

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE PACKED TAXI

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion talks about the mitzva of paying for a service that one owes, on time. As the Torah says, the wages of a hired man shall not remain with you [all night] until the morning (Vayikra 19:13, Parshas Kedoshim); and it says further, neither shall the sun go down on it (Devarim 24:15, Parshas Ki Seitzei),

This leads us to the following difficult question.

The Newman family was a family of 6 people. It was a rainy day and they were anxiously waiting for a cab to take them home. Mr. Newman saw a taxi and



A BUILDING OF JOY

What a remarkable Parsha the Torah presents us as we draw closer to Rosh Hashana! This week's Parsha, Ki Seitzei, is packed with mitzvos. There are 74 mitzvos which is 12% of all 613 mitzvos.

One mitzvah which grabs my attention is the obligation the Torah places upon the newlywed husband to make his wife happy for the entire first year of their marriage. The Torah places so much importance on this obligation that he is absolved from serving in the military service even if the nation is at war. In fact, he is even exempt from serving the army as a civilian - he must be free and available for his wife's needs the entire year.

What is the great significance of having a happy wife in the first year of marriage that it trumps the greater national concern of the military campaign?

As travelers of history we, the Jewish nation, know the secrets of survival. Within the frame of our personal lives we experience many storms of all types; snow, rain, wind and perhaps others as well. Nations, also, experience many types of storms; political, war, economic downturn, societal and perhaps other types as well. These storms take their toll on the welfare of those nations. Over time many will actually metamorphosize into a people that will no longer resemble the nation as it was when it began.

And yet, in spite of all our travels which include being dispersed to every corner of

MITZVA MEME

frantically flagged it down. The taxi stopped. The driver looked at all six and said that he can't take all six, just five. "I can't squeeze four people in the back. I will get a ticket", he said. Mr. Newman answered that if a police officer stops them he will pay for the fine. The driver hesitated. Mr. Newman pressured the driver until the driver finally relented and said yes. The driver sensed that everyone was in a hurry and drove quickly through the streets.

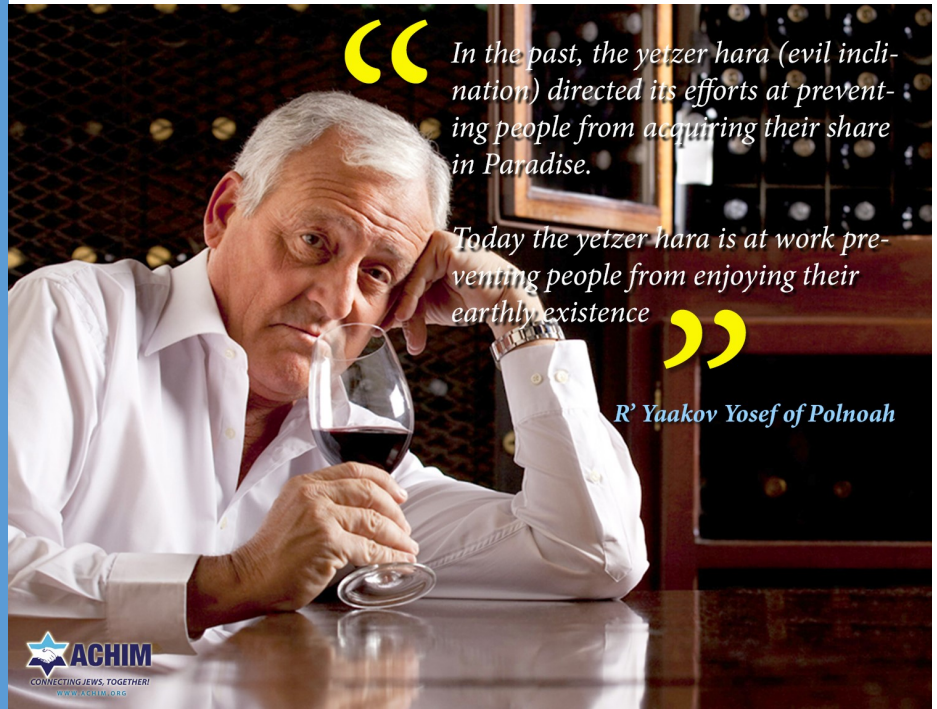
Inevitably, a police officer saw the speeding taxi and pulled them over. The officer looked into the car, spoke with driver and gave him two tickets, one ticket for speeding and another for fitting too many people in the back.

After the police left, the taxi driver said "well you agreed to pay for the ticket for too many people.",

But Mr. Newman responded, "What? It's your fault that the cop stopped you. You were speeding recklessly. If you would have driven at a legal speed you never would have gotten stopped and there would be no fee for too many passengers. I'm sorry, I am not obligated to pay in this case. It was your fault".

Who do you think is correct? The driver or the father? On one hand Mr. Newman agreed to pay for this fine. But on the other hand the fine occurred because the driver was speeding.

What do you think?



the world, traveling from one country to another and never having a land that we can call our own, we have survived! There has been no nation that has weathered as many storms as we did. In spite of all the untold persecutions, pogroms and expulsions that we have suffered, we continue to thrive as a nation holding our Torah high above the stormy weather. How do we manage this?

