



## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### RESPECT TO THE KING

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, Moshe is sent to speak to Paroh and ask him to free the Jewish people. Our Sages teach (see Rashi Shemos 6,13) that Moshe was commanded to speak to Paroh in a respectful way. Moshe was commanded to show respect to the Malchus, to the Kingship, even though Paroh was a very wicked person.

This leads us to the following true story.

Yair was a businessman. He lived in Eretz Yisrael, but traveled often to Jordan for business. Jordan is one of the few Arab countries that has a peace accord with Israel.

One day Yair was in Jordan and bought something in an open market. The vendor handed Yair the change. The change included a bill worth 50 Jordanian Dinar. All of a sudden, there was a strong gust of wind, and the bill flew out of Yair's hand. The 50 Dinar bill was being blown down the street. Yair raced after it, as he didn't want to waste his money. Finally, to prevent the bill from blowing any further, he stuck his foot out and put his foot on the 50 Dinar bill. After stopping it with his foot, he bent down and picked up the bill, and put it in his pocket. Yair



### STRONG AS AN OX

As we begin the Book of Shemos we are immediately introduced to our first exile, the Egyptian exile. What was the purpose of this exile? If it was to prepare us to be the nation chosen by HaShem, how did it accomplish that?

As one looks at the survival of the Jewish people throughout the past 2,000 years living on foreign lands, dispersed throughout the world, with no central capital, it is astonishing. In every century the winds of change blow across the continents. Changes in forms of government, changes in worldview, changes of religious adherence, changes of economies and so on. Through all these tumultuous storms our tiny people, dispersed throughout the world remain steadfast, attached to HaShem and to His Torah. This is an outstanding testimony to the strength of our commitment and the incredible stubbornness that our people possess.

This strength and stubbornness is the reason HaShem chose us to carry His Presence in this world. HaShem wanted a nation that would endure every possible challenge that would present itself. Just as the Torah is eternal, so would the nation that carries her need to be eternal.

The problem is that this very quality gives cause for concern how such a nation would be able to subject themselves to the yoke of their mission. One would expect a nation with these qualities to be independent and not subject themselves to some other entity.

This was the purpose of the Egyptian exile. Our nation developed from a family of seventy into the nation of Israel under the subjugation of Egyptian slav-

turned around to go back to his hotel, but he was stopped by a frowning Jordanian police officer.

"What is the problem," Yair asked the officer. The police officer said, "You just broke the law." Yair was surprised. "What do you mean, sir?" The officer said, "You broke the law. You showed disrespect to our king, King Hussein. King Hussein's face is on the 50 Dinar bill and it is a crime in Jordan to show disrespect to our king by stepping on a bill that has the king's face on it. Because this is your first time, we will let off with just a fine. You now must pay a 1000 Dinar fine. If you are ever caught stepping on a bill again, you will be jailed.

Without any other recourse, Yair paid the fine. He never made that mistake again. He was not going to step on a Jordanian bill again and show disrespect.

A while after that happened, Yair was back in Eretz Yisrael. He was holding a sefer, and in the sefer he had a photocopy of a page of Gemara. All of a sudden, there was a strong burst of wind and the page of Gemara flew out of his sefer and began to tumble down the street. Yair had a strong flashback to his incident in Jordan. He ran after the page, and his impulse was to step on the page of Gemara to prevent it from tumbling down the street further. He felt that if he didn't step on it, it might fall into a curb gutter and get lost forever. As Yair was about to step on the Gemara page, he had the following thought.

He knew that he would not step on a bill in Jordan, because it would disrespect the Jordanian king. Why should he treat HaShem any differently? Perhaps he should not step on the Gemara to show respect to Hashem. If he would not step on a Jordanian bill, but he would step on the Gemara maybe he would be showing Hashem less respect than the king of Jordan.

We are not sure what Yair did in practice at the moment, but he brought this question to Rav Zilberstein.

What do you think? If Yair would not step on a Jordanian bill, would he be allowed to step on a page of Gemara if that would be showing Hashem less respect than he would show for a human king?

See Upiryo Matok Shemos page 87

youth will be unable to carry it when he grows big and strong, so too, Man. If he does not carry a yoke and does not learn to subject himself to a higher authority when he is young he will have difficulty doing so when he becomes older.

