

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### A TICKET TO AMERICA

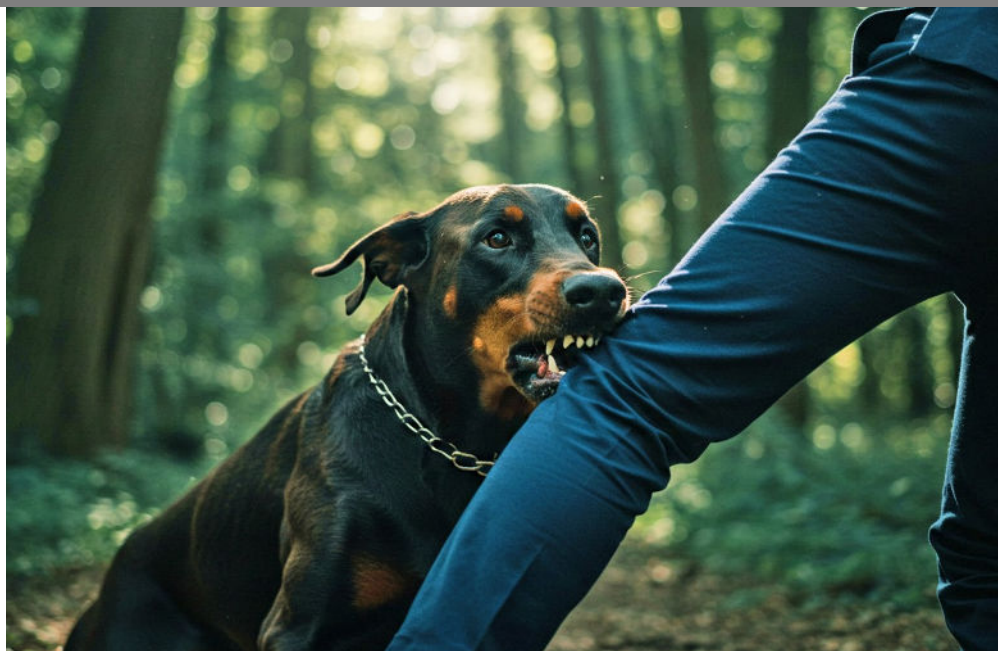
By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Zahava, a very busy mother living in Eretz Yisrael, desperately needed a vacation. The only problem was that she couldn't find a babysitter to watch her children.

Finally, she met a young woman named Elisheva and offered her \$1,000 to babysit her kids, plus a free ticket to the United States.

Elisheva was very intrigued by the offer and agreed to take the job. Zahava was extremely grateful, and she went away with her husband for a week while Elisheva dutifully babysat her children.

When Zahava returned, she gratefully paid Elisheva the \$1,000 and gave her the ticket to the United States. However, it turned out that the ticket was for a cruise, not a



## ON TOP OF FATHER'S SHOULDERS

When Amalek attacked our ancestors after the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea, Moshe instructed Yehoshua to choose men to fight against Amalek and go to war against them. Malbim explains that although Moshe led the wars against Og and Sichon at the end of their 40 year trek, nevertheless, regarding Amalek, Moshe had Yehoshua lead the war. The reason for this was because the campaign against Amalek had to be fought through natural means and not through miraculous means. All the endeavors that Moshe undertook operated in the miraculous mode, as Moshe was the 'Ish haElokim' the Man of GD and as such he could only lead the people for operations that were miraculous. Since Amalek needed to be fought through natural means, not miraculous means, Yehoshua was chosen to lead.

Why could we not fight Amalek through miraculous means?

Our Sages wonder how was it that after HaShem performed the miracle of splitting the Red Sea Amalek was able to penetrate our people? Why was HaShem not protecting us from them? To answer this question they use the following analogy.

A father was walking with his child through the forest. As it became difficult for the child to walk the father lifted his son up on his shoulders. As they walked farther the child asked his father if he could give this fruit and those berries and so on. After some time they encountered another traveler and the son asked this person "Do you perhaps know where my father may be?" Upon

plane. The boat trip would take between two and three weeks to travel from Israel to America.

Elisheva was surprised. She hadn't expected a cruise ticket. When she had accepted the job, she had assumed the ticket would be for a flight—just as most people who travel from Israel to America would expect.

