

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### CAN I, IF HE CAN'T?

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about the importance of honoring our parents.

This leads us to the following true story.

Chaim's father was very severely wounded in one of Israel's wars. Due to his injuries, he lost both of his arms. Chaim would come to his father's apartment daily to care for him and ensure he ate and was taken care of.

One day Chaim slept over at his father's apartment and for some reason was unable to go to shul for Shachris.



### THE CLOSEST ONE CAN GET

In this week's Parsha HaShem gave Moshe the two Tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were etched. The purpose of splitting the Ten Commandments into two Tablets was to distinguish between the first five which deal with man's relationship with HaShem and the second five which deal with man's relationship with his fellow man.

The obvious question is how the fifth commandment, "Honor your parents", relates to man's responsibility to HaShem. Should it not belong to those responsibilities that man has to his fellow man?

The Jew is required to love HaShem and to fear Him. This can be a daunting mission. How does one love an abstract Being? The human condition is such that our understanding is limited to the scope of our experience. This is the reason why most folks have difficulty contemplating a fourth dimension. If one does not experience something they have difficulty relating to it. Although we know HaShem is here and most powerful, nevertheless, it is difficult to relate to Him.

The closest human experience to experiencing HaShem is the ex-

He planned to daven in his father's home. He took out his tefillin to begin davening but hesitated. His father was unable to put on tefillin because of his injuries. Would it be disrespectful to put on tefillin in front of his father if his father is unable to do it himself?

Chaim thought to himself that we have a similar precedent when it comes to wearing tzitzis in a cemetery. One is not permitted to wear their tzitzis outside of his clothing at a cemetery. It is seen as mocking the dead, who cannot put on tzitzes and cannot do the mitzvah. Perhaps Chaim is not allowed to do the mitzvah of tefillin in front of his father, who cannot do it?

But on the other hand, perhaps one can argue that the father gets joy when his son performs the mitzvah. Therefore, perhaps it is not a problem at all to put on tefillin in front of him.

This question was brought before Rav Zilberstein.

What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Shemos 152



perience we have with our parents. Parents are the ones who brought the child into existence, sustained him when he was an absolutely helpless creature for the first many years of his life. They are the ones who worried, who cared, who fed, who prayed for and worked for him as he was growing up. Even when the child is fully grown and is now fully independent, the parents continue thinking about him and hoping for his best. Certainly, parents are not HaShem, but they are the closest one can get.

The reason the Torah places "Honor your parents" on the first Tablet is because the parent-child relationship is the paradigm for man by which he will

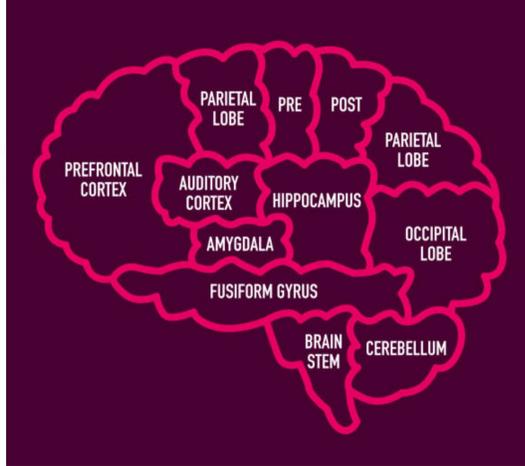
be able to relate to HaShem. If a child is raised in an environment where his parents are honored and revered, then he will have the necessary tools by which he will be able to love, honor and revere HaShem.

It is no wonder that the Talmud teaches us that HaShem equates the honor of parents to the honor due Him.

The mitzvah to honor one's parents is a responsibility that lies not only on the child but it lies equally on the parents to create the environment where the child can respect and revere the parents

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE BRAIN

Over the past two weeks, we learned about our amazing eyes and ears. Let's now complete this mini-series on the human body with an exploration of our amazing brain.

Science knows a lot about the brain, but scientists acknowledge that there is much more that we do not know about the brain than we currently do know. In recent years, however, our knowledge of the brain has exploded. In fact, most of what we know about the brain has been discovered in the last 15 years.

The brain is the most complex organ in the human body and is responsible for controlling thought, emotion, and behavior. The brain is composed of billions of neurons that communicate with each other through electrical and chemical signals. These signals are sent and received through synapses, which are the connections between neurons. Every time you recall a memory or have a new thought, you create a new connection in the brain.

The human brain is estimated to contain around 100 billion neurons, each one connected to up to 10,000 other neurons. Therefore the brain has more than one quadrillion (1,000,000,000,000,000) (1 million billion) connections or synapses. A piece of brain tissue the size of a grain of sand contains 100,000 neurons and 1 billion synapses.

What is the advantage of having so many synapses? This gives the brain its speed. It has a faster delivery of intercellular signals and allows them to receive and integrate lots of different information and then relay this information to other neurons. In fact, people who are smart are people who have the ability to have information move around the brain faster. The smarter the person, the faster information zips around the brain.

With all the news about advanced AI these days, you might be surprised to learn that in every way that it's been tested, the brain is still far superior to the most powerful computers in existence. Your brain's storage capacity is considered virtually unlimited. It doesn't get "used up" like disk space in your computer. Scientists have said that the brain is capable of storing more information than the entire internet.

The human brain is capable of  $10^{16}$  (10 with 16 zeroes!) processes per second, which makes it far more powerful than any existing computer.

