



## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### YOU CAN'T WORK FOR ME AND FOR HATZALA

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Donny, who had a job delivering meats for a butcher shop, was also a member of Hatzalah, a volunteer EMT service. One day, on Erev Yom Tov (the day before a Jewish holiday), as many people waited anxiously for their orders, Donny had just left to start his deliveries when he received an emergency call to help someone who had just been in a serious car accident nearby.

In the middle of his route, Donny pulled over and responded to the call. He was able to stabilize the injured person and stayed with them until the ambulance arrived. Once the paramedics took over, Donny returned to his truck. When he checked his phone, he saw several missed calls from his boss.



## PURITY OF INTENT

The Torah introduces Noach as a “man who was righteous and complete in his times.” The phrase ‘in his times’ seems to indicate that this description was based on the current ‘times’. The implication is that if Noach lived in some other ‘time’ this description would be inaccurate.

In explaining this verse Malbim notes the distinction between the quality of righteousness and the quality of completeness. The former describes Noach's worthiness in his interpersonal relationships. The manner in which he dealt with his friends and neighbors. He was interested in their welfare and respected their property and so on. The latter describes Noach's worthiness in his relationship with HaShem. Anything that Noach did for the sake of HaShem was done with complete and pure dedication; there was no other motive mixed in. Malbim explains how so often a person davens to HaShem or learns His Torah for motivations in addition to serving HaShem. He may be moved to build a name of honor for himself, or perhaps he has great financial gain. Even though he is also motivated by sincere interest in serving HaShem as well, nevertheless, the dedication is not purely for HaShem but is mixed.

As we mentioned earlier, the phrase ‘in his times’ indicates that in another period this description would be inaccurate. R' Nechemia (one of the Sages) interprets this verse to be saying that had Noach lived in the period of Moshe he would not have been such a great person. Therefore the Torah qualifies Noach's greatness as being limited to his living in such a degenerate period.

Regarding the quality of Noach's being righteous, that may be subject to comparison. In other words, compared to the people in his generation Noach was very righteous but had he lived in the period of Moshe his level of righteousness would be insignificant because everyone was righteous. However, regarding the quality of Noach's dedication being purely for HaShem and was never driven by any other motivation, how

Donny called his boss back, and the first thing his boss said was, "Where were you? I saw you on the GPS, and your truck was sitting idle! People need their deliveries, and they're getting anxious because it's getting late."

Donny explained, "There was an emergency. I'm an EMT, and I had to respond to the call."

His boss replied, "I'm sorry, but I can't have you doing emergency calls while on the clock. If you want to keep working with Hatzalah as an EMT, you can't continue working for me."

Donny felt it was unfair to be fired for his volunteer work with Hatzalah. It wasn't as if he had a choice; if someone needed help and he had the skills to save them, he was obligated to act. According to the Torah, saving a life is a sacred duty, and in a sense, he was "coerced" by his religious obligation to stop, even during work hours. How could Donny be fired for doing what was required of him?

But on the other hand, was the employer obligated to continue employing Donny if he could not be completely reliable to finish his deliveries on time?

They decided to bring the question to a Rav.

What do you think?

This is a question of an actual case and is not printed in any sefer.



would that change if he had been living in the period of Moshe? Complete dedication is complete no matter what you compare it with.

With his understanding of human nature, Malbim explains that for a person living in a period of wicked people, where the dominant culture goes against HaShem it is much easier to perform his service to HaShem with pure dedication to HaShem. This is because there is no other benefit to gain. Nobody will admire you or respect you for your acts of service to HaShem. Conversely, a person living in the period of Moshe where the dominant culture admires the service of HaShem and serving HaShem wins a person the admiration of his peers, it is very difficult to serve HaShem in complete dedication. Every act of service to HaShem wins the person much respect and admiration. To limit one's motivation in serving HaShem purely for the sake of HaShem is extremely challenging.

The Torah is teaching that as great as Noach was in his pure dedication to serve HaShem exclusively with no other motivation

tion, nevertheless, Noach would have been able to achieve this level in a period of Moshe.

This notion is articulated by the Rambam in his commentary to the Mishna at the very end of Makos. "From the principles of our faith we understand that when a person fulfills a mitzvah with perfect intent, namely, he has no other intention for doing this mitzvah, only to serve HaShem, he then merits life in the Olam Haba (World To Come)..."

So while we are so fortunate to be living in a society where serving HaShem is admired we must struggle to serve HaShem with complete purity.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### MOUNT ARARAT

This week's parsha discusses the mountains of Ararat, the place where Noah's teivah (ark) came to rest. Let's learn about the modern-day Mount Ararat.

Nestled at the crossroads of eastern Turkey, near the borders of Iran, Armenia, and Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan exclave, Mount Ararat stands as a beacon of natural beauty, historical significance, and enduring mystery.

The Torah refers to it as the "mountains of Ararat" because Mount Ararat is not a single peak but a group of mountains comprising two dormant volcanoes: Greater Ararat and Lesser Ararat. Greater Ararat, towering at 16,854 feet, is the highest peak in Turkey, while Lesser Ararat reaches a notable 12,782 feet. It is about half as high as Mt Everest which is 29,032 feet.