When Elisheva saw the ticket, she said, "I thought this was supposed to be a plane ticket."

Zahava responded, "I'm sorry, but this is what I have. I got a promotion for this, and it's all I can offer."

Elisheva felt very disappointed. She said, "But don't we go by the majority? The majority of people, when they hear 'a ticket to America,' assume it means a plane ticket."

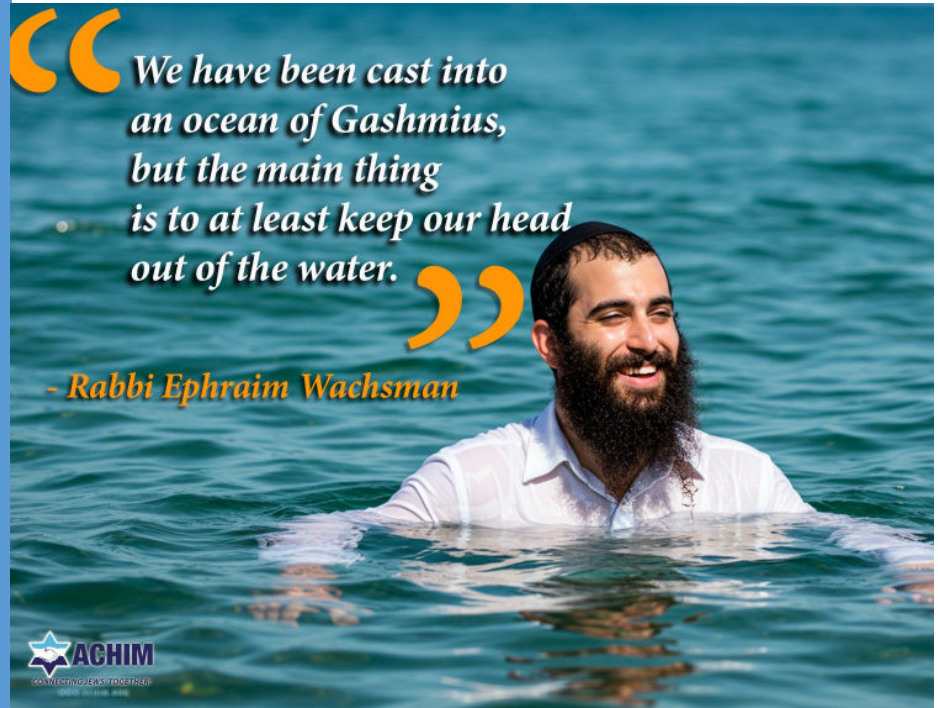
Zahava replied, "You can't go by the majority when it comes to monetary matters."

They agreed to bring the question to a Rav. The question is:  
Does Zahava have to pay Elisheva for a plane ticket, or is the cruise ticket sufficient?

On one hand, most people would assume that "a ticket to America" means a plane ticket. On the other hand, Zahava never specified, and Elisheva made an assumption. So, is the cruise ticket acceptable?

What do you think?

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hearing his son's request, revealing that his son did not even recognize that he was sitting upon his shoulders, the father immediately lowered the child and placed him on the ground. No sooner than he lowered his son, a dog attacked and bit the child.

Our Sages conclude this analogy explaining that so long as we remain aware that Hashem is carrying us high up above the ground no dog can reach us. It is only when we question if HaShem is with us and we are not sure if HaShem is protecting us, then we are placed on the same surface as the dog and it will attack us.

Amalek's ability to confront us lies specifically on our losing focus on HaShem's being close to us. When we lose that focus, we are left to deal with the animals on the ground. Every encounter with Amalek occurs only when we are on the ground and we have lost our focus. This is

why Amalek must be fought when we are on the ground.

The method by which we overcome Amalek is specifically through raising ourselves to our elevated position, back on Father's shoulders.

The Mishna teaches us that during the war against Amalek when the people looked Heavenward in prayer they controlled the battle and when they failed to look Heavenward in prayer Amalek controlled the battle.

Behold! The basis of the victory against Amalek was based exclusively on the level of attaching ourselves to HaShem.

