



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



BIKES ON THE BIKERACK

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, the Torah talks about tzara'as, which comes as a result of violating commandments between man and man. This brings us to the following true story:

Aaron rode his red bike to a shul that had many minyanim. When he arrived, he found that the bike rack in front of the shul was full, leaving him with no place to lock his bike. He decided to attach his bike to another bike, a blue bike that was on the outermost area of the bike rack. He sensed it was the wrong thing to do but he justified to himself that he would finish davening and unlock his bike before the owner of the other bike noticed. It turned out though, that Aaron met some friends at shul and stayed much longer than he first anticipated. He ended up staying most of the day in the shul.

While Aaron was inside the shul, Daniel, the owner of the blue bike that was now locked down, came out and saw his bike was locked to Aaron's. Frustrated and unable to find the bike's owner, he had no choice but to walk



BARLEY IS FOR ANIMALS AND WHEAT IS FOR MAN

Nations identify their greatness and success in terms of their economic success. A strong economy spells a strong nation. Naturally, national pride runs parallel to this strength. For a nation whose economy is based on their agricultural output we could well imagine that the period of their harvest would be a period where national pride reaches a climax. And yet, as we see from the mitzvah of the Omer and the prohibition to harvest the new crop before the second day of Pesach, our people have a different perspective.

The Torah prohibits her nation from lifting the sickle to harvest the new barley crop that ripens in the Spring season. We must wait till after the nation celebrates the first day of Pesach. We must wait until after every Jewish family sat down to the seder table and shared with their family how our peoplehood began as slaves in Egypt and only through HaShem's Grace we became His people. Once that is accomplished we are allowed to harvest our first crop. It is no wonder why that first day of Pesach is called a 'Shabbos' because it prohibits us from engaging in the harvest.

Even when that Shabbos, that first day of Pesach has passed and we begin to reap the new harvest HaShem instructs us on that very first day of the harvest that every person of our nation must count for themselves seven complete weeks after which we bring the national offering on the holiday of Shavous. The entire nation must focus their vision upon the holiday which celebrates our receiving our ultimate national treasure - the Torah. Why are we so different from other nations?

To appreciate the distinction between our people and all the other nations of

home.

Later that afternoon, Daniel returned to retrieve his bike, only to find that both his and the other bikes were gone. Another person, looking dumbfounded, held the key to a lock. It was Aaron, who was shocked to see that his bike and the blue bike were stolen.

It became clear that someone had stolen both bikes in the interim. It also became clear to Daniel that Aaron was the one who locked his bike down. Daniel confronted Aaron. "It is your fault that my bike was stolen. Had you not locked my bike to yours, I could have taken my bike home before the bike thieves came."

Aaron apologized, but he didn't think he was responsible for paying for the stolen bike. Aaron argued that it was a grama, an indirect consequence of locking the blue bike.

However, Daniel argued that since Aaron used his bike, he had the status of a borrower, a shoel, and was therefore obligated to pay for all resulting damages, even if it was a grama, an indirect consequence.

Unable to reach an agreement, they decided to bring their question to Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein.

What do you think? Should Aaron, who attached his bike to Daniel's, be obligated to pay for Daniel's stolen bike? Or should it be considered a grama that was not directly Aaron's fault, thus freeing him from responsibility? What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Shemos 266

Regarding the question of toveling the pots that were returned to the store. Rabbi Berkowitz's answer that the pots do not require tevila only applies if the store owner was Jewish. (At some time Burlington was owned by Jews.)

replaced by other nations. Similar to the forest that is filled with trees that sprout and grow and fall and decay and are replaced by new ones in their place. There is no destination.

The Jewish people, on the other hand, have a destination. With our exodus from Egypt we became a people and with the receiving of the Torah we received our destination. We are destined to change this material world which has no direction and bring it heavenward. We were charged with the mission to elevate the physical world to become capable of housing the very Presence of HaShem.

