

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE “BLOOD TEST”

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Akiva was a patient in a hospital in Eretz Yisrael. He was in desperate need of a blood transfusion, and without it his life was at risk. The hospital did not know what to do, because none of the blood they had available was a match. Akiva had needed several transfusions in the past, and his immune system had developed antibodies to multiple red-cell antigens. The blood bank tested unit after unit, but every available unit was crossmatch-incompatible.

Eventually, one nurse pointed out that there was another patient in the hospital named Nachum who had a compatible blood type. The doctors approached Nachum, but he refused to consent to donating his blood. The reason for his refusal was unclear, but he would not agree. Blood donation often comes with forms and screening questions that ask for medical history and personal information. He might be fine with a simple



RELEASE THE LEASE

Malbim explains that Hashem could not take His people from Egypt without the expressed permission of Pharaoh. The reason for this was because our people were destined to be in servitude for 400 years, and at that time they had only served 210 years. This means Pharaoh still had 190 years left on his lease. One goal of the plagues was to convince Pharaoh to release his lease willingly. Malbim explains that until the final plague of the firstborn, Pharaoh could not be convinced. However, somehow with that final plague Pharaoh capitulated and granted them complete release. He told Moshe that they did not need to return after their three-day reprieve.

What changed with this final plague? How did it clinch Pharaoh's concession when the other plagues failed?

Let us climb into Pharaoh's psyche and make sense of what is occurring.

Moshe and Aaron enter the scene and present a new idea. There is a G-d of Israel who claims to have authority over me and wants my permission to release the people from servitude. This G-d of Israel certainly has incredible powers, much more than any of my wise men have ever encountered, and nevertheless, their G-d needs my permission to release them. It is clear to me that as powerful as He may be, He still needs my permission. Although it is hard to continuously refuse granting permission, it nevertheless feels good to see how powerful I am. In other words, the more intense the plagues become, it demonstrates my strength as being, in some way, even more than His; He cannot redeem His people without my permission!

To further underscore my strength over their G-d is that whenever Moshe communicates with HaShem he needs to leave the capital city. (Our Sages explain this phenomenon due to the high level of tumah in the city; it was not appropriate for HaShem to bring His Presence there. However, we are now in Pharaoh's psyche.)

lab draw, but he refused to participate in the blood donation system.

Meanwhile, Akiva's condition continued to deteriorate, and he became sicker and sicker. Finally, one nurse thought: Nachum, this patient who has the matching blood type, may actually have a mitzvah, or perhaps even an obligation, to donate his blood. If he does not donate, Akiva may die. We know that one is permitted to violate almost any mitzvah, even stealing or lying, in order to save a life.

The question is this: would it be permissible to approach Nachum, the patient who refused, and tell him that they are simply performing routine blood tests, and then use that blood to save Akiva's life? In other words, would the staff be allowed to use a small amount of deception to take Nachum's blood without his knowledge in order to save Akiva?

On the one hand, you could argue that you cannot take someone's blood without their permission; that seems deeply wrong. On the other hand, if they do not do so, Akiva will die, and we know that one is allowed to violate almost any aveirah, except for the three cardinal sins, to save a life. Also, perhaps it is a mitzva for Nachum to donate his blood, so they would simply be helping him do a mitzva?

What do you think?

See Chashukei Chemed, Bava Kama, p. 346.

Certain that Moshe did not receive a communication from HaShem because their G-d cannot enter the capital city. Moshe was clearly bluffing. Until now Moshe truly represented this mighty G-d, but now Moshe was calling his bluff, pretending to have received a warning from HaShem when in reality he did not.

There was more to Pharaoh's confidence. He knew that the Zodiac and the astrological signs are the true governors of this world. He also knew that Egypt was under the sign of Aries, the sign of the month of Nissan, and therefore, no matter how powerful their G-d may be, on the night of the 15th of Nissan Egypt was invincible. Moshe was clearly bluffing.

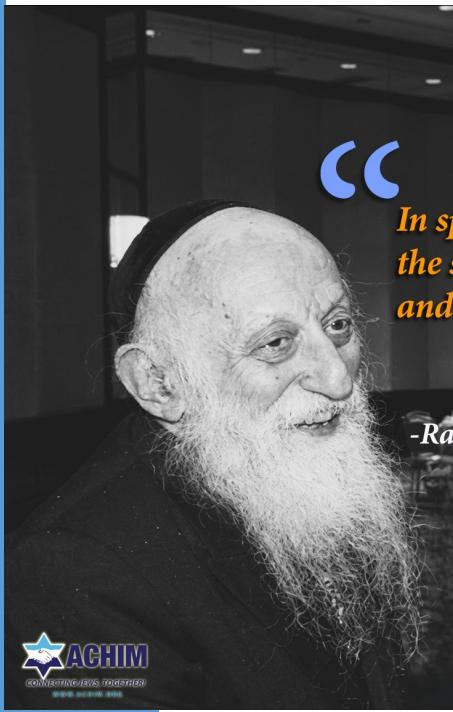
When midnight arrived in Egypt and the firstborn began dying, Pharaoh suddenly realized that HaShem is, in fact, the G-d of everything, even of the Zodiac. His entire belief structure collapsed, and he ran to Moshe with a completely open heart and instructed him to take HaShem's people out; he no longer wished to refuse HaShem's request.

