

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



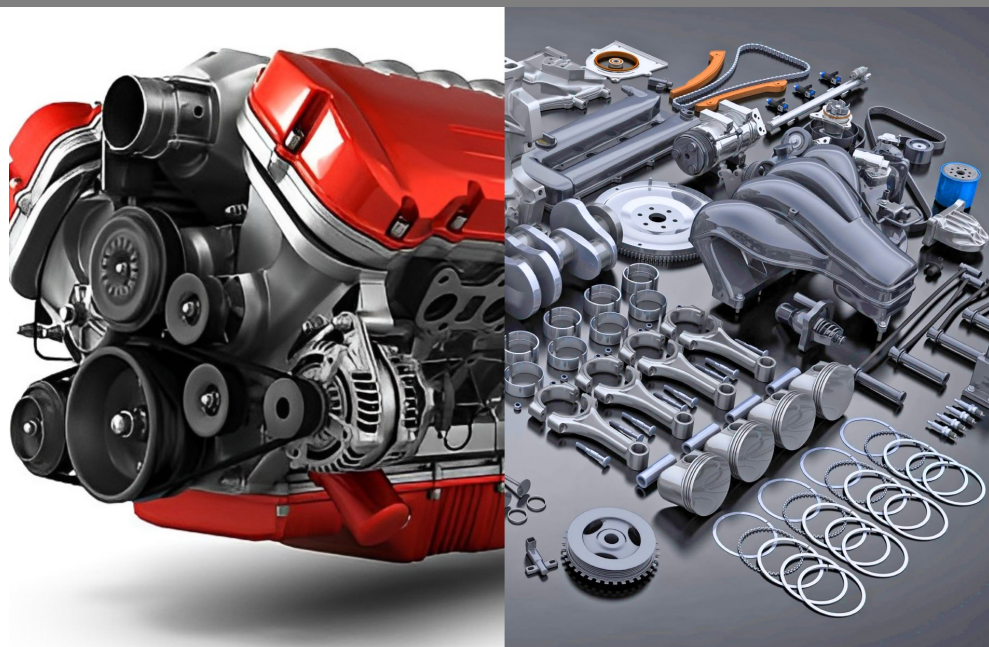
STUCK IN THE ELEVATOR

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

We are all still enjoying the afterglow of the joy of Purim. It is also still Adar when we increase joy. So in honor of Purim and Adar, I'd like to share a humorous true story.

One day, four very large men entered an elevator in Israel. They noticed a sign on the elevator indicating a maximum weight of 500 kg. They tried to close the door, but another person wanted to enter. The four told the new person that he couldn't come in because it would put their weight over the limit. However, the new person did not listen and forced his way inside the elevator. With no choice, one of the people in the elevator pushed the button for the floor they wanted to go to.

Mid-travel, there was a loud squeaky noise from the elevator, and the elevator suddenly stopped. They were stuck



MISHKAN; DO NOT TRY IT ON YOUR OWN!

The Beis Halevi asks the question which every thinking Jew asks when learning Parshas Ki Sisa; how did the people who left Egypt, who experienced the ten plagues, who experienced the splitting of the Red Sea, who experienced HaShem Himself talking to them from the Heavens, who were explicitly told by HaShem at Mount Sinai not to create graven images, create and serve a Golden idol!?

The function of the Mishkan was to house the Schechina. All of the many fine details in every component of the Mishkan were for that purpose. Just as there is nothing extra in a car engine there is certainly nothing extra in the construction of the Mishkan. The specific dimensions of each item corresponded to aspects of HaShem's Shechinah. Naturally these are all wrapped up in kabbalistic sodos (secrets) of which only few great Sages know.

Just as a master mechanic can build a car engine without instructions by virtue of his knowledge of how everything works, so should a great Sage be able to build the Mishkan by virtue of his knowledge of how everything works. As we will see, this assumption is not true.

The Beis Halevi explains that the Bnei Yisroel were confronted with the ultimate dilemma; what were they to do if Moshe Rabbeinu is dead!? In their mind, due to Satan's shenanigans, the people were convinced that Moshe had died on Mount Sinai. So long as Moshe was with them, he took care of communicating with HaShem. Whenever they were afraid or if they needed something, whether it was food or drink Moshe took care of it. However, with the

inside a broken elevator! The people inside quickly notified the repair people, and within half an hour, the elevator was fixed. When the building manager heard what caused the elevator to break, he was upset and demanded that all five people pay for the expensive repair.

An argument ensued over who was responsible for paying for the damage. The original four said that number five was responsible because he put them over the weight limit. However, number five argued that he alone wasn't the one who caused the damage. If he had been riding by himself, there wouldn't have been any damage. He did it in partnership with the rest of them.

Then another argument emerged: perhaps the person who pushed the button should pay for the damage. Had he not pushed the buttons, there wouldn't have been any damage.

This three-way dispute was brought to Rav Zilberstein.

Who is liable in this situation? Is it the one who put them over the weight limit, all five of them, or the one who pushed the button?

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P.S.

We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the publishers of the Purim Prattle Parody. You did such a great job and your imitation was the highest compliment. We love how you paid attention to so many fine details and nuances!



new reality that Moshe is no longer with them they needed to bring HaShem's Presence into their camp.

With this in mind, and only with this in mind, the people went to Aharon who was most knowledgeable about the sodos of Creation and so on, and asked him to make such a mechanism by which they could draw the Schechina into their camp.

