

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



CASHING THE POSTMARKED CHECKS

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Avi owned a successful grocery store in Israel. One day, he handed a stack of checks to Izzy, one of his main store clerks, instructing him to take them to the bank and deposit them. Izzy didn't examine each check individually; he simply took the entire stack and deposited them.

It turned out that several of the checks were postdated. Since they were not yet valid, they bounced, resulting in bank fees for both Avi and the check writers. In total, these unnecessary fees amounted to hundreds of dollars—all because the dates on the checks weren't checked beforehand.



FROM STONE TO FLESH

There are four additional Parshiyos that are read in the month of Adar, preceding the arrival of Nissan. These Parshiyos prepare us for the approaching Nissan.

The first of these Parshiyos is Parshas Shekalim when we read how our people contributed towards the Mishkan with a gracious heart. The second follows with Parshas Zachor where we remember to erase the memory of Amalek, whose legacy was one of unadulterated evil. Amalek stood for everything against that which HaShem stood for. Before reading the third Parsha, we celebrate Purim, during which we elevate ourselves through the renewed acceptance of the Torah. For the third Parsha we read Parshas Parah, whose haftarah describes how, with the arrival of Moshiach, HaShem will replace the hearts of stone of His people with hearts of flesh. The heart of stone, whose natural inclination is drawn to material desires, cannot be influenced and cannot change its nature. The heart of flesh can be easily impressed with the value and attraction to spiritual greatness. Just before Nissan arrives, we read Parshas HaChodesh, which generates a new spirit within us.

In discussing the distinction between the heart of man and the ruach (spirit) of man, Malbim explains that the heart is the home of his feelings and passion while his ruach is the home of his intellect, which discerns between good and evil. The natural tendency of the heart is to be inclined to the base material physical world in contrast to the ruach, whose tendency is inclined to good. When the heart carries sway over the ruach, man will choose evil to be more attractive and will tend to follow evil. If time passes and man does not keep

This led to a dispute between Avi and Izzy: Who was responsible for covering the fees?

Avi argued that Izzy was at fault. "I told you to deposit the checks. You should have made sure they were all valid before doing so. You shouldn't have attempted to deposit the postdated ones."

Izzy, however, disagreed. "You gave me the stack of checks as they were. I didn't inspect them—I just followed your instructions. The responsibility is yours."

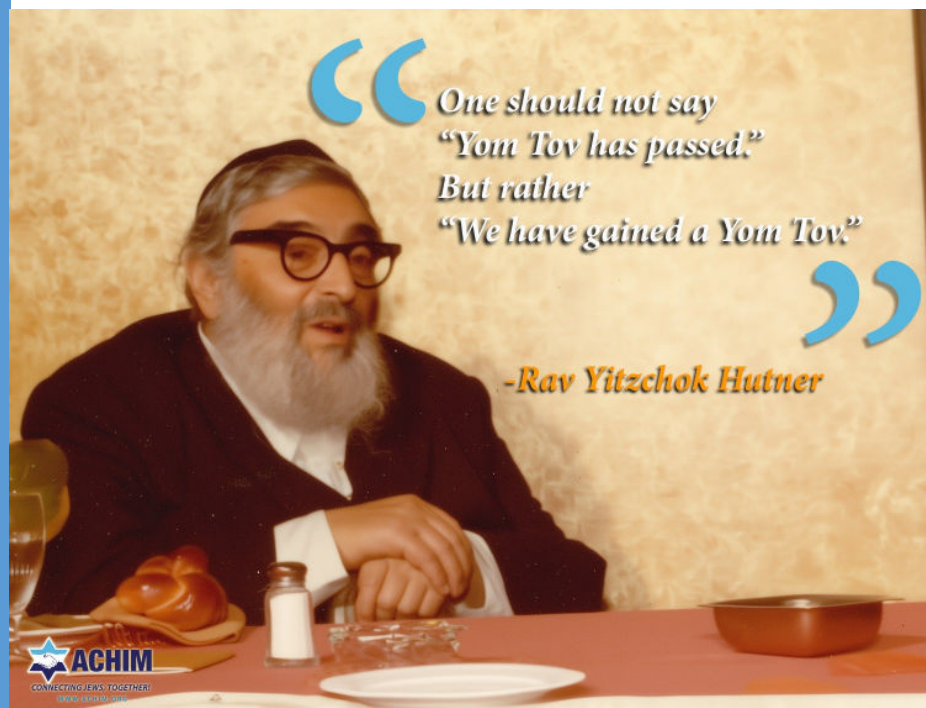
Unable to resolve the matter, they decided to bring the question to a Rav for a ruling:

