

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



SKIPPING THE REALTORS

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha discusses settling in Eretz Yisrael. This leads us to an interesting true story about buying a home in Eretz Yisrael.

Avi was in the market to buy a penthouse apartment in Eretz Yisrael. He called a realtor and said he was looking for a penthouse apartment in Beit Shemesh. He wanted an apartment that had five bedrooms and three bathrooms.

The realtor looked at his database and said that what he was looking for was not that common, but he had one great idea. The realtor proceeded to describe all of the details of the penthouse apartment to Avi.

Avi asked the realtor if he could tell him the address of the apartment. The realtor said, "If you are serious, then let's make an appointment, and when you come into the office and sign the papers to officially commission me as a realtor, I will give you all the final details of the apartment, including the address and apartment number".

Avi asked the realtor if he could at least give him the street that the penthouse was on. The realtor saw no harm in that as the street was a very long one, and there were hundreds of apartments on that block. "Sure, it's called Hakalanit Street," the realtor said.

Avi then opened the phone book and called another realtor. It didn't hurt to have more than just one



PURE HEART

In Chapter 30 of our Parsha, Moshe says; "It will be when all these things come upon you; the blessing and the curse... then you will take it to heart among all the nations where HaShem dispersed you, and you will return to HaShem and listen to His voice with all your heart and all your soul. Then HaShem will bring back your captivity and He will have mercy upon you and He will return and gather you in from where He scattered you... He will bring to the Land and do good and make you numerous more than before." This is a prophecy which we are able to see become alive in our most recent history.

The trend of our people in the century preceding the second world war was a steep decline moving away from HaShem. Then came the war - the curse. The trend of our people from the end of the war until today has been a steady and sharp incline towards HaShem and towards His Torah. HaShem brought our captivity back to the Land and now He continues bringing the others who are elsewhere back to the Land. This has already happened and is currently happening.

In the next verse Moshe says "HaShem will circumcise your heart and the heart of your children to love Him with all your heart and with all your soul." What is covering the heart that it should need circumcision?

The Ramban explains that the heart, if untainted, intuites what is right and what is wrong. However, once Adam and Chava ate from the Tree, good and evil were intermixed and now Man's heart cannot intuit properly. We must therefore always be weary of where our heart guides us. The Ramban explains that in the period of Moshiach, HaShem will lift the covering from our heart and we will no longer be misled by our heart. Good and Evil will no longer be intermixed and our hearts will be able to intuit

option. Avi told realtor number two what he was looking for. The realtor said, "What you are looking for is not that common, but I found one." The realtor then also proceeded to describe the details of the apartment. To Avi, the details sounded surprisingly similar to the first apartment described by realtor number one. Avi asked realtor number two if he could tell him the name of the street that this was on.

"Sure," the realtor said, figuring that the street alone would not give away too much information. "The street is called Harakefet street." It sounded like it was a different street.

But to Avi's mind, it was weird that both apartments sounded exactly the same. Avi opened up a map. Lo and behold, as he surmised, Hakalint street and Harakefet street were two intersecting streets. It might really be the same penthouse that both were talking about.

Avi took a trip to the intersection of Hakalint and Harakefet. Sure enough, there was just one apartment at that corner intersection. That building had just one penthouse suite.

Avi went into the apartment building and knocked on the penthouse door.

The owner opened the door. Avi asked him if he was looking to sell his apartment. The man said that he was. Avi offered him a price, and the man agreed.

Soon enough, they finalized the sale, and Avi purchased it without having to use any of the realtors. Avi felt that it was providential and that he had great mazel. Both realtors never told him where the house was, but Avi was able to put two and two together and figure it out.

After word got out that Avi had bought the penthouse, the first realtor approached Avi. He wanted a commission for helping Avi to make the purchase. Then the second realtor came to Avi. He wanted a commission for making the sale.

