

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



## SELLING CATS

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha teaches us that the Mabul was decreed in response to gezel, rampant theft in the world. This leads us to the following true story.

Ari was a successful antique dealer. He once went to a Jewish neighborhood to purchase different antiques. It was an area that had many antique shops. There was one antique shop that was unassuming and tucked into a corner. He realized he had never been in it. Ari went in and looked around. It was a small shop with many dusty antiques. But out of the corner of his eye, he spotted a silver bowl that he recognized. He pulled out his antiques catalog and realized that this bowl was a very limited edition and it was worth more than \$200,000. Ari wanted to buy it, but he also wanted to get the best price for it. Ari watched as the store owner opened a bottle of milk. To Ari's great shock, the owner poured the milk into this rare, expensive antique silver bowl. Then, a cat, presumably the owner's pet, came and drank from the bowl.

This gave Ari an idea. It was clear that the store owner had no idea how valuable this antique was; he was simply using it as a dish for milk.



## CLOTHING, DIGNITY, & TZITZES

Gleaned from a talk of Rabbi Aaron Lopiansky

It is interesting to note how Klal Yisroel's journey began with the struggle against Egypt and Canaan, the descendants of Cham. At the end of our journey which we anticipate shortly, we will struggle with Gog and Magog, the descendants of Yefes. Who are Cham and Yefes and how do they relate to our journey?

Noach became drunk from the vines that he planted and shortly thereafter he was found naked by his son Cham. Cham's reaction to seeing his father in that degraded state was less than civilized. Cham then told his brothers Sheim and Yefes about their father. Sheim took the initiative to cover Noach and Yefes assisted him in doing so.

When Noach came to his senses and understood what Cham had done to him he cursed him and blessed Sheim and Yefes. The Midrash teaches that in the merit of assisting Sheim cover the nakedness of Noach, Yefes merited that his descendants would wear garments of nobility. The reward for Sheim's initiative to cover Noach was that his descendants merited the mitzvah of tzitzis.

There are three basic approaches to human life. The first approach is that of base materialism. Participating in the material world with no limitations and no qualifications. The next level of life adds the component of respect and honor. Let us use the following illustration. A small child discovers a cupcake covered with sweet soft creme sitting in the middle of the table. The small child will climb right up on the table and poke his hands into the creme. The child is not concerned what people will think, he just wants the soft sweet creme. As the child advances and is now an 11 year old he will find a different way to get the cupcake but he will certainly not embarrass himself in doing so.

These two stages illustrate the distinction between Cham and Yefes. Cham had no qualms

Perhaps now, Ari thought, he could get this antique for an extremely cheap price. He could later sell it at the going rate and get rich from the profits. So Ari turned to the store owner and said, "Your cat is adorable. Can I buy it?"

The owner said, "Well, it's my cat, my pet. I won't sell it for anything."

But Ari pressed him. "Please, I'll give you \$1,000 for it."

The owner said, "I won't sell it for less than \$5,000."

Ari realized that \$5,000 was a very steep price. But he also knew that if he paid the \$5,000, he might easily get the owner to throw the bowl in for free. So Ari took out his wallet and paid him \$5,000.

Then Ari said, "Now that I have this cat, I need a bowl. Would you be able to throw in the cat's bowl?"

The store owner refused.

Ari persisted, "Okay, I'll give you \$1,000 for the cat's bowl."

The store owner still declined.

"How about \$2,000?"

"No."

"\$10,000?"

"No."

Ari, perplexed, asked, "I don't understand. I'm offering you \$15,000 for both the cat and the bowl, and \$10,000 for just the bowl. Why won't you accept it?"

The owner looked at Ari straight in the eyes and replied, "I'll tell you why. You see, I'm not in the business of selling antiques. I'm in the business of selling cats. To antique dealers like you who want to try to rip me off. Every day I sell a cat just like this one to someone exactly like you. Antique dealers think they can rip me off and cheat me out of my bowl."

Ari paused to let the words sink in, then said, "Okay, in that case, if you're not selling me the bowl, can you please give me my money back? I don't really want a cat for \$5,000."

But the man retorted, "You understood the value of the cat and paid with full awareness. You can't back out from the deal."

