

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



FAKE SNAKE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion opens with the importance of establishing courts to adjudicate disputes. This leads us to the following true story.

One day Ari went outside to his backyard and saw a large venomous snake in the grass in his backyard. He was terrified of snakes and his wife and children were even more terrified. Ari quickly ran inside and opened the local Jewish phonebook and called the exterminator to come remove the snake.

The exterminator came with all of his



FOOTSTEPS

In this week's Parsha, Shoftim, Moshe teaches us; "When there is an issue that eludes you, you must go to the place where HaShem chose. You will come to the judges and you will do as they instruct from that place". Would it not be more appropriate to say that "you must go up to the judges in the place where HaShem chose". Why is the location of the court relevant? Similarly, we must ask why the Torah underscores to follow the judges' advice from that place? What relevance is the place?

Our Sages teach us that "The origin of wisdom is fear of HaShem". We can certainly appreciate that our wise men must fear HaShem to be trustworthy leaders, but how does the fear come to be the origin of their wisdom?

When our Sages talk about wisdom they refer to absolute wisdom. It is the wisdom whose truth is absolute. The way to discern absolute truth is to see if it survives the test of time. Any wisdom that is created by Man will not endure time. Just as Man is finite so is his wisdom. The source of absolute wisdom can only be from a point outside of Man that is not subject to Man's limitations. There is only One such source - HaShem. Only when one recognizes that all of life, all of existence finds its source in HaShem, only then will he be able to begin collecting wisdom. Without the fear, or awareness of HaShem wisdom does not begin. Allow me to illustrate this point.

There were three travelers walking through a forest on a cold winter day when they came upon a clearing. They decided to play a game. Who could make a perfectly

MITZVA MEME

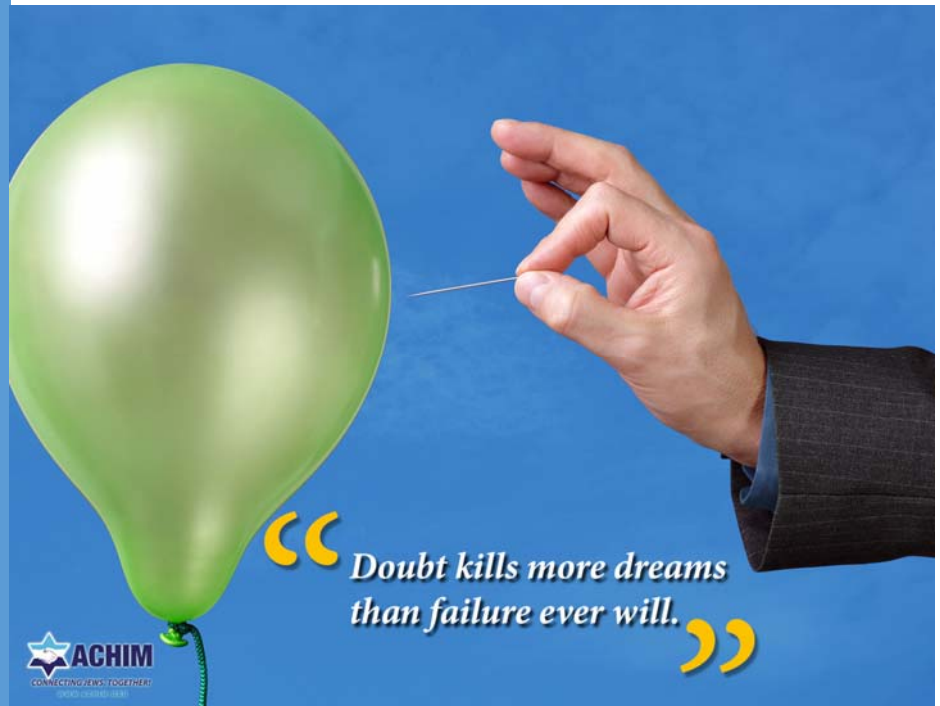
equipment and was prepared to catch the snake. Suddenly the exterminator laughed out loud and picked up the snake with his hands. It turned out that it was a very realistic looking but rubber snake. It turned out that this snake was left there by the neighbor who threw it over the fence from his yard and forgot it there.

