



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



RIGGING THE SCALE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Avi owned a fish market in Israel. His store was adjacent to a vegetable store owned by an Israeli Arab named Malik, who was very friendly. Avi made sure to maintain a cordial relationship with him. Avi would shop by Malik occasionally, and always insisted on paying full price. Malik considered Avi a close friend, to the point that he felt entitled to certain favors.

Every Friday, Malik would walk into Avi's store, pick out a bunch of the most expensive fish, place it on the scale, and expect a discount. For example, if the fish weighed 400 shekels, Malik would only pull out 300 shekels and pay, saying, "Come on,



KNOW YOUR ENEMY

Our Parsha opens "When you go out to war..." As we approach the Days of Judgment many commentators read the opening of our Parsha in the context of our current war with the Yetzer Hara.

Intelligence is a critical component in winning a war. When we know and understand the enemy's strengths and weaknesses and where his vulnerabilities are we can hope to win.

In his book of drashos, Artzos Hashalom, Malbim addresses the tactics of our enemy. A person has two primary activists who oversee and carry out the decisions he makes. One activist is 'inspiration' and the other is 'drive'. The person decides what he wants to do and his inspiration excites his drive and the drive moves all the components of his body to carry out his will.

For the first many years of his life a child has only one advisor advising him, the Yetzer Hara, who directs the activists to pursue all his physical needs, wishes and whims. All those formative years the activists have become conditioned to always look out for his own base interests. Upon reaching adulthood, the child gains intelligence and a new advisor, the Yetzer Hatov (YT) is introduced. The YT recognizes what is truly good and what is truly beneficial for the person, and knows that he should not be pursuing his own interests but rather the interests of HaShem, of the Torah and of others. Naturally, the YT directs the activists to follow the good path. However, since the activists have been conditioned for so many years to look out for his own interests there is a natural rejection of pursuing the direction of the YT.

So long as the activists remain loyal to serving his base interests the YR will dominate. The objective of the YT is to break the conditioning of the activists and retrain them to become loyal to HaShem's interests. The way to retrain the activists is to train them in

between two brothers like us, such close friends, what's a little money? You're not going to nickel and dime me."

Avi never had the courage to protest, but over time, he began to resent Malik's presumptuousness. One day, Avi had an idea. He owned a strong industrial magnet that could alter the numbers displayed on the scale. He thought he could use it to make the scale show a higher weight than the actual one so that when Malik asked for his usual discount, the final price would come out to about the real price. This way, Malik would feel like he was getting a discount, and Avi wouldn't lose that much money.

However, Avi wondered whether this was permitted. On one hand, he had been losing money due to Malik's impertinence.

On the other hand, there is a prohibition against tampering with scales. He questioned whether it might be allowed in a case like this, where he was being constantly taken advantage of.

What do you think?

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the personal benefits of honor and respect that he will gain. Although the YR does not prefer mitzvos which are done for Torah he will tolerate the performance by having the activists perform those mitzvos for the self interest of the person. So that even if the mitzvos are performed, the activists will not become retrained to do for HaShem and for others. This, Malbim writes, is the strategy of the Yetzer Hara. He will encourage the person to study Torah, give tzedakah and many other mitzvos for the sake of personal gain.

Therefore, Malbim writes, the approach needed to overpower the Yetzer Hara is by becoming cognizant of the mitzvos that we do and why we are doing them and to train the activists to perform them exclusively for HaShem, for His Torah and for others. He writes that so often we are driven to perform mitzvos for the fame and honor that follow.

Perhaps this is why Micah tells his people that among the three most important lessons is to walk humbly with HaShem with no other ulterior motives.

May HaShem grant us the success in winning our wars; the personal battles and the national battles.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind

MITZVA MEME

“Mighty is the one whose desires are still,
Conquering urges by sheer force of will.”



performing mitzvos whose goal is to connect to HaShem. After a certain amount of time and practice they can be retrained. At that point the person has conquered the Yetzer Hara.

There are two steps to this process. The first is straight forward but the second is tricky and this is where many people fail. The first step is to actually perform mitzvos. The person can do this by paying attention to his intellect, and committing himself to following the advice of the YT. The next step and the more difficult one is the purity of intent that needs to be practiced when doing those mitzvos. Malbim explains that mitzvos need to be done with a purity of intent. That intent is to perform the mitzvah exclusively for the sake of the mitzvah, or for the sake of HaShem Who commanded us to perform that mitzvah. If the purity of intent is missing, the potency of the mitzvah is compromised.

The YR knows that if the activists will be retrained he is lost. Therefore, the YR actually encourages us to perform mitzvos, even though it goes against his agenda. This is because he wants to maintain his control over the activists by having them focus on



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

LESULA: THE MELANCHOLY BEAUTY OF A NEWLY DISCOVERED MONKEY

Imagine wandering through the thick, untouched rainforests of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where every step could reveal something unseen by human eyes for centuries. In 2007, amidst the towering trees and rich biodiversity of the Lomami Basin, something remarkable happened—a new species of monkey emerged from the dense foliage, captivating the hearts and minds of the world. Its name? The lesula, scientifically known as *Cercopithecus lomamiensis*.

Although the lesula was only officially recognized as a distinct species in 2012, its journey began when researchers spotted a curious creature kept as a pet by a local schoolgirl named Georgette in Opala, a village deep in the heart of the DRC. The lesula's face, with its large, soulful eyes and golden mane, immediately attracted attention. This was not just any ordinary monkey. Its delicate features and almost human-like expressions stood out, as if this creature were staring directly into your soul.