What do you think? According to the Torah, can Ari get his money back because he paid much more than the cat was worth, or was it not a faulty sale?

See Upiryo Matok Vayikra Page 51



about degrading his father because he saw the physical word with no added qualifications. No different than an animal. Why shouldn't he be proud of what he did? That is why he told his brothers. Yefes, on the other hand appreciated Man's quality of refinement and recognized that Man is not an animal. Dignity and honor belong to Man and his behavior must reflect that. This is why Yefes merited that his children wore clothing of nobility.

Clothing is the vehicle by which Man finds honor and dignity. The king wears a crown, the general wears the appropriate adornments and so on. The clothing a person wears tells much about the person. It is therefore appropriate that Yefes merit the clothing of nobility.

Sheim's approach to life goes one step beyond. Sheim recognizes that the dignity of Man is only because he carries the image of HaShem. He recognizes that Man was created only to serve HaShem. He therefore merits the mitzvah of tzitzis. The clothing that Sheim wears is to associate him with belonging to HaShem.

The Ohr Hachaim explains how tzitzis resemble the emblem that

slaves wore to show that they belong to their master. When we wear our tzitzis we are making a statement that we belong to HaShem and are here to serve Him.

In Sheim's act of covering Noach he demonstrated his recognition that Noach carried in him the image of HaShem. He therefore merited that mitzvah.

When our people began their journey they first had to overcome and defeat the powers of base materialism and introduce the world to the nobility of Man. As our people advanced the world learned from us that Man has dignity. In fact, today it is hard to find a society where they still feed people to wild animals for sport. However, although the world appreciates the dignity of Man they still deny the ultimate in Man's greatness, which is that he belongs to HaShem. Man's true nobility lies in the fact that he is capable of bringing about G.dliness into the world. Man is actually able to elevate the material world around him.

This will be accomplished with the defeat of Gog and Magog, the descendants of Yefes.

May we merit to see the day when we will shed our clothing of self pride and don the clothing which proclaims that we belong to Him.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### LEAF SHEEP

The Mishna in Kilayim Chapter 8, Mishnah 5, talks about the Adnei Hasedeh, which is a type of animal-plant hybrid. It is an animal (either a sheep or a grazing humanoid) that is attached to the ground. In modern times, this creature has been a mystery. Where have we seen an animal-plant hybrid? But in 1993, scientists discovered a creature that can give us an example of an animal-plant hybrid. Please meet the Leaf Sheep!

Discovered in 1993, they are predominantly found in waters near Japan. Another name for it is "salty ocean caterpillar." They are sometimes referred to as "sap-sucking sea slugs." Leaf sheep are considered one of the cutest species in the ocean world. Don't be confused; they are not really sheep; they are really a type of mollusk without a shell. These creatures are only about a quarter of an inch in size.

While they are predominantly found near Japan, their habitat range is quite expansive, covering regions from the Philippines, Indonesia, Northern Australia, Singapore, to New Caledonia. The tropical climates of these regions provide the ideal conditions for the leaf sheep to thrive.

One of the most captivating aspects of this species is their appearance. They have a highly detailed physical appearance. Bearing two dark eyes and two rhinophores that strikingly resemble sheep's ears or insect antennae, they exude an endearing charm. These rhinophores serve more than just a decorative purpose. They are actually scent and taste receptors. Much like insect antennae, small hairs in the rhinophores assist the sea slugs in sensing chemicals in the water, enabling them to locate their primary diet: algae, particularly Avrainvillea.

However, the leaf sheep's relationship with algae is not a simple predator-prey dynamic. Their ability to perform something called kleptoplasty sets them apart. Kleptoplasty means that when they consume algae, they puncture the algae cell walls, suck out the algae's insides, and extract, or "steal," the chloroplasts from the algae and incorporate them into their own bodies! After ingestion, instead of digesting these chloroplasts, the sea slugs embed them into their own tissues. The term "klepto" derives from the Greek word Klepto, which means "to steal". This process not only allows them to become essentially solar-powered but also leads to their bioluminescence. The incorporation of chloroplasts enables these slugs to survive entirely on solar energy for up to two months due to photosynthesis, a feature quite rare in the animal kingdom. Like plants, they use sunlight to convert carbon dioxide and water into energy. All

members of the Sacoglossa order share this unique "solar-powered" trait, making them stand out among sea creatures. So, while they are not really plants, they exhibit plant-like characteristics like photosynthesis.

