

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



TRANSPARENCY

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion opens with the injunction to make sure that no theft is involved when bringing a Korban. We learn this from the fact that the Pasuk reads, "When an Adam brings a korban". Our Sages teach that this means that a korban must be clean from theft like Adam himself, (everything belonged to him).

This principle is true in general. When we do a mitzvah we must make sure not to justify any underhanded means in pursuit of the mitzvah.

This leads us to the following true story.

Yosef came to the United States on a fundraising trip for his Yeshiva, which was in dire need of funds. He approached the home of a renowned philanthropist. As he was going up the steps, he met another fellow walking out.

"Listen, my friend" said the man. "It looks like you are here collecting. Let me give you a tip. This gvir likes "geshmake divrei Torah". He asked me a question on a gemara and I didn't know the answer. Let



INTEGRITY & FIDELITY; OUR SECRET WEAPON

This week, in addition to the regular Parsha of Vayikra, we will read a second Parsha, Parshas Zachor. Parshas Zachor instructs us to remember that Amalek attacked us when we left Egypt. They had no interest in attacking us other than to demonstrate that G.D's people are just as mortal and human like every other nation. In reality, however, we know that as HaShem's people, we are not mortal. The nation of Israel is eternal, we will outlive history itself.

In the verses preceding Parshas Zachor the Torah instructs us not to cheat in our business dealings. Our Sages teach us that when we cheat in our business dealings we are inviting Amalek to attack. In other words, our first line of defense lies in the integrity of our business dealings. Once that is in order, our enemies will not rise up. Why should our business conduct influence our security so significantly?

It is understood that our security is ultimately in the hands of HaShem. It therefore follows that to the degree that HaShem is with us, to that degree we are protected.

There is a basic principle that governs all relationships and that includes our relationship with HaShem as well. The more aware we are of our friend the closer we become. If our attention is on our friend when he is well and when he is sick, when his children are doing well and when they are not, the friendship between the friends will be strong. When we pay little attention to our friend the relationship wanes.

MITZVA MEME

me give you my advice. Learn that gemara, come up with an amazing pshat and when you come back, you will be prepared. That will really impress the gvir and he will likely be very generous with you."

Yosef appreciated the tip and quickly went to a nearby shul and prepared that sugya (topic). He had a very geshmak and lomdisheh pshat and was excited to be able to share it.

Yosef then made his way to the gvir. Yosef was welcomed in with a smile, by the gvir. Sure enough the philanthropist opened with his question. "I was learning this gemara and I had this question". He then proceeded to tell him the question.

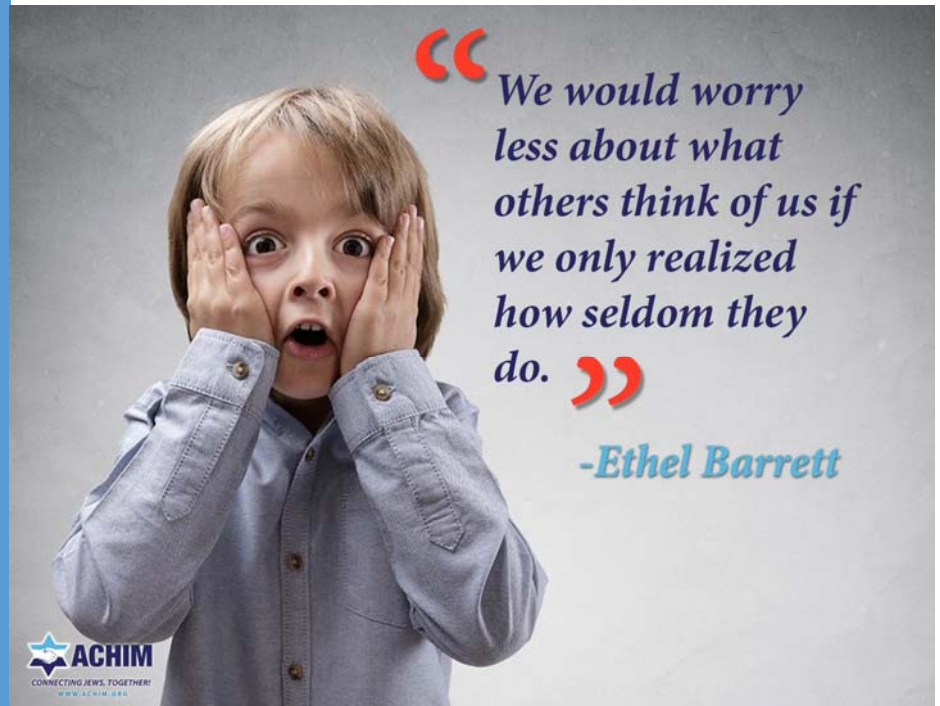
Yosef was excited to share his answer. "You know, I was actually just learning this sugya. It is a great question. I have a really geshmake approach for you." Yosef then proceeded to excitedly tell the gvir his shtikel Torah. He gave it over with relish and enthusiasm. The gvir was visibly excited. He loved the dvar Torah. When Yosef then proceeded to talk about his Yeshiva, the gvir was extremely generous. He took out his checkbook and wrote a check that was far in excess of what Yosef ever expected to raise. Before accepting the check, Yosef was panic stricken with the following doubt. Was he allowed to accept the check?

