



Get and Give

Rabbi Yosef Dovid Rothbart, Rabbinic Administrator

בא אל פרעה כי אני הכבדתי את לבו ואת לב עבדיו
(שמות פרק י פסוק א)

The altar was built. The roads to *Yerushalayim* were blocked. Yeravam was offering up incense on his altar when the Navi Iddo arrived. “*Mizbeach Mizbeach*,” the Navi began. “A son will be born to the house of Dovid and his name will be Yoshiyahu. He will kill the false priests of this place and human bones will be burned on you. As a sign that this will come to pass, the altar will split and the ashes will spill off the altar!” Yeravam was not happy that the Navi was interrupting his service with such dire predictions. He stretched his arm out towards Iddo, but it became paralyzed and he could not bring it back. And then... the altar broke and the ashes spilled off.

Although his hand had been able to move even while defying *Hashem*, after his attempted assault it lost capabilities. This was a tangible display of the attribute of *Hashem*, מי קל כמוד. Rav Moshe Kordevero explains that this attribute demonstrates that our Creator overlooks iniquity in a manner that is incomprehensible to our finite mind. Every movement that a person makes requires divine assistance. The hand that reached towards the emissary of *Hashem* froze midway. Yet, earlier when Yeravam offered up his incense and channeled this energy to rebel against the One who provided it, it was overlooked and the assistance did not cease.

In *Mitzrayim* as well this attribute was evident. בא אל פרעה כי אני הכבדתי את לבו – Come to *Paraoth* for I have hardened his heart. The Sefas Emes explains that *Hashem*

was highlighting this attribute. Go to *Paraoth* and you will see My greatness. Despite My absolute mastery of all creations, I have hardened the heart of the Egyptian monarch and enabled him to disregard My instructions and speak disrespectfully towards Me.

Accordingly, this is something that also must be told over when relating the miraculous exodus. ולמען תספר באזני בך וכן בך (שם, ב). For each Jewish person is to be reminded of this attribute and strive to emulate it.

Indeed, this is the prayer of every Jewish person by the conclusion of his silent entreaty. – ולמקללי נפשי תדום. – And to those who curse me, my soul should be silent and not retaliate. – ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה – and my soul should be like dirt to everyone. This is not merely a prayer for humbleness. The *Reishis Chochma* (Gate of Humbleness) brings from his rebbi, Rav Shlomo Alkebetz, that this is a *tefilla* to emulate the attribute of *מי קל כמוד*. We beseech *Hashem* that we should be like dirt. Dirt is something that gets trampled upon. People walk all over it and make holes in it. It is disregarded and pushed out of houses. And yet despite the blatant disregard of dirt, it ignores these insults and reciprocates by producing food for those who snub it. It takes a seed and brings forth wheat, fruits and vegetables for the very people who try to eliminate it.

And this is what we ask for; to be like dirt and not to merely ignore the taunts and derisions of people, but to be so unaffected that we are able to embrace the person who at that very moment is belittling us and still give to him in a warm and caring manner. By doing this, we emulate our Creator.

Your First Choice

After spending the *Yomim Noraim* with Rabbi Dov Ber, an unmarried *chasid* entered the room of the Maggid of Mezritch to take his leave. He complained to his rebbe that because of lack of finances he was struggling to find a wife. No one was suggesting any ideas for him.

"Go *I'shalom*," the *Magid* encouraged him. "And the first marriage proposal to come to you – accept it."

So the *chasid* left in a much happier mood. He was confident that his quest would finally conclude. He had a plan and was excited to see how it would develop.

On the way he stopped off at a small inn for the night. That particular inn which the *chasid* chose, was a hangout for a group of friends who spent their time drinking, playing cards and engaging in silly jokes. The *chasid* tried to avoid this group and picked a table to the side where he was able to stay to himself.

But it was a cold night and his table which was far from the fireplace did not afford much warmth. So he switched places moving to a table closer to the warm fire. This table was in proximity to the card game as well. And although he tried not to be conspicuous, he was noticed by the others. A few of the guys put down their cards and sauntered over to join him by his table.