Of course the Satan had other ideas and used this opportunity to create the Golden Calf. Granted, that thousands of our people actually served the Calf, but that was not the original intent. Those who did succumb to serving the Calf were duly punished and the entire nation accepted that punishment. They all realized how wrong they were.

With the construction of the Mishkan which followed the Golden Calf, our people attained an atonement for that

grievous sin.

When we read the Parsha of Pikudei in which the Torah records the setting up of the Mishkan we find that every step of the setup concludes "they did as HaShem commanded Moshe". Would it not have been sufficient for the Torah to write either at the beginning or the end of the setup that everything was done as HaShem commanded Moshe? The answer is that after falling from their sin of the Golden Calf in which they tried to accomplish making a Mishkan on their own, they realized that even if you have the greatest Sage, without the mitzvah of HaShem, nothing will be accomplished. Therefore, every step and every detail was specifically done as HaShem commanded Moshe.

Every mitzvah that we do accomplishes so much in the world. The accomplishments impact our material world as well as the spiritual world. However, all those accomplishments only occur because they were commanded to us by HaShem and only when we do them in that context can we hope to achieve those accomplishments.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE JANTHINA

In the past, we learned about two candidates for what the chilazon is: the Murex Trunculus and the Cuttlefish. Let's now learn about a third possibility, the sea snail called Janthina. Rabbi Arye Kaplan writes that in ancient times, snails like Janthina were renowned for their dyes.

Rabbi Kaplan quotes the opinion of Rabbi Yitzchak Herzog that it is possible that Janthina is the chilazon. The Janthina is a truly fascinating sea snail, let's learn more about it together. Janthina, also known as the common violet snail, is found worldwide in the warm waters of tropical and temperate seas. Violet sea snails are called that because the lightweight shell they live in is made up of various shades of purple, and the animal inside is itself violet in color. Its shell is paper-thin. They are often found in large groups.

This species begins life as free-swimming larva. When young, they live below the surface, free to move and hunt as they please. Their bodies are tender and round with a minuscule cup-shaped shell that covers the frame, and two small 'wings' that they use to swim.

But this stage does not last. First, the snail's vision goes dim. Then its eyes begin to break down, and blindness overtakes it. It loses its ability to swim underwater.

How does it survive? It is pelagic, meaning it drifts on the surface of the ocean. Once it reaches its adult form, it produces mucus which it agitates with its foot. It then mixes the mucus with air to fill it with bubbles. This creates a 'bubble raft'. The snail slime hardens to a stiff rubbery texture, not easily popped. This raft keeps the adult sea snail floating on the surface of the sea, upside down with its shell hanging downwards. This species will spend the rest of its life in this manner, its foot bound to the string of air bubbles. A fully grown violet sea snail is usually around 3 to 4cm across the shell. If at any stage of its life the violet sea snail becomes detached from its bubble raft, it

will sink to the seabed and soon die.

Scientists say that this passive flotation is actually an advantage for the Janthina, and it is a particularly resource-efficient form of animal locomotion. The Janthina are unable to control where their raft floats and sometimes become stranded on beaches when they are blown ashore by strong winds.

Violet snails feed on creatures that can kill a human. Janthinas eat the Portuguese Man O' War. The Portuguese Man O' War has a powerful sting and is responsible for up to 10,000 human stings in Australia each summer. But the Janthina is completely impervious to the stings of a Portuguese Man O' War.

What hunts the Janthinas? Fish, birds, sea turtles, other molluscs and nudibranchs. The Janthina is protected from them with a great camouflage strategy known as countershading. It works by having the underside of their shell – which sits on the surface of the ocean when they're floating – be much darker in color than the top. It's just like penguins. Think of penguins when they're swimming with black plumage on their backs and white plumage on their stomachs. Countershading works because predators below think they're looking at the light-colored sky above, while predators above think they're looking at the deep color of the sea below.

Janthina are protandric hermaphrodites. This means that they are born male and develop into females over time. The snail begins life as a male and later changes into a female.

You might be wondering about the dye that comes from the Janthina. Interestingly, a particular species of Janthina, the Janthina globosa, secretes a purple dye (the same dye that gives it its purple color) to paralyze its prey, allowing it to eat its target without much of a fight. Although Janthina globosa seems like a harmless snail, it is an incredibly successful predator.

NO CHOICE

One summer, Reb Moshe Feinstein was planning to remain in the city but his family prevailed upon him to spend a couple of weeks in a Catskill Mountains bungalow colony.

But after only one day, Reb Moshe asked that arrangements be made for a driver to take him back to the city with all his luggage. He would not explain what had gone wrong. He simply said, "if a driver cannot be arranged, I will take a bus."

Only later did he explain the problem. His bungalow adjoined that of a widow, whose daughter had a sweet voice. The daughter entertained her mother much of the day with her singing.

Halachah did not permit Reb Moshe to hear the singing, and he was not going to deny the widow this pleasure.

To Reb Moshe, there was no choice but to return home.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the child who was saved by the baby bathtubs, Rav Zilberstein wrote that the father has no obligation to pay for the damage. Even the child would have no duty to pay when she becomes bas mitzva.

This week's TableTalk is sponsored out of gratitude to HaShem for all the kindness and generosity He provides to me and my family

By Milana Rabinowitz

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