

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE DELIVERY

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion talks about the importance for Beis Din to adjudicate justly.

This leads us to the following interesting story.

Shimon went to a Jewish owned appliance store. He saw a nice refrigerator that was on sale. Shimon paid for the refrigerator with the understanding that the sale was final as it was on clearance.

Shimon went home and asked the store to deliver the refrigerator to his home.



RETURNING TO NORMAL

All of us who are in this lockdown still remember what life was before the lockdown. We recognize that our current state is not normal and are convinced that life will certainly return to 'normal', hopefully soon. Imagine, if you will, that this current state remains the same for another 40 years, Heaven forbid! The children born into this new world will have no frame of reference to expect that things will return to 'normal' because this current state will be 'normal' to them.

In this week's Parsha, Acharei Mos - Kedoshim, the Torah teaches us what 'normal' is. The Parsha of Kedoshim opens with HaShem's instruction to Moshe to address the entire nation; the elders, the lay folk, the women and even the children. He tells Moshe to tell the entire nation that everyone in the nation is to strive to become kadosh, to become Holy, to achieve a level of Holiness similar to HaShem's Holiness. HaShem adds a word of encouragement by telling them "because I, HaShem your G.D, am Kadosh.

How are we to understand this encouragement? Of course HaShem is Holy because He is G.D, we are not! HaShem is immortal, we are not. HaShem has no physical limitations, we do!

Maharal asks why did the first-borns of Israel need the special protection of the Korban Pesach at the plague of the first-born any more than the previous nine plagues? None of the other plagues affected the Jewish people. Why should the plague of the first-borns be different?

He explains that on the night of Pesach HaShem revealed Himself in total exposure. His Presence was so powerful that all first-borns were struck by the radiation of that Presence. Although the Jewish first-borns were not deserving punishment, they would nevertheless

MITZVA MEME

The store had their non-Jewish delivery man drive the truck over. On the way a car smashed into the delivery truck. No one was severely injured but the refrigerator in the truck got badly damaged.

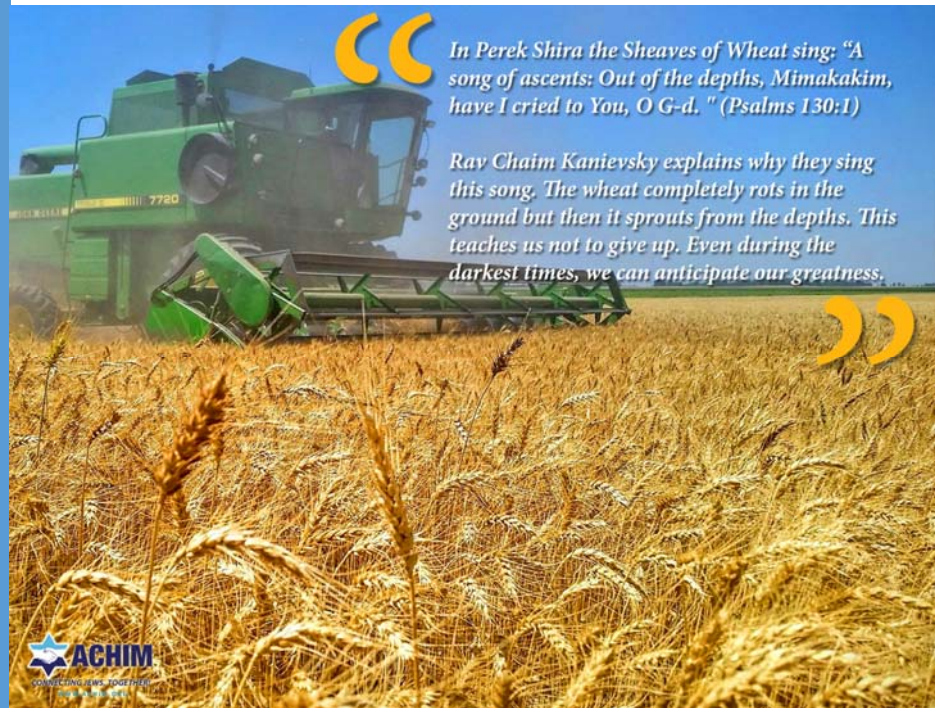
Shimon wondered who was responsible for the loss of the refrigerator. On one hand he paid for it. But on the other hand it had not been delivered to his home yet. Or maybe you could argue that the driver was acting on his behalf by taking it to Shimon's home.

Was the refrigerator destroyed in Shimon's possession, or was it destroyed while still in the possession of the store? Does the store have an obligation to replace the refrigerator?

What do you think?

The answer may not be what you intuitively think.

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In Perek Shira the Sheaves of Wheat sing: "A song of ascents: Out of the depths, Mimakakim, have I cried to You, O G-d." (Psalms 130:1)

Rav Chaim Kanievsky explains why they sing this song. The wheat completely rots in the ground but then it sprouts from the depths. This teaches us not to give up. Even during the darkest times, we can anticipate our greatness.

be struck by the same radiation and suffer the same fate. It was for this reason HaShem gave us the mitzvah of Pesach.

