THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

by Rabbi Dovid Green

A great scientist saw the need to send a spaceship to the nearest star and back. Knowing the trip would take approximately six thousand years, he designed a craft large enough and aesthetically pleasing to make the journey a more pleasant one. He solved with his genius and sensitivity all of the technical problems that could possibly arise. There were plants to replenish air and other creatures to create a constantly replenishing food chain.

The only problem that he struggled with was the radical of the human factor. People born on the craft after the generation of the first couple would think that this was their native home. They would forget about the original mission and may even tamper with and sabotage it.

Even the brilliant and creative scientist was desperate for a solution. The flight needed some human input and was ultimately for the sake of preserving humanity. The mission was for man, but how to keep man actively involved in the project was the question of the day.

It was decided a document would be introduced into the lives of the people on the spacecraft that achieved a few vital purposes. 1) It would include the blueprint of the entire craft to be used as a tool for understanding and repairing the craft along the way. It would advise about daily, weekly, and yearly maintenance of the ship and the proper use of all its buttons and levers, and of course sharp warnings and cautions about the abuse of certain buttons and levers. 2) Included in the document would be the original goal and philosophy of the mission. 3) It would describe the history of its initiation till its ultimate conclusion. 4) The document would help attune the participants as to the cycles of life on the craft for example; a) Every seventh day the window of the ship faces home. For those who are aware it is an awesome treat and it orients the inhabitants to their point of origin and destination. b) Every year, at different times, smells and sounds from fruits unique to planet earth are introduced to create a sense of longing and belonging to another time and place. These days correspond to days of historical significance such as launching and unsealing the document etc. 5) Laws of human conduct to maintain order and decency are vital for the continuity and safety of the flight. 6) Technical instructions whose purpose and origin only the brilliant scientist knows are promulgated in the document, partially to demonstrate the superior genius of the designer and partially to test the loyalty of the crew, but nobody really knows what the real reason is. Yet everyone with clear intellect understands that fools rush in where angels dare to tread and proceeds cautiously. 7) Procedures about keeping the integrity of the document and its myriad details are also a critical component of the document. As long as the message is clear there is still

hope for a successful mission. Once the message is blurred then the entire project is at great risk. 8) Essential parts of the document itself are hung about the giant spacecraft at conspicuous junctures such as doorways. 9) The document is spread throughout the ship in all languages so that the information within is never lost. 10) A special group of scholars who are designated and heralded with the special task of representing and maintaining the integrity of the document and its grand plan so the project shall not fail. They are handpicked, as special commandos and are trained to give their life rather than change or consciously misrepresent the mission.

With these features intact the scientist felt more confident to launch the project that would save humanity while man himself would play the crucial role in bringing the ship back home.

When contemplating celebrating the holiday of Shavuos, which commemorates the giving and the receiving of the Torah by the Jewish Nation 3313 years ago, keep in mind this little science fiction tale and remember the following phrases while clicking your heals together three times. A hint is enough for a wise man. This ain't Kansas Dorothy. No analogy is perfect. Time wounds all heals. Things left to chance go to chaos. Truth is stranger and more organized than fiction. There's no place like home.

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