

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



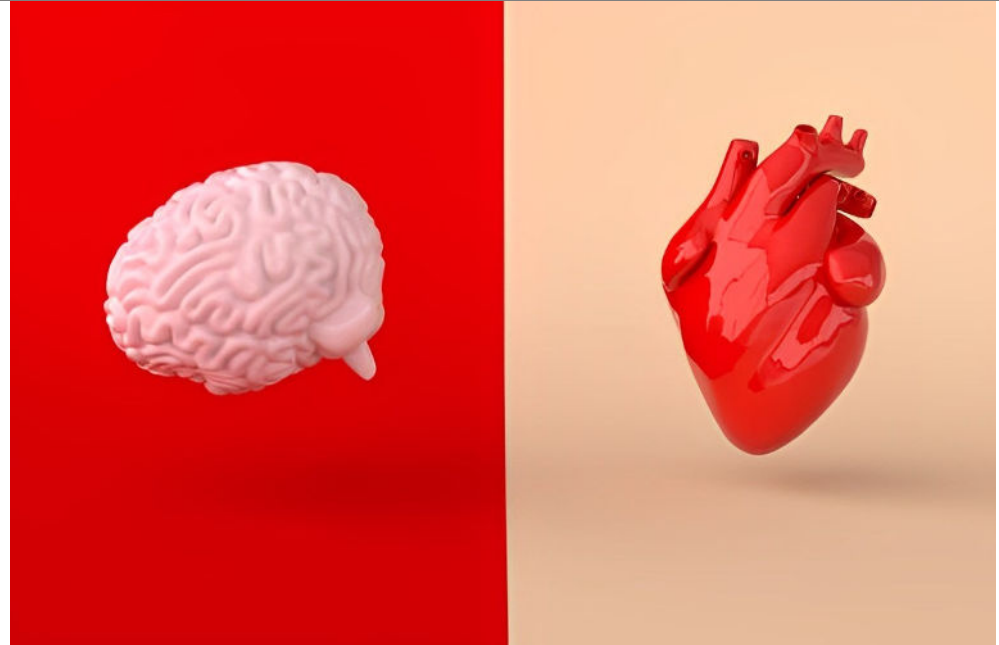
RUBIX RAGE

By Rabbi Paysach Diskind

In Vhaarev Na IV (page 347) the following Din Torah between two sixth grade boys is discussed.

Itamar received a Rubix Cube from his father and brought it to school. He spent an entire recess trying to figure out how to make each side one color only. Seeing that it was absolutely impossible and completely frustrated, he tossed it into the garbage.

The next day Nesanel came to school with a Rubix Cube as well. Itamar thought that perhaps Nesanel had found his Ru-



DRIVEN BY THE HEART OR DRIVEN BY THE MIND

At the end of our Parsha we are given the mitzvah of tzitzis. The Torah dedicates an entire paragraph explaining the function of tzitzis. We know that every mitzvah has its unique function and yet by very few mitzvos does the Torah dedicate so much text in explaining it. Why does tzitzis receive so much attention?

There are three primary players in the activities which Man undertakes. His mind / intellect, his heart and his eyes. Naturally there are his hands and feet, but let us consider those participants as secondary. The actual decision of what to do is handled by the first three players. Only two of the three players are actually used, however, sometimes it is the heart and the eyes and sometimes it is the mind and the heart. I would like to present the two processes and how they play out.

In the first process the role of the heart is two-fold. The first role of the heart is to decide what is 'good' and what is 'bad'. It identifies food or some other physically attractive pleasure as 'good'. Then the heart's second role kicks in which is to motivate, inspire and impassion. After that is accomplished the eyes get to work in seeking out what will satisfy the heart's desire. Once the target is identified the person will go into action to carry out his activity. His intellect played no role in the decision.

In the alternate process the mind begins the process by establishing what is 'good' and what is 'bad'. It continues its role in identifying what specifically the target should be. Once the intellect establishes that, the heart inspires, motivates and impassions the person to take action. In this process the eyes play

bix Cube and took it for himself.