Who should be responsible for the bank fees—the employer who handed over the checks or the clerk who deposited them without checking the dates?

What do you think?

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MITZVA MEME



himself in check, his heart will gain more influence over the ruach, and he will stray from the straight path of Torah.

Given this understanding, the Sfas Emes explains how the first two Parshiyos run parallel to the last two. Parshas Shekalim inspires the heart of the Jew to be open and to give graciously towards the building of the Mishkan, the dwelling place of the Shechina. Once the heart has been opened to spirituality, we address our ruach to remember Amalek and his legacy of evil and prepare ourselves to wipe out that legacy. Once we celebrate Purim and elevate ourselves with the acceptance of Torah with renewed passion, we are ready for Parshas Parah.

In Parshas Parah, we read how the heart, having been inspired enough to move the ruach in a positive direction, will be replaced with a new heart. The old heart was stone and unable to be attracted to elevated aspirations. The new heart, the flesh heart, will be ready to take on a new ten-

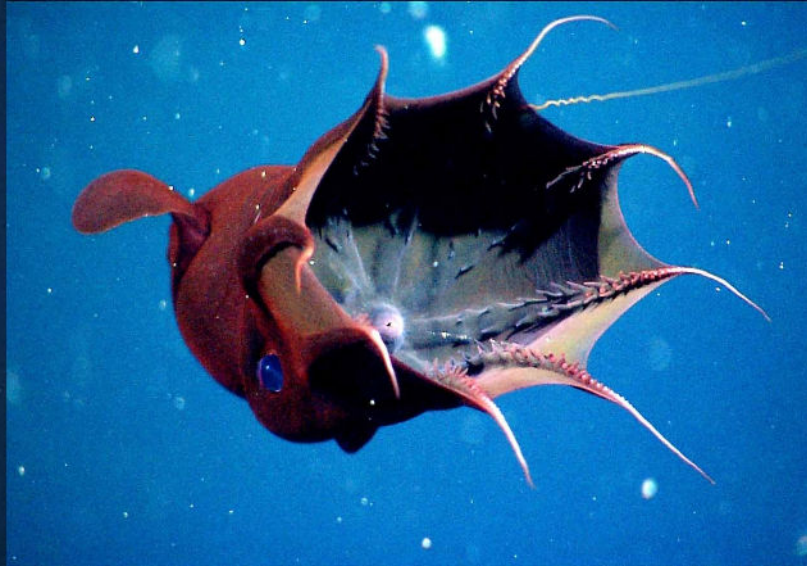
dency of spirituality. The new heart will be inclined to elevation. Once we receive our new flesh heart, we read Parshas Hachodesh, which renews us and opens up our ruach to discern properly what is good and what is evil, what is worth pursuing and what is worth rejecting.

In Psalms (51:12), Dovid Hamelech asks from HaShem, "Create for me a pure heart and renew in me a corrected ruach." Behold! When asking HaShem to renew and refresh him, he requests that a new heart be created, but for his ruach, he only asks that it be renewed.

