



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



TWO TAXI DRIVERS

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, our Sages teach us that Yaakov was created first but was born second, while Esav was created second but was born first. This raises the question of who deserved the rights of the bechorah (birthright). This concept leads us to the following true story that was sent to me.

Yehuda, who lives in Eretz Yisrael, called a taxi company at 12:00 PM to book a ride for 2:00 PM to take his family on an important trip. Shortly after making the booking, he received a call from the driver to confirm the address and time, and everything seemed set. About 30 minutes later, Yehuda received another call from someone else confirming the same details. The voice sounded familiar, but he didn't think much of it. Yehuda assumed it was just standard procedure.

At 2:00 PM, a taxi pulled up to his house, and Yehuda and his family got in, ready to leave. Just as they were about to go, another



STRANGERS IN A FOREIGN LAND

Our Sages tell us that the 400 years of exile which Avraham's descendants were to endure began with the birth of Yitzchok. HaShem's decree was that "for 400 years your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land ..." Yitzchok was Avraham's first descendant by which the decree began. Malbim points out that this decree of being a stranger in a foreign land is fulfilled by always being on the move and never being able to settle down. Alternatively, if one does settle down and becomes a permanent resident in a foreign land and is not subject to always being moved around, they can still fulfill "being a stranger in a foreign land" if they always see themselves as foreigners. Even though they may gain complete native status, so long as they recognize that this land is not theirs and they do not behave as if this is their land, then the decree of being a stranger in a foreign land is satisfied.

Due to the famine that occurs in our Parsha, Yitzchok moves to Gerar in the hope to find food there. Unfortunately the famine is in Gerar as well but HaShem tells him that he may not go down to Egypt. Rather, he should stay in Gerar and he will be blessed. Just as HaShem promised, Yitzchok was blessed to such great proportions that in that year of famine his fields produced 100 times the usual yield. He became fabulously wealthy. His wealth even exceeded the wealth of the king of Gerar. Although Yitzchok's success was a blessing to the local population as they had that much produce, nevertheless, the local folks envied him greatly. Because of their envy Yitzchok moved out of the area along with his tremendous herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. When he dug wells to provide water for his livestock the locals came after him for stealing their water. He had to move from there until he returned to Be'er Sheva.

Rav Hirsch (pictured) suggests that this envy was HaShem's way of protecting

taxi arrived at the same time and place. After some confusion, it became clear that the second taxi was actually the one Yehuda had originally booked at noon. Somehow, two drivers had been assigned to the same ride.

Both drivers were understandably upset. Each had blocked out time in their schedule, traveled to Yehuda's house, and expected to be paid. Yehuda was caught in the middle. One driver insisted, "I was the original booking, and I arrived on time! You need to pay me." The other argued, "I came first, you got in my taxi, and I made the trip to your home. You owe me for the service!"

Yehuda now faced a dilemma. Should he pay both drivers, since both had shown up and expected compensation? Or should he pay only the driver who actually took him and his family to their destination? And which driver should he use—the one who was booked first, or the one who arrived first?

On one hand, each driver invested time and effort to fulfill Yehuda's request. The second driver was likely assigned by the company due to a misunderstanding, and it wasn't his fault that he was also sent. From a Torah standpoint, it might be fair to compensate both for their effort, as they were both ready and willing to provide the service.

On the other hand, Yehuda will only benefit from the service of the driver who actually drove his family. It's not his responsibility to manage the taxi company's scheduling errors.

And which driver should he use? The one who showed up first (and whose taxi he already entered) or the one with whom he had originally confirmed?

What do you think Yehuda should do?



Yitzchok from falling prey to assimilation. Consider the respect he could have enjoyed by bringing blessing to Gerar. Imagine the business opportunities he had by doing much business with the local population had there not been hatred. It is not hard to see how this very blessing could turn to curse if there was no hatred and envy. The very hatred and envy was the antidote which preserved the integrity of his commitment to his Abrahamic mission. As Malbim states that we must maintain our position of always being a stranger in a foreign land. If we begin to feel comfortable in this foreign land and do not recognize that it is not our land, then we must be kicked around and not be able to remain in one place. This decree of being strangers is how we endured the millennia of exile without losing our integrity to our mission.

