

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### THE PAIR OF PAINTERS

In this week's Parsha the Torah mentions a place called "Di Zahav". (Devarim 1,1) Rashi quotes our Sages that this place was really a silent rebuke for allowing "too much gold" to cause the Jewish people to sin. This is a reference to the fact that the desire for money is a common source of temptation.

This leads us to the following interesting true story.

Yitzchak needed his house painted. He opened the Jewish phone book and called a local Jewish painter named Aron and asked for an estimate. After Yitzchak described the house, Aron said it would cost about 1000 dollars. Yitzchak thanked him and told him he would think about it.

Yitzchak then called the next painter in the phone book, called Nachman. After describing his house, Nachman gave a price of 2000 dollars.

"I don't understand", Yitzchak said. "I called another painter and he said it would be \$1000,



### KEEP IN TOUCH

In this week's Parsha, Devarim, Moshe reprimands his people on the events that occurred during their trek through the desert in which they rejected HaShem. He spends much of his talk on the sin of accepting the report of the spies. How appropriate it is that this Parsha is already read on the Shabbos preceding Tisha b'Av, the day on which we cried in despair over the report of the spies. Our Sages teach us that HaShem's response to our crying on Tisha b'Av in the desert was that Tisha b'Av will remain a day of crying throughout Jewish history until we reach our destiny. Tisha b'Av became the anniversary for the greatest tragedies that befell our people.

Moshe tells his people that he too was not allowed to lead the people into the Land as a result of the Meraglim. Why was Moshe punished; he certainly did not participate in that terrible sin?

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh explains that once the people failed in their trust of HaShem and cried over the report of the meraglim, they instilled within themselves and their descendants an aspect of evil which would express itself later in history. The sins that were committed by our people 900 years later which precipitated the destruction of the Bais HaMikdosh only occurred because of the kernel of sin that was implanted in them with the sin of meraglim. When we lost our trust in HaShem's protection and guidance by accepting the spies' report we created a fault in the genome of our people. We were now prone to do terrible crimes hundreds of years later.

The Talmud teaches us that everything Moshe did was eternal. If Moshe would have led his people into the Land he would have also constructed the Bais HaMikdosh which would render the Bais HaMikdosh indestructible. But, HaShem wanted to ensure that the Bais HaMikdosh would be destructible. If the Bais HaMikdosh would be

why are you asking for double that price?" Nachman calmly replied, "I know I am an expert in my field. In my opinion, \$2000 is a very fair price for the job you described to me. But if it is true that someone is offering to do it for \$1000 then I can offer you a discount and do it for \$1800, but I can't go any lower."

Yitzchak thanked him and said he would consider it.

Yitzchak then called the first painter, Aron, and asked him to come over to do the paint job. Aron came by the next day with his truck. After looking at the size of the house and fully realizing what the job would entail, Aron said, "I'm sorry, after seeing the house, I can't do this for anything less than \$2500. This is really a big job". Yitzchak told Aron that he was unable to afford that price and they agreed to part ways.

Yitzchak then picked up the phone and called the second painter, Nachman, who had offered to do it for \$1800. But then he hesitated. Yitzchak realized that the only reason that Nachman agreed to give him a price of \$1800 was because he thought someone else was willing to do it for \$1000. But it turned out that the \$1000 estimate was really fake. Aron was never willing to do the house for that much. Yitzchak wondered if he had to be fully transparent with Nachman and tell him that the other painter was in truth not willing to do it for \$1000.

On one hand, the other painter did tell him that price. But on the other hand, if Nachman would be told that the other painter could not honor the \$1000 estimate, perhaps he would charge \$2000 and not \$1800.

What do you think? Did Yitzchak have an obligation to tell Nachman the truth about the other painter?

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indestructible then HaShem's wrath over the people's behavior would be expressed by destroying the people themselves. Therefore, to protect the future of our people Moshe was not allowed to lead us into the Land. Therefore, Moshe correctly tells his people that it was because of their accepting the evil report he was not allowed to lead the people into the Land.