“Hey, Nesanel, where did you get that Rubix Cube from?” asked Itamar.

“Oh, I got it from the garbage, why do you ask?”

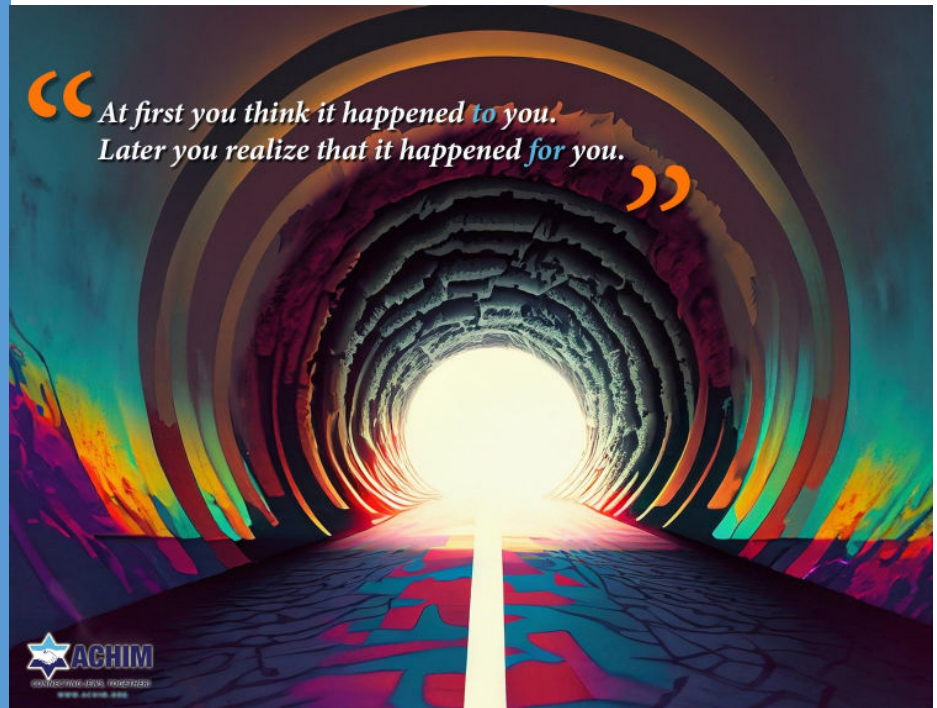
“Well, that is my Rubix Cube and I want it back!”

“I know it was yours but I saw you toss it in the garbage yesterday. So, too bad, once you tossed it in the garbage, it’s hefker, it is no longer yours!”

The bickering went on from some time until they decided to bring the case to the Rav.

- Does it make a difference how long it was in the garbage?
- Does it make a difference who gave it to Itamar in the first place?
- Does it make a difference what kind of garbage it was in?
- Does it make a difference which of the boys is older?
- Does it make a difference how expensive the Rubix Cube is?

Hint: At least one of the above questions does make a difference!



no role and the heart’s role is diminished to its second role only. The actual decision of what is ‘good’ is dealt with by the intellect as well as what the target should be. The eyes are not needed to seek out the heart’s desire because the intellect decided that already.

Naturally, animals who have no intellect will always use the first process. Man, however, has a choice. He can choose to place his heart in charge of the decision-making process like the animal or he may choose to place his intellect in charge of the decision-making process.

We can appreciate that the Torah expects Man to place his intellect in charge of making the decision as to what is ‘good’ and what is ‘bad’. After all, that is why HaShem blessed Man with intellect; to use it and to give it its due authority. However, the Torah understands Man and his challenges. Man’s greatest challenge is that one part of him

is a physical materialistic creature which is driven to the physical pleasures and that part of him wishes to empower his lower calling to decide what is ‘good’ and what is ‘bad’. For Man to choose his intellect he requires support and effort.