Georgette's father had taken the young lesula after its mother was killed by hunters—a sad reality in this part of the world, where bushmeat hunting is common. Yet, the lesula, with its heartbreakingly beautiful face, would not remain a secret for long. Once researchers began to examine it, they quickly realized that this monkey was unlike any species they had studied before.

When photos of the lesula were first released, the global response was immediate. The lesula's face, described by many as "heartbreakingly beautiful," became a sensation. Its large, round eyes, often compared to famous portraits by artists like Rembrandt and Antonello da Messina, evoke a sense of tenderness and compassion. With a calm, pensive gaze, the lesula seems to examine the viewer with the quiet wisdom of an ancient soul, its expression resonating deeply with people.

And it's not just the eyes. The lesula has a long, human-like nose and delicate facial features that add to its uncanny resemblance to us.

The lesula is a shy and quiet monkey, living in the remote rainforests of the Lomami Basin. Its habitat, spanning approximately 6,500 square miles (17,000 square kilometers), is one of the least explored regions of the DRC. Here, in the lowland rainforests between the Lomami and Tshuapa Rivers, the lesula lives a life of quiet solitude, moving between the ground and the trees in search of food.

Unlike many other primates, lesula monkeys spend a significant amount of time foraging on the forest floor. This ground-dwelling behavior is unusual among monkeys, making the lesula a truly unique species. It is thought that this adaptation may help them avoid competition with other monkeys that live primarily in the trees. In the stillness of the forest, lesulas quietly go about their day, foraging for fruits and leaves, grooming one another, and communicating with their family groups.

But despite their quiet nature, lesulas face a grave threat. Like many animals in the Congo Basin, they are hunted for bushmeat, putting their population at risk. Though scientists have only recently discovered this species, it has already been classified as "vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

One of the most fascinating aspects of the lesula is its vocalizations. In the early hours of the morning, between 6:00 and 6:30 AM, the male lesula lets out a booming call that echoes through the forest. Researchers believe these calls serve as a means of long-distance communication between lesula groups. The male's distinctive boom is likely made possible by a specialized air sac in his throat, allowing him to project his voice across the dense forest.

These calls are often answered by other lesulas, creating a chorus that can be heard throughout the forest. The morning call of the lesula is a reminder of the rich soundscape of the rainforest—a place where every call, chirp, and rustle has its place in the grand symphony of nature.

These monkeys are social creatures, known to live in larger groups of up to 38 individuals when conditions allow. Within these groups, a dominant male usually takes charge, while other males roam between groups or form small bachelor groups. The lesula's rich social structure, combined with its shy nature, makes it a challenge for researchers to observe them closely in the wild.

The discovery of the lesula is a reminder of how much of our world remains unexplored. Deep within the Congo's rainforests, there may be countless other species waiting to be discovered. The Lomami Basin, where the lesula was found, is a treasure trove of biodiversity. It is one of the last frontiers of scientific discovery, where each new finding has the potential to reshape our understanding of the natural world.

THE RAID

Rabbi David Ashear told over the following beautiful story:

A man told me that a few years ago he was unemployed for an extended period of time and was struggling with his finances. Then, a businessman came along with an attractive job offer. It was exactly the offer he had been waiting for, and his life seemed to be changing. Finally, he had hope. Before he could even sign the contract, an adversary from his past bad-mouthed him to the businessman, and he was rejected. The man was stunned. The accusations were entirely false. He pleaded his case with the businessman, but to no avail. At that moment, he felt as though his world was crashing down on him. He went into his car and cried for a half-hour.

After a half-hour, he said to himself, What am I doing? Why am I crying? This is from Hashem. It must be for the best. I am not going to let this break me. I will just move on and do the best I can. The next six months were extremely difficult, as he struggled to get by financially.

Then came the "ישועת ה' כְּהֶרֶף עֵינַי" Hashem's salvation arriving in the blink of an eye." Someone else approached him with a job opportunity, he signed, and is now doing well. Meanwhile, the office of the man who had offered him the job a half-year earlier was raided by the police, and the entire staff was arrested on fraud charges. All the employees are in trouble with the law.

"I was crying in the car," the man reflected, "for something that ended up saving my life. I don't know what I did to deserve such kindness. What I thought was my biggest problem was actually my biggest blessing. It's so clear now."

If we could feel even during times of hardship that Hashem is really helping, then we could eliminate all our stress and enjoy peaceful, relaxing lives under all circumstances.



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the broken bus, Rav Mordechai Shuchatowitz of the Baltimore Beis Din answered as follows: If Yanky could have stopped working when the bus broke down and left it to the administrator to deal with having the bus repaired, then he would get paid only for the actual driving time. But if it was understood that he was responsible to stay with the bus and get it repaired, then his job continued throughout that process, and he'd have to get paid for all of his work time. A hired worker is a shomer sachar on the employer's equipment (Mishna Bava Metzia 80b), and as such he is liable to do everything in his ability to protect the owner's property (Gemara 93b). Accordingly, Yanky could have been responsible to stay and get the bus repaired, and if so, he'd get paid for all of his time on the job.

In honor of all Lomdei "ORAYSA" who are on the cusp of being mesayem Sukkah.

לכבוד הרב אלי' פרנס שליט"א על התמנותו לראש חבורת צהריים 'אורייתא' של כולל ד'באלטימאר - ק"ק שארית ישראל



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