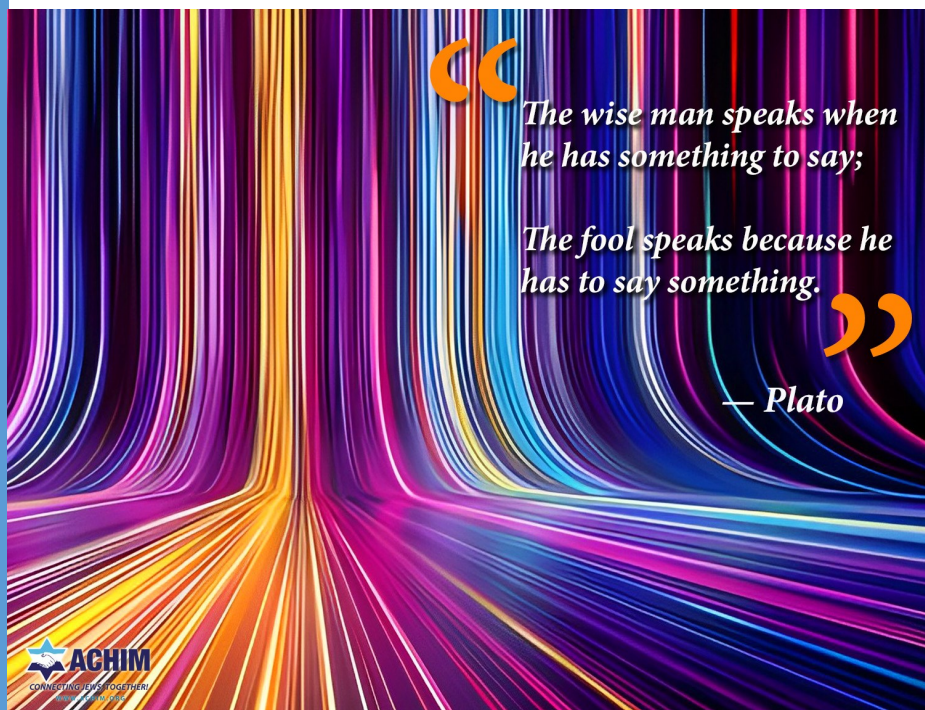
The Egyptian exile served the purpose of training us to wear a yoke so that we would be prepared to carry HaShem's yoke.

We can appreciate why in the third paragraph of the Shema we remind ourselves that HaShem took us out of Egypt. This is because in the first paragraph of Shema we accept upon ourselves the yoke of HaShem. In the second paragraph we accept upon ourselves the yoke of mitzvos. As long as we continue to remind ourselves that the Egyptian exile was to carry the yoke we will be able to carry out the first two paragraphs.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**

## MITZVA MEME



ery. With the exception of the tribe of Levi our entire nation was subjected to the yoke of slavery. This was the environment in which we sprouted from being a family to becoming a nation.

Let us take an analogy from the ox.

The strongest beast of burden is the ox. However, the only way to harness the ox to its plough or to its wagon is through the yoke that sits on the ox's head or neck. The way to train an ox to wear a yoke is only if the yoke is placed on it within the first few weeks after birth. Once the ox grows older without having worn a yoke it will reject the yoke and will be ineffective to carry its load.

We find Yirmiyahu compare Man to the ox as he writes in Eicha, "It is good for a man when he carries a yoke in his youth." Just as the ox who does not carry a yoke in its





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE AMAZING MARINE IGUANA

Imagine an animal that is hunted by a shark. The shark can hear its heart beating from up to 13 feet away. How can the animal hide? The animal has the ability to voluntarily stop its heart for as long as 45 minutes so that the shark cannot sense it, and the animal gets away. Does this sound impossible? Is this fantastic? No! Please meet the fascinating Marine Iguana.

The Marine Iguana is an extremely unique reptile. It is the only lizard that can live in the water. It only lives in the Galapagos Islands, a set of South American Islands to the left of Ecuador, Peru and Columbia. This lizard forages in the ocean for Algae which makes up its only diet.

Male marine iguanas can grow to about five feet long, while females are generally about 2 feet long. Marine iguanas live in coastal colonies that typically range from 20 to 500 animals, but sometimes more than 1,000.

Male marine iguanas are usually colored black. But during mating season, they turn rainbow colors. They turn into bright shades of blue, pink, green, and red to attract females. Once the mating season is over, they turn black again.

Its black color is an important design. The black color of the marine iguana helps it to absorb as much sunlight as possible. These cold-blooded reptiles get quite cold-blooded after a dive into the ocean; they lose a lot of their body heat and may only be around 50°F. They need to sunbathe to bring their body temperatures back up, but this slows them down and makes them very vulnerable. Their black color helps them absorb heat as fast as possible!

Marine iguanas have another distinctive visual feature. They often have what looks like a wig of white salt on their heads and neck. Why do they have this? Because they feed underwater, they ingest a large amount of saltwater. To prevent dehydration, they must expel salt without expelling water, so they have specialized glands that remove salt from their blood. They expel the salt by "blowing" it out of their noses. It looks a lot like a sneeze. Because of this method of removing salt, their heads and necks often become encrusted

with salt.

Why do Marine Iguanas spend so much time in the water? Marine iguanas forage almost exclusively on red and green algae. On one of the Galapagos islands, it has been estimated that almost 1,900 marine iguanas eat about 30 tons of algae per year. Their short noses, which are shorter than most lizards, make it easy to feed on algae.