The exterminator turned to Ari and said, "I'm happy that this ended well. We have a policy that every time we drive out we charge a minimum of \$100. I still expect to be paid". Ari felt silly that he had to pay for this, and he wanted his neighbor to pay instead because he had left the snake in his yard.

When Ari brought it up to Yaakov, his neighbor, Yaakov said, "I don't think I have to pay for this. It's true that I accidentally left the snake there, but you should have been more careful before you called the exterminator".

What do you think? Does the neighbor have to pay for the cost of the exterminator?

See Hebrew Veharev Na Volume Two Page 149



straight set of footprints in the snow from one side of the clearing to the other. The first fellow looked across the clearing and focused on a specific tree and began his walk across the clearing never taking his eyes off that tree. When he got there he saw that his footprints formed an arch. The reason it was not straight was because although he focused on one point, nevertheless, the element of human error was unable to keep his eyes locked on being dead center.

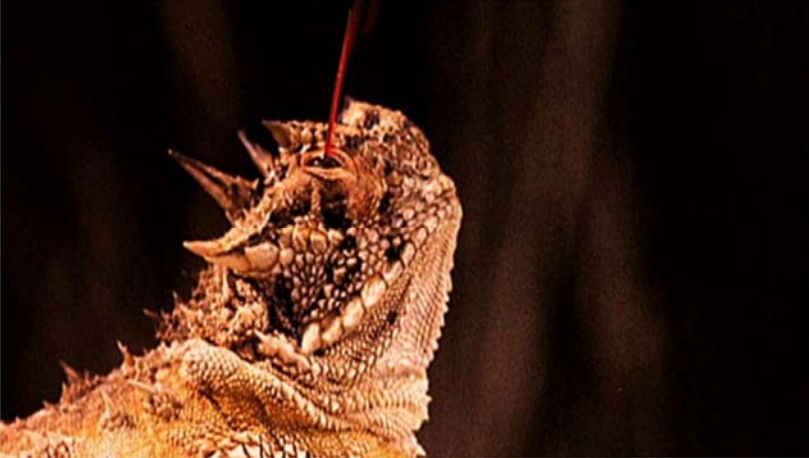
The next fellow understood his friend's mistake and did not look to the other side at all. Instead, he looked at his feet and made sure that each step was perfectly aligned with the previous step. When he reached the other side he saw that although the footprints formed a relatively straight line, nevertheless, it was a jagged line. His mistake had been due to the human error of not being able to make sure that every step was perfectly aligned. Just a slight angle off will be recognized after taking so many steps.

Finally, the third fellow recognized that he could not rely on his own judgement. Instead he found a perfectly straight line from a source outside of him. He looked across the opening and saw two trees. One was directly in front of the other. When he moved a drop to the right he could see the second tree. When he moved a drop to the left he could again see the second tree. However, if he kept himself in one rigid position, the front tree blocked the view of the second tree. Behold, he used a straight line, the line created by those two trees, to guide him. He then proceeded to cross the clearing keeping his focus on those two trees, always keeping the position that the front tree blocked the view of the second tree. He won the game.

Our Parsha is teaching us that if an issue eludes us, the place to go is the place where HaShem chose. There we will connect to the origin of wisdom. When we get there, the judges who sit in the court will clarify our issue and we must follow what they advise from that place.

Have a very safe and very wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE TEXAS HORNED LIZARD, THE LIZARD THAT SHOOTS BLOOD OUT OF ITS EYES

The Texas Horned Lizard is the largest of several horned lizard species. North American desert horned lizards have a wide range of predators within their habitat.

They are preyed upon by snakes, other lizards, mice, bobcats, foxes, coyotes and birds of prey. The lizard has a few defense tactics depending upon each type of predator and whether that predator likes to swallow prey whole or chew it up.

The first defense is camouflage. Horned lizards' color pattern is designed to blend into the background. They can change their color tone from light to dark and back again. The lizard often pretends to be a rock. It tucks its head and limbs, and hunches its back to look like a rock. But if induced to run, the lizard will run a short distance and freeze, trying again. Sometimes the lizard will flip over on its back, so its predator will see the lighter color of its underside. The flat body is designed to be close to the ground so that the lizard does not cast a shadow.

