



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



SEDER FOOD FOR THE PLANE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This Shabbos is Pesach. This leads us to the following true story.

There was a kosher catering company in Eretz Yisrael which supplied kosher food to airlines that had flights to Israel.

One year a European airline asked the kosher caterer if they could prepare meals for a Pesach seder for the plane. They had a group of Jewish customers who were flying on Pesach night. They weren't religious but they didn't want to miss out on having the traditional seder foods while they



SIMPLICITY IS LIBERTY

This Friday night every Jewish family that proudly calls themselves Jewish will sit around their dinner table surrounded by family and especially children to tell the story of our people. At this Seder they will tell how we were once slaves to Pharaoh and to Egypt until HaShem liberated us and we became His people for the rest of eternity. The centerpiece of this Seder will be the Matzo.

The Matzo is referred to as the poor bread. It seems to represent our period of slavery. However, when eating the Matzo we must do so in a reclining position. If one forgets to recline while eating the Matzo he must repeat eating it again. The reclining position is clearly representative of the liberation side of the equation. How do we reconcile the apparent contradictory role of the Matzo? Does it represent servitude or does it represent freedom?

The Maharal explains this with a simple concept. Simplicity defines Liberty. Let us use two types of can openers to illustrate this concept.

The first type is the 'electromagnetic motion detector super duper automatic can opener' which can sense the proximity of the can and identifies where the rim is, it then grabs the can, clamps it down, the motor then turns on and opens the can automatically. The second can opener is the old fashioned kind, into which the person places the can manually, clamps it in place manually and turns the knob manually.

Certainly, we identify the former as the rich man's can opener. However, in spite of

were flying. The airline asked if the catering company would prepare trays of matzah, kosher wine, maror and charoses, and Hagadas for these customers.

Chaim, the owner of the catering company, was unsure what to do. He brought this question to Rav Elyashiv. Should he prepare seder meals for the airplane?

On one hand, even though the people flying on the plane would be mechallel Yom tov, at least they would get the mitzvah of eating matzah, maror and daled kosos.

But on the other had, perhaps it was condoning and encouraging flying in a plane on Pesach night.

What do you think. Should the company prepare seder night airline food?

If you have a true mitzvah dilemma that you would like us to share, please email it to rabbiweiner@gmail.com



There is nothing noble about being superior to some other man. The true nobility is in being superior to your previous self.



its high level of sophistication it is nonetheless dependent on so many factors. The extra features that it offers makes the entire mechanism dependent on extraneous factors other than itself. The poor man's opener, on the other hand, in spite of it being so simple, is not dependent on anything but the basic laws of physics. It is a can opener dependent on nothing else.

When we address the issue of liberation, simplicity is the key. Although wealth does not necessarily restrain its owner, it nevertheless, is common for the owner of wealth to define himself by his fortune. When that happens he becomes tied up in his wealth and finds himself restrained. His wealth can actually bring about his demise. It was not uncommon to find the poor folks escaping to foreign lands in times of war while the wealthy could not escape because they were tied down. If one defines themselves by their wealth they are no different than the super

duper can opener and liberation becomes unattainable.

On the night of the Seder we celebrate HaShem's liberating us. We are, in fact, wealthy people. Look what at our wealth; we have the Torah, the path for successful living. We live for a purpose. We have a destiny. It is no wonder why we behave on this night as wealthy people. However, the centerpiece of the Seder must be the bread we eat. The bread we eat is the defining symbol of how we define our lives. That bread must be simple. It cannot be dependent on other factors.

If our income affords us to buy a high performance vehicle we do not lose our liberation. But when we must have that vehicle to be happy and satisfied with ourselves then we have lost our freedom. We are dependent on material and are reduced to that level.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and a successful Pesach.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

LIGHT LIKE AN EAGLE

PICTURED: Clockwise, An eagle carrying a rabbit and a fox, the giant nest of a bald eagle, a Eurasian Griffon, The eyes of an eagle

Last week we learned about the speed of the deer. The week before that, we learned about the power of a lion. This week, let's continue with the series and explore the "flight of an eagle".

Eagles are some of most powerful birds. Due to the size and power of many eagle species, they are ranked at the top of the food chain as apex predators in the avian world. Some species of eagles even feed on large prey like monkeys and sloths. Eagles are also some of the largest birds of prey. For example the white-tailed eagle has a wingspan of 7 ft 2 in wide. (The wandering albatross has the longest wingspan of any living bird, with a wingspan of up to 11 ft 6 in)

Our sages teach that we should be "light like an eagle". Rav Shlomo Ganzfreid in the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (Chapter One) says that being light like an eagle refers to the power to pull our eyes away from the powerful "gravity" of forbidden sights. A forbidden picture or image may pull us down, and we should be light like an eagle and lift up despite the weight pulling us down.

