

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE HAPPY ACCIDENT

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Sarah, a young woman, caught a serious virus that caused swelling in her brain. Because of this illness, she developed a condition called post-viral aphasia. The virus damaged the part of her brain that controls speech.

Sarah could still understand what people were saying to her, but she could not form words herself. She simply could not speak. It was a heartbreaking situation.

Some time later, unrelated to the virus, Chaim was driving his car. He was not paying enough attention and accidentally hit Sarah. She was thrown into the air and landed hard on the ground. She broke several bones and hit her head and was rushed to the hospital.

Over time, she slowly recovered from her broken bones and other injuries. However, during her recovery something remarkable happened.



EVERYTHING NEW

HaShem's primary expectation from us as a people and as individuals is to fill our temporal transitory lives on this world with kedusha. That is to say that all our actions and involvement with the material world should be driven by the intent of doing so for the sake of HaShem. When any action is taken in this world the intent and motivation behind it defines that action. If, for example, one studies Torah with the intent of acquiring a respectable name then that activity is defined by that intent; it is a self-serving endeavor. If one is motivated to take a job and earn a livelihood to be able to raise his family for the sake of HaShem, that job is defined as such; it is a service of HaShem endeavor.

The reason HaShem lowered our neshamos into this material world was specifically for this reason. He wanted us to fill the world with sanctity and purpose. Kedusha which translates to sanctity derives from l'kadesh which translates to designate someone or something for a specific purpose. Hence, when we give purpose to the world, namely, to elevate it heavenward we bring sanctity and purpose to this otherwise purposeless world.

When Shlomo Hamelech writes that there is nothing new under the sun he means that in the material world, which is referred to as being under the sun, everything that occurs is cyclical. The astronomical rotations and revolutions go round and round. The eco

Hashem gave the human brain an amazing ability to adapt and reorganize itself after an injury. Sometimes when one part of the brain is damaged, other parts can learn to take over the lost function.

In Sarah's case, the virus had damaged the speech centers on the left side of her brain. While her brain was healing from the accident, it began to reorganize. Other areas of the brain gradually started doing the work of producing speech.

New pathways formed that allowed her brain to send speech signals again.

Little by little, Sarah began to speak.

Before the accident, she could not talk at all. After her recovery, she could.

Chaim felt terrible about what he had done. He knew that his careless driving had caused Sarah serious injuries. After she recovered, he wanted to offer to pay her compensation for the harm he caused.

But an unusual question came up.

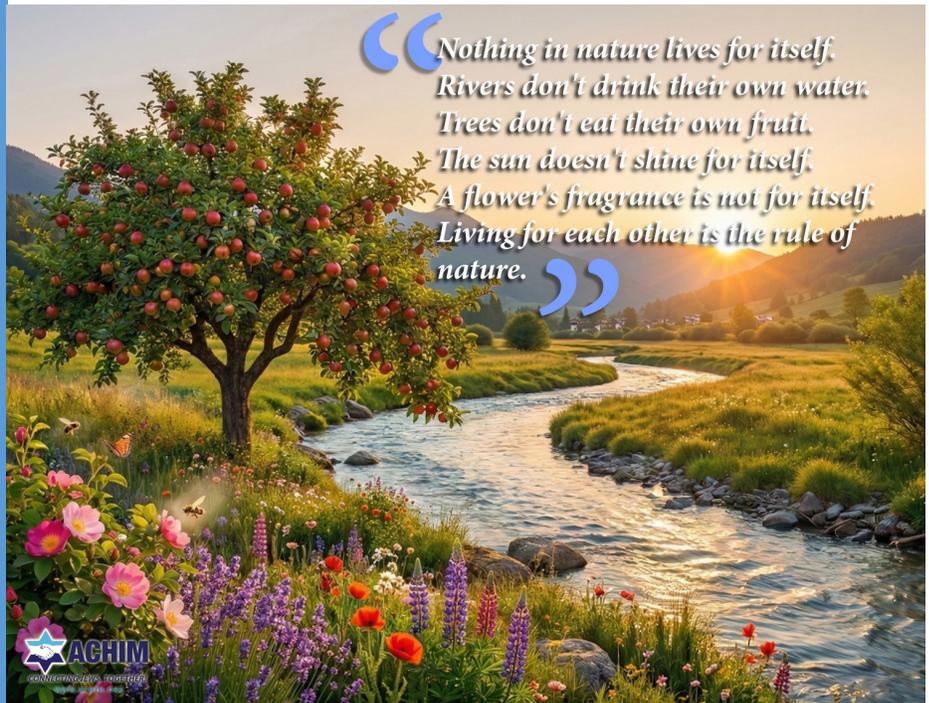
Does Chaim actually have to pay?