The second defense is to appear inedible. The lizard can puff itself up with air to appear too big to eat. It will face a predator with its array of horns which can be manipulated to point forward or backwards. Snakes like to swallow prey head first, because legs fold backwards, but might find this difficult with forward pointing horns.

Horned lizards can distinguish the type of snake that is after them. With relatively slow-moving rattlesnakes, the lizard will sit and wait until the snake is near, then run away. Rattlesnakes do not usually pursue their prey.

Whipsnakes and coachwhip snakes, however, are very fast and do pursue their prey. Horned lizards almost never run away from these snakes because they would not succeed. Instead, the lizard spreads its back and tilts upward, presenting a spiny shield to the snake's face. This makes it difficult for the snake to get its jaws around the lizard.

Their most interesting defense mechanism by far is the following. Horned

lizards can squirt blood from their eyes. They flood their ocular sinuses, tissues found below their eye, with blood. When a horned lizard feels threatened by a predator, usually a canine or feline, its final defense response is to shoot blood from these flooded sinuses and out its eye sockets. The horned lizard aims for the predator's mouth. Apparently the blood has a very bad taste to canines. The predator is often frightened and flees.

Here's how it works. The horned lizard has two constricting muscles that line the major veins around its eye. When these muscles contract, they cut off the blood flow back to the heart, while it continues to flow into the head. This floods the ocular sinuses with blood, building pressure, and causing them to bulge. By further contracting these muscles in a rapid manner, the pressure increases even more, eventually rupturing the thin sinus membranes. The result is a jet stream of blood that can shoot four to six feet from the eye socket, a process known as auto-hemorrhaging, or reflex bleeding. Amazingly, this process can be repeated several times within a short period if necessary, though the mechanism for this rapid recovery is not completely understood. The lizard uses the same mechanism to remove particles from its eye, without rupturing the sinus membranes completely. When dirt, soil and other particles enter the eye, the lizard controls the pressure precisely allowing the sinuses to swell but not hemorrhage. It then sweeps a thin, transparent third eyelid across the surface of the eye. This membranous eyelid folds back to the front corner of the eye, leaving the debris at the rear corner. The lizard then uses the bulging ocular sinuses to draw the debris away from the rear of the eye and onto the eyelid. Once the lizard floods its sinuses with blood, as described above, the skin surrounding the eyelids expands, dislocating the debris where it falls off or is otherwise easily removed.

UP TILL NOW WE LEARNED DAF ALEPH

After the Holocaust, the Satmar Rav learned with a ragtag group of survivors in America. He invited them to learn Meeches Brachos with him. He would start at 7 o'clock and talk with them about their families, their work, and other personal but ostensibly mundane matters. At 8 o'clock he would look at his watch and say with surprise, "oh vei iz duch shpeit (it's late) perhaps we will begin tomorrow".

He would do this every day, for a year. The people in the class loved his conversations, and really gained from them, but they wondered why he put up the same charade every day.

Finally after a year the Rebbe looked around at his group of students. Instead of seeing a ragtag group of broken survivors, he saw a group of confident young men whose lives were beginning to rebuild. He then began the class by saying the following:

Biz yetz huben mir gelernt Daf Alef - up till now we learned Daf Aleph. Itzter lumer lernen Daf Beis. Now let's begin to learn Daf Deis.

Why is the first page of the Gemara Daf Beis? Because the Daf Aleph is the page on which one has to prepare himself to begin. One has to transform to become a confident and healthy person before he can go to the next page.

Based On Touched By A Story, By Rabbi Yechiel Spero



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question of the laptop that was left outside, Rav Zilberstein wrote in a similar case that it seems that the repairman would not be liable.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of Arkadiy Berezin

אהרון בן יצחק

May the merits of all the hundreds of beautiful Shabbos tables bring an elevation to his beautiful neshama
By his beloved family

Ben Jessurun Agency



Bjessurun@allstate.com • 410-443-0771

Shabbos, Table Talk & Goldberg's Bagels.

מעין עולם הבא!



1500 Reisterstown Rd. | Baltimore | 410-415-7001 | www.goldbergsbagels.com

Rosenbloom PEST-CONTROL

TOTAL CUSTOMER DEDICATION