As we approach the days of Purim and Pesach may we merit the moment when HaShem will finally lift us up one last time, never to let us down again.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE PELICAN SPIDER

Deep in the forests of Madagascar, South Africa, and Australia, a tiny predator lurks in the shadows. With its long, pelican-like "neck" and eerie, outstretched jaws, this strange creature seems like something from a sci-fi movie. But the pelican spider—also known as the assassin spider—isn't just weird-looking; it's a highly specialized hunter. These extraordinary arachnids aren't content with catching insects like most spiders. Instead, they are the ultimate spider assassins, stalking and impaling other fellow spiders with their long, fang-tipped jaws. Let's dive into the wild and wonderful world of these bizarre predators and uncover the secrets that make them one of nature's most incredible hunters.

The pelican spider gets its name from its bizarre shape. Instead of a typical rounded spider body, it has an elongated carapace that stretches up like a pelican's neck. Its mouthparts—called chelicerae—jut forward like a pelican's bill, giving it a look that's as fascinating as it is strange. But this odd anatomy isn't just for show. That long "neck" allows the pelican spider to strike with deadly precision, keeping its dangerous prey at a safe distance while it delivers the fatal blow.

Despite its fierce hunting skills, the pelican spider is actually tiny! Most species measure between 2 and 8 millimeters long—smaller than a grain of rice.

When the sun sets, pelican spiders come to life. These nocturnal hunters don't spin webs to catch their prey like many other spiders. Instead, they rely on stealth and strategy. How do they find their victims in the dark? They track silk draglines—the fine threads other spiders leave behind as they move. By following these silk trails, pelican spiders locate their prey with eerie precision. Once they find an unsuspecting spider, they move in slowly, carefully plucking at the web to trick their target into thinking a meal has arrived. But instead of food, the web's owner gets a surprise attack!

With lightning-fast reflexes, the pelican spider snaps its long chelicerae forward, stabbing its victim with venomous fangs. The impaled spider struggles, but the pelican spider holds it at a safe distance, waiting for the venom to take effect. This way, it avoids a counterattack from potentially dangerous prey. Talk about an expert assassin!

The pelican spider's unusual anatomy gives it a serious advantage when it comes to hunting. That long "neck" isn't actually a neck at all—it's an extension of the spider's exoskeleton that provides extra reach for its deadly chelicerae. Scientists studying pelican spiders have discovered that this structure works like a lever system, allowing them to strike with maximum force and precision. Even the smallest pelican spiders, just a few millimeters long, can take down prey their own size with ease.

Their chelicerae are even more impressive. They can fold neatly against the "neck" when not in use, making them streamlined and ready for action. But when they find a target, the chelicerae snap upward at a 90-degree angle, impaling their prey instantly.

Most spiders feast on a variety of insects, trapping them in webs or ambushing them on the forest floor. But pelican spiders have a much more specialized diet—they only hunt other spiders! This makes them true araneophages, a term used to describe animals that exclusively prey

on other spiders. Why target fellow arachnids? Spiders are rich in protein and often easier to catch than fast-flying insects. Pelican spiders have developed the perfect adaptations for spider-hunting, including specialized venom, long impaling jaws, and the ability to track silk draglines left by their prey. This lifestyle sets them apart from nearly all other spiders, making them some of the most unique and specialized predators in the arachnid world.

Pelican spiders don't just rely on stealth—they may also use trickery and deception to outsmart their prey. Some researchers believe certain species of pelican spiders mimic the movements of struggling prey caught in a web, fooling other spiders into coming closer. Imagine this: A small orb-weaving spider is sitting in its web, waiting for food. Suddenly, it feels vibrations—a telltale sign that something has been caught in its sticky threads. But as it approaches to investigate, it's actually a pelican spider, pretending to be an insect struggling in the web! The hunter has now become the hunted. This kind of aggressive mimicry (imitating something harmless to lure prey) is still being studied, but if true, it would make pelican spiders even more sophisticated hunters than we already know them to be.