On one hand, he clearly caused real damage. Sarah suffered broken bones, pain, and a dangerous head injury because of his mistake.

On the other hand, during the recovery from that very injury, Sarah's brain reorganized and she regained her ability to speak, something she had lost before the accident. In a certain way, Chaim permanently helped Sarah.

What do you think? Should Chaim be required to pay for the harm he caused? Or could someone argue that, in the end, the accident actually left Sarah better off than she was before?

See Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 416



“Nothing in nature lives for itself.
Rivers don't drink their own water.
Trees don't eat their own fruit.
The sun doesn't shine for itself.
A flower's fragrance is not for itself.
Living for each other is the rule of nature.”

system with its food chain goes round and round. The water systems of the world go round and round. The world continues perpetually to go round and round without ever getting anywhere. There is no destination, it is a truly fascinating wonderful world but simply purposeless. There is nothing new that is generated.

When HaShem took us out from Egypt to be His nation with the purpose of infusing meaning and purpose into the world, He gave us our very first command; “This Chodesh is yours!” Chodesh means month but it derives from chidush which means new and fresh. Chidush implies something that was not here before, something that was just brought into existence. Something that breathes a new breath of life is chadush. HaShem endowed

us with the ability to bring life and meaning into this cyclical world where nothing has any inherent destiny. We are the creators of sanctity and meaning.

Each year, as we enter the month of Nissan, we are reinvigorated with that same messages of **החודש הזה לכם** . We are the creators of destiny. As HaShem continues guiding our people and governing history we daven that we will finally arrive at the point where the world will be truly renewed and every being will breathe a new life of meaning and sanctity.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE SECRET OF THE V FORMATION

When we look up at the sky during the fall or spring, we are often greeted by the iconic sight of a V-shaped formation of geese or pelicans. To many, it is simply a sign of the changing seasons. However, if we look closer, we find a brilliant display of cooperative design and complex physics that reveals a profound wisdom in Hashem's world. We will see that this V formation is a high-performance aerodynamic machine where every individual contributes to the survival of the whole flock.

The primary reason migratory birds fly in formation is remarkably practical: they are trying to conserve massive amounts of energy. Long-distance migration is one of the most physically demanding feats in the animal kingdom, and birds have been given a way to "surf" through the sky to make the journey possible.

To understand how this works, we have to look at how air moves around a wing. As a bird flaps, it creates a disturbance in the air. The air rolls off the wingtips, creating miniature, spinning tornadoes of air known as wingtip vortices. Inside these vortices, there are two distinct zones of air movement: downwash and upwash.

Directly behind the bird, the air is pushed downward (downwash), which would force a trailing bird toward the ground. However, just outside the wingtip, the air is pushed upward (upwash). By positioning themselves precisely in this upwash, trailing birds receive "free lift." They are essentially utilizing the energy expended by the bird in front of them to stay airborne with less effort.

The physiological benefits of this arrangement are actually measurable. Scientists have outfitted pelicans with heart rate monitors and discovered that birds flying in formation have significantly lower heart rates than those flying solo, even when traveling at the exact same speed.

This energy conservation leads to a staggering increase in efficiency. Research shows that by utilizing the upwash of their flock mates, a group of birds can fly up to 70% further than a single bird could using the same amount of energy. This is often the difference between a successful migration and exhaustion.

Furthermore, birds in a V-formation exhibit incredible coordination. They don't just sit in the right spot; they time their flapping perfectly. To maximize the lift, they flap "in phase" with the bird ahead. If they happen to drift into the negative downwash zone, they will immediately adjust and flap "out of phase" to minimize the downward push. This level of synchronization requires a sensory awareness that far exceeds human capability.

While we commonly refer to this as a "V-formation," it is rarely a perfect, symmetrical shape. If you watch a flock for several minutes, you will see it fluctuate into a "J" shape, a checkmark, or a waving squiggle. This lack of perfection is actually a sign of the birds' constant adaptation to a changing environment.

