. Then it goes into action with a surprising defense technique. It suddenly takes in large amounts of air very rapidly through its gills. When it does so, it blows up like a balloon! It changes from a regular fish to a round balloon fish. It almost doubles its size, vertically.

This defends the fish in the following ways.

Because the porcupine fish has small spines protruding all around its body, when it expands, these spines stick out of the large ball. It makes it a definite menace to any fish that might consider biting it.

In addition, this increase in size reduces the range of poten-

tial predators to those with much bigger mouths. In addition, some porcupine fish are poisonous, with a powerful neurotoxin in their ovaries and liver. This neurotoxin is at least 1,200 times more potent than cyanide. How can the porcupine fish create such a powerful neurotoxin? The poison is produced by several types of bacteria obtained from the porcupine fish diet.

As a result of these three defenses, porcupinefish have few predators, although adults are sometimes preyed upon by sharks and killer whales.

There is, however, one predator that a porcupine fish has a hard time escaping. That predator is people! Porcupinefish is an exotic delicacy in the Philippines, and is called "tagotongan".

Thank you HaShem for showing us your Wisdom.

I COOK THE FOOD ANYWAY

In the past we discussed the remarkable way that Rabbi and Mrs Machlis would observe Shabbos. They would often have as many as 150 guests on Friday night.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Henny Machlis's Shabbos meal was that she would do this even when they were not home!

"We used to take off a few weeks a year," Henny explained in 2002, "and we would inform the people in advance. A couple of years ago, my married daughter had a baby boy on a Shabbat, so the bris was the following Shabbat, in a different city.

Whoever called during the week, we told them not to come, but there was no way to announce it to our 'regulars.'

Just in case, we arranged for a rabbi to be here to conduct the meal and I cooked a little, and we left challah, salads, drinks, and provisions.

I thought, 'Maybe 20 people will come.'

Well, 80 people showed up that Shabbat night, and 65 people the next day for lunch.

"So now, if we want to go away for Shabbat, we inform people that Rabbi Machlis won't be here to give divrei Torah, but that there will be someone else to run the meal. And I cook the food anyway 51 weeks a year.

"Only on Pesach we don't have guests, and we go away, because of the special mitzvah to teach your children on the Seder night. Then we concentrate exclusively on the children and attempt to celebrate the holiday in a private family setting."

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THE ANSWER

Regarding the question about whether to move the mother to the nursing home or not, Rav Elyashiv answered that in that case they should move her to a good nursing home. Keeping her home would be the best care, but she could get good care at the nursing home as well. If, however, she stays home, it will shorten the life of her husband. Having her home would be a hezek, a damage. Moving her to a nursing home would just be abstaining from a revach, a gain. One should note that this is a very serious question and if it is ever relevant they should discuss this with a competent posek.

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