The aesthetic appeal of the leaf sheep is undeniably one of its stand-out features. Their cream-white, jelly-like body appears almost ethereal and transparent. This body is adorned with green cerata, branching digestive glands that closely resemble the leaves of succulents or aloe vera plants. These cerata can even have white, purple, or pink endings, adding to their visual allure. Some people compare their green structures to sheep's wool. Although most are green, they come in different colors as well. But these green structures are, of course, not wool. They are, in fact, the leaf sheep's digestive glands.

In addition to their beauty and unique photosynthetic abilities, the Leaf Sheep boasts a robust defense mechanism. The algal chloroplasts they consume provide them with a chemical defense against predators. This chemical defense, combined with their green hue, enables them to blend seamlessly into their surroundings, further ensuring their survival.

Sea Sheep are marine creatures living in saltwater. They are not suited for freshwater habitats. They breathe through gills like other sea slugs. Like real sheep, they are strictly herbivorous. They are not poisonous or venomous. These fascinating creatures typically have a lifespan of between 2-3 years.

Despite their allure and ecological importance, the leaf sheep faces several challenges. Threats like habitat loss, illegal fishing, climate change, and the devastating effects of plastic pollution loom large. There's potential that they could become house pets in the future. Their captivating motion and unique appearance would undoubtedly make them a sought-after addition to any aquarium.

The Leaf Sheep, with its enchanting appearance and unparalleled photosynthetic abilities, serves as a testament to the wonders of Hashem's marine world. This species was discovered less than 30 years ago, and there's still much to learn about them. In-depth studies on Sea Sheep are ongoing. And while this creature is most likely not the Adnei Hasadeh, it gives us a paradigm of a plant-animal hybrid. Imagine what other creatures we might discover in the future.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world.

## TZITZIS IDENTIFIES WHO YOU REALLY ARE

An Israeli army officer, Guy Marder (pictured), lives north from where the terrorists attacked, and was celebrating Simchas Torah in Kiryat Gat, a 30-minute drive from Re'im. Hearing about the terrorist incursion, Guy got in his car and hurried south, carrying only his personal pistol.

Arriving in the region of Re'im, Guy saw a badly wounded Golani soldier and took him into his car. At the same time a Hamas terrorist shot at his car, but Guy maneuvered away and managed to shoot the terrorist dead. Taking the soldier's gun, Guy killed another five terrorists on motorcycles.

Having transferred the soldier to a field hospital, Guy joined a policeman travelling southward and once again they were attacked by terrorists. Guy and the policeman were injured in their legs and the car careened off the road. Guy was left in a ditch but still managed from there to eliminate more terrorists, after placing a tourniquet on his injured leg. He lay in the ditch for two hours with tens of dead terrorists nearby until the arrival of IDF forces. Unfortunately they thought that he was one of the terrorists as he was wearing civilian clothes.

Guy cried that he was a soldier but was already weak from loss of blood. At the last minute one of the soldiers said: 'Don't shoot, he had tzitzis!' and thus his life was dramatically saved.

Guy was taken to Beilinson Hospital where he was operated on and is now being treated.



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the hitchhiker who left the car to daven mincha, Rav Zilberstein (Upiryo Matok Vayikra page 45) wrote that the hitchhiker is liable to pay the fine. This is because the hitchhiker can be considered to be a shomer sachar, a paid watchman, who is liable even for a grama, an indirect damage. He is being "paid" to watch the car with the free ride. In addition, the hitchhiker, the paid watchman, stands in the place of the owner. Because the car was parked in a no-parking zone, and the hitchhiker was responsible for it while there, the hitchhiker is liable for any damage or fines that come because of the illegal parking. Rav Zilberstein wrote that the hitchhiker should have ideally told the car owner that he needed to daven mincha before the owner left, but if not, he should have stayed sitting in the car, and davened mincha alone, while sitting.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated by Lev and Olga Kreymer in memory of Lev's mother

**Esther bas Nosson haKohein**

May the merit of gracing hundreds upon hundreds of Shabbos tables with beautiful conversation be a zechus for an iluy of her neshama.



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