In order to get their algae, Marine iguanas can dive as deep as 98 ft underwater and can spend up to one hour underwater. How can Marine iguanas stay underwater? Do they have gills like fish? No, they breathe air like us, but they can hold their breath for up to 60 minutes. That's pretty impressive. Most of us have trouble holding our breaths for 60 seconds. How do they do this? They have a special blood pigment that allows them to hold more oxygen, which is essential for long dives underwater. Also, as we mentioned above, they can slow their hearts down. When swimming, marine iguanas' heart rates drop to half of that on land. This helps them to stay beneath the sea for extended periods of time. Thus trick is also helpful in avoiding one of their main predators – sharks!

They have a very muscular and "flat" tail, unlike land lizards, which allows them to be very proficient swimmers. Their flattened tail is ideal for propelling them through the water, while their hands and feet hang limply at their sides. Even newly hatched marine iguanas are good swimmers.

Marine iguanas have another incredible ability. They can make themselves shrink in length and in overall size, in times of reduced food availability. For example, during El Niño climate events, they can make themselves shrink by as much as 20%. The now smaller iguanas require less food. Once their preferred algae return to high levels, they quickly return to their original size.

Aside from being powerful swimmers, marine iguanas are excellent climbers. They are able to scale flat, smooth cliffs that are nearly straight up. How wondrous is your creation, Hashem!



## "AS LONG AS THERE IS EVEN ONE JEW IN THE WORLD WHO DOESN'T HAVE FOOD TO EAT, I CAN'T LIVE THAT WAY"

Abraham Axelrod, the late deputy-mayor of Jerusalem, once related the following anecdote:

I once chanced to be standing near Rav Aryeh Levine during a funeral at the Sanhedria cemetery. After the grave was filled, he said to me with a smile "Many times people have tried to persuade me to move to larger, more comfortable living quarters; and I have refused. "Come and see", he continued, as he motioned to the grave. After his long life on earth is over, a man is brought from his home, to here.

For me, the move, the transition will not be hard, because between my room and here the contrast is not so very sharp.

But when a man has grown accustomed to living comfortably in a splendid home, how hard it will be for him at the end of his days to move his 'residence' to this small bit of space . . ."

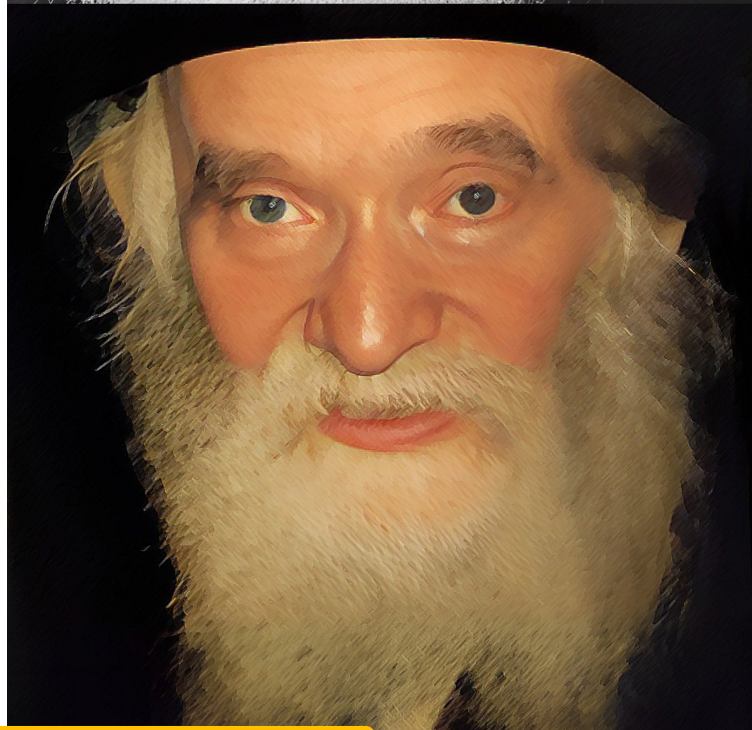
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The furnishings in Rav Aharon Kotler's apartment were the epitome of simplicity and austerity. The rabbi was the leader of the generation, the greatest Jewish leader of his time. The entire Jewish world in America and Israel was led by him. Yet his apartment was furnished with old chairs that didn't match. There was an old worn-out couch in another room. Rabbi Chaim Epstein said, "It is a pity we can no longer see his apartment; it would have been a lesson for generations."

So why didn't Rav Aharon buy new furniture? Rav Aharon said, "as long as there is even one Jew in the world who doesn't have food to eat, I can't live that way."

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**Pictured:** Top, Rav Arye Levine. Bottom, Rav Aharon Kotler



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the cat and the bird, Rav Zilberstein answered as follows. Since the domestic cat does not need to kill the bird to survive and can find food elsewhere, either from people, or garbage, etc, one should chase away the cat to show rachmanus on the bird. Rav Shimon Sofer even wrote that such a cat has a category of a "Rodef." However, if the prey was a pest, like a mouse, which can cause harm to people, then the cat should be allowed to kill it.

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

**Nesya bas Shlomo**

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by Boris and Elana Malachevsky

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