

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



## THE ANGRY DENTIST

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's parsha discusses the mitzva of Ona'as Mamon, not to overcharge someone in business matters.

This leads us to the following interesting true story:

There was once a man named David. David woke up one morning with a toothache. Although David generally avoided dentists, he knew that he needed to see one. He scheduled an appointment with Dr. Stein. David walked in to the office in pain



## IS THIS OURS?

In this week's double Parsha, Behar-Bechukosai we are taught the mitzvah of Shmittah. Every seventh year we must cease from almost all agricultural activity in the Land of Israel. Keep in mind that the base of our economy was agriculture. To cease all plowing and planting for an entire year would be devastating for such an economy. Every 50 years there was a Yovel, a Jubilee year which shared the same restrictions. The implication is that every 49th and 50th year there were two years of consecutive Shmittahs!

The Torah warns us that we must be fastidious in our observance of the Shemitah years. If we will not, then the Land of Israel will throw us out and will be exiled so that the Land will get her years of rest.

The notion of Shemitah is that we have a constant reminder that our Land is not ours. Our Land belongs to HaKadosh baruch Hu and He allowed us to live in the Land and to work the Land. And He commanded us to cease from work every seven years to demonstrate that it is His not ours.

The irony of Shmittah: our permanence in our Land is dependent upon our temporal relationship to our Land. Only when we recognize our Land as belonging to HaKadosh baruch Hu can our Land remain ours. Once we relate to our Land as belonging to ourselves then we lose our Land.

We find the same irony with respect to the laws of slavery. A non-Jew may sell himself into eternal slavery. When he does so, his children will be slaves since their father sold himself into that class. However, a Jew cannot sell himself into eternal slavery. He can sell himself into a temporary state of slavery for six years but no more. The reason for this distinction is that a Jew is already a slave to the Master of the Universe and therefore has no rights to sell himself. The non-Jew on the other hand does not belong to the

and very nervous. The dentist was not friendly or sympathetic. David was in pain and kept abruptly asking for details about the necessary treatments, and it was clear that Dr. Stein was quickly losing patience with his patient. David continued to rudely ask him questions, and in a moment of anger, Dr. Stein slapped David across the face. Dr. Stein immediately realized that he was liable to lose his job, or worse. He quickly apologized and offered David \$5000 if he would keep it a secret, and not press charges. David was quick to decline. "If you give me \$50,000, I won't repeat to anyone what happened here, and I won't press charges", he said.

Dr. Stein was forced to agree, and paid David the \$50,000.

Later David wondered if what he did was permitted according to the Torah. Was he allowed to ask for so much money to forgoe his right to press charges? Was that forbidden extortion? See Veharev Na Volume Three page 296

The answer to last week's question is still being researched. Please stay tuned.



Master and belongs to nobody but himself. He, therefore, has the right to sell himself and his sale is valid for eternity. Just as he sells his car he can sell himself.

Behold! Our state of belonging to HaKadosh baruch Hu is our safeguard from becoming slaves to others.

In the haftorah that we read this week, the prophet Yirmiyahu tells us that the one who relies upon HaKadosh baruch Hu is blessed because by doing so, HaKadosh baruch Hu becomes his support. He continues by saying that such a person is compared to a tree planted by the river side. Even in the hot dry summer his leaves are always moist.

The lesson our Parsha is teaching us which is reinforced by Yirmiyahu is that to the extent we submit our trust in HaKadosh baruch Hu and relinquish any reliance on other sources of support, to that extent He will support us.

A young man in his late 20's once told me that he dislikes religion because one must relinquish their independence and trust in G.D. He felt strongly that Man has to trust in nobody but himself. He must take full credit for his successes and full responsibility for his failures.

While he is correct that Man must take full responsibility for his actions, he is incorrect that his successes and his failures are his own doing. Once he has done all that is within his power the rest is up to the Director of our life.

While it is true that Man must relinquish his independence in claiming his successes as his own, nevertheless Man is the one in control. The lesson of Yirmiyahu is that Man is in control as to whether the Director will be his support. Only to the one who places his trust in HaKadosh baruch Hu will merit that HaKadosh baruch Hu will be his support. If however he chooses not to rely on Him but rather relies on his own strength and intellect then he will have no support, he will in fact be left to his own limited resources.

The secret of our strength and the inspiration of our courage is waiting for us to tap into. We need only to recognize the true source of our strength and the true source of our aspiration and rely on Him.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

People call these cicadas “locusts” but they are not true locusts — real locusts look like grasshoppers. The phrase “17 year cicada” indicates that they arrive every 17 years. The name “periodical cicadas” indicates that they arrive periodically and not each and every year. The scientific name for the Genus of these cicadas is *Magicicada*, and there are 3 types of 17 year *Magicicadas*: *Magicicada septendecim*, *Magicicada cassini* and *Magicicada septendecula*.

There are 13 year cicadas too! *Magicicada tredecim*, *Magicicada neotredecim*, *Magicicada tredecassini*, and *Magicicada tredecula*. Broods XIX, XXII and XXIII feature these cicadas.

Most 17 Year Cicadas have red eyes, but they can also have white, gray, blue, yellow, or multi-colored eyes

The *Massospora* fungus infects *Magicicadas*, filling their abdomens and destroying their ability to reproduce. Often, their entire abdomen will fall off. The cicadas actually spread the fungus throughout their local colony via mating.

