

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE LAPTOP BAG

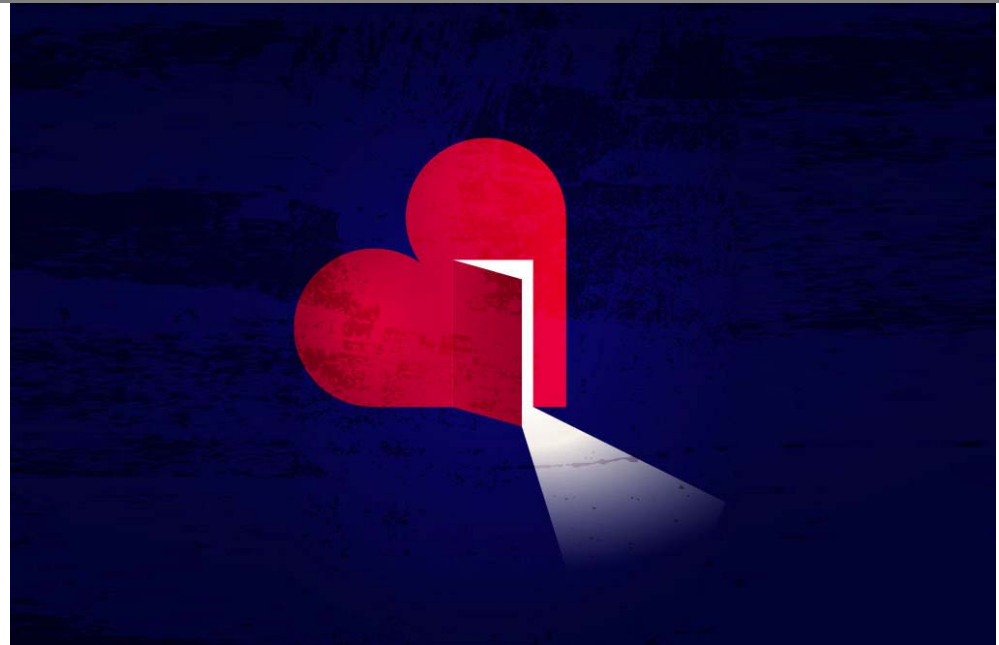
By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Torah portion the Torah discusses how a court has to investigate the testimony of witnesses very carefully. This leads us to the following story.

Dov had a laptop that needed to be fixed. Izzy was a computer expert who lived in Dov's neighborhood.

Dov called Izzy and asked if he would be able to look at and fix his laptop. Izzy gladly agreed. Dov went over to Izzy's house and dropped off his laptop, in its laptop bag.

A couple days later Izzy told Dov that the computer was fixed and working perfectly. The next day Dov called up Izzy and said, "I have an urgent work related matter. Can I ask you a huge favor? Would you be able to kindly drop off my laptop at my house? I'm going to be in and out on important business, so in case I'm not home please leave it at my next door neighbor's house. Although Izzy didn't normally do deliveries, neverthe-



THE OPEN HEART

Excerpted from a talk from Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky

In this week's Parsha, Re'eh, we are given the mitzvah of tzedakah. In addition to this mitzvah we are also instructed not to feel bad about parting with our money. The Torah instructs us to give the tzedakah with an open generous heart. Why should the intent with which one gives tzedakah be required? Every mitzvah we do should have pure intentions but there is no additional instruction that it must be done in such a way. Why is tzedakah different?

There are two attitudes regarding the giving of tzedakah. The first attitude is that HaShem blessed me with much financial success and that comes with an obligation to give some of my hard earned money to others. The implication is that the money is truly mine; I worked hard and earned it fair and square and it is my responsibility to use it wisely which includes giving it to the needy. The alternate attitude is that although I worked hard and the success was preceded by my sweat and toil, nevertheless, my success is a gift granted to me by HaShem which I do not really deserve, I have no right to expect it. My responsibility to give to the needy is my demonstration that I am but a recipient of HaShem's undeserved kindness.

HaShem created this world by blending the two attributes of Din and Rachamim, Justice and Mercy. The attribute of Justice dictates that existence is given only to those who truly deserve it. The attribute of Mercy dictates that existence is granted even to the undeserving. It is simply a gift from HaShem that one does not deserve.

Since Justice dictates that only those creatures who can justify their existence should exist, there would be no creatures whatsoever, because how can any creature justify its existence

MITZVA MEME

less, he was a good friend of Dov's and agreed to do this favor. "Ok, I can drop it off. But I cannot take responsibility for it. Is that ok?"

"Not a problem", Dov said. "Thank you so much for your kindness."