The implication of Ohr Hachaim's explanation is that if we would not have failed in our trust of HaShem by the meraglim we would never have come to commit those egregious crimes. The Ohr Hachaim understands that the root cause of all those sins find their origin in our lack of trust in HaShem.

How does a weakened trust in HaShem lead us to commit murder, adultery and idolatry hundreds of years later? Regarding the sins for which the second Bais HaMikdosh was destroyed and the cause of our current exile; how does a weakened trust in HaShem lead us to commit baseless hatred and weakened Torah study hundreds of years later?

In the Rema's first entry to the Shulchan Aruch he instructs us to constantly be aware of HaShem's Presence in front of us. "A person does not sit, does not talk, does not conduct himself the same way if he is in the presence of a nobleman as he would if he were by himself at home. If one recognizes that everything he does and everything he says and everything he thinks is done under the watchful eyes of HaShem, he would be filled with awe and humility in front of HaShem."

Our life in the desert, seeing constant miracles every moment of the day for 40 consecutive years could have implanted within our genome an awareness of HaShem that would never be shaken. Imagine living with such an awareness; who could even contemplate a sin?

May HaShem grant us the ability to recognize HaShem's constant involvement and intervention in our daily lives so that we may bring back that awareness and finally turn Tisha b'Av into a day of great rejoicing, soon in our days.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos and an easy fast.

**Paysach Diskind**





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### EARWIGS

This week my daughter was playing outside and she was pinched by an earwig. When I was a child, we called earwigs "pincher bugs". I never heard of that happening before, but my wife looked it up and learned that it can happen, albeit rarely. In the process of our research, we learned that earwigs are quite amazing. Let's take a deeper look together.

There are about 2,000 species related to earwigs. Earwigs stand out with their characteristic cerci. Cerci are the pair of forcep-like pincers on the back of their abdomen. Male earwigs generally have more curved pincers than females. These pincers, which do not have any venom or poison, are used to capture and hold prey and defend themselves. Although the pincers may look dangerous, in reality, even the curved pincers of males cause little or no harm to humans. In addition, there is no evidence that they can transmit diseases to humans or other animals.

For protection from predators, some earwigs can squirt foul-smelling yellow liquid in the form of jets from scent glands on one of their abdominal segments. They can aim the discharge by revolving the abdomen and simultaneously use their pincers in defense.

The largest species of earwig is the Australian giant earwig which is approximately 2 inches long.

Earwigs also have wings. The hindwing is a very thin membrane that expands like a fan, radiating from one point folded under the forewing. Even though most earwigs have wings and are capable of flight, they are rarely seen in flight. The wings are folded very carefully and in a unique and detailed way. The cerci are used to fold the wings.

This leads us to the meaning of their strange name, earwig. Entomologists and etymologists suggest that the origin of the name is a reference to hindwings, which are unique and distinctive among insects. When these wings are unfolded they resemble a human ear. So earwig really is a corruption of "earwing".

But urban legend and old wives' tales offer a different interpretation about the meaning of the name. The folk version is that at night earwigs would enter the ears of people and burrow into the brains to lay their eggs there. But don't worry. Although there have been anecdotal reports of earwigs being found in the ear, earwigs are not known to purposefully climb into ear canals. Also, they do not lay eggs inside the human body or human brain.

Earwigs live for about a year from hatching. Earwigs molt five times in a year before they become adults.