What was the secret of the Pesach? How did it protect them from HaShem's intense radiation?

The mechanism by which the Pesach protected them was by making the people of Israel HaShem's property. By offering the Pesach sacrifice and roasting it and eating together in one house together with the other members of the household, we proclaimed HaShem as our G.D and His absolute Unity. Through this service we became His. Our source of existence was no longer found in the material world, it was now found in HaShem directly. While all creatures find their source of existence in HaShem, the difference is that others are products a secondary cause; Nature, who herself is a creation of HaShem. The Jewish people, on the other hand, are no longer a product of Nature. We transcend Nature, we have a direct connection to HaShem - He is our lifeline. When HaShem radiated His Presence through Egypt on

the night of Pesach, only those whose existence were subject to Nature were struck. For them, it was an overdose of radiation. For our people, however, who draw their existence directly from HaShem it was a life giving experience. The radiance of HaShem's Presence actually bestowed a special sanctity upon the first-borns of Israel. Using the insight offered by Maharal, HaShem's words of encouragement resonate. HaShem is expecting from us to become Holy. He wants us to strive for Holiness because He is Holy and being that our lifeline draws directly from Him, it stands to reason that we, too, can connect on some level to His immortality and transcend our material limitations. Yes, even the simple men and women and even the children can achieve levels of Holiness similar to His.

Behold! HaShem has told Moshe and he, in turn, has taught us what 'normal' is. The Director of history Himself shares with us in our Parsha who we are and what our destiny is. The idea that holiness and awareness of HaShem will be the 'normal' seems somewhat foreign to us. However, that is only because it has been so long since the world entered the current state of distancing from HaShem. We were born into this state of existence. But we know and anticipate that the world will return to true 'normal' someday soon.

Have a safe and very wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE FRILLED DRAGON

No, that is not an extinct dinosaur, you are looking at! It is a real dragon.

The Australian frilled dragon is a fascinating creature to watch. It is also known commonly as the frilled lizard, or frilled agama. This species is endemic to northern Australia and southern New Guinea. It is often kept as an exotic pet.

It is about 3 feet long. When an enemy draws near, this lizard raises a frill which normally is flat along the back. This frill stands out in a circular disk which can be 2 feet across. It is a startling display and its frill displays bright orange and red scales.

How did that frill get there? Did the lizard "will it" into existence? Did it tinker with its own DNA? How does it know to use it to frighten enemies?

The lizard adds to this immense, apparent increase in size by opening its mouth, which is bright yellow or pink inside. By now, the situation is surely looking

worse, as far as the predator is concerned.

Then, to settle the matter once and for all, the lizard gives a terrible hissing sound and slowly moves toward the enemy. It raises its body; and sometimes holds its tail above its body

By that time, the troublemaker generally decides to leave.

This reaction is also used for territorial displays, to discourage predators and during courtship.

Like many lizards, frill-necked lizards are carnivores, feeding on cicadas, beetles, termites, and mice. They especially favor butterflies, moths and their larvae. They also consume spiders and occasionally other lizards

The species' main predators are eagles, owls, larger lizards, snakes, dingos and quolls.

How incredible are your creations Hashem!

“PACK UP ANY DRESSES THAT YOU THINK HIS WIFE MIGHT LIKE, AND BILL ME”

Shloime Gross was a philanthropist and ba'al chesed from Flatbush, who passed away at a young age. A friend referred to Shloime Gross as “the prince of Jerusalem.” Here is why. The friend related as follows: On Shloime’s frequent visits to the Holy City, he was greeted by scores of men, many of them talmidei chachamim, whom Shlomie had assisted financially and in other ways at some point in time. I was driving with him in Yerushalayim when we passed a famous chassidishe shul. Shlomie noticed one of his Yerushalmi friends and honked the horn to get his attention. The man hurried to the car and a few others followed behind him. Shlomie got out of the car and in moments was surrounded by Yerushalmis who were hugging him with genuine love.

One such man related as follows:

Dovid HaMelech says, “Praiseworthy is he who contemplates the needy”. Shlomie was unusual in his ability to understand exactly what each person needed and to provide him with those needs — as I experienced firsthand. I was preparing to return to Eretz Yisrael after having spent two months in America with one of my children who required medical treatment. A few days before my return, Shlomie said to me, “You’ve been away for so long, it would be proper to bring home something nice for your wife.” I knew that he was right, but I had no idea what to get for her. Shlomie had it all figured out. “I’m calling a women’s clothing store in Flatbush. You’ll go there and get a nice dress for her.” The proprietor asked me, “So what kind of dress would you like to get?” I had absolutely no idea, so the person picked up the phone and called Shlomie. Shlomie told him, “Pack up for him any dresses that you think his wife might like, and bill me.” I walked out of the store carrying a package with six or seven dresses. Judging by my wife’s reaction, I can tell you that it was a wonderful idea.

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THE ANSWERS

Regarding the question of two sons with the same Hebrew name, Rav Zilberstein answers that technically it is permitted to do this, as we find that David Hamelech had two sons with the same name. However there is a concern for “poor mazel” for the children, therefore it would be best to add a name, such as Chaim, to one of them.

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