"Hello, Hello," they began in a friendly tone. "Who are you? What is your name, and where are you from? How did you end up in our inn? Do you want to join our game?"

"Thank you," the *chasid* began unsure of where the conversation was going to go. "I am on my way home. I had travelled to the Maggid of Mezritch to be with him over the *Yomim Tovim*. I appreciate your offer, but I really prefer just to relax after travelling all day."

"Why did you go to the *Magid*? What did you want from him?" The others paused their game now and turned to listen in, curious about the exchange that was taking place at the next table.

A little bewildered by the direct question, the *chasid* told his interrogators everything. "I asked the rebbe to beseech *Hashem* to help me meet my intended wife. He told me that I would have to agree to the first match I was offered."

That was all this group needed to hear. The card game was now long forgotten as one of the gang jumped up to the delight of the others and screamed, "Really? Great! I have an unbelievable idea for you. My sister is a fresh divorcee and has a hundred rubles of dowry - and she's even here! If you agree, we can close the match immediately!"

The truth was that this prankster did not have a divorced sister.

If he did he would never allow her to marry someone who looked like the man who had entered their inn that night. He was excited by the simple faith of the *chasid* and wanted to exploit it. The only young woman who was there that night was the daughter of the wealthy innkeeper who was absent from his home at the time.

The *chasid* did not wait a moment before answering. The *Magid* instructed him to accept the first proposal. He did not say that it depends on who is proposing and whose "sister" is being offered. "I agree," was his calm response.

By now the rest of the people were smirking and laughing. Only the *chasid* seemed composed and serious. The "*shadchan*" ran into the kitchen and rushed over to the innkeeper's daughter. Excitedly, he explained to the girl the prank that they were doing and asked her to play the role of the intended wife. He encouraged claiming that it would be excellent for the inn business, as many drinks would be sold to the many guests at this auspicious celebration. In her innocence, she agreed. She washed her face and walked out to the room where the guests waited for her expectantly and was greeted with loud cheers and applause.

In honour of the engagement of the new couple the gang ordered a vodka and through their giggles and laughter, they wished the newly engaged couple a "*I'chaim*" and *hatzlacha* on their new life together.

But the celebrations did not stop here. "A wedding!" one of them called out. "Why don't we arrange the wedding ceremony right away? We can have a great party!"

"But none of us know how to write a *kesuba* and officiate the wedding ceremony." There was only so far they would go. But the *chasid* did know, and volunteered immediately to write both the *kesuba* and the ceremony.

Hearing this, they began to howl in laughter. They took a white tablecloth, tied it to four broomsticks and held it over the couple's head as a *chupa*. The *chasid* wrote the *kesuba* and then married the giggling young woman as his legal wife *בנות משה* *השנייה*.

By the first dance things began to get wild. The effects of the alcohol could be seen and the gang began to mock the newly married man. The taunts became more severe and they even began to hit the *chasan*. Seeing the state of things, he fled and spent the night in the hut of one of the gentiles in the village. In the morning he dared to approach the inn door nervously. He heard one of the servants saying, "Here comes the father of the bride!" and he entered.

To be continued...

How Can H.I.T. Help You?

Do you own a property management business that employs a superintendent who responds to calls on Shabbos or Yom Tov? Such an arrangement can involve chillul Shabbos.

To book a consultation or to find out more information please call (416) 535-8008 or email info@halachainstitute.com



Questions from the H.I.T. HOTLINE

Is it permitted to lend money without proof?

The *Gemara (Baba Metziya 75b)* brings from Rav Yehuda in the name of Rav that anyone who has money and lends it without witnesses, transgresses the prohibition of placing a stumbling block in front of the blind. By lending without proof he is giving the borrower the opportunity to entertain the thought of not repaying the loan. Many *poskim* therefore wonder why this is done.

