

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THIEF!

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion has a reference to the prohibition of theft. The Torah says that Eliezer took his master's camels. Our Sages teach that they were called his master's camels because wherever he went it was obvious they belonged to Avraham since they were muzzled to ensure they wouldn't eat from another person's property. Now this leads us to the following story.

Aron was in sleepaway camp. He had a couple of roommates and was having a great time. One day while Aron was resting in his bunk bed, he saw his roommate Mordechai walk in. Mordechai looked around the room and it was clear that Mordechai thought that Aron was sleeping. Mordechai walked over to Aron's table stand and opened up Aron's wallet. Inside the wallet was a \$100 bill. To Aron's shock, Mordechai looked around furtively, made sure that no one saw him, took the \$100 bill and put it in his pock-



THE BEAUTY OF AGING

Excerpted from a talk from Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky

The Midrash relates the following conversation between Avraham and HaShem. Avraham turned to HaShem "You told me that I am most beautiful of all people and yet when I and my son enter the city nobody recognizes who is the father and who is the son and they therefore do not know to whom to give respect", since Avraham and Yitzchok were identical. HaShem responded "With you, old age shall begin". That night Avraham's hair whitened.

There are two points worth addressing. One point is that Avraham possessed no sense of vanity. Why then does he wish to be the most beautiful of all people?

The second point is that while the Midrash implies that white hair and old age are associated with beauty, we find in other places that white connotes approaching death and death itself. We wear a white kittel on certain occasions to remember the day of death. In fact, the whiteness of hair comes as a result of the dying of the pigment on the hair follicles. Since death is certainly not associated with beauty why should old age and specifically the whitening of the hair be so?

Every person has two parts. He has an outer shell; his body. And he has an inner self; his soul. In his youth the outer shell projects itself with color and vibrancy while the inner self has still not yet matured. As he travels along the path of life encountering

MITZVA MEME

“Those who dare to fail greatly,
can achieve greatly.”



et. Aron didn't say anything because he was so shocked at the brazen theft.

Later that day Aron approached Mordechai. “I know you came into the room and you thought everyone was sleeping, but I saw you take money out of my wallet. I demand that you give it back.” Mordechai looked at him with derision and said “What are you talking about? You're making things up. You must be delusional. I never took any money”.

Aron knew that Mordechai was gaslighting him, but now that Mordechai had the money, it seemed that there was nothing that Aron could do.

The next week was the camp's visiting day. Once again Aron was in his room, resting and reading a book when Mordechai's father walked in with a shopping bag that had a lot of nosh and snacks in it. Mordechai's father told Aron, “Would you mind giving this package to Mordechai? Mordechai forgot to take this with him when we were together. Aron said “not a problem I'll be happy to give him the package”. When Mordechai's father went away Aron peeked into the shopping bag. Inside the bag, in addition to snacks and junk food was an envelope marked money. Aron opened the envelope and saw that there were three hundred dollar bills in the envelope. Aron saw this is a great opportunity to get his money back. He knew for a fact that Mordechai stole \$100 from him. He knew that if he simply took a \$100 bill from the envelope and gave the package to Mordechai, Mordechai might never be the wiser. This would be a way for him to get back his money peacefully.

What do you think? Can Aron simply take his money back? Or would we say that Aron is not allowed to take matters into his own hands?

See Hebrew Veharev Na Volume Two page 83

challenges and overcoming difficulties his inner self begins to develop. The beauty of the inner self is much more delicate and finer than the coarse nature of the outer shell. It is therefore difficult to discern the beauty of the inner self while the outer so boldly overshadows it. Just as it is difficult to discern the beauty of the fine nuances of the hundred piece symphony while there is a rock concert next door, similarly, it is difficult to discern the fine lines of beauty of the inner self while the outer shell distracts so much attention.

Our father Avraham had achieved remarkable greatness through the challenges that he faced and that he conquered. His inner self shined with blinding brightness. However, so long as his physical beauty did not recede, people did not recognize who is the father and who is the son. His inner self was not recognized. Avraham wanted the outer shell to recede and allow the inner self to shine through.