Your brain is hyper-efficient, running on just 20 watts of power. A home computer, by contrast, needs 65–250 W. For a computer to simulate the 100 trillion connections of the human brain in real time, it would need 12 gigawatts – around 600 million times the power!

One of the world's fastest supercomputers, called Summit, weighs 340 tons. It can make 200 quadrillion calculations per second. That is far less than the  $10^{16}$  that the human brain can do. And the brain only weighs 3 pounds! Imagine what a human brain weighing 340 tons could do!

The brain can create an estimated 10,000 - 60,000 different thoughts per day. The average brain generates 48.6 thoughts per minute.

The largest brain of any animal is that of the sperm whale. It weighs about 20 pounds. But although the human brain is smaller, the human brain is larger in relation to body size than any other creature's brain.

The brain is extremely efficient. However, the brain is the most energy-hungry organ in the body, consuming as much as 20 percent of the body's energy, even though it only accounts for 2% of the body's total weight. The brain also uses 20% of the oxygen and blood in the body. The average human brain has about 400 miles of blood vessels.

The brain is made up of approximately 75% water. The water is essential for its performance. It takes only 2% dehydration to affect your attention, memory, and other cognitive skills.

Teenage brains are not fully formed. It is not until about the age of 25 that the human brain reaches full maturity.

It's actually a myth that you only use 10 percent of your brain. We actually use all of it. We're even using more than 10 percent when we sleep.

Here is a fascinating thing. Although pain is processed in the brain, it has no pain receptors and feels no pain. This explains how brain surgery can be performed while the patient is awake, with no pain or discomfort. Headache pain feels like it starts in the brain but, in fact, is caused by sensations from nearby skin, joints, sinuses, blood vessels, or muscles.

According to research performed at Cambridge University, the order of letters in a written word doesn't matter much to the brain. As long as the first and last letters are in the right spot, your brain can rearrange the letters to form words as fast as you can read. This is why most people can easily make sense of this jumble of letters:

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttair in waht oredr the lttetrs in a wrod are, the olny iprmoentn tihng is taht the frist and lsat lttter be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.

## THE SHAAGAS ARGEH'S OPINION CARRIES GREAT WEIGHT IN HEAVEN

By Torah law, an animal that is mortally wounded either through birth defect, disease or injury is deemed a treifah and may not be eaten. There is a question whether a particular lung defect renders the animal a treifah; Beis Yosef (R' Yosef Karo, author of Shulchan Aruch) rules that it does not, while Rama (R' Moshe Isserles) disagrees. Ashkenazic Jews generally follow the opinion of Rama when he and Beis Yosef disagree. However, with regard to this disagreement, one Ashkenazic gaon ruled according to Beis Yosef. He was Rabbi Aryeh Leib Gunzberg, legendary author of Sha'agas Aryeh and one of the eighteenth century's greatest Torah geniuses. His p'sak (ruling) in this matter caused quite a stir among Ashkenazic Jews. Nevertheless, the Jews of Volozhin, where the Shaagas Aryeh served as Rav, faithfully followed his opinion. Years later, when the Shaagas Aryeh's famed disciple, Rabbi Chaim Volozhiner, became Rav of Volozhin, he continued to follow his rebbe's ruling.

In Volozhin, there once lived a man who suffered from a lung disorder identical to that which was the subject of the disagreement between the Beis Yosef and Rama. The man decided that his condition would benefit from the pure and rarified air of Switzerland and he began making plans to move his family there.

One night, the man's father, who had died some years before, appeared to him in a dream. "My son, I have come to warn you not to leave Volozhin. The illness from which you suffer is rendered life threatening by the Rama — and his ruling is followed by almost the entire European Jewry, including the Jewish community of Switzerland. "it is only in Volozhin that the Rama's opinion is not followed, for it is there that the great Sha'agas Aryeh served as Rav, and it is he who ruled that this illness is not terminal. The Shaagas Argeh's opinion carries great weight in Heaven. Just as the animals in Volozhin with this defect are deemed kosher and not mortally ill, so too, you are deemed capable of living many more years. "However, if you move elsewhere, where the Sha'agas Argeh's ruling is not accepted, you will die within the year."

The man canceled his plans to move. He was never cured of his lung disorder, but he lived into his eighties.

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**Pictured:** The Swiss Alps



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the tefillin found by a shady merchant, Rabbi Zilberstein wrote that the tefillin can be presumed to be stolen, and therefore he was allowed to do what he did to rescue the tefillin from someone who does not own it. Regarding the question of whether they can be worn because we don't know who wrote them, Rav Zilberstein answered that if it is checked by an expert and they are found to be kosher, we can assume that a Jew made the tefillin. Regarding whether the tefillin can be kept, Rav Zilberstein wrote that he should put notices in the local shuls that tefillin were found, and in the meantime, the finder can use the tefillin.

L'Zecher Nishmas my Father, HaRav Meir Shraga B'R Eliyahu.  
My Mother, HaRabanis Fraida Miriam bas HaRav Elozer Beinish  
My Brother, R' Eliyahu Yosef Ben HaRav Meir Shraga  
My Aunt, Moras Laya Bracha bas HaRav Elozer Beinish  
My cousin, HaRabanis Aviva bas HaRav Shmuel Yaakov

May their Neshamos have an Aliya  
and may they be "Gutta Beters" for us & Gantz K'llal Yisroel.  
Yossie & Chaya Krieger

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