To this end HaShem gave His people the mitzvah of tzitzis. The function of the tzitzis is to give Man the instrument by which he can overpower the urges of his heart. The genius of this mitzvah is that it actually gives a primary role in Man’s activity back to the eyes. ‘Meitzitz’ means to peer or to look. The tzitzis are called that name because the Torah is instructing us to look at the tzitzis and through seeing them we will remember the mitzvos of HaShem and be inspired to use our better half, the part of us that is made in HaShem’s Image. With the tzitzis the eyes no longer take orders from the heart but rather their role is to direct Man to place his intellect in charge.

The reason for the Torah teaching us the purpose of the mitzvah of tzitzis is because this mitzvah is an instrument which is designed to be used in giving Man his necessary support. In the paragraph of tzitzis we are given the instructions how to properly and successfully use the instrument.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

BIRDS OF BALTIMORE: THE MOCKINGBIRD

In many of the science pieces in Table Talk, we often talk about the wonders of creation in far-flung parts of the earth. But the truth is, we don't have to look far to see amazing creatures. Let's learn about the wonders of the "Birds of Baltimore."

Let's start with the Mockingbird, which I often see in my backyard here in Baltimore. We know that certain birds make distinct calls. We are familiar with the familiar caw, caw, of the crow, or the gentle chirp, chirp of a sparrow, or the mourning call of the mourning dove. Those birds stick to those particular sounds. But let's meet the Mockingbird, the bird that mimics the sounds of hundreds of other birds, amphibians, and even cars!

The Northern Mockingbird is known for its mimicking ability and huge song repertoire. In fact, the scientific name of the Northern Mockingbird is *Mimus polyglottos*, meaning "many-tongued mimic" because of their song capabilities. Mockingbirds were referred to by Native Americans as *Cencontlatolly*, translating to "four hundred tongues."

Among the species and vocalizations imitated are Carolina wren, cardinal, titmouse, towhee, sparrow, wood thrush, and eastern bluebird songs; calls of the Northern flicker and great crested flycatcher; jeers of the blue jay; and chups, and chirrs of the American robin. It imitates not only birds, but also other animals such as cats, dogs, frogs, crickets and sounds from artificial items such as uncoiled wheels and even car alarms. Northern Mockingbirds have been known to imitate at least 12 different species of North American frogs and toads. They even mimic man-made noises like music and machinery. The Mockingbird possesses a large song repertoire that ranges from 43 to 203 song types.

Why do they mimic other birds' songs? Scientists believe that Mockingbirds imitate the calls and songs of other birds to discourage these birds from settling in the Mockingbirds' territory by making it appear heavily populated.

Males sing songs at the beginning of breeding season to attract females. Unmated males sing songs in more directions and sing more bouts than mated males. Unmated males are also more likely to use elevated perches to make their songs audible farther away. Unlike most birds, who usually only sing during the day, Mockingbirds also sing at night for hours on end during the spring and summer.

The Northern Mockingbird has gray to brown upper feathers and a paler belly. Its tail and wings have white patches which are visible in flight. It has parallel wing bars on the half of the wings connected near the white patch giving it a distinctive appearance in flight. The white patches on a Northern Mockingbird's wings and outer tail feathers serve dual purposes: The birds often show off these plumes during mating rituals, and they also flash them when defending their territory from potential predators like hawks and snakes. Northern Mockingbirds measure from 8.1 to 11 inches. The Northern Mock-

ingbird's lifespan is observed to be up to 8 years, but captive birds can live up to 20 years.

The Northern Mockingbird is an omnivore, eating both insects and fruits. Its diet consists of animal prey during the breeding season, but takes a drastic shift to fruits during the fall and winter. Mockingbirds also eat garden fruits such as tomatoes, apples, and berries (like blackberries, raspberries, and mulberries), as well as grapes and figs. The Mockingbird prefers to live near humans and has a preference for urban and suburban neighborhoods. This is because wide-open lawns and parks are perfect for hunting their insect prey, and males often sing from perches like the tops of houses and telephone poles, where their performance can involve leaping into the air and fluttering back down. The Mockingbird has an affinity for mowed lawns with shrubs within proximity for shade and nesting. When foraging for food, it prefers short grass. This bird does not nest in densely forested areas, and generally resides in the same habitats year round. Both the male and female are involved in the nest building. The male does most of the work, while the female perches on the shrub or tree where the nest is being built to watch for predators. Once the eggs are hatched, both the male and female will feed the chicks. After about 10 to 15 days of life, the offspring become independent.