May we soon merit the time when our hearts will be inclined toward spiritual greatness and our spirits will have the clarity to recognize what is truly good and what is not.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE VAMPIRE SQUID

Imagine a creature so mysterious, so otherworldly, that it seems plucked straight from the pages of a deep-sea horror story. It drifts through the pitch-black waters of the ocean's abyss, its dark, webbed arms billowing like a cape. It has eyes so large they seem to glow in the gloom, and when threatened, it can flip itself inside out into a spiky, nightmarish ball. With a name like *Vampyroteuthis infernalis*—which translates to “vampire squid from the Inferno”—you might expect a fearsome monster lurking in the shadows. But the vampire squid is not a literal monster. It is one of the most unique and bizarre creatures on the planet. Let's take a deep dive into the world of the vampire squid.

The vampire squid lives in one of the most extreme environments on Earth: the deep sea's oxygen minimum zone. This layer of the ocean, between 500 and 3,000 meters deep, is a world of near-total darkness, crushing pressures, and almost no oxygen—conditions that would suffocate most sea creatures. But for the vampire squid, this is home sweet home.

Unlike its shallow-water cousins, which need a constant supply of oxygen to fuel their fast-paced lifestyles, the vampire squid can thrive in near-suffocating conditions. It has huge gills, a super-slow metabolism, and even blue, copper-rich blood that binds oxygen efficiently, allowing it to survive where few others can.

Even more amazing? This deep-sea drifter is neutrally buoyant. Instead of constantly swimming to stay afloat, like most squids, the vampire squid's body is filled with ammonia-rich fluids that make it nearly the same density as seawater. That means it can hover effortlessly, saving precious energy in a world where food is scarce.

And speaking of food, you might be wondering... Despite its name, the vampire squid isn't a bloodsucker. In fact, it's one of the only cephalopods that doesn't hunt live prey! Instead, it dines on “marine snow”—tiny flakes of dead plankton, algae, and fecal matter that drift down from the ocean's surface. Yes, you read that right: the vampire squid is essentially the deep sea's janitor, feasting on tiny bits of decaying debris.

To collect its unusual food, the vampire squid uses two long, retractable feeding filaments—slender, sticky threads that it extends into the water like fishing lines. These filaments snag drifting particles, which the squid then gathers, coats in mucus, and rolls into a nutritious little food ball. It may not be the most glamorous meal, but in the deep sea, every scrap of food counts!

In a world without sunlight, the vampire squid has a different way to dazzle: bioluminescence. Instead of squirting ink to confuse predators (like other squids), the vampire squid has something even more spectacular: it releases a cloud of glowing, blue specks! This bioluminescent mucus, spewed from the tips of its arms, creates a sparkling smokescreen that can last up to 10 minutes—giving the vampire squid plenty of time to escape. Even better, if a predator gets too close,

the glowing mucus can stick to them, essentially turning the hunter into prey by making them a glowing target for even larger predators. This is called the “burglar alarm” effect, and it's one of the vampire squid's cleverest survival tricks.

And if that weren't enough, this deep-sea phantom can even control the brightness of its own body! Tiny light-producing organs called photophores let it glow or go dark on command, making it nearly invisible when it wants to hide.

Inside-Out “Pineapple” Defense. One of the vampire squid's most bizarre tricks is its inside-out defense. When startled, it can flip its webbed arms over its body, exposing the underside of its cloak and the rows of spiky-looking cirri that line its arms. This dramatic posture, called the “pumpkin” or “pineapple” position, makes the vampire squid look like a terrifying, spiky orb instead of a tasty meal. But don't be fooled—those “spikes” aren't sharp at all! They're actually soft and harmless, more for show than for attack. The vampire squid is all about tricking predators into thinking it's scarier than it really is.

If a predator bites off one of the vampire squid's arm tips, no problem—it can grow it back! Like some other cephalopods, it has the ability to regenerate lost limbs. This makes its inside-out “pineapple” trick even more effective. If a predator does take a bite, the squid can escape and eventually heal, ensuring it survives another day in the abyss.

