

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### THE NEW LIBRARY

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Meir, an Israeli taxi driver who was always looking to make more money, would often cheat his customers. He would take the longest route possible in order to maximize the fare. He also tampered with the meter so that it charged more. He used all types of deceitful practices over his career. This continued until he retired.

After retirement, Meir learned more about the Torah and became completely religious. He greatly regretted the crimes he had committed. He made a calculation that over the course of his career he stole about \$50,000.

He went to the Rav, and the Rav told him that the Talmud says that if somebody steals from the public, there is no way to pay back directly. Instead, he



### THE MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

In the third chapter of Shemos HaShem starts the process of our redemption by beginning His relationship with Moshe. In the two verses that precede that process the Torah tells us that the king of Egypt died and the pain to which our people were subjected increased ever so much. Daas Zekeinim explains that with the passing of this king and the terror continuing they realized their situation was absolutely hopeless. In their absolute hopelessness they cried out. In response, "HaShem heard their cry and remembered His covenant with Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov."

The implication is that it was their crying out that triggered HaShem's remembering His covenant with our Fathers. Although HaShem was certainly going to honor His commitment to His covenant nevertheless it needed to be triggered by our cries.

How reminiscent this is to the very beginning of Creation. On the third day of Creation HaShem created the entire world of vegetation which needed rain to begin sprouting. However, it could not rain until the sixth day because rain could not begin unless Man davened for it. Only after Adam was created and prayed for the rain did it rain.

This presents a conundrum. For some reason HaShem created a world. The creation of the world itself was not a result of anyone's prayer, rather it was the Will of HaShem that there should be a world. If the world cannot develop without rain then let there be rain without prayer just as the creation occurred without prayer?

The answer to this riddle is that the purpose of the world is specifically to create an environment in which Man can build a relationship with HaShem. This relationship can only occur through prayer. HaShem therefore created a complete world with everything it needed. However, the maintenance program required for the world was very

should pay for the needs of the public. The Rav informed him of a synagogue in the area that was looking to build a library, which just happened to need \$50,000—the exact same amount that the taxi driver had stolen. So, Meir donated the money to the synagogue. About a year later, they built a beautiful library room in the synagogue.

After his donation, the taxi driver visited the library and saw a giant plaque that said, "This was donated by the generous philanthropist Meir, who is a great supporter of Torah." Meir felt bad about that and thought perhaps it was wrong for them to have the sign because he did not donate the money out of generosity. He was doing it to make amends, not to be seen as a supporter of Torah.

Meir wondered if it would be dishonest, Gneivas Daas, for them to praise him as a great supporter when he was just trying to repent for his thefts. He considered whether he should ask them to take down the sign, as they might not realize that his reason for donating the money was to make up for his past thefts, and not to be generous.

What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Vayikra Page 70



great. Man was then placed in the position to care for the maintenance of the world even though he was unable to do so on his own. Only with HaShem's assistance can Man maintain it. So behold! Man is found in the perfect environment to connect to HaShem. He is charged with the maintenance which is impossible without HaShem's assistance thereby compelled to turn to HaShem on a regular basis. HaShem responds to Man's request and a relationship is built.

The Talmud uses the following analogy to explain why the portion of manna was delivered daily and not annually. The king's son was away from home and his father sent him provisions once a year. The king noticed that his son never sent any correspondence to him. He therefore changed the schedule and sent his son provisions once a week and as expected, he heard from his son on a weekly basis. The Talmud explains that the purpose of receiving only a small portion every day was specifically for the purpose of giving Man the opportunity to create and maintain a relationship with HaShem.

The question is why was it necessary to subject us to absolute hopelessness? Certainly the people prayed before reaching this point of hopelessness and HaShem wanted a deeper prayer. Adam was not faced with hopelessness. Why should we?

Our exodus from Egypt was not just another miracle by which we were spared from a tragedy. Our exodus was a creation of something that never existed before. The prayer that was going to facilitate this creation had to be something much greater than a shallow request. The nation of Israel had to surrender all hope of any continuity. Only with that awareness and that yearning to HaShem could we become His people. He wants us to recognize that we have no existence without Him.

Have a wonderful Shabbos Hagadol\* and a beautiful Yom Tov.

## Paysach Diskind

\*Rav Elyashav learnt from the Shulchan Aruch who dedicated the entire sa'eeef 430 to the halacha that the Shabbos preceding Pesach is called Shabbos Hagadol, that one should use that name in place of simply Shabbos. And so I wish all a wonderful Shabbos Hagadol.