The birds are bold and aggressively defend their nests and surrounding areas against other birds and animals. They will attack much larger birds, even hawks. When a predator is persistent, mockingbirds from neighboring territories may be summoned by distinct calls to join the defense. Other birds may gather to watch as the mockingbirds drive away the intruder. In addition to harassing domestic cats and dogs that they consider a threat, mockingbirds will at times target humans. In an incident in Tulsa, Oklahoma a mockingbird consistently attacked a woman postal carrier. This resulted in the distribution of a warning letter to residents, warning that their mail may be interrupted unless the bird was removed. (My wife has seen this happen in front of our home here in Baltimore as well.) This aggressiveness is reflected in the choice to be the state bird of Texas. In true Texas fashion, the 1927 legislation declaring the Northern Mockingbird the state's official bird reasoned that the species is "a fighter for the protection of his home, falling, if need be, in its defense, like any true Texan."

The Northern Mockingbird is known for its intelligence. A 2009 study showed that the bird was able to recognize individual humans, particularly noting those who had previously been intruders or threats. In addition, these birds recognize their breeding spots and return to areas in which they had the greatest success in previous years. Researchers had one participant stand near a Mockingbird nest and touch it, while others avoided the nest. Later, the Mockingbirds recognized the intruder and exhibited defensive behavior, while ignoring the other individuals.

INVESTMENT BUILT ON SOLID PRINCIPLE

The following story was related by Rabbi Menachem Porush (pictured) to Rav Yechezkel Aryeh Hacohein Munk.

Rabbi Menachem Porush had an acquaintance who lived a more modern lifestyle. He once asked Rabbi Porush “I keep hearing about a **יש שכר זבולון**—partnership concept. Please explain this to me.” Rabbi Porush explained how people of means can take upon themselves a partnership with a Torah scholar and his family. In the World to come they equally share in the reward of the Torah study. He thought for a moment and said to Rabbi Porush “I like this idea. Can you please help find a suitable Torah scholar for my family to partner with?”