Avi didn't know what to do. He did not intend to cut out the realtors; he just happened to figure it out by himself. Did he have to pay the first realtor? He was the one who first proposed the idea. But perhaps he should pay the second realtor because only after the second one told him the street did he know where it was. Perhaps he had to pay both? Perhaps he had to pay both, but they should each split one commission. Or finally, perhaps he did not have to pay either of them because, after all, he made the sale without them.

He decided to bring this question to Rav Zilberstein.

What do you think? Does he have to pay either of the realtors?

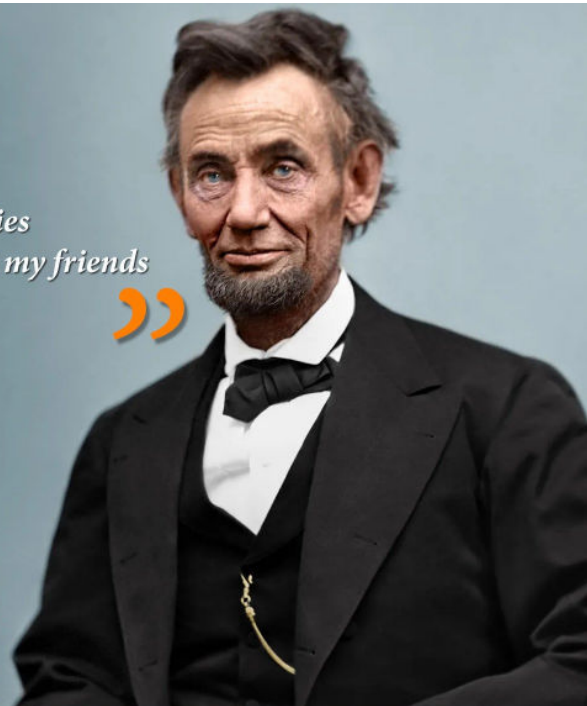
See Upriryo Matok Beresihis page 373



*I destroy my enemies
when I make them my friends*



-Abraham Lincoln



what is right. Our heart will naturally guide us on the path of HaShem.

The Ramban is teaching us that once Moshiach arrives there will be no challenge to choose right over wrong. There will be no interest in choosing evil. We will still have the ability to choose evil, but nobody would do it? Just as today I can burn my house down, but nobody will do it. The implication is that once Moshiach arrives any good choices we make will no longer be identified as our accomplishments. We did it effortlessly.

The Maharal wonders, according to the Ramban's lesson, will there be any meaningful growth towards HaShem on our part? Will our growth towards HaShem be associated with our efforts?

In addressing this question the Maharal says a fascinating thought. He draws a parallel between the relationship of Yom Tov to Shabbos and the relationship of the days of Moshiach and the period that will begin with the entry of the seventh millenni-

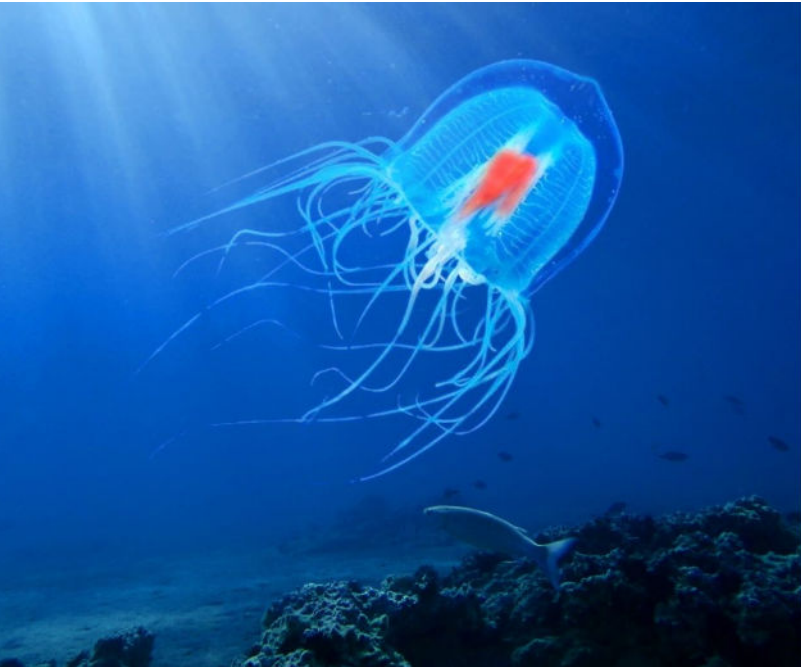
um. The former is Yom Tov and the latter is Shabbos.