This was the scene which our people were shown as they began their new relationship with the Almighty: keep your eyes open, sooner or later the truth will become apparent.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind

MITZVA MEME



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*In spirituality
the searching is the finding
and the pursuit is the achievement*

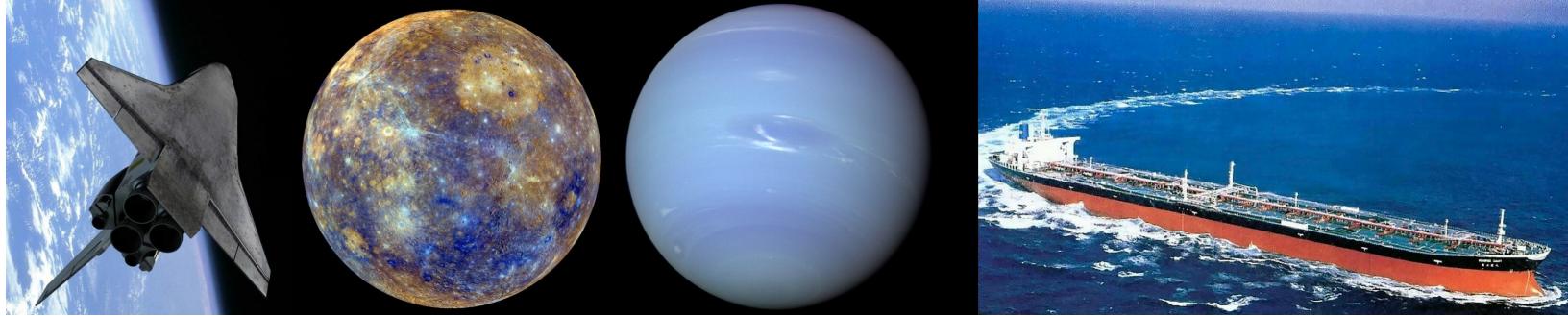
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-Rabbi Abraham Twerski

Pharaoh's line of thought leads him to the following plan. He discovered a pattern in the delivery of the plagues. The first two came with a warning and the third without warning. The next two came with a warning and the sixth without warning. The next two again came with a warning and the ninth without warning. This means that the next plague will be preceded by a warning. He therefore ordered Moshe to come to the palace and told him that permission was not given to leave Egypt, and that the next time Moshe returned to the palace he would be killed.

Pharaoh felt confident that the only way a warning could be delivered would be if Moshe left the city to receive the communication from HaShem and return. Pharaoh therefore ordered Moshe that he would never return back to the palace, and Moshe would have no opportunity to warn him. The plan did not work because right there, in the presence of Pharaoh, Moshe received a communication from HaShem in which he received the warning to give Pharaoh of the next plague. In fact, Moshe gave him exact details as to when the plague was going to occur, at midnight of the 15th of Nissan.

Given Pharaoh's understanding of what was happening, he was cer-



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

SPACESHIP EARTH PART TWO

Last week we learned that the Earth is moving at about 67,000 miles per hour as it travels around the Sun. One can ask: if Earth is moving at 67,000 mph, and a manned spaceship can only go about 25,000 mph, how can a spaceship ever catch up to Earth and land on it?

The answer is that this works because of relative speed, which is the same reason you do not fall behind when you jump inside a moving airplane. When a spaceship sits on the launchpad, it is already moving at 67,000 mph around the Sun, just like Earth. When the rocket launches, it does not lose that 67,000 mph, it keeps it. The engines simply add extra speed on top of it. Then, when the ship wants to land, it does not have to "chase" Earth from zero. It is already traveling alongside Earth around the Sun, and it just has to adjust its local speed and direction so it can fall back into the atmosphere and come down safely. Think of it like two cars driving side by side on the highway at 67 miles per hour. One car, the "spaceship," speeds up slightly to pass, then slows down to merge back in. It never had to go from 0 to 67, it just adjusted a little relative to the other car.

Because a spaceship already has Earth's speed and then adds more speed on top of it, this leads us to a mind-bending fact connected to motion. Einstein showed that motion and gravity affect time. Astronauts on the International Space Station are moving fast, so time passes just a little differently for them. After one year in orbit, an astronaut has aged about 0.005 seconds less than someone who stayed on Earth, because of the combined effects of speed and gravity. If you take this idea to an extreme and travel at 90% of the speed of light for ten years, life on your spaceship would feel completely normal. You would eat, sleep, and watch the clock tick by for what feels like exactly ten years, and you would arrive back home just ten years older. However, back on Earth, the situation would be very different because your extreme speed caused your time to slow down relative to everyone you left behind. While only a decade passed for you, your family would have waited about twenty-three years for your return. In a very real way, you would have traveled to the future, skipping over thirteen years of history, and returning to find that everyone you know has aged much more than you have.

