

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### ROBBING THE NEIGHBOR

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion talks about the damage caused by machlokes, by arguments. Sometimes, however, machlokes between two Jews can be very beautiful. The following is a true story.

Natan lived in an apartment building in a wealthy Jewish area in Mexico City. As we know, Mexico city has some very wealthy people, but it is also the home of very dangerous underworld figures.

One day Natan was coming home from school and paused in front of his apartment building. As he was about to push the bell to his apartment to be "buzzed" in, he heard the sound of a man behind him. He turned around and saw a man pointing a gun at him.

"Easy, my friend", the man said. I want you to push the bell to your apartment and let me into the apartment building. Then I am going to follow you up to your apartments and pay your parents a friendly little visit."

Natan immediately understood that this was a robbery and that he was in great danger. Trembling, he pushed the bell to his apartment.



### THE MORE YOU TAKE THE LESS YOU GET

This week's Parsha is the Parsha dedicated to teaching us the role of the Kohein Gadol. The Parsha opens with Korach, the cousin of Moshe, challenging Moshe's choice of Aharon to be the Kohein Gadol. In reality there was no basis for this challenge because it was not Moshe's choice, it was HaShem's choice. Nevertheless, in Korach's mind this choice was Moshe's and hence he challenged it. In responding to this challenge Moshe corrects Korach on two accounts. The first is that it is not I who chose Aharon but HaShem. To make this point, Moshe offers Korach and his cohorts to bring the ketores offering and let HaShem choose whom He wishes. The second point which Moshe corrects Korach is that the role of being Kohein Gadol is not a role of authority in which the chosen person takes power over others. Quite the contrary, it is a role of giving up oneself to others. The greatness of personality which is required of the Kohein Gadol is not one of leading others and directing others. The greatness of personality is one of being able to give up one's own self. It is the greatness of self-sacrifice.

Moshe tells Korach "and Aharon, who is he, that you should contest his position." The phrase 'who is he' implies that Aharon is a person of negligible significance. This is a very difficult argument. If Moshe is telling Korach that Aharon is a nobody, that would only support Korach's point. That is all the reason to challenge Aharon's position?!

If we go back to the Book of Shmos we will discover the first time where HaShem indicates that Aharon will merit to be the Kohein Gadol. Moshe had stubbornly refused HaShem's appointment to redeem His people on the grounds that Aharon was more worthy than he. HaShem responded, Aharon will come to greet you and see you in your new position of authority, being chosen by HaShem, and his heart will be filled

His parents saw him on the video monitor and buzzed him in. Natan, followed by the robber, took the elevator to the floor of his apartment. When Natan came near his apartment he made a quick decision. His mother was expecting a baby. His father was not very healthy and had a heart condition. If they would be confronted by this gun-wielding robber, Natan was afraid that the stress and trauma of the robbery might put his fragile parents in mortal danger.

Natan decided that instead of entering his own apartment he was going to knock on the door of his neighbor's apartment, Mr. Itzkowitz, from down the hall. Natan assumed that the robber did not know which apartment was his. Natan, followed by the dangerous robber, knocked on his neighbor's door. When Mr. Itzkowitz saw Natan's face in the peephole, he gladly opened the door. But when Mr. Itzkowitz opened the door to greet Natan, the robber pulled out his gun and demanded that Mr. Itzkowitz give him all the money that was in his apartment. This was not the first time Mr. Itzkowitz was confronted by a thief, and calmly, Mr. Itzkowitz took the robber to a drawer and handed him \$10,000 dollars in cash. The robber took the money, left Natan and Mr. Itzkowitz alone, and quickly took off.

After the police were called and the dust settled, Natan's father gratefully approached Mr. Itzkowitz. I'm really sorry for the loss that the robbery caused you. I'm really sorry that my son knocked on your apartment door instead of ours. He did it to protect us. Here is a check of \$10,000 to cover your loss.

Mr. Itzkowitz turned to Natan's father. "You have a wise and fast thinking son. It is very nice of you to offer this but I cannot accept the money. You weren't robbed, I was. But Natan's father insisted.

