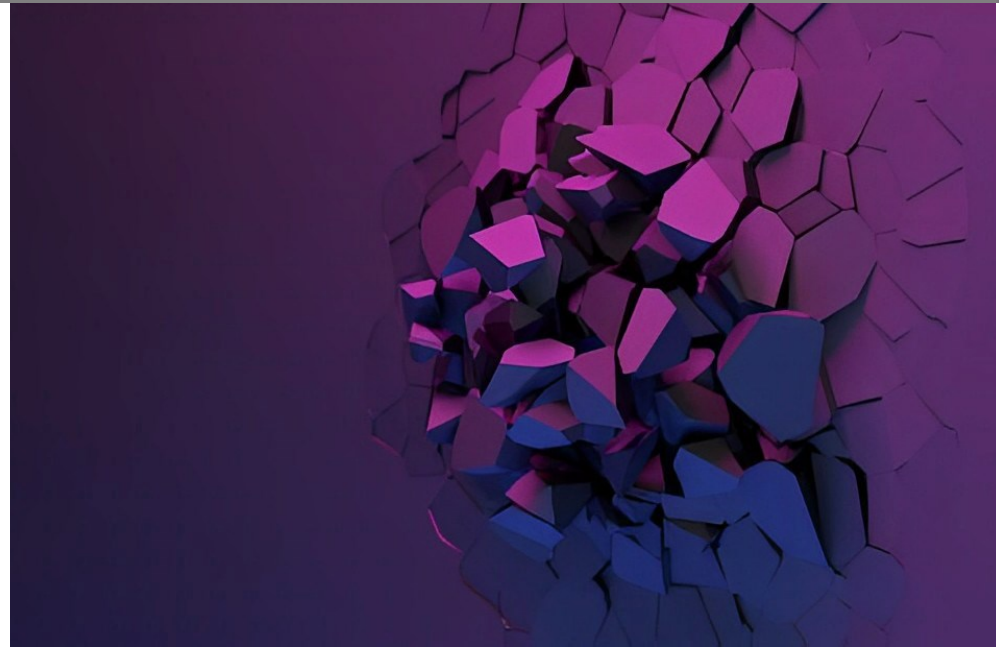




A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



PICKING THE LOCK OR BREAKING THE DOOR

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha opens up, describing how HaShem is righteous and just. We have a mitzvah to emulate Hashem's character. This leads us to the following true story that recently occurred.

Tzvi was a member of Chaverim. He lived with his wife and young children in a development that was filled mostly with religious Jews. Four apartments were in his particular building, and all the neighbors were young frum families like his.

One Shabbos, Tzvi came to his building and was hit with a strong smell of gas. He quickly checked that the gas wasn't coming from his apartment. It wasn't. He knocked on two other doors. The residents there checked, but the gas was not coming from them.

There was one remaining apartment that the Siegal family rented. Tzvi knocked on the door, but no one answered. As Tzvi knocked, it became clear that the gas smell was coming from the Siegal's apartment.

No one answered the door. Finally, after knocking for a few minutes, Tzvi decided that the Siegals

PENETRATING THE BARRIER

The basic notion of teshuva is to break down the barrier, created by our sins, that separates us from HaShem. By successfully doing teshuvah we create an opening in that barrier and we are able to connect to Him as we were originally able to.

In Shir HaShirim, the Jewish people are depicted as being in a house protected from the outside rain and HaShem is outside wanting to come in from the downpour. HaShem knocks on the door calling out to His beloved people "Open up for Me, I want to come in. My head is soaking from the painful rain (referring to the tears of suffering Jewish people in exile)" The Midrash explains on this verse that HaShem is telling His people "If you open up an opening the size of an eye of a needle I will open up an opening large enough for wagons and trucks."

This oft-quoted Chazal demonstrates how little teshuva we need to do relative to the size of the barrier we are trying to penetrate. The question is that while HaShem is extremely gracious nevertheless, His reciprocity seems totally disproportionate. Is there a way to understand it?

I had the good fortune to meet an old friend of mine who I had not seen for some time. He shared with me the passing of his wife half a year ago. They discovered she had advanced cancer and did not have much time left. The children came home to spend whatever time left she would have in this world. As the days moved along she became less and less communicative.

were not home, but they must have accidentally left the gas on. A gas leak is obviously dangerous, and something had to be done quickly.

Tzvi's first impulse was to get his own lockpick set. You might ask, why does a nice Jewish man have a lockpick set? Well, that is one of the tools of the trade of Chaverim. Chaverim are equipped to open the doors of cars or apartments in case people get locked out.

But as Tzvi went to retrieve the lockpick set, he had second thoughts. If he went into the Siegal's apartment without permission and picked the lock, it's possible that the Siegals would be embarrassed for him to see the apartment without their knowledge. Perhaps it wasn't as neat as the owner would have liked. Perhaps there were private items that might be visible in the apartment. Perhaps if he went in, the neighbors would always be embarrassed of him. Also, perhaps the neighbors would be uncomfortable knowing that he could always enter whenever he wanted.