One may not cook or prepare on Yom Tov for the Shabbos that follows unless they have already begun the preparation before the arrival of Yom Tov. If one starts cooking for Shabbos before the arrival of Yom Tov then they may continue cooking for Shabbos even on Yom Tov. The Maharal teaches us that if a person begins his journey of drawing himself closer to HaShem before the arrival of Moshiach, his journey will continue even after Moshiach arrives. Even though it will be effortless once Moshiach arrives, nevertheless, if he pushed himself to his limit before the arrival, that push will continue propelling further once Moshiach arrives. That continued propulsion will be identified as his accomplishment - because he started it before the arrival of Moshiach.

Moshiach is certainly not far off. It is my prayer for this coming year that HaShem help every member of His people to push themselves so that together we will continue our journey into the period of Moshiach.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos and a k'siva v'chasim tova.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE IMMORTAL JELLYFISH, *TURRITOPSIS DOHRNII*

As we approach Rosh Hashanah our minds rest upon our destiny. Nobody is immortal and every day of life is a gift from HaShem. There is however one creature who is immortal. Please meet the Immortal Jellyfish, the *Turritopsis dohrnii*.

Imagine if a person, when old, could simply shed their limbs and turn into a blob of flesh. Then, new limbs are created from that blob, making it a new, young person. Imagine if they can do this every time they get old, effectively skipping the death stage.

That is what the immortal jellyfish can do. The Immortal Jellyfish have a secret that sets them apart from the average sea creature: When their bodies are damaged due to environmental stress, physical assault, or are sick or old, the mature adults, known as medusas, can turn back the clock and transform back into their youthful selves. They shed their limbs, become drifting blobs, and morph into polyps. These polyps are twiggy growths that attach to rocks or plants. Gradually, the medusa grows out of the polyp once again, rejuvenated. They are, effectively, immortal. They can keep repeating this cycle. As they get old, they can shed their limbs and become young again. This process can go on indefinitely, effectively rendering the jellyfish biologically immortal. Individuals can still die if they are eaten by predators, of course, or mortally wounded, and this often happens. All stages of the medusae, from newly released to fully mature individuals, can transform back into polyps.

How do the immortal jellyfish do this? Is there a particular gene that gives it this immortality? It does this through a cell development process called transdifferentiation.

When scientists sequenced the creatures' genomes, the researchers noticed that as the jellyfish grew into adults, the genes linked to DNA storage were active. As the animals began their descent back into polyps, those genes became quieter, with their proteins reaching their lowest levels in the floating ball form. However, genes related to pluripotency, or a cell's ability to grow into a variety of fully developed forms, did the opposite. They were quiet in the adult form but leaped into action as a jellyfish broke its body down and started to build it back up. The pluripotency genes then returned to dormancy when the process was complete.

What this means is that DNA that's normally in storage is brought out during the transformation, and genes that coax cells to reset go into overdrive. Genes related to DNA repair and protection were involved in the jellyfish's rejuvenation. This means that while there is no particular gene for immortality, there is certainly a procedure for it.

Scientists and pharmaceutical companies hope to discover whether any of these processes in *T. dohrnii*'s body have a parallel in the human body. The prospect of the capability of biological immortality with no maximum lifespan makes *T. dohrnii* an important target of basic biological, aging, and pharmaceutical research. Scientists are also hoping to find a way to make stem cells using this process in order to renew damaged or dead tissue in humans. While there is research being done, for the near-term, this fountain of youth is just for jellyfish.