Finally, Mr. Itzkowitz said, "I do not want the money, I want the mitzvah". I will only accept the money from you if halacha requires that you pay me.

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? Was Natan's father responsible to pay Mr. Itzkowitz for the loss of the money, because Natan chose to knock on the neighbor's door?

See Upiryo Matok Bereisheis page 433



*“Change is not easy.  
But remaining in a constant  
state of grief, heartache, and  
resentment is harder.”*

with joy over your appointment. Our Sages teach us that it was the zechus of Aharon's heart-filled joy for the appointment of Moshe that he merited to be appointed the Kohein Gadol.

The quality needed to merit the position of Kohein Gadol is selflessness. It is the ability to go beyond one's own needs and beyond one's own ego. The only way a more senior brother can be filled with joy when his younger brother gets that highest position in the nation is if that senior brother carries no self interest.

The Torah instructs all non-kohanim to refrain from performing any service in the Mishkan. There are several forms of service which are more severe regarding this prohibition. Any form of service which is an act of giving is punishable by death whereas any form of service that is not an act of giving is not punishable by death. For example, if a non-kohein performs a k'mitza (this is the service of scooping a fistful of flour from the flour offering) even though he is prohibited to do so, he is not punishable by death. If, however, the non-kohein placed the k'mitza on the Al-

tar which is a service of giving, he is punishable by death. Behold! The most sacred act of the kohein is the act of giving.

Perhaps this explains the difficulty of the first verse of our Parsha. The first verse appears to be incomplete. "And Korach the son of Yitzhar, (who was) the son of Kehus (who was) the son of Levi took, and Dasan and Avirum the sons of Aliav and On the son of Peles." The verse identifies the subject, Korach and his cohorts, it identifies the verb, to take, but it does not identify the object, what did they take! The commentaries struggle with this question.

However, after appreciating the lesson Moshe taught Korach, we can appreciate this first verse. There is no object. The verb, to take, was not intended as a verb but rather as an adjective to describe who Korach was. Korach and his cohorts were takers. It was this quality of being takers which disqualified them from the Kehunah. The Kohein must be a giver.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### GARLIC

We recently learned about pepper. This week let's learn more about another spice, Garlic. Garlic is popular all over the world for the strong flavor that it adds to our foods. There is also an inyan brought in the Gemara, and cited by the Vilna Gaon, to eat garlic on Friday night because of its unique properties.

What causes the strong smell and taste of garlic? Also, what do garlic and matches have in common? Let's look at this a bit deeper.

The word garlic derives from Old English, *garlêac*, meaning gar (spear) and leek, so gar leek really means the spear-shaped leek.

Garlic is actually a perennial flowering plant growing from a bulb. It is part of the onion genus *Allium*. Garlic is a close relative of the onion, shallot, leek, and chive. It also belongs to the family of lilies.

Garlic was known to ancient Egyptians and has been used as both a food flavoring and traditional medicine. Today, China produces about 80% of the world's supply of garlic.

Garlic has a tall, flowering stem that grows up to 4 ft. The leaf blade is flat, solid, and approximately 1/2 to 1 inch wide. The plant may produce pink to purple flowers from July to September. Garlic is pollinated by bees, butterflies, moths, and other insects. Garlic plants are usually hardy and not affected by many pests or diseases. Garlic plants are said to repel rabbits and moles.

The garlic plant's bulb is the most commonly used part of the plant. Garlic bulbs are normally divided into numerous fleshy sections called cloves. The cloves are the part that we usually eat. There are about 10–20 cloves in a single bulb, give or take. They have a characteristic pungent, spicy flavor that mellows and sweetens with cooking.

We know that garlic has a strong smell and taste. What causes this? It is the result of interesting chemical interactions. The strong "garlicky" smell is mainly due to the sulfur-containing compounds allicin, ajoene, diallyl polysulfides, vinylidithiols, and S-allylcysteine. When the garlic cells are crushed or chopped, phytochemicals responsible for the sharp flavor of garlic are produced. When a cell is broken by chopping, chewing, or crushing, enzymes stored in cell vacuoles trigger the breakdown of several sulfur-containing compounds stored in the cell fluids. The resultant compounds are responsible for the sharp or hot taste and strong smell of garlic. So both matches and garlic contain sulfur.

