

Spared From the Fire

Special thanks to revach.net for the story

One day, a fire began on the street where the home of the Chofetz Chaim was located. The fire was spreading quickly, and all the houses in its path were in danger of being burned down. All of the houses' residents began frantically gathering their most valuable possessions, and prepared to vacate their houses. The Chofetz Chaim, who was already an elderly man, sat in his chair amidst the turmoil, deep in thought. His family was puzzled by his behavior, but the Chofetz Chaim continued to sit and think with an anxious expression on his face, ignoring the tumult around him.

Fifteen minutes passed, and the Chofetz Chaim suddenly breathed a sigh of relief. He quickly arose from his chair, and walked toward the corner of his house, where a high shelf was situated. He stood on a chair to reach it, and took down a small watch. He then gathered his other possessions, and joined his family in vacating the house.

When his family questioned him, he clarified the reason for his mysterious behavior. "A yeshivah bochur had asked me to keep his watch in my house. Baruch Hashem, I found it; there's a specific mitzvah to guard anything given to one for safekeeping."

His family and students were astounded at his answer. During a time of crisis, when most people react with fear and panic, the Chofetz Chaim's first instinct was to save a yeshivah bochur's watch! ♦



Halacha Challenge



A Shavuos Prayer

by Shlomo Epshteyn
reviewed by Rav Chaim Malinowitz

On erev Shavuos, Ya'akov was busy writing something on a piece of paper. "What are you writing?" asked his brother, Shimon. "I am writing a personal tefilla that I'd like to say on Shavuos," answered Ya'akov and showed the paper to Levi. The text said, "Ribono Shel Olam - today is yom matan Torah. Please help me in limud haTorah this year - to learn, to teach, to remember and to fulfill the words of Your Torah with joy." "But," wondered

Shimon, "I thought we're not allowed to make personal requests when we daven on Shabbos and Yom Tov?"

Question

Can Yaakov say this tefilla on Shavuos?

Answer

Yes.

Explanation

A Braisa¹ states: "It is forbidden to ask for personal needs on Shabbos." For this reason, explains the Magen Avraham², when we pray Ma'ariv on motzei Shabbos (or Yom Tov), we first "leave" Shabbos by saying "ato chonantanu" in the 4th blessing of the Amida, and only then continue with the weekday nusach of the Amida, where we ask for our needs. ↻

This week's issue is dedicated

by the Reznik family, in memory of Riva bas Dovid
by Yochanan Moran, in memory of Mrs. Ahuva (Libbie) Rubinoff

Menucha sponsors



Place your company's
logo here

Halacha Challenge

↶ Cont. from page 1

Why did Chaza"l make such a decree? The Midrash Tanchuma³ explains that making personal requests may lead a person to emotional distress. Feeling distress on Shabbos is a problem, since, as the Midrash puts it, "Shabbos was given to the Jewish people for sanctity, pleasure, and tranquilly; and not for pain." Hence, to avoid pain and distress, Chaza"l prohibited us from making personal requests on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

Does this decree apply to any kind of personal request? The Magen Avraham⁴ rules that this prohibition is only applicable when there is an imminent problem (e.g., issues of health, parnasa, etc., R"l) Otherwise, personal requests are permitted. The Mishna Berura⁵ brings this ruling of the Magen Avraham. The Shulchan Aruch HaRav⁶ holds that the prohibition of making personal requests applies only to physical needs. Hence, according to the Shulchan Aruch HaRav, one may ask for the granting of personal spiritual needs⁷.

Consequently, based on these *halachic* authorities, Yaakov may ask on Shavous for *siyata d'shemaya* in his learning. ♦

1. גמרא ירושלמי שבת פרק טו הלכה ג 2. מג"א סימן רצד ס"ק א 3. מדרש תנחומא פרשת וירא סימן א 4. מג"א סימן רפח ס"ק יא 5. מ"ב סימן רפח ס"ק כב 6. שו"ע הרב סימן רפח ס"ק ח 7. פסקי תשובה סימן רפח ס"ק ח

Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers



Zeidy, why did Hashem hold a mountain over our heads at *matan Torah*?



One of the explanations is as follows, kids. The day of *matan Torah* was a wedding day between Hashem and Am Yisroel. The mountain over our heads was our *chuppah**.

By the way, you know, on a wedding day, if a *kallah* asks for a present from her *chasan*, will he not give it to her? Of course, he will give her that present with much love. Since Am Yisroel is like a *kallah* on Shavous, we should use the opportunity and ask Hashem for special presents in the areas of *ruchnius*.

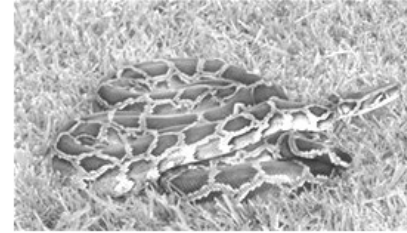
[*Nesivos Shalom, Shavous, "Hag Ha'atzeres"]

Wonders of Creation

Pythons

by Alex Isaacson

Special thanks to the Israel App for the help with the content



Pythons are non-venomous snakes that can be found in Africa, Australia, and Asia. Some especially large pythons have even been known to attack and eat small alligators and deer. Female pythons will generally wrap their bodies around their eggs to incubate them until they hatch. So that the embryos develop in a healthy fashion, Hashem gave pythons a special skill of twitching their muscles in a specific way to raise their temperature.

We've all heard the story of Adam and Chava, in which a snake tempts humans to sin against Hashem and is subsequently punished with the loss of its legs. It is one of the most famous curses in Scripture, but the Midrash reminds us that even the curse of Hashem contains a blessing. With the loss of its legs, the snake has gained greater agility and ability to worm its way more easily through holes and crevices. Snakes in captivity are known for being incredible escape artists, and this is a direct result of their lack of legs. ♦

Riddles & Parsha Qs

Riddle



Answer to last issue's Riddle:

In the daytime, I was revealed, but when they slept, I was concealed. They lived just fine without me, but without me, some would have died. I am neither food nor medicine, but be careful, with me, you can't say a lie! I love parshas Nasso, it does mention me, but to find me there you need a good eye. Who am I?

(*Riddle*: ...One day, after *Matan Torah*, during the first years of Klal Yisroel's encampment in the midbar, Zev became thirsty for water. He went around looking for the Miriam's well. Zev went around the whole Machane Yisroel, visiting each *Degel* and each *Shevet* inside each *Degel*. He even searched in Machane Levi'im. He then went outside Machane Yisroel just to see in case the well happened to be there. The well was nowhere to be found. Where was the well?)

The Midrash tells us that Miriam's well was located inside the courtyard of the Mishkan. [Midrash Bamidbar Rabba]