Later that day Izzy's assistant drove over to Dov's house and knocked on Dov's door. No one answered. So as Dov requested, Izzy's assistant went to the next door neighbor's house. No one answered there. He went to the neighbor on the other side. No answer there.

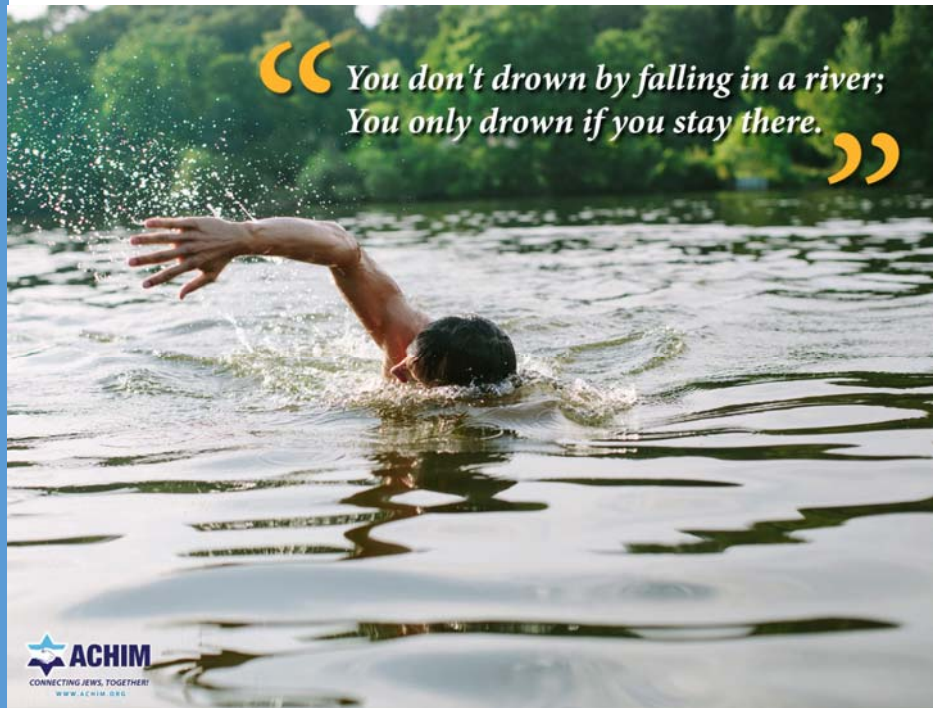
Izzy's assistant already made the trip and he didn't want to bring the laptop back so he went to Dov's house and knocked on the door once more. No one answered. So he left the laptop bag on the front porch mostly obscured from outside traffic. It was a safe neighborhood and Izzy's assistant was confident that Dov would come home shortly. Izzy sent a message to Dov that his laptop bag was on the porch. The next day Dov reached out to Izzy. "Where is the laptop? I didn't see it on the porch." "What do you mean", Izzy replied, "My assistant left it on your porch". "I don't see it here", Dov answered, in a panicked voice.

It turned out that the laptop was stolen from the porch. Later Dov reached out to Izzy. "The computer has really important stuff on it for my work. I would like you to pay me for the loss of my computer and the material on it". Izzy politely refused. He said, "I did you a huge favor by dropping it off. My assistant went to your house, and your two neighbors' houses, and no one answered. He left it at your house in a safe place."

"Yes", Dov retorted, "but you were irresponsible to leave it outside".

What do you think, does Izzy have to pay for the loss?

See Chashukei Chemed Baba Basra page 244



before it exists. It was therefore critical that the world have an element of Mercy. However, if the world would be created with Mercy alone it would defeat the purpose of creation as follows. HaShem created the world as a vehicle whereby Man can create for himself his own destiny of eternal goodness. The Torah is the mechanism by which Man creates this destiny. Without the attribute of Justice, there would be no opportunity to create one's own goodness because all goodness would be given out for free. It would be like socialism, nothing is earned, it's all a gift.

HaShem therefore founded and maintained His world on both Justice with Mercy. Man was created undeserving, but nevertheless he can work to create his own destiny - it is not granted unless he worked for it.

This is similar to an older child living at home. Although the parents may cover his health insurance and do not charge him rent, nevertheless, he must pay for his own car and auto insurance. Although he is

being supported, he nevertheless, feels good about the money he earns on his own.