There was another option, Tzvi could call the fire department on Shabbos. If the fire department would go in, the Siegals would likely not be embarrassed of them. But there was a good chance that if came, they would break the door down.

Tzvi wasn't sure what to do, so he called the fire department. Sure enough, they came shortly afterward, smelled the gas, and smashed the Siegal's door down. They found that one of the gas knobs on the stove was accidentally knocked to the side, and the fire officials turned off the gas. When the Siegals returned, they had to wait a few days until their front door was replaced.

Later Tzvi felt bad that he didn't simply unlock the door. So he brought this question to a Rav.

What would have been the preferred choice? Did he do the right thing to call the fire department, even though they broke down the door, or should he have quickly unlocked it himself?



*Be not afraid of going slowly.
Be afraid of standing still.*

Towards the very end when she could barely articulate anything she would nevertheless, mouth the words 'I love you' to the child that was with her. She did not actually say those words but it was clear that she was trying to say them.

My dear friend, Reb Yosef, told me that the joy that filled the children when Mommy said "I love you" was ecstatic.

At that point, Reb Yosef realized that perhaps this is why HaShem's reaction is so disproportionate to our efforts. All we do is open the eye of a needle. We have everything stacked against us. The challenges of the yetzer hara with his tools of distractions and temptations can be overbearing. If we succeed at penetrating that barrier, even if it is only enough to get a thread through it, it is a great accomplishment. It demonstrates the great desire to connect to

HaShem.

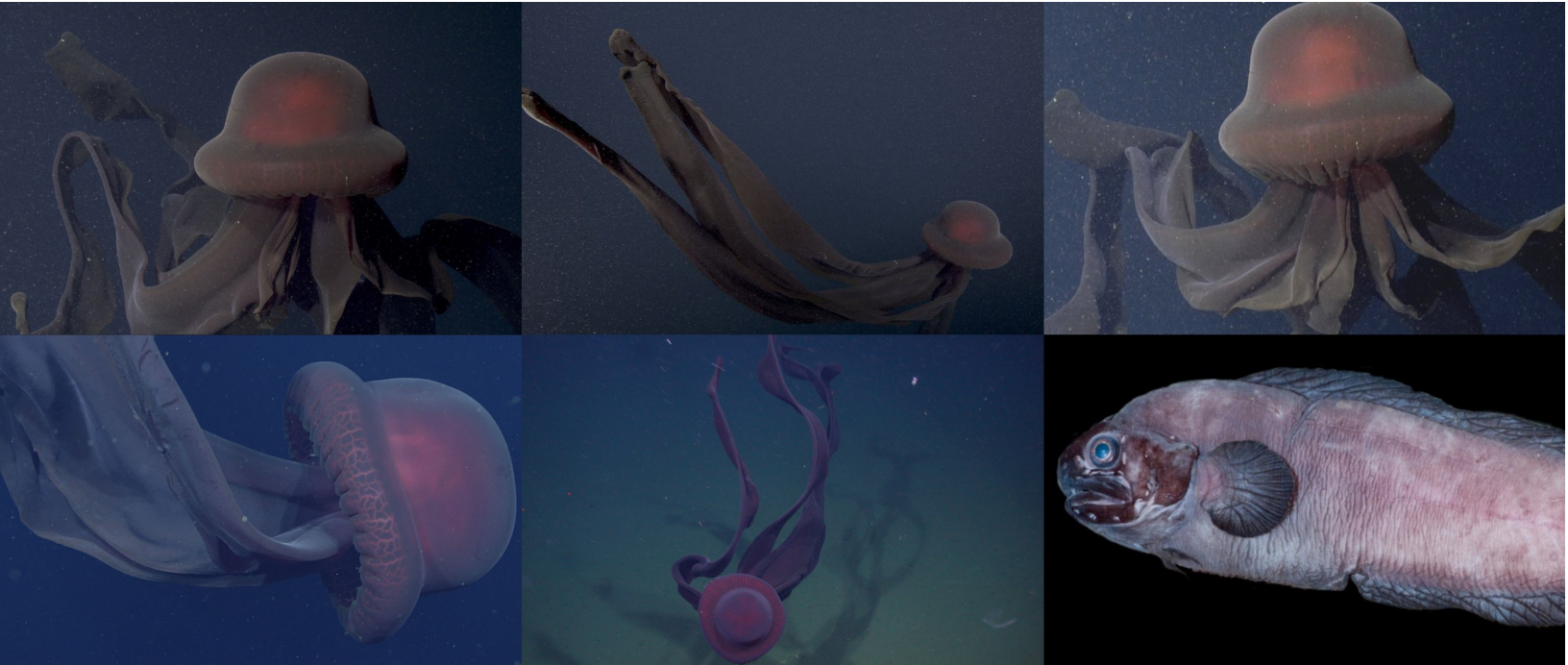
HaShem recognizes that effort and that desire. Just like my friend's children, HaShem becomes so ecstatic to see us mouth those words that He breaks through that barrier so that wagons and trucks can go through. He wants to enter and come close to us.

I wish to dedicate this thought and the inspiration it offers as an iluy to Yehudis Shifra bas Dovid Zalman z'l. May HaShem grant Reb Yosef and his dear family much strength and nechama to continue moving forward.