The World's Biggest Eyes (Proportionally!). Imagine having eyes the size of dinner plates—relative to its body, the vampire squid has the largest eyes of any animal on Earth! These enormous, marble-like orbs help it navigate the near-total darkness of the deep. And here's a cool trick: in certain lighting, the vampire squid's eyes can appear blood-red or eerie blue, but they're actually colorless! The shifting colors are simply reflections of light in its deep-sea environment.

A Squid With Extra “Fishing Lines”. In addition to its eight webbed arms, the vampire squid has something unusual: two long, retractable filaments. These filaments are not tentacles like those of a true squid—in fact, the vampire squid is the only living cephalopod that has them! These delicate filaments extend far beyond its body and are covered in tiny, hair-like sensors that help it detect food particles drifting in the water. When it senses something edible, it reels in its filament and scrapes off the collected “marine snow” with its arms, forming it into a mucus-covered food ball in a unique feeding strategy!

With neutral buoyancy, spooky defense tactics, and glowing mucus clouds the vampire squid is one of nature's greatest deep-sea wonders. It's a survivor, an illusionist, and a recycler of the ocean's drifting debris—all wrapped up in a tiny, slow-moving package. The deeper we explore the ocean, the more we uncover creatures like the vampire squid—living proof that Hashem's greatest marvels often thrive in the places we least expect.

PUT THE FAN BACK IN THE KITCHEN SO THAT THE REBBETZIN WILL BE MORE COMFORTABLE

R' Hershel Mashinsky met the Klausenberger Rebbe in 1946 on the Rebbe's first trip to America. After observing the Rebbe's avodah, he attached himself to the Rebbe with every fiber of his being.

During the initial period after the Rebbe's marriage, he lived in a tiny apartment on Rodney Street in Williamsburg.

R' Hershel came to visit one brutally hot summer day and noticed that there was only one fan in the kitchen. Feeling the terrible heat, R' Hershel took the fan from the kitchen and brought it to where the Rebbe was sitting.

"Please bring it back to the kitchen," the Rebbe gently asked R' Hershel, who was at the age of shidduchim at the time.

"You know," the Rebbe continued, "you will soon be married. Chazal teach us that one must honor one's wife more than himself. Please put the fan back in the kitchen so that the Rebbetzin will be more comfortable."

R' Shimon, a chassid, similarly recalled:

It was during the summer when the Rebbe was in the Klausenburger camp in the Catskills. I entered his room in the small, spartan bungalow. There I saw the Rebbe sitting at his table, learning in front of a Gemara, literally shivering with cold.