Among the members of the onion family, garlic has by far the highest concentrations of the sulfur-containing compounds, making garlic much more potent than onion, shallot or leeks.

Hashem designed this as a defensive mechanism of the garlic, deterring animals such as birds, insects, and worms from eating the plant. Because

of this, people throughout history have used garlic to keep away pests such as mosquitoes and slugs.

Garlic is known to cause bad breath and even body odor. In fact the Gemara in Sanhedrin 11a shares a story of how Rav Yehuda Hanasi asked whoever ate garlic to leave the beis medrash, and Rav Chiya walked out to avoid embarrassing the culprit. What causes this odor? This is caused by allyl methyl sulfide (AMS) that is created by the metabolism of garlic's sulfur compounds. Allyl methyl sulfide (AMS) cannot be digested and is instead passed into the blood. It is carried to the lungs and the skin, where it is excreted. This causes bad breath; and a body odor that can be exuded through skin pores. Since digestion takes several hours, and the release of AMS several hours more, the effect of eating garlic may be present for a long time.

Interestingly, garlic's taste and odor can be passed on. Some nursing mothers have found that after consuming garlic, their babies can be slow to feed, and have noted a garlic odor coming from them. In addition to being observed by modern science, this idea is also quoted by Rashi in Bamidbar 11,5 and is the reason why the Manna did not taste like garlic or onion because it is "Kashe Lameinikos", hard for nursing mothers.

The chemicals in garlic are very strong. Some people apply garlic topically for various purposes, including naturopathic uses and acne treatment. But there have been reports of serious burns, including burns to children, resulting from topical use of raw garlic. Because of this, topical use of raw garlic is discouraged, particularly to young children.

Alliums, the sulfur compounds in garlic might be toxic to cats or dogs.

While allicin may be very strong, it has many positive health benefits. Allicin kills bacteria and fungus and is therefore believed to reduce "bad" cholesterol, as it inhibits enzymes from growing in liver cells. Allicin helps nitric oxide release in the blood vessels, relaxing them and thus bringing about a drop in blood pressure. Keeping blood vessels relaxed and lowering blood pressure is good for the heart and the rest of the vascular system. Garlic also helps fight the common cold. Because of its antibiotic properties, garlic used to be called Russian penicillin & given to soldiers during the Second World War as medicine.

Interestingly, garlic was one of the earliest "performance enhancing" substances. In Ancient Egypt, it is said that they would give it to their slaves to be a powerful source of strength. Interestingly in the Torah, we find that the Bnei Yisrael complained that they remember the garlic that was given to them for free by the Egyptians. (Bamidbar 11,5). In ancient Greece, garlic was given to Olympic athletes to reduce fatigue and enhance performance.

How wondrous is your creation, Hashem!

## HE IS A TZELEM ELOKIM

Once, Rav Avigdor Miller was walking with someone down the street. They passed a drunken man sleeping on the sidewalk, with his head on the hard pavement. When Rav Miller saw the man, he quickly found some rolled up newspapers and put them under the man's head like a pillow. Rav Miller then explained his behavior to the person with him. "He is a Tzelem Elokim (created in G-d's image)."

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A grandson once asked Rabbi Miller how he could tolerate living on Ocean Parkway, with emergency vehicles always driving by, their sirens blaring and lights flashing. Rav Miller replied, "To the contrary, these 'disturbances' are really a great opportunity. Each time an ambulance drives by, I say a small tefilla for the ill person inside it. I even trained myself to do it during my sleep".

(From Rav Avigdor Miller, His Life and Revolution, By Yaakov Y. Hamburger, Published By Judaica Press, Preprinted With Permission From The Copyright Holders)



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about distributing the CDs with the audio of a student misbehaving and the teacher rebuking, Rav Zilberstein wrote that it would not be permitted to distribute such CDs.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in loving memory of

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