It is remarkable that our Sages used the eagle for this metaphor. The eagle is actually the strongest bird in the world and can fly despite being pulled down by a great load. For example, the bald eagle is noted for flying with the heaviest load verified to be carried by any flying bird. An eagle can fly carrying a 15 lb deer fawn! In addition, the eagle is considered by many to be the fastest flying bird. For example, when diving after prey, a Golden Eagle can reach 200 mph! (Many say the golden eagle is faster than the peregrine falcon, another very fast bird.)

It is also fascinating that our sages use the eagle as a metaphor for proper sight. Sight is the strongest of all eagle senses and they can detect prey as far as two miles away. Their eyes are very large, can take up almost 50% of the head, and can be twice as long as a human eye! An eagle's vision is 4-5 times better than that of a human. Eagles can see five basic colors as opposed to our three. Eagle eyesight can also detect UV light. Cones are light detecting cells that are sensitive to color. One of the reasons that eagles have better vision than humans is because their retinas, a layer at the back of the eyeball, have more cones. We have 200,000 cones per square millimeter, whereas eagles have one million.

Rav Ovadia M'Bartenura offers another approach. He says that being "light like an eagle" refers to the mandate to achieving great heights in Torah. Eagles can fly to great height of about 10,000 feet. That is nearly two miles high. This is a great height, but there are other birds, like a mallard duck, that fly higher.

However some authorities are of the opinion that the word "nesher" can also include the Eurasian griffon. The Eurasian Griffon (also known as a Griffon Vulture) is a native bird of Eretz Yisrael. The Rüppell's griffon vulture has been recorded to fly higher than any other bird and reaches an incredible height of 37,000 feet! That is more than 7 miles high, around the height that a commercial aircraft typically flies.

According to this, when our sages are saying to be "light as a Nesher", they may be saying that we should reach the highest heights that Hashem's creatures can reach.

When the Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, they are described as leaving "on the wings of eagles"

Rashi (Shemos 19,4) explains that this means that just as the eagle carries his young on his wings to protect it from the arrows of a hunter, also Hashem protected us from the arrows of the Egyptians. Most birds do not carry birds on their wings. But in fact eagles have been observed to do this:

"...reliable observers have actually seen a parent bird let its young rest for a moment on the feathered back - especially when there was no other roosting place in sight." (V.C. Holmgren, Bird Walk Through The Bible [New York: Dover Publications 1988] p. 98)

Eagles also build the largest bird's nest. For example bald eagles build enormous nests high in the treetops. If the nest serves them well during the breeding season, they'll keep using it year after year. And, like all homeowners, they can't resist the thought of renovating and adding to their abode. Every year, they'll spruce it up with a whopping foot or two of new material. On average, bald eagle nests are 2-4 feet deep and 4-5 feet wide. But one pair of eagles near St. Petersburg, Florida, earned the Guinness World Record for largest bird's nest: 20 feet deep and 9.5 feet wide. The nest weighed over two tons!

Thank you Hashem for blessing Your creatures with such incredible skills

WE WILL PERMIT THE USE OF KITNIYOS THIS YEAR

Our Rabbanim and communal leaders throughout the generations took special care to meet the needs of the impoverished — sometimes even more than their own needs.

During the 19th century, Rav Shmuel Mohilever was very involved in helping Jews who had been drafted into the anti-semitic Russian army. He arranged for a kosher kitchen to supply their needs and would invite many of them to his home for Sabbaths and Festivals.

Once, before Pesach, the community head came to him and said, "Rebbe, we're suffering from a bad drought this year. Prices have been going up by the day and people simply cannot afford to pay the costs involved in buying the Pesach needs of the soldiers."

R' Shmuel answered, "Let us assemble the rabbinical court and permit the use of kitniyos (legumes forbidden on Pesach according to Ashkenazic custom) this year."

"Rebbe, " said the man, "you have taken a load off my shoulders. I was trying to see how we could feed the soldiers during Pesach, but now that you have permitted the use of kitniyos I can rest easier."

"Jewish soldiers?" replied R' Shmuel in indignation. "That I will not allow. You, I and all the members of the community will eat kitniyos this Pesach. But as far as the soldiers are concerned, we must feed them only the best, just as in any other year."

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THE ANSWER

Regarding the question of the voucher used for others, Rav Zilberstein said he was allowed to use it for others.

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