The answer lies in the Jewish family. The Jewish family provides the soil from which the next Jewish generation sprouts. The Jewish family provides the nurturing nourishment through which the values and appreciation of Torah are transmitted.

At the core of our people's lifeblood is the personal relationship every member has with HaKadosh baruch Hu. How does a person develop such a relationship with his Creator? He appears to be purely abstract. Great philosophers might be able to relate to this Almighty Being but how can every 12 year old Jewish girl

and every 13 year old Jewish boy come to love HaKadosh baruch Hu?

The answer to this question again lies in the Jewish family. The love that only a family can produce provides the model by which the next generation can develop their own relationship with HaKadosh baruch Hu. It is a love in which there is authority and respect for the parents and a caring and commitment for the children. It is a mix and blend of perfect balance in which the children of the family can come to love and fear their parents. It becomes the paradigm from which the next generation has a frame of reference how to relate to the Being that grants them life, that cares for them and that is committed to them.

Given all of the above, there is no greater national cause than the Jewish family.

The remaining question is why focus on making his wife happy, should he not focus on building his home and family, providing all its basic needs?

Man cannot begin to build a home and a family without the help of his wife. The bond between man and his wife is therefore critical to the success of that home. No person can commit to another person with having a sense of appreciation and happiness. The Torah therefore instructs every newlywed man to dedicate the first year of their marriage to the happiness and appreciation of his wife. In this holy endeavor he brings the Jewish people closer to their goal. It is no wonder that this Noble mitzva takes



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

ICHNEUMON WASP

Imagine a tiny creature that looks so delicate that the slightest wind might blow it over. Then this little thing lands on a hard tree trunk, and begins thumping with something that looks as delicate and frail as the leg of a daddy-long-legs. Frail? that antennae of the ichneumon wasp happens to be a high-power extension drill!

The drill is about 4 1/2 inches long; so long that it curves up and down as the small fly thumps on the hardwood with it. After thumping for a time, the tiny creature somehow knows it has found the right place to start work.

Drilling begins. This little wasp uses

that delicate feeler to cut its way down through several inches of hard (hard!) oak wood! How can it do it? No one has any slightest idea. But it does do it.

The second miracle is what the wasp is drilling for the larvae of a special beetle. How does it know where to start its drill so as to go straight down (it always drills straight down) and reach a beetle larvae? No one can figure that one out either. Somehow that initial faint thumping gave it the needed information.

PAYING FOR THIRTEEN YEARS

As R' Avraham Dovid Sauer stood at the entrance of Baltimore's Kosher Bite Restaurant, he was overcome with a feeling of relief and joy. Before him stood Rabbi Ervin Preis, the Rabbi of Suburban Orthodox Congregation, appearing healthy and in good spirits. Rabbi Preis had been in failing health with a terminal illness, so R' Avraham Dovid couldn't believe Rabbi Preis was actually out and about as if everything was perfectly fine. Although R' Avraham Dovid was neither a congregant in Rabbi Preis' shul nor a personal acquaintance, he, along with the entire Baltimore community, was davening for Rabbi Preis' recovery.

Hesitantly, R' Avraham Dovid approached Rabbi Preis to wish him Shalom Aleichem. Rabbi Preis shook his hand warmly, and R' Avraham Dovid asked Rabbi Preis how he was feeling. With his characteristically congenial style, Rabbi Preis answered. "Baruch Hashem, I am doing much better." Apologetically, he added, "Please forgive me: you look familiar, but I cannot remember your name." R' Avraham Dovid told Rabbi Preis his name and, without missing a beat, Rabbi Preis continued, "Of course, I should have recognized you! You are Avraham Dovid, the son of Channah Machlah. How is the rest of your family: your father, Moshe the son of Adele, your mother, Channah Machlah the daughter of Sorah Miriam, and your five siblings?"

With incredible accuracy, Rabbi Preis mentioned each of R' Avraham Dovid's siblings by name. "How do you know the Hebrew names of all the members of my family? You even know all of my grandparents' names!" exclaimed R' Avraham Dovid in amazement. "Yes, I actually do know your entire family by name, but probably not by face. There's an easy explanation for this. About thirteen years ago, I called your father, the owner of Security Unlimited, to install an alarm system in our home. Your father spent many hours installing the system. When he was ready to leave late at night, he handed me the bill, which was clearly far lower than I knew it should have been. When I questioned him, your father's response was that he was giving me a discount because I am a Rabbi. I told him I felt uncomfortable receiving this discount. Your father replied, 'Well, then, I'll make a deal with you. In return for this discount, I ask that you have my family in mind in your tefillos. Please ask Hashem to watch over us.' 'I accepted your father's condition,' continued Rabbi Preis. "Every day for the past thirteen years, I have remembered each member of your family in my prayers. I am just keeping my end of the bargain."



ACHIM IN A NUTSHELL

"Veyached l'vaveinu l'ahava es Shimecha."

"Please bring our hearts together so that we can love Your Name".

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