On one hand the man was willing to give him the money. But on the other hand, if he would be totally transparent with him and tell him the full story of how he met the other collector on his way in, and purposely prepared that exact sugya, perhaps the gvir would feel fooled. Did Yosef have an obligation to tell the gvir the full story, and perhaps lose this opportunity? Would being silent about it be gneivas daas, deceiving the philanthropist?

What do you think?

See Hebrew Veharev Na Volume Two page 337

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



There is perhaps no greater concern that constantly haunts us than issues relating to our livelihood and the business dealings in which we are involved. If every time we dealt with our business we turned to HaShem, whether for His help or whether to make sure we were in line with His expectations, we would be drawn so close to Him. Our relationship with Him would be that much more strengthened. The closeness generated by that conduct would be profound. It is therefore no wonder why the key to our national security lies in the level of integrity we have in our business dealings.

The implication of this notion is far reaching. What we might otherwise consider foolish and reckless could, in fact, be wise and prudent. There are times when we intuitively feel that the most secure way to proceed, is in the secular court of law even when there is an expectation that we should be going the the

Jewish Beis Din. Our rationale tells us that there is no question what our course of action should be. Nevertheless, our Sages teach us that the reverse is true! Not only will it be better for us personally as we strengthen our connection with HaShem, but it offers security to our entire nation.

We read daily, of rockets coming in from Gaza to our beloved Homeland with almost no casualties. One must wonder in whose merit are we spared from the carnage? While I certainly do not know who to credit, we can certainly speculate that it may be those brave people who rise to the challenge of following what they know is expected of them rather than compromise their integrity.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

SMELLING WITH A TONGUE

Snakes are often feared. But the truth is that deaths from snake bites are actually rare. More people are killed by bees than by snakes every year. Interestingly, in hospitals and ambulances snakes are a symbol of healing seen on the serpent-entwined "Rod of Asclepius". Many scholars have the opinion that the origin of the serpent entwined rod comes from the story in the Torah of the bronze snake that Moshe placed on a stick.

Snakes range greatly in size. The smallest is the tiny 4 inch long barbados thread snake. The largest is the reticulated python that is 22 feet long. Two-headed snakes can also occur on rare occasions. Often the two heads will fight each other for food despite sharing the same body.

Rather than rely on their eyesight, snakes use smell to track their prey. Interestingly, they smell by using their tongue. When a snake's forked tongue flickers in and out, the serpent is picking up small particles from the air or ground and transferring them to the "Jacobson's organ" in its mouth. This is a special structure in the roof of the mouth, with a sensory organ lining similar to that in a nose, but much more accurate. They keep their tongues constantly in motion, sampling particles from the air, ground and water, analyzing the chemicals found and determining the presence of prey or predators in the local environment. Even water dwelling snakes like the anaconda have tongues that function efficiently underwater.

Pit vipers and pythons have infrared receptors on their snouts. This allows them to "see" the radiated heat of warm-blooded prey even in the dark.

The underside of a snake is also very sensitive to vibration. This allows snakes to be able to sense approaching animals by detecting faint vibrations in the ground. These belly scales also allow the snake to travel by gripping surfaces.