In the 1830's there was a debate regarding the status of the Jew in Germany. On one side was a fellow Heinrich Paulus who argued that "civil rights be denied to the Jews because they apparently wish to remain a nation apart for they per-

ceive their religious objectives in such a way that they perforce remain a nation apart from those nations which have provided them shelter..." On the other side was a Jew by the name of Gabriel Riesser who argued in favor of granting the Jews full civil rights like any other German national. "To be sure the Jews were once a nation. But they ceased to be some two thousand years ago as have most other nations whose descendants constitute the states of present day Europe..." Riesser goes on to argue therefore that we are just as much German as anyone else living in Germany. As long as the Jew demonstrates their loyalty to the Fatherland he is deserving full equal rights.

While I am confident that Malbim would want the Jew to receive full civil rights, nevertheless, it would seem that Malbim would agree with Heinrich that until the Jew returns to his homeland he must remain a nation apart. And as I ponder this question, maybe Malbim would agree that we should not win equal civil rights, unless we would recognize on our own that we are strangers in a foreign land.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

MAGNIFICENT MAGNETS

A frum household would not be complete without a good set of Magna-Tiles. Have you ever asked yourself where those magnets come from? Are they magnetic rocks from under the ground? Also, have you considered how often we use magnets in our daily life? Let's dive into where magnets come from and how they are made.

Magnets in Nature: The Marvel of Lodestone. Long before humans understood magnetism, they stumbled upon a natural form of it—lodestone, (pictured left) a naturally magnetic rock made of magnetite. Ancient sailors used this "magic stone" to create early compasses, guiding their ships across uncharted seas. This simple mineral was the key to unlocking Earth's mysteries. It was called lodestone because it was a stone that would "lead." Today, geologists and collectors treasure lodestone for its natural beauty and magnetic properties, but lodestones are too weak to be used for most magnetic applications.

The Rise of Manufactured Magnets. Nature's magnets paved the way for something even more extraordinary: artificial magnets. These human-made wonders are crafted from materials like iron, nickel, cobalt, and alloys. Manufactured magnets can be fine-tuned for specific uses, making them far stronger and more versatile than their natural counterparts. Take rare-earth magnets, for example. These tiny powerhouses, made from elements like neodymium and samarium, are among the strongest magnets in the world. Despite their small size, they power some of our most advanced technologies, from electric vehicles to wind turbines.

How Are Artificial Magnets Made? Ferrite magnets, (pictured second from left) also known as ceramic magnets, are the dark gray ones you see most often. They're in refrigerator magnets, toys, and even speakers. The process of making them begins with gathering the right materials, primarily iron oxide (a fancy name for rust!) mixed with either barium carbonate or strontium carbonate. These ingredients are finely ground into a powder, much like flour. Once the materials are prepared, they are mixed with a binder to hold everything together, forming a paste-like consistency. This mixture is then pressed into molds, creating shapes like blocks or discs, similar to how cookie dough is pressed into cookie cutters. These shapes are placed in a furnace and heated to a scorching 1,000°C (over 1,800° F). This process, known as sintering, hardens the material and fuses the particles into a solid ceramic form. After cooling, the magnets are exposed to a powerful magnetic field, usually from a strong electromagnet. This step aligns the tiny magnetic domains within the material, giving the magnet its ability to attract metal. Finally, the magnets are polished, cut to size, and coated for durability. They're now ready for action, whether that means holding notes on your fridge or powering the sound in your speakers.

Neodymium magnets (pictured third from left) are the superstars of the magnet world, known for their incredible strength. Made from neodymium, iron, and boron, these materials are melted into an alloy, shaped, and cooled into ingots. The alloy is ground into a powder, pressed into molds, and heated to make it dense. A strong magnetic field aligns the particles, giving the magnets their power. Finally,

they're coated with nickel, copper, or epoxy to prevent corrosion, ensuring durability for high-tech gadgets like headphones and wind turbines.