May this Yom Kippur bring us to the moment when all the barriers separating us from HaShem will melt away.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos Shuva and a gmar chasima tova.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE GIANT PHANTOM JELLY

Last week we learned about a fascinating type of jellyfish, the immortal jellyfish. While those jellyfish were truly remarkable, they are relatively small. Meet one of the longest and rarest jellyfish, the giant phantom jelly. Even today, scientists still know very little about this animal.

The giant phantom jelly is called *Stygiomedusa gigantea*. It is rarely seen and there have only been 110 sightings in 110 years. The reason why it is rarely seen is that it lurks in the ocean's midnight zone, the area where light can not penetrate. It lives in depths as much as 21,867 ft. That is more than four miles deep down into the ocean, where the water pressure is extremely high.

Although it is rarely seen, it is widespread throughout the world, with the exception of the Arctic Ocean.

The giant phantom jelly is one of the largest invertebrate predators in the deep sea. Unlike other jellyfish with many tentacles, the giant phantom jelly has four arms with a long ribbon-like or kite-like shape. These arms can grow up to 33 ft long. Its bell is 3.3 feet across. It looks a little like a creature wearing a dark sheet or blanket.

Imagine that you are swimming in the ocean, and one of these 30-foot-long arms reaches up to touch you!

But not to worry, these arms do not have stinging tentacles like other jellies. They instead use their arms to trap and engulf their prey.

They usually only prey on plankton and small fish. The giant phantom jellyfish is an important predator of the deep sea, often competing with squids and whales. Other species of jellyfish, anglerfish, cuttlefish, and giant squid are also found in the ocean's midnight zone.

Water pressure reaches up to 5,800 pounds per square inch at these depths. That means it is the weight of two small cars pushing

on every square inch! Nuclear submarines cannot go deeper than 1000 feet below the ocean's surface. So how can these phantom jellies survive such intense pressure? How can the Giant phantom jelly survive in depths like 20,000 feet below the ocean's surface? Jellies can survive these tremendous pressures because Hashem gave them unique bodies. Their soft gelatinous, or spongy bodies absorb the pressure.

Since giant phantom jellies dwell in the deep ocean, visible light does not penetrate far enough. Therefore, the giant jellyfish may appear "invisible" or glow orange very faintly in its surroundings, depending on the depth of the water. Their jelly appears a slight red-orange color when there is visible light.

Even though this jelly lives in the deep ocean, it has a symbiotic relationship with the *Thalassobathia pelagica* fish. (**Pictured**, bottom, right) The large umbrella-shaped bell of the giant phantom jelly provides food and shelter for the *T. pelagica*. In turn, the small fish aids the giant phantom jelly by removing parasites from its body. Without the protection of the giant phantom, the *T. pelagica* could not survive because there are no other shelter resources at such extreme ocean depths.

You might think that this strange and mysterious creature lives in the deep ocean in the far reaches of the earth. But in fact, as recently as 2021, it was observed in the wild in Monterey Bay, California. Footage in California was captured by marine biologists piloting a deep-sea robot. In the video, the giant jellyfish's large bell is seen pulsing and glowing a faint orange as it floats in the dark abyss. The scarlet jellyfish is seen bobbing along with its bell-shaped head and four long, flowing arms that resemble a kite's ribbon tails.

Scientists have attempted to capture one of these giant phantom jellies with nets. But the jellies turned to gelatinous goo whenever they tried to bring it up to the surface.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous creations!

I WILL TELL YOU WHAT A TZADIK IS

In my father's final year in this world, he was speaking to my nephew about his perspective on pain. "You never want to ask HaShem for pain. However, when he subjects you to pain - Cherish it! It takes away so much pain in the world to come. It's like paying pennies on the dollar." Upon hearing this, my nephew exclaimed,, "Zaide, you are such a tzadik!"

My father responded "That's not a tzadik, anyone who understands the function of pain would feel the same way. But I will tell you what a tzadik is.

"This story I heard in the name of the Chofetz Chaim.

"Many years before the Chofetz Chaim there was a family whose father and older children were killed in a pogrom, HaShem should avenge their blood. The mother was able to escape into the forest with her little baby. Once in the forest the baby got ill and died. After burying her last child she stood up with her hands to HaShem and cried. "HaShem, you gave us such a difficult mitzvah to love You with all our heart. How difficult that was for me. I had a husband whom I loved, I had children whom I loved, how can I love You with all my heart. But now, HaShem, I have nobody left. Now, I can love You with all my entire heart.

"Now that is a tzadik! "

Written by Paysach Diskind

Pictured: Rav Hirsch Diskind



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the realtors, Rav Zilberstein said that the buyer would have to pay the realtors, even though they did not tell him outright where the apartment was. He should pay one commission and split it between the two realtors. He didn't have to pay each realtor full commission.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated as an iluy for the neshamos of

Reb Elozer Isbee and his mother

אלעזר בן יהודה אריה לייב הכהן

נפטר י"ב אב

חיה רחל בת הרב חיים נחמן

נפטרה י"ב תשרי

By Mrs. Aviva Isbee and family