To accommodate a snakes narrow body, snakes' paired organs like kid-

neys are arranged one in front of the other instead of side by side. Also most snakes have only one functional lung.

An older snake may shed its skin once or twice a year. But a younger snake, still growing, may shed up to four times a year. This shedding serves two of functions. Firstly, the old and worn skin is replaced; secondly, it helps get rid of parasites such as mites and ticks.

The snake's jaw is a complex structure. In humans the bottom and top of the jaw are attached. But in a snake the top and bottom are attached only with a loose ligament. This allows them to open their mouths wide enough to swallow their prey whole, even if it is larger in diameter than the snake itself. For example, the African egg-eating snake eats eggs much larger than the diameter of its head. Imagine being able to swallow a watermelon bigger than your head, whole!

After eating, snakes become dormant while the process of digestion takes place. The digestive process is highly efficient, with the snake's digestive enzymes dissolving and absorbing everything but the prey's hair (or feathers) and claws, which are excreted along with waste. But if a snake is disturbed after having eaten recently it will often regurgitate its prey to be able to escape the perceived threat.

Because snakes have a slow metabolism rate, they don't have to eat as often as other animals. The King Cobra can go months without having to eat.

Some snakes can breathe partially through their skin allowing them to dive deep underwater.

Thank you Hashem for showing us such great wisdom in Your creations.

"DON'T STEAL. PLEASE ASK ME, AND I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU."

Rabbi Naftali and Rebbetzin Pessia Carlebach lived in Vienna. They had a gentile maid and Rebbetzin Pessia noticed that various items seemed to be disappearing from the house. She also saw that when the maid left on Friday before Shabbos she always carried a suitcase. One Friday Rebbetzin Pessia asked the maid, "What's in that suitcase?" "Nothing," said the maid. "I must look." Pessia insisted. Inside there were items the maid had stolen from the house. Rebbetzin Pessia said to her softly, "You're only seventeen. If you're stealing now what will become of you in the future? Once you start stealing, you won't be able to stop and eventually you'll end up in prison. Please do me a favor. If you ever need something, don't steal. Please ask me, and I'll give it to you."

The maid, who was at first very frightened at being caught, was very touched by Rebbetzin Pessia's mild reaction and gentle words. She became attached to her heart and soul and told the Rebbetzin, "I would die for you."