The aerodynamic "sweet spot" is never static. It shifts based on the size of the leading bird, the speed of its flapping, and the unpredictable nature of wind currents. To stay in the zone of maximum lift, birds must make micro-adjustments every second. Additionally, flocks are comprised of individuals of different ages, strengths, and sizes. A side of the flock with stronger,

more experienced birds might stretch out longer than the other, creating an asymmetrical look.

The most significant cause of shape-shifting, however, is leadership swapping. The bird at the very front—the "point" of the V—receives zero aerodynamic benefit. It faces the full force of the headwind and must do the hardest work. To prevent any one bird from becoming dangerously exhausted, the flock constantly rotates the leader. When a leader tires, they drop back into the "arm" of the V to rest in the upwash, and another bird steps up to take the brunt of the wind. This constant shuffling keeps the formation in a state of flux.

How do the birds know exactly where to fly to catch that invisible "sweet spot"? Hashem gave birds highly specialized, microscopic feathers called filoplumes. These feathers act like built-in sensory nodes distributed across their wings and bodies. Filoplumes allow a bird to literally feel the tiny shifts in air pressure and the movement of wind currents rolling off the wings of the bird ahead. This physical feedback is processed almost instantly, enabling the bird to make split-second, unconscious adjustments to its flight path and rhythm. They are flying by "feel," using the atmosphere itself as a map.

The V-shape also serves a vital social and defensive purpose. Because each bird flies slightly to the side and behind the one in front, every single member of the flock has an unobstructed line of sight. No one's forward vision is blocked by the tail feathers of a neighbor. This clear view allows the entire flock to keep their eyes on the leader's navigation and to instantly detect incoming predators. If the leader veers left to avoid a hawk or to follow a landmark, the visual cue ripples down the line in fractions of a second. The flock moves almost like a single, giant organism rather than a collection of individuals.

Perhaps the most moving aspect of the flock is its inherent sense of shared burden and compassion. The flock operates as a unified community, prioritizing the survival of the group over the convenience of the individual. The strongest adults take the lead to break the wind, while younger, older, or weaker birds are naturally positioned further back in the formation, where the energy savings are the greatest.

This support system remains even when things go wrong. If a bird becomes sick or wounded and falls out of the formation, the flock does not simply leave it behind. Two other birds will naturally drop out of the formation and follow the struggling bird down to the ground. They will stay with the vulnerable bird to provide protection from predators until it is healthy enough to fly again or until it passes away. Only then will the "guards" launch back into the sky, joining another passing flock to complete their own journey.

Even the noise of a flock, the loud honking of geese, is part of this cooperative design. Research suggests that the birds in the rear use these vocalizations to communicate with and encourage the birds at the front. By "honking," they urge the leaders to maintain their speed and stamina despite the heavy resistance they face. It is a literal cheerleading section from the back of the line.

The flight of a flock is a masterclass in physics, sensory biology, and selfless cooperation.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

“REBBI... IS THAT YOU?”