Many earwig species display maternal care, which is uncommon among insects. After mating, the female will begin to lay 20 to 80 pearly white eggs. The mother will pay close attention to the needs of her eggs, such as warmth and protection. The mother will also faithfully defend the eggs from predators. Another distinct maternal care unique to earwigs is that the mother continuously cleans the eggs to protect them from fungi. Studies have found that if the eggs were replaced after hatching, the mother continued to clean them for up to 3 months. The eggs hatch in about 7 days. The mother may assist the nymphs in hatching. When the nymphs hatch, they eat the egg casing and continue to live with the mother. The nymphs look similar to their parents, only smaller, and will nest under their mother and she will continue to protect them until their second molt. The nymphs feed on food regurgitated by the mother, and on their own molts. Interestingly, If the mother dies before the nymphs are ready to leave, the nymphs may eat her.

Earwigs are fairly abundant and are found on all continents except Antarctica. Earwigs are mostly nocturnal and often hide in small, moist crevices during the day, and are active at night, feeding on a wide variety of insects and plants. Few earwigs survive winter outdoors in cold climates. During the summer they can be found around damp areas such as near sinks and in bathrooms. Earwigs tend to gather in shady cracks or openings or anywhere that they can remain concealed during daylight. Picnic tables, compost and waste bins, patios, lawn furniture, window frames, or anything with small spaces (even artichoke blossoms) can potentially harbor them.

What do earwigs eat? They are omnivores, which means they eat plants and ripe fruit as well as actively hunt small bugs like lice, bluebottle flies and woolly aphids.

Some earwig species live on the outside of other animals. This is called being epizoic. Some are normally found deep in the skin folds of Malaysian hairless bulldog bats and feed on bats' body or glandular secretions. Others are found on Giant Cricetomys rats.

What are earwigs afraid of? Earwigs are regularly preyed upon by birds, bats, lizards, centipedes, assassin bugs, and spiders. One species of tachinid fly, has been demonstrated to be successful as a biological control of earwigs for almost a century. The common predatory wasp, the yellow jacket preys upon earwigs when they are abundant. The eggs and nymphs (babies) are also eaten by other earwigs.

## YOU ARE A DIAMOND POLISHER !

Rav Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz, who led Torah Vodaath and helped build torah in America, had hundreds of students. Even though the weekly salaries of educators were less than half of what one could hope to earn as a rabbi, only in a few special cases did Rav Shraga Feivel direct his students toward careers in the rabbinate. "As a rabbi," he told his older students, "you'll be dealing with the balebatim. How much can you do with baalebatim? But if you work with children, you'll have spiritual satisfaction — and you'll be building Klal Yisrael. If American rabbis had used the time spent preparing derashos to educate the children in their shuls, he noted bitterly, they might have accomplished much more.

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A Torah educator once informed the Chazon Ish that circumstances had forced him to seek another means of livelihood. "Which field do you propose to enter?" asked the Chazon Ish. "Diamond polishing." But you are a diamond polisher!" the Chazon Ish exclaimed. "What could be more precious than a Jewish child!"

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One year at the Torah Umesorah convention, there was a session on the topic, "How do you make your students feel loved?" When Rav Tendler returned from the convention, he said that he thought the time could have been better used for different topics. "Ta," Elisheva asked, "What is the way that you feel a teacher should make the students feel loved?" Rav Tendler, puzzled that she had even asked the question, shrugged, and said, "Love them." It was that simple!

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Rav Shlomo Freifeld valued mechanchim and made sure that they knew just how serious their job was. To a talmid who had just accepted his first position in chinuch, Reb Shlomo said this: "If you are not prepared to do whatever it takes for each individual bachur, to love every single talmid, don't become a rabbi. Become a shochet. It's better to slaughter chickens than bachurim!"

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### THE ANSWER

Regarding the question of the parrot that used profane language, Rav Zilberstein answered that if the store owner was selling the parrot to a religious family, he should have understood that having a parrot that used bad language is considered a major flaw. Therefore the store owner should give a refund and return the money. See See Upiryo Matok Bamidbar Page 371

This week's TableTalk is dedicated as an iluy for the neshama of

Reb Elozer Isbee

אלעזר בן יהודה אריה לייב הכהן  
נפטר י"ב אב

By Mrs. Aviva Isbee and family