A spider-hunting spider needs a venom that works fast—and pelican spiders have exactly that! Unlike other spiders that rely on venom designed to kill or immobilize insects, pelican spiders have venom that targets spiders specifically. What makes their venom so unique? Scientists believe it contains neurotoxins fine-tuned to paralyze arachnid nervous systems. This specialized venom quickly incapacitates their prey, preventing it from fighting back. Unlike some venomous spiders that inject digestive enzymes to liquefy their prey, pelican spiders keep their meals impaled on their long chelicerae (jaws) until the venom has done its work. They then consume their prey by slowly sucking out its liquefied insides—a gruesome but effective way to eat! Because their venom is so spider-specific, it doesn't seem to affect insects or other animals. Scientists are still studying the exact chemical composition of their venom. Since it affects spider nervous systems so precisely, it could have potential applications in biomedical research, possibly leading to breakthroughs in understanding nerve function or developing new types of insect-specific pesticides.

Despite being fierce hunters, pelican spiders have a softer side when it comes to their young. Unlike many spider species that simply lay their eggs and leave them to hatch on their own, female pelican spiders carry their egg sacs attached to their legs. This behavior ensures that the eggs are protected from predators, harsh weather, and other dangers. The mother carries her future spiderlings wherever she goes, keeping them safe until they are ready to hatch. This level of parental care is uncommon in many spider species, where young are often left to fend for themselves. Once the eggs hatch, the tiny spiderlings remain close to their mother for a short period before dispersing into the forest to start their own lives as miniature assassins. This small but crucial act of care helps increase their chances of survival, ensuring that the next generation of pelican spiders continues to thrive.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

Rabbi Asher Zelig Rubenstein zt"l, a Rosh Yeshiva of great repute, led Yeshivas Toras Simcha of Yerushalayim in the year 2000 when the following incident occurred.

Rav Moshe Shapiro zt"l gave a shiur to a select group of kollel avreichim, and Rav Asher Zelig very much wanted to join that chabura. When he asked Rav Moshe to accept him, Rav Moshe initially refused. However, after much insistence on Rav Asher Zelig's part, Rav Moshe conceded. Rav Asher Zelig was naturally the oldest member of the chabura and certainly the most prestigious. The gap between his age and Rav Moshe's was much smaller than the gap between him and the other avreichim.

Rav Moshe had an extremely strong kpeida (concern, issue) about the disturbance caused by cell phones. He made it very clear to the members of the shiur that the shiur was offered only on the condition that there would be absolutely no cell phones in the room. It was not sufficient to simply turn off the phone—he insisted that there should be no phones should at all.

On this fateful day, in the middle of the shiur, a cell phone rang. Rav Moshe stopped, looked up, but said nothing. A few moments later, the phone rang again, and once more he stopped. When it rang a third time, Rav Moshe closed his Gemara and said that he could no longer continue the shiur. The silence in the room was palpable. At this point, Rav Asher Zelig got up, went to the back of the room, took the phone, shut it off, and apologized to Rav Moshe. Rav Moshe then asked him if it was his phone. Rav Asher Zelig again apologized and promised that it would not happen again.

When Rav Moshe realized that it was Rav Asher Zelig's phone, he told the group that, considering who Rav Asher Zelig was, he would overlook the incident and continue giving the shiur. In 2013, at the shiva for Rav Asher Zelig, one of the visitors related this story to the family who had never heard it before. The visitor, one of the avreichim in that chabura, shared how Rav Asher Zelig had saved the shiur from being dissolved. He then went on to reveal that, in truth, it had been his phone that rang. At the time of the incident, he had been too embarrassed to publicly admit it, so he remained silent.

Rav Asher Zelig never shared this incident with anyone. His wife knew nothing of it, nor did she know that her husband had taken the embarrassment upon himself to protect the avreich.

Fortunate is the one who serves HaShem with modesty. May his memory be a blessing.

As told to Paysach Diskind by Rav Asher Zelig's son-in-law.



## THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the woman who found many toys on her lawn, Rav Zilberstein (Chashukei Chemed, Bava Kama, page 174) answered that if she had not given notice to her neighbors that she does not allow them to leave their belongings in her yard, she would have the mitzvah of hashavas aveidah (returning lost objects). However, once she put up a sign and informed them that she does not permit toys in her yard, any toys that ended up there would be considered aveidah mida'as—a lost object that was abandoned willingly. In that case, she is not obligated to return them and is allowed to remove them from her yard.

As we find ourselves in the season of communal giving with the shekalim and the gifts to the Mishkan  
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