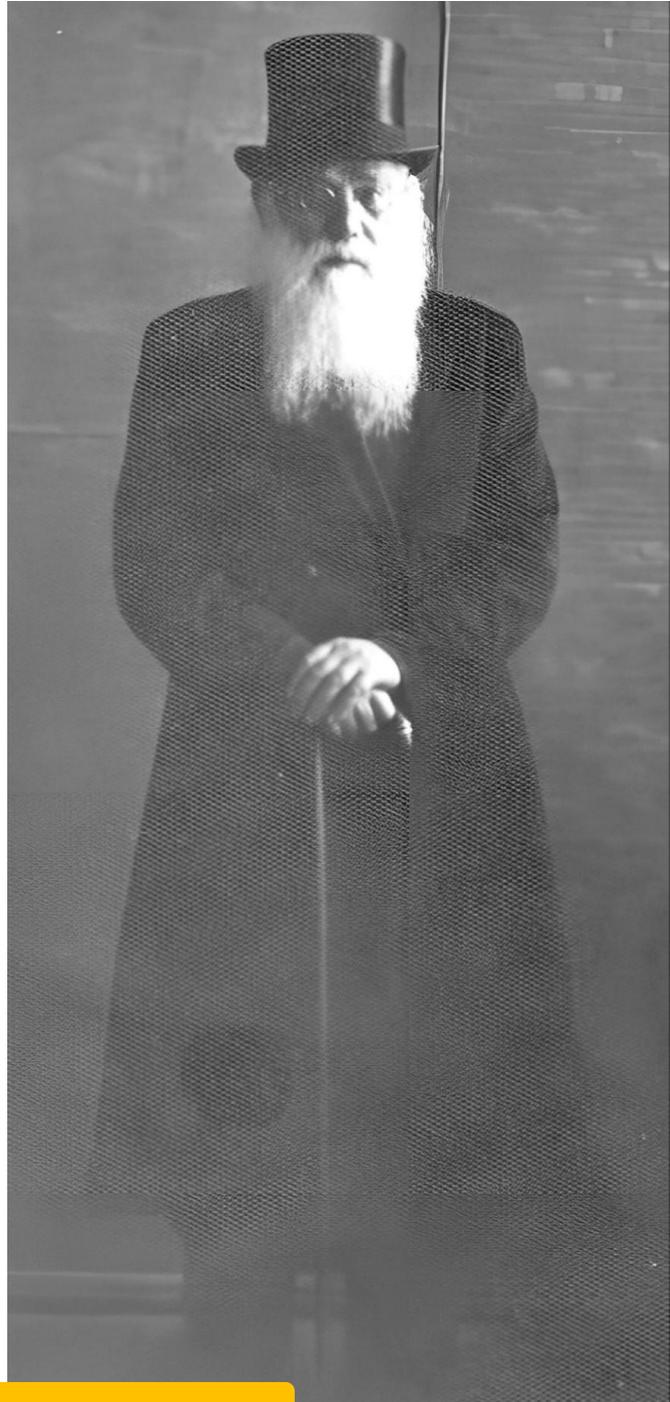
The bachurim were sitting in the beis midrash learning when the first shots rang out, causing them to freeze in place. For months, rumors of the Bolshevik Revolution and distant reports of fighting had reached their small village, but the conflict had always seemed like something happening far beyond the horizon. Inside the walls of the yeshivah, they had continued their studies under the guidance of the great Rav Shimon Shkop, finding that as long as their Gemaras were open, the outside world felt safely distant. Now, however, the war had arrived with the sound of gunfire that was far too close. As fear crept across their faces, the fragile calm they had maintained through the discussions of Abaye and Rava was shattered by the sound of marching boots and shouted orders. They had all heard the terrible stories of young men being taken by soldiers and sent to distant places, never to be heard from again. Many of these students were barely more than children who had come only to learn Torah, never imagining they would stand face to face with an army.

Suddenly, the door burst open and armed soldiers stormed into the room, shouting for everyone to line up against the wall. The bachurim instinctively turned toward their rebbi, who quietly closed his Gemara and motioned for them to comply. As they formed a line, Rav Shimon stood at the front; though he was not physically imposing, his steady presence brought a measure of calm to his terrified students. The soldiers raised their rifles as the commanding officer stepped forward, but before any violence could occur, Rav Shimon spoke in a steady voice, telling the officer they were prepared to comply with their requirements. Instead of responding with an order, the officer simply stared at Rav Shimon, studying his face as if searching a distant memory. To everyone's surprise, he finally asked almost hesitantly, “Rebbi... is that you?”

Though Rav Shimon was puzzled and did not recognize the man, the soldier slowly removed his military cap and ordered his men to lower their weapons. He explained that years earlier, he had come to Telshe to take an entrance exam for the yeshivah where Rav Shimon had been a teacher. While walking between buildings, Rav Shimon had noticed a button was missing from the young man's coat. Despite the student's insistence that it didn't matter, Rav Shimon had brought him to his home so his wife could sew a new button onto the garment, noting that it was vital to be able to stay warm during the cold winter. That simple act of kindness stayed with the man through the years, even after he was drafted into the army and his life took a different direction. He told the frightened bachurim how fortunate they were to have such a rebbi before ordering his soldiers to leave. Moments later, they marched away, leaving the village untouched.

While we cannot control what becomes of any person we meet, we can control how we treat them; sometimes, a single quiet act of chesed can end up saving an entire world.

Based on A Touch Of Warmth By Rabbi Yechiel Spero



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the funeral, Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein (Chashukei Chemed Nedarim page 343) wrote that it would not be permitted to exhume the body. However, regarding the second idea, he said that if this would prevent a major argument within the family, it would be considered a merit, a zchus for the soul of the deceased, to take a manikin wrap it in tachrichim, and hold another “Levaya.” This should only be done if extreme care is taken to ensure that the family does not discover what was under the tachrichim.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in memory of Morris Tulchinsky

משה בן יעקב
On his 13th yahrzeit

By his loving family Menashe and Bracha Efron



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