Let's look a bit deeper at the other features of the immortal jellyfish. The medusa of *Turritopsis dohrnii* is bell-shaped, with a maximum diameter of about 4.5 millimeters (0.18 in), and is about as tall as it is wide. The relatively large stomach is bright red and shaped like a cross. Young specimens 1 mm in diameter have only eight tentacles evenly spaced out along the edge, but adult specimens have 80–90 tentacles. They are found worldwide in temperate to tropic waters. They are often found in marinas or docks, vessel hulls, and ocean floors.

Turritopsis dohrnii are a carnivorous species. When mature, they prey on other jellyfish species, zooplankton, fish eggs, and small mollusks. *T. dohrnii* hunts by using its tentacles as it drifts through the water. Its tentacles, which contain stinging cells called nematocysts, spread and sting its prey.

What eats the immortal jellyfish? They are preyed on most commonly by other jellyfish. Other predators include sea anemones, tuna, sharks, swordfish, sea turtles, and penguins.

Keeping the immortal jellyfish in captivity is quite difficult. Only one scientist, Shin Kubota from Japan's Kyoto University, has managed to sustain a group of these jellyfish for a prolonged period. Kubota reported that during a two-year period, his colony rebirthed itself 11 times. Shin Kubota regularly appears on Japanese television to talk about his immortal jellyfish and has even written and recorded several songs about them.

YOUR ENTIRE TEFILLAH WILL BE A FULFILLMENT OF THE MITZVAH OF HONORING YOUR PARENTS

My Uncle Yisroel Shurin, married to my mother's sister, was a Rov in East New York in Brooklyn. The profile of his congregants was older gentlemen, most of whom did not have an extensive Yeshiva background. He was an excellent Rov and beloved by his congregants.

One year as Rosh Hashanah approached Uncle Yisroel asked his son, Yitzchok who was quite a fine Baal tefillah, if he would consider staying home for Rosh Hashanah to serve as chazzan for Musaf. Yitzchok was studying in Yeshivas Chaim Berlin at the time and was not at all interested in spending Rosh Hashanah at home. In Chaim Berlin there were hundreds upon hundreds of Bnei Yeshiva davening together with the top Chazzanim. How could he stay home? He told his father that he really preferred to remain in Yeshiva for Yom Tov. His father, who was not ready to give up, suggested that he speak to Reb Yaakov Kamenetsky, Yitzchok's grandfather.

Upon hearing the dilemma, Reb Yaakov responded. "I cannot tell you what to do. It is your decision. However, you need to understand that if you will stay home for Yom Tov then your entire tefillah will be a fulfillment of the mitzvah of honoring your parents. On the day of Rosh Hashanah when your davening is a fulfillment of Kibud av v'eim, that will generate a powerful zechus.

And if you choose to stay home please keep Bubby and me in mind when you daven.

As told to R' Paysach Diskind by Rabbi Yitzchok Shurin

p.s. There are three cholim at King David Rehab who would like to daven with a minyan on Rosh Hashanah. If you know anyone who might be interested in this opportunity, they should contact me at 443.286.9338

Pictured, top to bottom: Rav Yisroel Shurin, Rav Yackov Kamenetzky with his son-in law, Rav Yisroel Shurin, King David Rehab



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the broken camera, Rav Zilberstein wote that it was an aveira for the person to take the picture against the will of the subject, this is a violation of "ve'ahavta lareacha kamocho." At the same time, the person who broke the camera is liable to pay for the damage. He should have found another way not to be photographed with the costume, like leaving the area.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to wish all the readers of TableTalk along with the entire Jewish people a year of good health and happiness.

May we merit the coming of Moshiach in 5783.

Olga Rubin and Boris Vaynshteyn