Perhaps the reason HaShem designed nature that we harvest barley, which is used as animal feed before we arrive at Shavuous is because until we receive the Torah we have no destination. Only after Shavuous do we begin harvesting the wheat, the grain used in Man's food.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind

MITZVA MEME

"The essence of all growth is a willingness to change for the better and then an unrelenting willingness to shoulder whatever responsibility this entails."

The Grapevine



the world we could use the distinction between Man and the animals. On the surface, Man is just another animal. Man has a scientific name just like all the animals. However, we know that Man is not an animal - he is an absolutely different creature. What is his distinction?

The activities of all animals is to eat, procreate and care for their next generation so that their offspring will continue doing the same. It is a circular existence that continues along with no destination. The entire ecosystem as well is circular - going in circles with no destination. Man, on the other hand, is able to identify destinations and take himself along with his entire world to that destination.

This is the distinction between the nation of HaShem and the others.

History is the story of nations rising and falling and being



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

WORLD'S LARGEST BAT: THE GOLDEN-CROWNED FLYING FOX

Let's continue our exploration of Hashem's amazing creatures. Can you imagine a bat that is the size of a child? Please meet the golden-crowned flying fox.

The golden-crowned flying fox (*Acerodon jubatus*), also known as the golden-capped fruit bat, is one of the largest bat species in the world and is endemic to the Philippines. It is also known as a Megabat. This extraordinary and fascinating species has a wingspan of up to 1.7 meters (5.6 feet) and weighs up to 1.4 kg (3.1 lb). Think about it. It is nearly as long as the length of a regular twin-size bed.

These nocturnal creatures play a vital role in seed dispersal and pollination in their ecosystem. However, they are currently listed as an endangered species due to deforestation, poaching, and other threats.

The golden-crowned flying fox derives its name from the golden fur that begins between its eyes and terminates at the nape of its neck, resembling a crown. These bats are among the heaviest of all bat species, with males being slightly larger than females in many measurements. Their remarkable size, combined with their long, 21 cm (8.3 in) forearms, makes them stand out among other bat species.

Golden-crowned flying foxes are primarily frugivorous, consuming several kinds of figs, guava, and other native fruits. They may also consume plant leaves and nectar. These bats are particularly dependent on *Ficus* fruits (figs) and forage near rivers, where fig trees are abundant. They prefer to be close to agricultural fields but only in undisturbed forest areas. Unlike most bats, they do not use echolocation but rely on their keen sense of smell and large eyes to locate ripe fruits and navigate their surroundings. Recent research suggests that some fruit bats, including golden-crowned flying foxes, might possess a form of echolocation. However, they rely more on their sight and sense of smell than other bat species that predominantly use echolocation.

These bats are highly social creatures that roost in large colonies, sometimes consisting of as many as ten thousand bats. They may form mixed-species colonies with a related large bat called the large flying fox (*Pteropus vampyrus*). Golden-crowned flying foxes are known to engage in social and maintenance behaviors during the day, such as grooming and interacting with other bats. Little is known about their mating and reproduction; however, they generally give birth annually from April through June. Fe-

males have a gestation period of approximately six months and give birth to only one pup at a time. Golden-crowned flying foxes have slow reproductive rates, which makes their population vulnerable to decline.

After birth, mothers carry their babies while airborne. A newborn won't be able to fly on its own for several months. And because these mammals travel from camp to camp in pursuit of food, the mother bat won't build any permanent nests. Instead, she'll spend several weeks with her baby bat clinging to her belly. As it grows more independent, the mother bat leaves it behind at night while feeding. Pups are weaned at around three to four months old and learn to fly at approximately the same age.

These bats are quite intelligent and they have been compared to domestic dogs. In one study, flying foxes were trained to pull a lever to get food, which they were then able to remember some three and a half years later.

Golden-crowned flying foxes have few natural predators. However, they can fall prey to large birds of prey, such as the Philippine eagle, and pythons. Humans are also a significant threat, as they hunt the bats for bushmeat. The bats' large size makes them easier targets than many other bat species.

The golden-crowned flying fox is an extraordinary and fascinating species that plays a crucial role in its ecosystem. However, it faces significant threats from deforestation, hunting, and other disturbances.