They'll land on you if you're using a power tool or lawn mower. Cicadas think the sounds made by power tools and lawn maintenance equipment are made by cicadas. They get confused and will land on the people using the equipment! Pro-tip: cut your lawn in the early morning or near dusk when the cicadas are less active.

Cicadas have five eyes: they have the two, obvious, large, compound eyes, and three ocelli. Ocelli are three jewel-like eyes situated between the two main, compound eyes of a cicada. We believe ocelli are used to detect light and darkness. Ocelli means little eyes in Latin.

Wild animals as well as domestic pets will eat them. Dogs will gorge themselves until they choke. Squirrels will eat them like corn on the cob. Wild turkeys will grow fat and juicy on the cicada feast. Fish go crazy for them too — you can use them as bait, or use lures that mimic them.

Cicadas do not eat solid foods — instead they use their slender, straw-

## INTERESTING 17-YEAR CICADA FACTS

like mouth parts to drink tree fluids.

**That cicada sound:** Only male cicadas make the sound they're famous for. Males have organs on their abdomens called tymbals. Muscles pop the tymbals in and out, which creates the sound we hear. Males make different calls for different reasons, and each species has a unique sound. Females can make sound too — they flick their wings to respond to males.

There are literally billions of 17 year cicadas. Why? One theory suggests that the large number of cicadas overwhelms predators, so predators are never able to eat them all so many of them will always survive to mate. This is a survival strategy called “predator satiation”.

The biggest concern about 17 year cicadas is their potential to damage young trees. The truth is they will damage limbs on the wimpiest of trees, so if you if you have weak, pathetic, wimpy ornamental trees in your yard you should consider placing netting around the trees if the cicadas should visit your yard. You can try hosing them off with water, placing insect barrier tape around the trunk of the trees, or picking them off like grapes! Or, plant strong, beefy American trees. Cicadas actually benefit the health of trees by aerating the soil around the roots, and trimming the weak or damaged limbs.

Scientists speculate that one reason why these cicadas emerge in 17 or 13 year cycles is because those are prime numbers. The fact that 13 & 17 are relatively large prime numbers makes it difficult for predators to synchronize with them.

Annual cicadas that arrive every year often have wasps specialized to prey on them; periodical cicadas however have no such wasp.

They use their color to warm up: Cicadas need to be warm to sing and fly around, but they're cold blooded. Their dark skin absorbs the heat of the sun, which helps to warm them up.

# JEWISH COMPETITION

Rabbi Kanarek is dean of both Bnos Yisroel Elementary School and Bais Shaindel High School in Lakewood, New Jersey. He proudly relates the following story.

I was Joseph Beyda's "teacher" in religious studies. I'll explain why the word teacher is in quotes. Joseph and I had a very close relationship. Once, he had a special request: "I have to travel to Bentonville, Arkansas," he explained, "and I don't want to skip out on my studies. Come with me on my trip, and we'll study together in our free moments." I agreed. Bentonville was the headquarters of Walmart, which had over two thousand stores. Joseph's relationship with them went way back, to when Walmart was only a small chain. As Walmart grew, so did Joseph's business. Joseph's firm was one of the main suppliers of linens for this huge chain. His annual appointments were nearly automatic. For new suppliers, however, it was a different story. Salespeople often had to wait months to get an appointment with a buyer if they were fortunate enough to get one at all. The linens department was practically closed to new salespeople, since the chain was very happy with Joseph's merchandise and had no reason to look elsewhere. Joseph and I arrived some time before the appointment, and we sat down to study together. Joseph, however, couldn't concentrate. His eyes were drawn to another man who was pacing back and forth in the waiting room. "Who's that?" I asked. "That's one of my competitors," Joseph replied. After several more minutes, Joseph got up and went over to the fellow. "Is something wrong?" The man sighed. "I've been trying to get an appointment for ages. Somehow I was under the impression that I had an appointment for today, but when I got here, it turned out that it was a misunderstanding. They don't want to see me." Joseph stood silently for a moment, deep in thought. "Let me see what I can do for you," he said finally. He walked down the corridor to the buyer's office and poked his head inside. "Hi, Frank (this name is fictitious), it's me. Listen, why don't you see this other supplier?" "But I don't want to. I don't need his stuff. I'm happy with what you give me." "At least give him a chance," Joseph argued. "Why should I? And besides, he's your competitor! Why do you want me to give him a chance?" "That doesn't matter. There's room for everyone. Why shouldn't he make some money, too?" Frank finally agreed to see the other man, and Joseph came out with a smile. "Okay, he'll see you right now. Go in." The man looked bewildered. "Right now? But — but all my stuff is in the car! I don't have my samples ready!" "No problem!" Joseph said cheerfully. He turned to me: "Let's give him a hand." We ran to the competitor's car, took out the samples, raced back to the buyer's office and quickly set everything up. The man watched, open-mouthed. I was amazed at what I had seen. All this time I thought that I was the one teaching. Instead, it was Joseph who taught me the real lesson. Joseph How one man can make a difference, By Jack Doueck, Sephardic Press page 262



## MAZEL TOV

We wish to express our heartfelt Mazel Tov wishes Ben and Aliza Jessurin on the birth of their baby boy. May they merit to raise their little boy to Torah, to Chupah and to maasim tovim.

Paysach and Yitzi

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