Our father Avraham was not vain. He had no interest in the world other than to increase the awareness of HaShem's involvement in the world and in the lives of its inhabitants. The reason he wanted to have beauty and to be recognized and respected was because when people would see the beauty of his inner self it would inspire them to elevate themselves to their own greatness as well.

Avraham wanted his outer shell to recede from its bold expression of colorful vibrancy and allow the fine nuanced beauty of his soul to penetrate outward for all to see and to be inspired.

It is no wonder that while old age and the whitening of one's hair are not signs of beauty in their own right, they are nevertheless prerequisites for the pure beauty of the inner self to shine.

Have a very safe and very wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

GLOWWORMS

Let's take a look at another creature that seems like fantasy.

Glow-worm is a common name for hundreds of different species of insects that glow using bioluminescence. Glow-worms include species from 4 different beetle families and many kinds of Fungus Gnats.

The most well known is the *Arachnocampa* which emits a blue/green glow when it is in the larvae stage. They are found in caves, overhangs, rock cavities, and other sheltered, wet areas. Using bioluminescent molecules in their body, they emit light from their abdomen, similar to fireflies. They suspend sticky strings of slime all around their nests and use the light to attract moths. Because they live in dark caves, these small glowing lights attract moths which fly directly into the slimy strings, and get stuck there. The moths get disoriented because the slime seeps into their breathing holes making it easy for the glow worms to catch and eat them.

The larvae will eventually develop into larger flying insects, about the size of a mosquito.

Different types of glowworms use their bioluminescence for different purposes. Some use their glow to warn away predators, and some to attract a mate. Some fungus gnats eat fungus, not insects, and they use their glow to attract other insects to help spread the fungus that they eat.

What is bioluminescence? Bioluminescence is the production and emission of light by a living organism. It is caused by biological molecules that absorb energy and release excess energy as light. Certain biological

molecules have a structure that has the ability to absorb energy from various sources. In the case of many insects, this molecule is a protein that is activated by ATP. When ATP transfers energy to these molecules, they slowly release the energy at a specific wavelength. The wavelength emitted is determined by the structure of the molecule. Therefore, each type of glow-worm emits a slightly different color depending on the bioluminescent molecules it produces.

The Waitomo Glowworm Caves is a cave at Waitomo on the North Island of New Zealand. The local Māori people had known about the caves for about a century before surveyors, Laurence Cussen and Fred Mace, were shown the entrance in 1884. They did extensive explorations with candlelight on a raft going into the cave where the stream goes underground. As they began their journey, they came across the Glowworm Grotto and were amazed by the twinkling glow coming from the ceiling.

The Waitomo Glowworm Caves are known for its population of *Arachnocampa luminosa*, a glowworm species found exclusively in New Zealand. You can take a boat ride through the Glowworm Grotto. The boat takes the visitor onto the underground Waitomo River where the only light comes from the tiny glowworms creating a sky of living lights!

Based on biologydictionary.net

JUST BECAUSE I WAS UNABLE TO HELP YOU, DOESN'T MEAN THAT I CAN'T CRY WITH YOU

Shneur and his wife were unable to have children. He made a very long journey to visit the Rebbe, Rav Yitzchak of Vorki to ask for his bracha to have children.

When Shneur sat with Rav Yitzchak to ask for his bracha, Rav Yitzchak closed his eyes for five minutes and covered his face.

Finally, he turned to Shneur and said, "I'm so sorry, sometimes it's just not meant to be. There is nothing that I can do to help you have children". Shneur left the room crying bitterly. He went back to his inn to stay for the night before he made the long trek back home.

Five minutes after Shneur got back to the inn, there was a knock at the door. To Shneur's shock it was Rav Yitzchak. "Why are you here so late?", Shneur asked.

R' Yitzchak said to Shneur, "Just because I was unable to help you, doesn't mean that I can't cry with you". Rav Yitzchak sat down next to him, held him, and they cried together.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the man who requested a cast, Rav Zilberstein answered as follows. If the doctor knows the person well enough that he suspects that it might help him with his shalom bayis he can give him the cast. However he has to first make sure that he is not harming anyone else in a way that may be illegal or immoral.

This week's issue is dedicated L'ilui Nishmas
Avrum Lipa Shif z"l

By Eugene and Miriam Vurgaftman, for Miriam's paternal great-great grandfather

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