Although the volcanoes are dormant, Ararat's volcanic activity is part of relatively recent history. The last recorded eruption occurred in 1840, triggering a 7.4-magnitude earthquake that caused landslides and widespread destruction, tragically resulting in the loss of around 10,000 lives. Today, the volcanic cone is obscured, as the summit remains perpetually snow-capped.

Mount Ararat has spurred numerous expeditions in search of the teivah, especially following the discovery of the Ararat Anomaly in 1941—a peculiar object photographed on the mountain that fueled speculation. The Ararat Anomaly (**bottom right**) is an unusual geographical feature located on the northwest side of Mount Ararat's summit, visible from aerial and satellite imagery. It lies at about 15,500 feet along the snowline, making it difficult to access and study. The anomaly appears as a rectangular shape beneath snow and ice, sparking speculation that it could be part of Noah's Teivah. However, harsh conditions and restricted access to the area have limited direct investigation. While satellite images and later surveys have fueled public interest, many experts argue that the formation could simply be a natural rock or ice feature.

The Durupınar site (**bottom center**) is another location linked to theories about the teivah. It lies about 18 miles south of Mount Ararat's summit in the Ağrı province of Turkey. This boat-shaped geological formation was first identified by Turkish Captain İlhan Durupınar during a NATO aerial survey in 1959. Its shape resembles descriptions of Noah's Ark, leading to further interest. Investigations at the site, including ground-penetrating radar studies, have identified features that appear man-made, such as parallel lines and possible structures below the surface. However, many scientists have dismissed these findings as natural geological formations.

The Armenians are descendants of the Urartu Kingdom, which once occupied the area around Mount Ararat. In fact, the name Armenia is derived from Ararat and Urartu. Although Mount Ararat now lies within Turkey (taken from Armenia by the USSR and given to Turkey), it remains Armenia's national symbol.

On clear days, the mountain is visible from Yerevan, the Armenian capital, where it dominates the skyline and serves as a constant reminder of the nation's historical lands. Ararat is prominently featured on Armenia's coat of arms, alongside an illustration of Noah's Ark (**bottom left**). Many Armenian organizations, from sports clubs to cultural institutions, bear the name "Ararat." For some, climbing the mountain is a symbolic act of pilgrimage and a testament to national identity. The mountain also holds a special place in Armenian literature and art, featuring prominently in poetry, paintings, and even on the nation's currency—appearing on dram banknotes and postage stamps. For Armenians, Ararat symbolizes new beginnings and spiritual renewal, inspired by the story of Noah. Historically, the Armenian Apostolic Church opposed climbing Mount Ararat, viewing it as a sacred and untouchable site.

In the 1920s, Kurdish fighters used Lesser Ararat as a strategic base during uprisings against the Turkish government. The mountain also briefly served as the center of the Republic of Ararat, declared by Kurdish nationalists in 1927, though this statehood was short-lived.

Today, because of the complex military and political nature of Mount Ararat, access to the mountain is tightly controlled. Climbers must obtain permits from Turkish authorities and are required to hire official guides. In 2004, Turkey declared the Ararat region a national park to preserve its natural beauty and regulate the flow of visitors to this politically sensitive area.

Even today, climbing Ararat remains a formidable endeavor. The mountain's weather is notoriously unpredictable, and the risk of altitude sickness adds to the difficulty. The extreme cold and thin air at Ararat's peak present significant challenges for climbers, emphasizing the mountain's untamed and pristine environment.

Between volcanic activity, extreme weather, and military restrictions, it seems that the mystery of the teivah's remains will remain hidden for the time being.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

## IF HE'S SO EXCITED, THERE MUST BE SOMETHING TO IT

One Leil Shabbos, the Riverdale Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Avrohom Ausband was walking down the street in Riverdale to attend a shalom zachar. Along the way, Rav Avrohom passed a local baal habayis and greeted him with his trademark warm and exuberant "Gut Shabbos! How are you, Reb Yid?" They spoke for a few moments, and the Rosh Yeshiva continued on.

Nine months later, the Rosh Yeshiva received a call. It seems there had been another individual standing there, who'd witnessed the exchange. This Yid, who was not shomer Shabbos, turned to his friend and asked, "Who was that man, and why was he so excited?" His friend explained that he's an Orthodox Rabbi and that he's always excited, that's just the way he is. But the man wouldn't let it rest. "If he's so excited, there must be something to it. I need to find out."

Nine months later, this man was completely shomer Shabbos. That was the power of Rav Avrohom.

Taken from Chayeinu Magazine



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about whether the bus driver was allowed to change the numbers on the bus, Rav Zilberstein (Upiryo Matok Devarim Page 365) wrote that he was permitted to do so because our Sages teach that it is sometimes allowed to alter the truth to promote peace and prevent improper complaints. Regarding whether the passengers were permitted to ask him to change the route, Rav Zilberstein explained that this, too, is allowed. The reasoning is that it is very likely the bus line managers would agree with their request, given the large number of needy people relying on the ride.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in memory of  
Moishe Smirnov  
**Moshe ben Anna**

by his beloved family Slava and Cheika Vaynshteyn



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