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE GIANT WETA

Last week we learned about giant lice. This week let's learn about a giant species of Grasshopper, another of the ten plagues.

Imagine you are in the forests of New Zealand. Crawling out from under a rotting log, a bizarre insect the size of a mouse scurries across the forest floor. It has a round, bulbous body covered in spiky armor and moves with a slow, lumbering gait. This is no ordinary bug - this is the giant weta, one of the biggest and weightiest insects in the entire world! Let me tell you more about this marvelous creature from New Zealand.

Despite its fearsome scientific name, *Deinacrida*, meaning "terrible grasshopper," the gentle giant weta is a veggie lover that wouldn't hurt a fly. In fact, these plump critters go crazy for crunchy carrots! Just imagine a giant insect happily munching away on some carrots like a rabbit.

The giant weta belongs to the weta family, which has over 70 different species crawling around the islands of New Zealand. Some of the smaller weta relatives are even meat-eaters that hunt other bugs! The tree weta can jump from branch to branch, but the giants are just too heavy to hop around like their sprightly cousins. The name "weta" comes from the Maori word "wetapunga," which translates to "god of ugly things."

How heavy are we talking? The record for the world's biggest bugs goes to a captive female giant weta that weighed as much as a newborn puppy at a whopping 2.5 ounces! Most barely tip the scales at 1.2 ounces, but that's still heavier than some mice. They have big

bulging eyes made up of hundreds of tiny lenses and two long antennae to smell out their next leafy meal. When threatened, these gentle giants will hiss loudly and kick out their spiky legs to protect themselves.

The ancestors of the Giant Weta roamed the islands of New Zealand thousands of years ago, way before people arrived there. Back then, these crazy critters could be found all across the mainland - but today, they are only found on a few remote islands off the coast. What happened?

When humans first reached New Zealand, they brought along rats and cats. These invasive predators, combined with habitat loss, nearly wiped out the poor giant weta from the mainland. Today, the giants' last stronghold is on Little Barrier Island, about 50 miles from Auckland. Here, they are safe from rats and cats and can munch on leaves to their heart's content.

Some conservation groups have made it their mission to protect and re-introduce the giant weta. Through breeding programs, they are working hard to bring these cool bugs back from the brink of extinction. These efforts are giving the giants a new lease on life in their island sanctuaries, safe from furry threats.

So the next time you're exploring the forests of New Zealand, keep an eye out for these incredible insects. You might just spot a two-inch long weta ambling along, oblivious that it's one of the heaviest bugs on the planet. Whether you think they're ugly or cute, there's no denying that these vegetarians with a kick are one of nature's most marvelous and amazing heavyweights.



## HE SAT, OPENED UP EACH GIFTED SEFER, AND READ FROM IT

Throughout the years, various people gave the Rosh Hayeshiva Rav Aharon Schechter seforim as gifts, most of which he did not need, and many of which he had very little interest in.

When he moved from his house on East 17th Street to the house on East 12th Street, he needed to downsize his library due to space constraints.

The Rosh Hayeshiva said, "If someone gave me this sefer, it is because they wanted to benefit me, to give something to me. So how can I just give away the sefer?"

So he sat, opened up each gifted sefer, and read from it until he felt he was able to get something from it, a vort, a kasheh, a diyuk, something he had not known. He refused to give away a sefer until he got something from it. Even though the benefactor had given it years beforehand, and was completely unaware that the Rosh Hayeshiva was doing so.



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the horoscope ruse, Rav Zilberstein (Upiryo Matok Vayikra Page 344) wrote that the buyer who paid the horoscope writer to convince the seller to sell violated a prohibition of Geneivas Daas. Nonetheless, because the seller never made a condition that he was selling it because of the advice of the horoscope, therefore, even though that may have been his thoughts, since it wasn't explicitly stated as a condition of the sale, he could not back out. Consequently, the buyer would not need to reverse the sale and could keep the business.

לעילוי נשמת מרים זיסל בת יצחק לייב בק ז"ל  
ט' ניסן תשע"ט

Dedicated anonymously



**K&F**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
406 W. Pennsylvania Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204

Brad E. Kauffman Esquire and Kauffman and Forman P.A.  
specializing in corporate and construction law,  
estates, wills and trusts and business litigation.