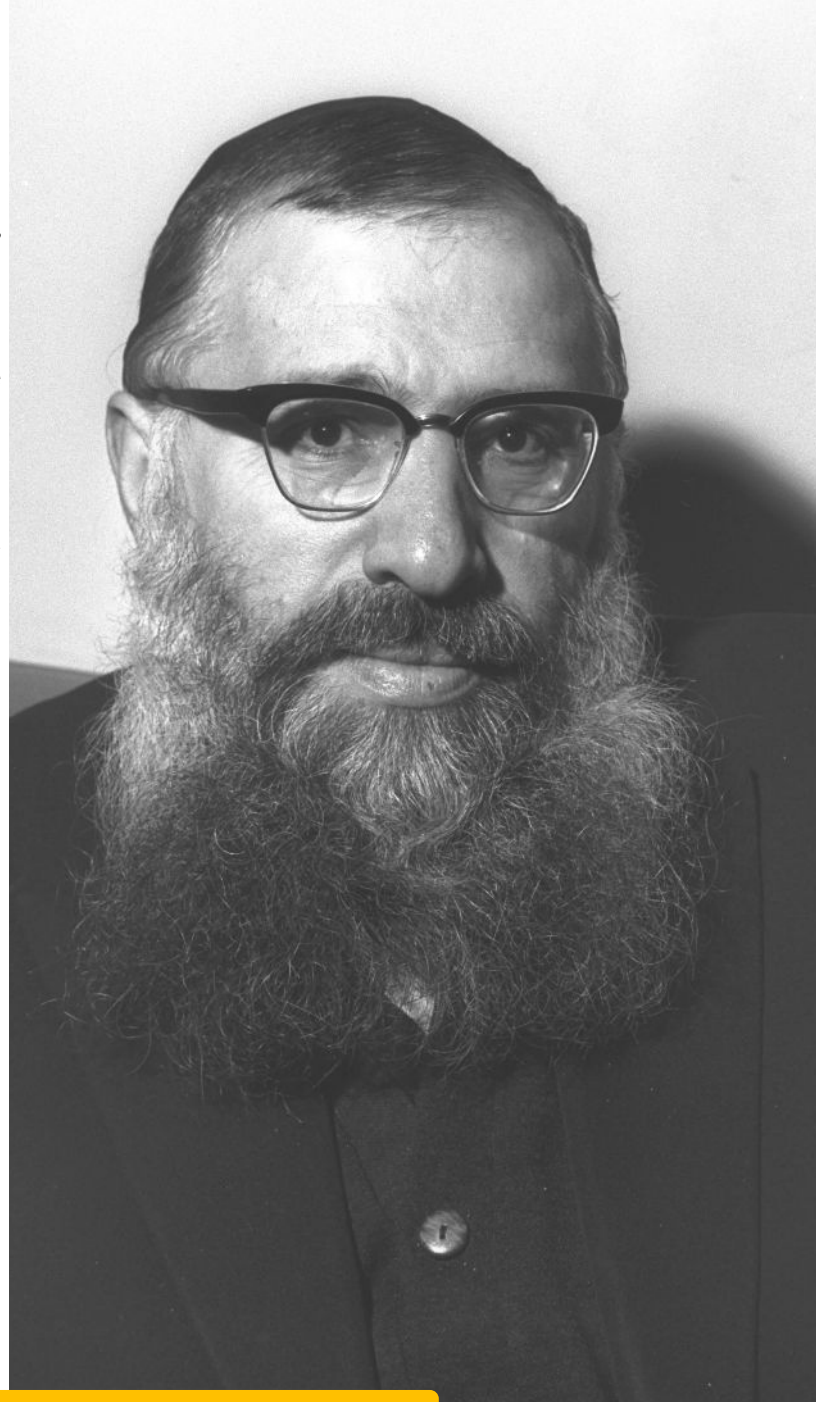
Rabbi Porush approached a Rosh Yeshiva who suggested the family of a Torah scholar in need of support and arranged for them to meet. After the scholar and this person met, the scholar got back to Rabbi Porush saying “I don’t think this partner is suitable for me.” He explained “I take my Torah study quite seriously. I looked into it, and there are some matters in his lifestyle which are not compatible with the level of my Torah study. I am not ready to share my Torah with him.”

Rabbi Porush called his friend back telling him that the scholar was not interested. The fellow responded to Rabbi Porush “I inquired about him and I know that he is living with quite some financial difficulty. If he is refusing us as a partner – I insist on knowing why.”

Rabbi Porush had no choice but to tell him. “This scholar takes his Torah study seriously. He feels there are some matters in your lifestyle that are not compatible with his Torah study.” Upon his friend’s insistence for an explanation, Rabbi Porush told him “There are three problems. The first is that your wife does not cover her hair. The second is that the level of schooling for your children is not what he considers adequate and finally your business opens too early Saturday night.” The fellow thought for a moment and said “Rabbi Porush, I will get back to you.”

A few days later, he returned with his wife to Rabbi Porush and said “We gave the matter much thought and decided that if this scholar who is in such dire financial need takes his study of Torah so seriously that he refused our partnership, then he is specifically the one we want to partner with. Please inform him that we will make the changes necessary to qualify us to be his partner. We would be privileged to partner with such a great Torah scholar.

The two families met and their lives were changed forever, truly forever and ever!



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week’s question about the Corona-infected apartment; the rule that governs this situation is that it is the responsibility of the owner of the rental to do whatever is expected of him to take care of. Naturally, this matter changes from location to location and from time to time. In this case, in 2020, since nobody would move into an apartment that was not disinfected, the vacationers would not be liable to pay for the rental.

This week’s Table Talk is dedicated to our beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather **Raymond Snitow - Aharon Ben Shlomo Dovid** on the occasion of his 16th Yahrzeit the 23 of Sivan.
May his neshoma have an Aliyah.

The Snitow, Willens, Feinberg and Walfish families



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