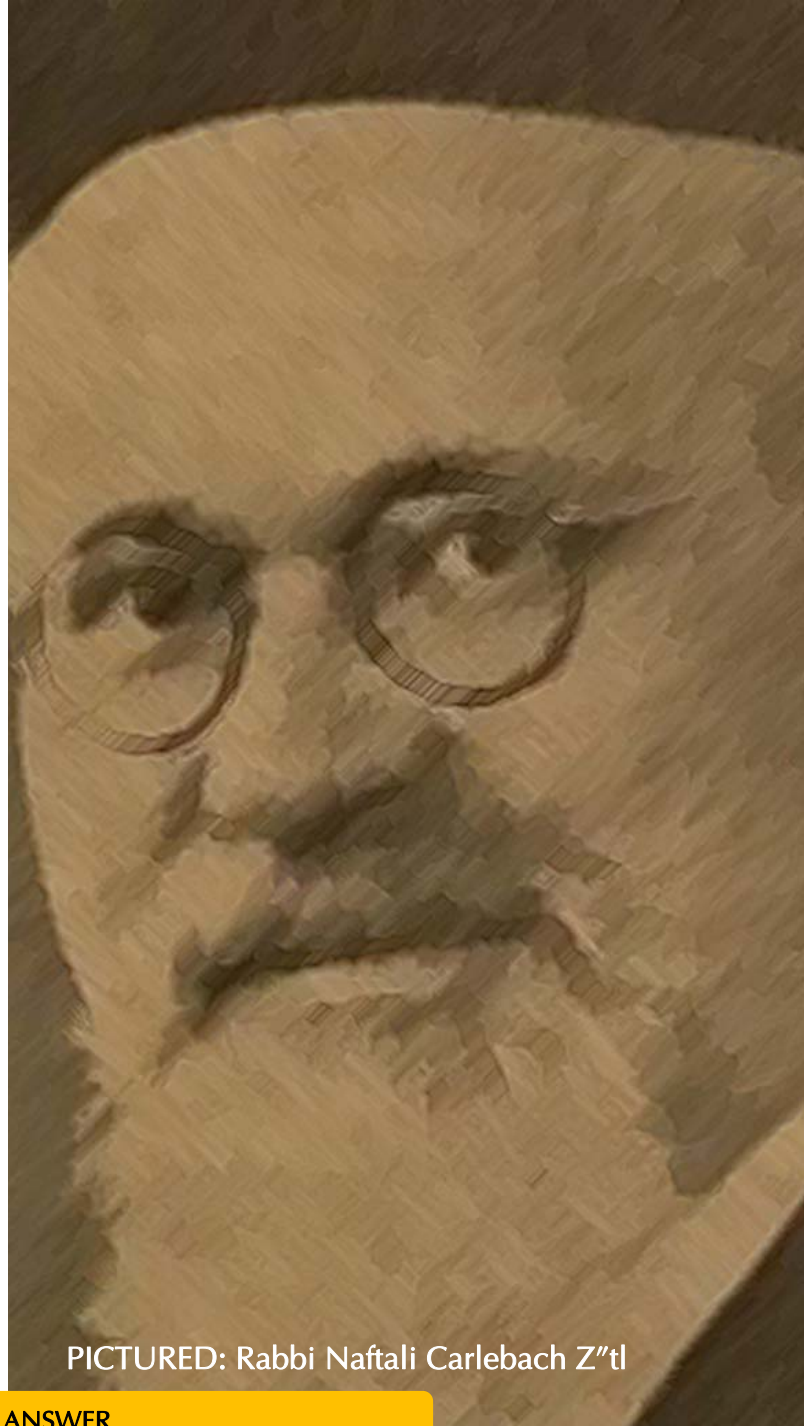
Two weeks after this happened the Nazis occupied Vienna. They immediately arrested every Jewish girl over fifteen on the pretext that they would have to clean the barracks being prepared for the German soldiers. The Carlebachs were terribly afraid for their sixteen-year-old daughter, Shulamis. Their gentile maid went to the Nazi officer in charge and said to him. "You don't have to arrest her. I'll go in her stead." The Nazi said to her. "Why are you, an Aryan girl ready to go in place of this Jew?" She said. "These Jews are good people." The maid was quite beautiful. The Nazi officer told the maid, "If you agree to go out with me on a date I'll let the Jew off". "I have to bring her in because of my superiors, but I'll immediately let her go home." The maid complied and went out on a date with the officer. The next day they arrested Shulamis Carlebach but soon brought her home on a scooter. The German officer then began dating the maid on a steady basis, and they became quite close.

Some weeks later the Nazi officer told the maid that they were going to arrest Rabbi Naftali Carlebach in two days. They would almost certainly kill him because he was a rabbi. But their policy was that if they came to arrest someone and he was sick they waited until he was well and then arrested him. So if the rabbi could manage "to be sick" he would buy time to arrange a way to escape.

Rabbi Naftali asked his doctor for some kind of pill to make him seem sick and the doctor complied. The next day, fifteen German soldiers with guns drawn came to the Carlebach home and when they went in to the rabbi they saw that he was in bed. He actually appeared very sick. "He's sick", the one in charge said. "We'll come back later." After that the Carlebach family arranged an escape and survived the war.

The power of showing compassion to a gentile girl!

(From Jewish Tales of Holy Women By R' Yitzchak Buxbaum. Published by Jossey-Bass)



PICTURED: Rabbi Naftali Carlebach Z"tl

THE ANSWER

Regarding the question about giving the sugar on Shabbos, Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered as follows: There is a concept, mentioned in Rabbi Akiva Eiger, of saving a person from doing a bigger aveira by having him do a smaller one. It would be challenging to apply that in this particular case though and the best thing to do would be gently say something that may convince her to stop for Shabbos.

Regarding the question of the money placed in the Pushka, Rav Berkowitz answered that it would really depend on the following variables: How old is the girl? Was the money hers or given to her to spend for the trip? How old was the tzedaka collector? Was the pushka sealed? Was the girl old enough to make binding commitments?

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