We learned that the Earth moves at 67,000 mph. What about the other planets? Which one is fastest, and which one is slowest? The closer a planet is to the Sun, the faster it must move to stay in orbit. The fastest planet is Mercury (pictured second from left), because it is closest to the Sun, and it travels at about 107,000 mph, almost twice Earth's speed. The slowest major planet is Neptune (pictured third from left), which is far from the Sun and moves at about 12,000 mph. Because its orbit is so large, one year on Neptune lasts about 165 Earth years.

Is there a way for us to feel or perceive the Earth moving? Even though you cannot feel Earth's speed directly, people

have found clever ways to measure Earth's motion in real life. One example is the Coriolis effect, which is sometimes called the "sniper's curve." The easiest way to understand it is to imagine two children sitting on a spinning merry-go-round, one at the center and one at the edge. If the child at the center tries to throw a ball to the child at the edge, they will miss. The ball flies in a straight line, but while the ball is in the air, the child at the edge moves because the merry-go-round spins them to a new position. To the people on the merry-go-round, it looks like the ball magically curved sideways, but to someone watching from above, the ball went straight and the people moved. This same idea applies to snipers. When a sniper fires a bullet at a target 1,000 yards away, the bullet is in the air for a few seconds. During that flight time, the Earth rotates the target slightly to the east. The bullet travels in a straight line, but because the target moved, the sniper has to aim where the target will be, not where it is. In the Northern Hemisphere, shots deflect to the right, and in the Southern Hemisphere, they deflect to the left.

Another real effect is the Eutrus effect, which can be understood as a "speeding car" phenomenon. Imagine you are driving a car over a rounded hill. If you drive slowly, you feel heavy and stuck to the seat. If you drive very fast over the top, you feel your stomach drop and you lift slightly out of your seat. You effectively "weigh" less because your speed is trying to launch you off the hill. Earth is a spinning ball, which acts like that rounded hill. The spin creates a centrifugal effect that is constantly trying to fling us outward, like water spinning off a wet tire. Gravity holds us down, but that outward pull makes us slightly lighter than we would be if Earth were not spinning. Earth spins to the east at about 1,000 mph at the equator. If you fly east at 500 mph, you are adding to that speed, so the outward effect gets stronger and gravity feels slightly weaker, meaning you weigh a little less. If you fly west at 500 mph, you are fighting the rotation, so the outward effect gets weaker and gravity has a slightly stronger grip on you, meaning you weigh a little more.

To see how amazing this can get, consider the Seawise Giant, (pictured right) one of the heaviest ships ever built. Because it was so massive, the numbers for the Eutrus effect become surprisingly large. When the Seawise Giant steamed east, near the equator, with Earth's rotation, the outward effect increased, and the ship pressed down into the ocean with about 80 tonnes (177,000 pounds) less force than if it were stationary. If the captain turned around and sailed west, against Earth's rotation, the ship effectively gained about 80 tonnes (177,000 pounds) of downward force. That means the total difference between eastbound and westbound would be about 160 tonnes (354,000 pounds). It is humbling to realize that the Earth's rotation can make a difference on the scale of something as heavy as a blue whale, or the Statue of Liberty.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

FOR THE FIRST FIFTY FEET, DRIVE SLOWLY, AND THEN DRIVE AS USUAL

On one occasion, Rav Dov Landau (pictured, bottom) related the following story:

The Chazon Ish (pictured, top) once went to a bris milah where he was given the honor of being sandak. After the bris, a large crowd gathered around him seeking berachos and advice. The Chazon Ish heard what each person wanted, and when he finished, he turned to go.

When he got into the car, he told the driver, "For the first fifty feet, drive slowly, and then drive as usual."

The driver did not understand the request.

The Chazon Ish explained: "If you drive at regular speed as soon as I get into the car, it will look like I'm running away from the tzibbur. Then the people who spoke to me will feel badly for delaying me, so drive slowly."

Rav Dov Landau concluded, "Everyone should act like that toward others. When a person meets us on the street and talks to us, we must be careful not to make him feel that we are uninterested in the conversation or that his words are a burden."

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the person who asked for other rooms to be painted so that they match, Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein (Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama p. 342) concludes with a tzaruch iyun and presents both sides. Some opinions say you should only have to paint one room, while others say he would indeed have to paint the other rooms to make everything match. But he said that, according to the view that you would have to paint the other rooms, after the job is done the painter would have the right to say, "Before, you had an old paint job. Now you have a new paint job. Please pay me for the new paint job."

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to memory of the mother of Elana Malachevsky

Nesya bas Shlomo

May this dedication bring an aliyah to her neshama
by Boris and Elana Malachevsky



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