

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE LECHAIM

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

The following interesting question was asked to Rav Chaim Kanievsky.

Michael was a non-Jew who was very interested in learning about Judaism. He and his wife moved to Israel to learn about Judaism, to convert, and to join the Jewish people. Michael connected with a rabbi, Rav Yaakov, and under this rabbi's tutelage and guidance, Michael slowly became ready to convert. Finally, after years of learning and preparation, Michael was ready for the giyur (conversion) process.

On the day of his immersion in the mikvah, Rabbi Yaakov prepared a special expensive liqueur to celebrate the occasion of Michael's joining the Jewish people. Rabbi Yaakov explained it was a special chocolate mocha liqueur



THE BEGINNING BEGINS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

In his first comment on our Parsha, Rashi explains that Aharon was dejected for not having the opportunity to participate in the inauguration of the Mishkan. In response to that, HaShem told him "When you raise up the neiros (light, or flame) of the Menorah they will face the center branch of the Menorah."

The instructions of lighting the Menorah were already given in Shmos. What is the purpose of giving these instructions once again? Furthermore, how do these instructions calm Aharon's dejection? We must also ask what is the message of these instructions? It would seem more correct to instruct "when lighting the Menorah, do so in a way that they should face the center. The wording of the Parsha seems to indicate that when you will light the Menorah they will face the center. The implication is that if you light the Menorah the lights will face the center by themselves.

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh explains that the usage of "neiros" in this verse refers to the cups of the Menorah which were not part of the Menorah. The Menorah was formed from a single block of gold. However, the cups which held the oil and the wick were separate pieces. These cups were removed, cleaned, and filled with oil and a new wick. Once this was done the cups were returned to the Menorah. Ohr Hachaim continues to explain that HaShem was telling Aharon that every day when he lifted up those cups to return them to the Menorah he was initiating a new Me-norah. Every day Aharon inaugurated the Menorah. With this, he was calmed.

Hence, in response to Aharon's dejection for not participating in the inauguration of the Mishkan, HaShem told him that your daily activity of returning the cups of the Menorah is an inauguration of the Menorah.

made in Israel that had milk in it, and so the liqueur was dairy. After Michael finished the conversion, Rabbi Yaakov said, "Mazel tov! Let's make a l'chaim with this delicious drink."

Michael was about to drink it when his wife reminded him, "Wait, wait, Michael. This afternoon for lunch you had a corned beef sandwich. You're fleishig!"

Michael thought about it and said, "That's true, but the truth is when I ate it, I wasn't Jewish. Now I've converted. Now I'm Jewish. So maybe it's OK that I ate meat because it doesn't count when I wasn't Jewish."

His wife countered, "But the reason why we wait six hours is because there might still be oils or meat from the sandwich in your mouth. Why should it make a difference if you were Jewish or not?"

Michael said, "I don't know. Once you convert, you're like a whole new person. Maybe I'm a whole new person, and I wouldn't have to wait anymore."

This question was brought to Rav Chaim Kanievsky. Was Michael allowed to have the dairy liqueur even though he was still fleishig from before he was Jewish?

What do you think?



The eye's darkest part reveals the most light.



-Sfas Emes

We still need to understand the syntax of the verse which indicates that when Aharon will return the cups they will automatically face the center. How will this happen and why is this important?

Let us appreciate what the significance of the inauguration service of the Mishkan was. It is untenable to equate this service to a mere ribbon-cutting ceremony or throwing out the first ball at the World Series. What purpose did it serve?

Our Sages teach us that the intent of the one who undertakes an endeavor as well as the motivation that drives that undertaking, creates the direction in which that endeavor will go. Let us take for example the following story. At the bris of the great sage of Elisha ben Avuah, his father was overwhelmed by the great powers of the Sages who were in attendance. Upon seeing their greatness he dedicated the career of his son, Elisha, to be a Torah scholar. Elisha, in fact, became a great Sage and was the Rebbi of Reb Meir. Later in life, Elisha turned away

from the ways of the Torah. The Talmud teaches that this tragic change occurred because his father's primary motivation for dedicating his son to Torah study was for personal fame and grandeur. That subtle change expressed itself so much later in life.

The prince of every tribe of Klal Yisroel participated in the inauguration of the Mishkan. Each tribe placed their intent and motivation into the Mishkan. Aharon, who was not given the opportunity, also wanted to install his pure and beautiful intentions into the Mishkan and was naturally dejected. His dejection was not because he wanted personal fame. Of course not! Aharon's intentions were solely for the Glory of HaShem and for the Jewish people. He knew how pure and holy his intentions were and for that reason he wanted to participate in installing those feelings into the Mishkan.

In response to Aharon's dejection HaShem told him "When you raise up the cups of the Menorah every single day by which you are inaugurating the Menorah daily, you can be sure that the lights of the Menorah will direct their shine towards the center stem. HaShem was reassuring him that his pure intentions will direct the flame in the right direction.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

PORT JACKSON SHARKS

Have you ever seen a creature like this before? Please meet the fascinating Port Jackson shark. The Port Jackson shark, a type of bullhead shark, is native to the waters around Sydney, Australia. They can grow up to 5.5 feet in length, with males typically being smaller than females. One of their most distinctive features is their broad, flat nose. Another feature that sets them apart are the harness-like bands that wrap around their bodies, making them look like they're ready for an underwater rodeo!

Port Jackson sharks are not just any ordinary sharks. Most sharks give birth to live young, but Port Jackson sharks lay fascinating spiral-shaped eggs, which often wash up on beaches. These eggs are unique because the females wedge them into rock crevices to harden. During the breeding season, which spans from late winter to spring, females lay eggs in pairs every 10-14 days. A single female can lay up to 16 eggs each breeding season. These egg capsules are spiral-shaped and harden once wedged into rock crevices, providing a safe place for the developing embryos. After 10-11 months, the young sharks hatch, ready to start their own underwater adventures.