The Erech Shai argues that the requirement to lend with proof only applies to “someone who has money” as Rav said. Only a person who is fiscally able to lend out consistently must ask for proof of each loan. However, a person who lends out infrequently need not lend with witnesses or with a contract. He explains this based on the following *halachic* presumption. A person who owes someone money does not have the audacity to deny this debt (*Kesubos 18a*). Therefore, a person who lends out only once in a while does not need to be concerned that the borrower will deny the debt. But if he is constantly lending to others, he will eventually lend money to a person who will act in an audacious manner and deny the loan ever took place. Consequently, he must ask everyone who approaches him for a loan to provide a contract or witnesses in order to be protected from this eventuality. Practically though, the Erech Shai concludes that this cannot be relied upon for the Shulchan Aruch and Rambam both quote this *halacha* without adding “someone who has money”.

The Divrei Malkiel (IV, 136) brings a position that lending without witnesses or a contract is not forbidden even on a rabbinic level. Rather, being particular about not doing so is a “*midas chassidus*” – an act of piety. Based on this, he argues that this is why many people choose to lend without asking for proof of the loan. However, the Sdei Chemed brings other *poskim* who disagree with this assertion and write that the implication of the Shulchan Aruch is that lending without proof is forbidden and not doing so is not merely a pious act.

Another possible reason which is given by the Aruch Hashulchan (*Choshen Mishpat 70, 1*) why people are not strict about this is that they trust that the borrower will not forget or deny that he borrowed money.

Practically, the Shulchan Aruch (*Choshen Mishpat 70, 1*) writes that a person should lend in front of witnesses or with a promissory note. Throughout the generations *poskim* have questioned the practice of not doing so and have given various reasons. Despite these reasons, a person should be careful about this. A head-check could function as a promissory note for this purpose. A person who is not careful about doing so has whom to rely upon.

**To have your question
answered call
H.I.T. at (416) 535-8008
or email
info@halachainstitute.com**





In this week's Parsha the Mitzriyim were struck with the makkah of locust. Here are some interesting facts demonstrating how destructive this could be.

- A desert locust swarm can be 460 square miles in size and pack between 40 and 80 million locusts into less than half a square mile.
- Each locust can eat its weight in plants each day, so a swarm of such size would eat 423 million pounds of plants every day.
- Locusts eat pretty much anything: grains, fruits, vegetables, leaves. When people throw blankets over their crops to protect them, the locusts simply eat the blankets. Locusts have even been known to swarm inside houses and eat the furniture!

RIDDLE



When is a person subject to death by *beis din* when he eats kosher meat but not if he had eaten non-kosher meat?

Please send in your answers to yrothbart@halachainstitute.com. Any correct answer that is received by Tuesday will be entered into a raffle to win a \$10 gift certificate to Miriam's Judaica.

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE: Who is obligated to wear *tefillin* on *Shabbos* (according to one opinion)?

ANSWER: The *Sefer Pachad Yitzchok* writes that according to the *Smag* (*mitzva 3*) *tefillin* is not worn on *Shabbos* as there are two *איותות* (*Shabbos* and *mila*) besides *tefillin*. If a person could not have a *bris mila*, he would be required to wear *tefillin* on *Shabbos*.

(אכן עיי' בתרומה"ד סי' קח)

Another possible answer is that a person who finds *tefillin* in a public domain may wear the *tefillin* in order to move them to a place where they will be protected and removed from disgrace. (301, 42)

Thank you to all those who sent in an answer to last week's riddle.

WINNER OF LAST WEEK'S PRIZE: Shalom Noach Rosenstein

Under the leadership of the Rabbonim of H.I.T.
Rabbi Yacov Felder, Chairman

HALACHA LINE • RABBINIC MEDIATION • ESTATE PLANNING • ERUVIN •
CRITICAL CARE QUESTIONS • HALACHIC BUSINESS CONSULTATION •
HALACHIC DOCUMENT DRAFTING • AND MORE

Halacha Institute of Toronto
info@halachainstitute.ca | (416) 535-8008



**HALACHA
INSTITUTE**
of Toronto