Rabbeinu B'chaya explains that the poor man is an expression of HaShem's attribute of Justice. This is why he has nothing. Justice dictates that this man, even if he is a great tzadik, does not deserve wealth. For in reality, even when we fulfil all the mitzvos of the Torah meticulously we are only doing our duty and perhaps all we deserve is to exist. Can anyone honestly say that HaShem owes them anything more than sheer existence? The wealthy man, on the other hand, is an expression of HaShem's attribute of Mercy because he too is not deserving of anything he has. Everything that was given to him was totally undeserved.

Rabbeinu B'chaya explains that the mitzvah of tzedakah gives the wealthy man the opportunity to mix Justice with Mercy thereby contributing to the maintenance of the world which is supported by this mix.

Perhaps this is why it is so critical that the wealthy man must have an open heart. He must see himself the recipient of the attribute of Mercy, of HaShem's undeserved kindness. Only then will his gift to the needy man mix Justice with Mercy and bring blessing to the world.

Have a very safe and very wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION THE BOXER CRAB & SEA ANEMONES

Over the next few weeks we will look at some of the fascinating defense mechanisms that HaShem gave to different animals to protect themselves.

Let's take a look at two different creatures that work together in an amazing way. The Boxer Crab is a one inch wide sea creature that lives in the sea, usually underneath stones and coral rubble. These crabs are usually patterned pink, brown or yellow and up to an inch wide. They have thin claws and a front pair of walking legs that are longer than the other three pairs. They spend most of their time attached to reefs in shallow waters.

Sea anemones are brightly colored cnidarians (marine animals that sting) with simple digestive systems and a single body cavity surrounded by dangerous tentacles. The tentacles are covered with stinging cells called cnidocytes which act as defensive mechanisms and can assist in the capture of prey. They are carnivores that eat fish, mussels, zooplankton and worms. Sea anemones have a few predators like some sea slugs and some fish.

Boxer crabs and sea anemones form one of the most unusual symbiotic relationships in the entire animal kingdom. The boxer crab is also known as the pom-pom crab or cheerleader crab. This is because anemones live on the delicate front claws of the crabs, protecting the claws and helping the crab pick up bits of food. The sea anemone can sting predators, and the crab uses it to protect itself. They move them in horizontal motions as they move. This movement is a natural deterrent to predators, and when directly threatened, the crab will use the sea anemone to "punch" the aggressor. The sea anemone's stinging tentacles help defend the crab. It is not as clear how much the anemone benefits in this relationship, but it seems that the crab helps protect it from danger, as well as providing it with food. Because the crab controls how much food the anemone gets, "its" anemones stay small in size. The crabs provide food by using the sea anemone's tentacles to collect food particles. Then they digest the debris and provide meals in return.

Boxer crabs don't need anemones to survive and sometimes they will use coral or sponges instead.

ALL I WANT TO DO IS SAY ONE WORD

Rav Avraham Kalmanowitz was unceasing in his efforts to raise money for the Jews in Europe during the Holocaust. He was a talented orator and a "gifted fainter", a skill he would employ to direct attention to the plight of the Jews.

His grandson related how Rabbi Kalmanowitz was unpopular for his schnorring during the war years, when it was possible to save a life for pocket change. No matter whom he would meet he would appeal for life-saving money.

At one synagogue function he was noticed approaching the building, and measures were immediately taken to prevent him from entering. But they weren't quick enough. Rabbi Kalmanowitz entered the building and everyone knew that an appeal would soon follow. This was something they could not allow. Vainly, the rabbi tried to put the crowd at ease "I don't want to speak," he pledged to a swarm of unbelieving eyes. 'All I want to do is say one word.' "One word?" Why, even the greatest fund solicitors in history could not crack open wallets with just one word. It was a safe gamble to let the rabbi speak, they reasoned, and he certainly had them intrigued!

Rav Avraham Kalmanowitz ascended to the podium and waited for the crowd to fall silent, and then thoroughly unexpectedly—he sighed, "AAAyyy," and fell to the floor in a dead faint.

The frantic crowd beckoned, "Breng vasser!" (bring water) as everyone looked on in anxious horror. When the apprehension had climaxed, Reb Avraham lifted one eye and commented, "Vasser brought min? Breng gelt!" (You're bringing water? Bring money!)

For the Love of Torah, By Hanoach Teller, Published by Feldheim page 45



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about giving the young woman a job, Rabbi Zilberstein wrote in a similar case that if it is truly a matter of saving a life, the manager can give the woman the job, even though she is not yet trained. However, the woman would have to eventually return the salary that she got paid while she was not qualified. This is similar to the idea that one is allowed to steal to save his life, but he has to return the money afterwards.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of our dear husband, Abba and Zaide

יחזקאל מיכאל בן יצחק הלוי

Eva, Herschel, Shoshana Steiner and grandchildren

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