Why do the eggs look so strange and unique? The spiral shape of the egg capsules allows female Port Jackson sharks to securely wedge them into rock crevices. This anchoring prevents the eggs from being washed away by currents or waves, which is especially important in the dynamic and often turbulent coastal environments they inhabit. Also, by placing the eggs in hard-to-reach locations, the risk of predation is significantly reduced. Many marine predators would find it difficult to extract the eggs from tight crevices, thereby increasing the chances of the embryos surviving to hatching. The spiral design of the egg capsules adds structural strength. The shape helps the capsule to withstand physical stresses, such as the pressure from being wedged into rocks. Finally, the spiral shape increases the surface area of the egg capsule, which can facilitate better oxygen exchange. More surface area allows for greater diffusion of oxygen into the capsule, supporting the respiration needs of the developing embryo. At the same time, the spiral structure can also help retain moisture within the egg capsule when it is exposed to air during low tides. The unique egg shape is also a result of the Port Jackson shark's specific reproductive strategy. This strategy involves laying relatively few eggs and investing heavily in the protection and development of each one, as opposed to producing large numbers of less protected eggs like other fish.

These sharks are nocturnal creatures, which means they rest in caves during the day and come out to hunt at night when their prey is most active. Their hunting technique is quite efficient—they use their sharp front teeth to grab and crush prey and their flat back

teeth to grind up crustaceans. They have two sets of teeth: sharp ones at the front to catch prey and flat ones at the back to grind up their food. Their diet includes sea urchins, crustaceans, and small fish, earning them the nickname "oyster crushers." Port Jackson sharks are a vital part of the marine ecosystem. They help control the population of sea urchins, crustaceans, and small fish, maintaining a balanced environment. They are also an important subject of scientific research due to their unique characteristics and behaviors.

Despite their fearsome appearance, they are not considered dangerous to humans. However, their dorsal fin spines are reputed to be venomous, so it's best to admire them from a distance. This is a rare trait among sharks.

Why do they have such a strange-looking face? It is perfectly suited for their bottom-dwelling lifestyle. The facial features of Port Jackson sharks are closely tied to their ecological niche as bottom-dwellers. Every aspect of their facial anatomy, from their flat nose to their small mouth, is optimized for a life spent foraging on the ocean floor. These features make them highly efficient at exploiting the resources available in their habitat. The wide, flat snout is equipped with numerous sensory organs called ampullae of Lorenzini. These electroreceptors help the shark detect the electrical fields produced by potential prey, even when they are buried in the sand or hidden in crevices. The small mouth of the Port Jackson shark is located on the underside of the head, which is typical of bottom-dwelling sharks. This positioning helps them to suck in prey from the sea floor efficiently. The grooves that connect their nostrils to their mouths allow them to draw in water and detect chemicals released by prey, enhancing their ability to locate food. Their diet mainly consists of hard-shelled organisms that require specific adaptations to capture and consume. The small mouth and robust jaw muscles are perfectly designed for holding, breaking, and grinding these tough prey items.

Port Jackson sharks are also unique for their high spatial memory. They have an incredible ability to remember their surroundings and can remember specific resting sites and return to them. This helps them find their way through the complex rocky environments they call home, locating the best hiding spots and the tastiest food sources. Imagine having a mental map of your neighborhood, knowing exactly where to find everything you need—that's what these sharks do! During the breeding season, their memory really shines. These sharks migrate to special coastal areas year after year. This ensures they lay their unique spiral-shaped eggs in the safest crevices, protecting them from predators and waves.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

"THIS IS MY MITZVAH! YOU GET YOUR OWN GARBAGE!"

Rav Yaakov Moshe Kulefsky was the previous Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Yisrael. For a year and a half, one of Rav Kulefsky's talmidim lived with his wife and family in the same building as the Kulefskys, in "401," as it is known in Yeshiva Lane. This talmid had many encounters with his esteemed neighbor, some of them humorous, but all memorable and meaningful. One Erev Shabbos, the talmid drove into the parking lot of 401 just as Rav Kulefsky walked out the back entrance, holding a bag filled with garbage. The talmid quickly jumped out of his car and ran over to offer to take the trash bag and throw it into the dumpster. But Rav Kulefsky pulled it away from him and declared with a twinkle in his eye, "This is my mitzvah! You get your own garbage!"

The rebbetzin did not drive a car. Although Baltimore has buses, the system is not as user-friendly as in other cities. Rav Kulefsky took it upon himself to drive his wife to the grocery store each week and to any other stores she had to shop at. He did this happily and graciously. Many talmidim, as well as other Baltimore residents, remember seeing Rav Kulefsky sitting in his car (which did not have air conditioning for many years) in the parking lot of the local supermarket, learning from a huge pile of sefarim as he calmly waited for his wife to complete her purchases. Some took advantage of the chance to talk to him in learning right then and there in the parking lot. At times, he even gave oral semichah tests while waiting in the car. If circumstances warranted, it was not unusual to meet him in the store on his own.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the person who began a competing store against his landlord, Rav Zilberstein (Upiryo Matok Devarim Page 133) wrote that there is a clear understanding an Umdenah, that a person does not want to lease his property to somebody who will compete against him and affect his business. Therefore, if the new grocery does affect the business of the landlord, the landlord is allowed to break the lease.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of the birth of our dear grandson
Gideon Y'shaya Loeb.

May his parents raise him to Torah, to Chupah and to maasim tovim and to be a source of much nachas to his entire family.

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