For some applications, flexibility is key, and that's where bonded magnets (pictured right) come in. These are made by mixing magnetic powders, like ferrite or neodymium, with binders such as plastic or rubber. This combination is then shaped using methods like injection molding or extrusion, resulting in magnets that can bend and flex as needed.

Magnets in Everyday Life. Wherever you look, magnets are quietly at work. They're in the transformers that power our homes, the hard drives in our computers, and the MRI machines that help doctors peer inside our bodies. Magnets make modern life possible in ways that are both visible and hidden.

One of the most prominent uses of magnets is in electronics. Transformers and inductors rely on magnets for efficient energy transfer between circuits. Electric motors and generators harness magnetic fields to convert energy between mechanical and electrical forms, essential for appliances and vehicles. Electromagnets, found in solenoids, MRI machines, and industrial lifting equipment, are indispensable. Magnetic storage devices, such as hard drives, play a pivotal role in preserving digital information.

Magnets are fundamental to power generation, converting mechanical energy into electrical energy in devices like wind turbines and power generators. They also facilitate electrical relays and switches by employing ferromagnetic cores to control current flow, ensuring reliable energy transmission.

Communication technologies heavily depend on magnets. Radios and televisions use magnetic components to enhance signal reception and transmission, and magnetic coils in telephone equipment enable sound conversion and amplification, ensuring clear communication.

Industries leverage magnets for precision and efficiency. Magnetic separation is vital in mining and recycling to isolate ferrous materials. Magnetic clamps and chucks secure materials during machining, and magnetized tools, like magnetic screwdrivers, simplify handling small metallic components.

In the medical field, magnets drive groundbreaking technologies. MRI machines use powerful magnetic fields to create detailed body images, revolutionizing diagnostics. Biomedical devices, such as pacemakers and hearing aids, incorporate magnets for critical functionality.

In daily life, magnets are ubiquitous. Speakers and microphones utilize magnetic principles to convert electrical signals into sound waves and vice versa. Refrigerator magnets provide simple utility, while magnetic locks and latches ensure secure, silent operation in homes and businesses.

Magnets are quietly at work all around us, enabling the technologies and conveniences we often take for granted and they are truly one of the most extraordinary tools in modern life.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world.

OF COURSE YOU MUST GO BUT DID YOUR WIFE AGREE?

In his biography of the Torah leaders, Knesset Member Rabbi Shlomo Lorincz (Pictured) shares the following story to illustrate the Chazon Ish's, (Rabbi Avrohom Yeshaya Kareletz) concern for one's wife.

In 1948 during Israel's War of Independence, there was an urgent communal matter that required Reb Shlomo to travel abroad. This would be his first trip abroad since he first arrived in the Land. There were issues that he wanted to discuss with the Chazon Ish before embarking on this trip. The first issue was his medical condition which could flare up and endanger his health if he were to travel.

The second issue was that there was a serious concern about his return to the Land given everything that was going on with the war. If he were to leave the country he could not be sure when he would be home next.

Regarding the health issue the Chazon Ish told Reb Shlomo that since this was an urgent journey for the sake of the community he would pray for him and his health would be fine. Regarding the second issue, the Chazon Ish asked him if his wife had given her permission for him to go.

Although Reb Shlomo had already told him in a previous discussion that his wife allowed him to go, nevertheless, the Chazon Ish wanted to confirm that his wife was in complete agreement that her husband leave the country. After confirming her agreement, the Chazon Ish gave him his blessings.



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the Mashgiach (Kosher supervisor), Rabbi Zilberstein answered (Upiryo Matok Devarim Page 453) that it is the Mashgiach's responsibility to declare whether the food is fit for consumption. Since this food was not fit for eating, the Mashgiach is responsible and should have informed someone other than the cook. Furthermore, serving food that could make people sick is also a concern of kashrus. It was not kosher because consuming dangerous food is prohibited by the Torah.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated In memory of
Mr. William Benjamin

זאב בן בנימין ז"ל

May his Neshama have an aliya.

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