Golden-crowned flying foxes have been the subject of scientific investigations in recent years, particularly concerning their potential as a source of emerging infectious diseases such as the Reston virus. The Reston virus, like the Ebola virus, is a member of the filovirus family. This virus, which affects some primates but is not known to cause illness in humans, has sparked interest among researchers who study the transmission of viruses between animals and humans. A study conducted at Subic Bay in the Philippines discovered that 3 out of 56 individual golden-crowned flying foxes tested positive for antibodies against the Reston virus, indicating that the species may carry the virus and could potentially transmit it to other animals.

R' LEIB THE SON OF SARAH, RESCUER FROM THE PORITZ

Rabbi Leib has come down in Chassidic history as Leib, the son of Sarah. Why this strange appellation? That is a story in itself. Rabbi Leib's father, Reb Yosef, was one of the hidden tzaddikim, who made his living tutoring children in Torah. There were some Jews who operated inns on the roads connecting cities, where travelers would stop for food and lodging. Being in the countryside, they did not have access to a cheder (Hebrew school) where their children could learn, and Reb Yosef would be hired for several months at a time to teach the children how to read and understand Hebrew so that they could pray and read the Torah. The innkeeper's family loved Reb Yosef, looking at him as a godly person. Reb Yosef was a widower, his entire family having been wiped out in a pogrom. The poritz (feudal lord), from whom the inn was rented, periodically visited to inspect his property, and on one occasion, noted the innkeeper's daughter, Sarah, who was stunningly beautiful. "I am going to have that young woman as my wife," the poritz said, and he said it in a tone that indicated he was not in jest. In czarist Russia, the feudal lords were supreme rulers over their fiefdoms, and they had the authority to sentence one to be executed at their whim. To throw an entire family into the dungeon was not an unusual occurrence. "I will be back in three days with my priest, and I will marry her right here," he thundered, and then, emitting a fiendish laugh, he said, "Unless, of course, she happens to be married already." The family was crushed. How does one deal with such an evil fiend? There was no one to whom they could appeal. They turned to Reb Yosef — who shared in the family's anguish — who said, "All I can do is pray to G-d for a miraculous salvation." The young Sarah then said, "We are not to depend on miracles. I know what I will do. I will marry Reb Yosef, and the evil poritz will not be able to touch me." "What are you saying, my child?" Reb Yosef said. "I am old enough to be your grandfather. You need a young, handsome husband." "There is no way a husband can be found for me in three days, and I would rather die than be taken by the poritz. Reb Yosef, you are the answer to my prayers, you are my only hope, and you will marry me," Sarah said, as she looked at Reb Yosef with pleading eyes. The father gathered together a minyan (quorum of 10) and a wedding was held. Shortly before the chupah (marriage ceremony), Sarah said, "Reb Yosef, you must promise me that we will have an outstanding child." Reb Yosef responded, "We know that G-d acts toward people according to how they act. You are doing something extraordinary, marrying a man so much older than you, and G-d will therefore reward you with an extraordinary child." Aryeh Leib was born a year after their marriage, and Reb Yosef did not live to see young Leib's bar mitzvah. Prior to his death, Reb Yosef said to his son, "You were born as a result of your mother's determination to save herself from the clutches of an evil poritz. Your mission in life will be to travel from village to village, seek out helpless Jews who are being persecuted by their poritzim, and do whatever you can to help them. G-d will bless your efforts with success. And you, my child, will always bear the name of the noble woman who bore you, Leibl the son of Sarah."

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THE ANSWER

Regarding Leah who hosted her friend's family for Shabbos Hagadol, Rav Zilbershtein answered that she may not keep the earrings since it was given based on an assumption which was not true. Even though it is accepted to leave a gift for a host but a gift of great value as those earrings were, would only be given if the guests thought that Leah was not paid for the use. Returning the rent to Rochel would not change the equation since the gift was given on a false assumption. If she wishes to reimburse the guest for those earrings somehow that would be acceptable. She may not, however, tell her that Rochel paid her.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated as an iluy for the neshama of our dear father and grandfather

Rabbi Aria Leib Newman
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