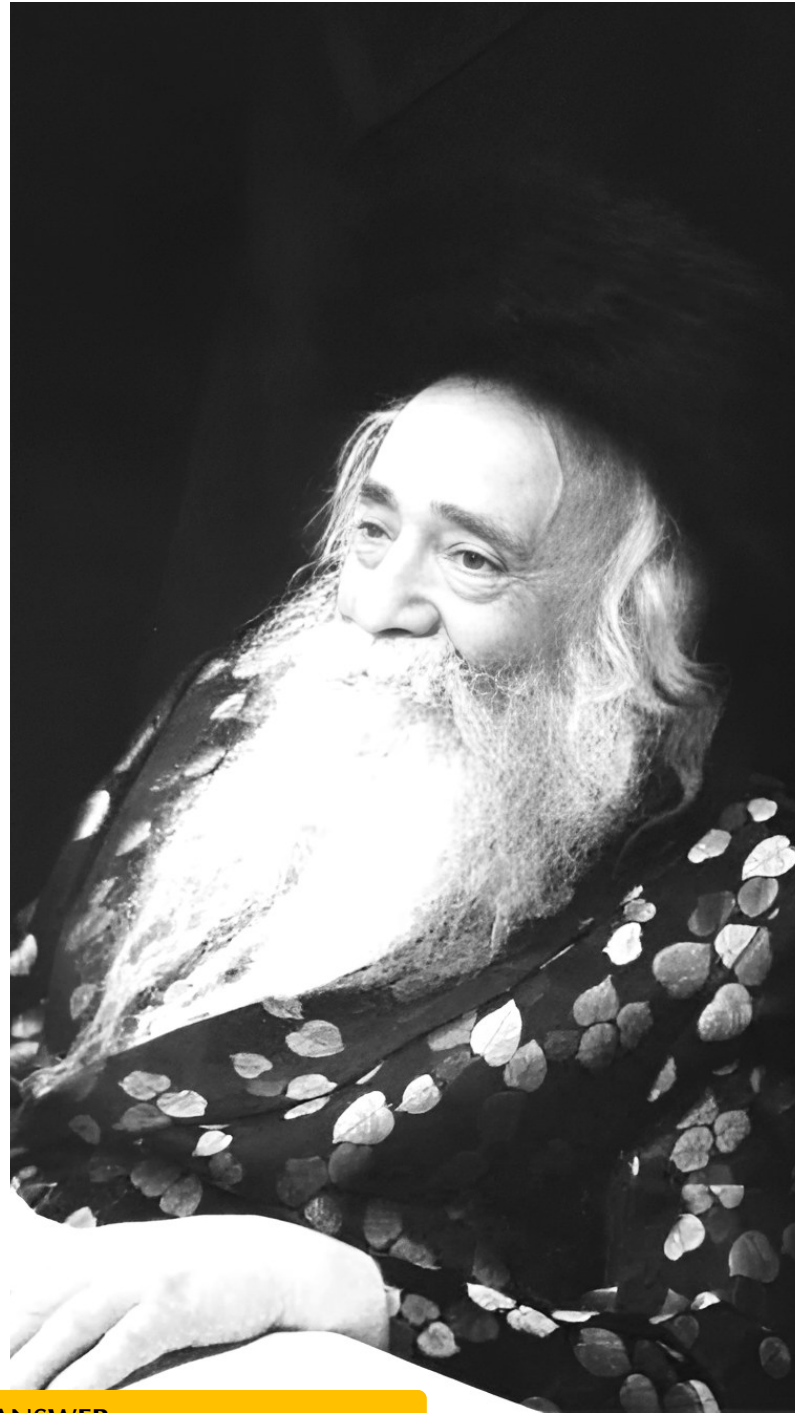
It was early in the morning, and the country air was cold. I couldn't bear seeing the Rebbe suffering like that, so I ran home, where I had a heater, and brought it to the Rebbe's bungalow.

The Rebbe gave me a big yasher koach. Then he rose from his chair and said, "I am bringing this to the Rebbetzin so that she shouldn't be cold."

"But Rebbe!" I protested. "It is the Rebbe who is shivering."

The Rebbe refused to listen. He brought the heater into the Rebbetzin's room, turned it on, tiptoed back out, and sat down in front of the Gemara again, shivering as he learned.

From The Klausenberger Rebbe, By Rabbi Avrohom Birnbaum, Published By Artscroll Mesorah and reprinted with permission



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the person who had a medical emergency, double-parked, and later had his car crashed into, Rav Zilberstein (Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 182) answered as follows: Normally, if a person blocks the street, those who damage his car would be exempt from liability. However, in this case, because the person who stopped had the right to do so due to a life-threatening situation, it would seem that the person who caused the damage would be obligated to pay. Rav Zilberstein concludes however, that this is still a tzarich iyun (requires further study).

This week's TableTalk is dedicated:

לעילוי נשמת יהודה דוב שמחה בן אורי אהרן ישעי' הכהן ז"ל

Rabbi Berish Meth Z"L

לעילוי נשמת אברהם בן בן-ציון ז"ל

Abraham Litwin Z"L

לעילוי נשמת פייגא חיה בת חיים יהודה ע"ה

Fay Litwin A"H

By Chalavna and Malky Meth



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