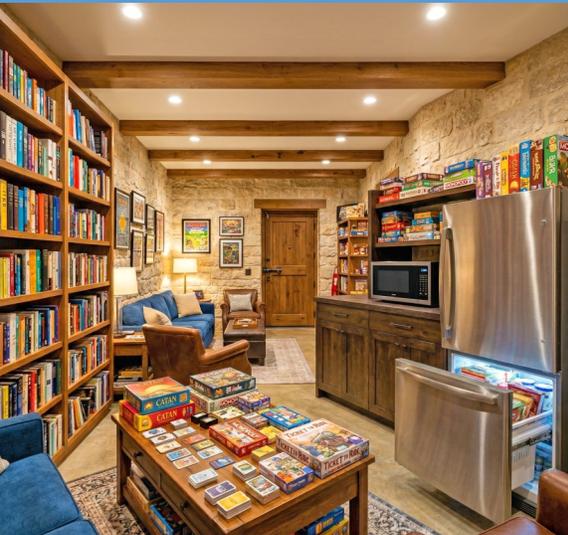


A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



STUCK IN THE GAME ROOM

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Yoni and Michael were childhood friends who grew up in Israel. They were extremely close. But as they got older, they slowly drifted apart. Michael went to university, while Yoni continued learning in yeshiva. Michael eventually entered the tech sector and landed a very good job with a high hourly wage.

One day, Michael told his childhood friend, "I'm getting married. While I was in university, I met the most amazing person. One small detail—she's not Jewish. But she's extremely kind and warm, and I think she has perfect character."

Yoni tried his best to dissuade him, but Michael was dead set on marrying this non-Jewish woman he had met in Israel. A date for the wedding was set.

Before the wedding, Yoni approached Michael with an idea. "You know what? Before you get married, let's go on a trip together, just you and me, for old times' sake. One last vacation, just the two of us." Michael agreed.

Two days before the wedding, they set off. They rented an Airbnb in a remote, quiet, beautiful area in Israel- so remote that there was no cell phone reception. They arrived, and saw that the place was gorgeous. Together, they explored the house.

They made their way downstairs to the basement. It was



ADJUSTING THE MINDSET

The Shulchan Aruch writes that the name for this Shabbos is Shabbos Ha-Gadol. Among the many reasons for this name is the Haftarah that we read from the final chapter of Malachi, in which Malachi tells his people about the end of days, when our people will approach their destination.

He writes that there will be a great and awesome day on which HaShem will reveal Himself. Before that day arrives, HaShem will send the prophet Eliyahu to His people, and he will inspire the hearts of the children of Israel to return to their fathers. There will be an inspiration of teshuvah in the world. This great and awesome day is a reference to the arrival of Moshiach. It will be a great and awesome day because there will be a revelation of HaShem that the world has not seen since the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

The Malbim explains that the reason for Eliyahu's coming prior to the arrival of Moshiach is to prepare the world for teshuvah, as the verse states, "lest I (HaShem) come and punish the world to utter destruction." In other words, the absolute revelation of HaShem at the time of Moshiach's arrival will be so demanding that the world will be required to submit completely to Him. If people are not ready and prepared for that 180° turn, HaShem's revelation will cause their destruction. Until that revelation occurs, the world will not be held to such a high standard of complete submission to Him.

a game room, filled with games, activities, and shelves of books. There was a microwave, and when they opened the fridge and freezer, they found them fully stocked with food, frozen dinners, and drinks.

Yoni said, "I'll be right back, I'm just going to run upstairs." Yoni went upstairs. He took out a key and locked the basement door from the outside, trapping Michael inside.

"I know you're going to hate me right now," Yoni called through the door, "but eventually, I know you're going to understand."

Michael tried everything he could to get out, but the door was locked and there was no way to escape. He had everything he needed, there was no shortage of food or entertainment, but he was furious, and he knew he couldn't get out or call anyone.

As Yoni had planned, Michael missed the wedding. His own wedding.

Two days later, Yoni returned, called out, "Okay, it's time to go," and opened the door. Together, they drove back home.

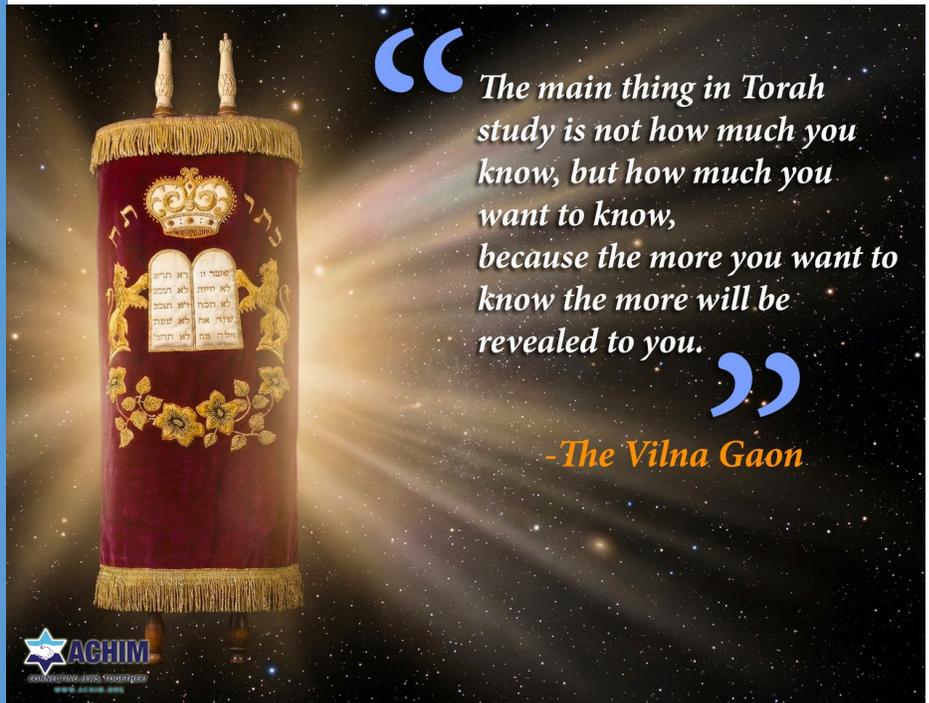
Michael was, of course, furious. Unimaginably furious. He called his fiancée, the woman he was supposed to have married. Her response stunned him. "Where were you?" she said. "I cannot believe I ever considered marrying you. You humiliated me, and I want nothing to do with you or with Jews. I hate all Jews, and I'm so glad I'll never have anything to do with you. You and all Jews are despicable."

Michael was shaken. He hadn't realized she harbored such antisemitism, and her reaction made a profound impact on him. It led him to reexamine his choices, and eventually he embraced Judaism fully and became completely frum.

After everything had settled, Yoni sent a question to Rav Zilberstein. He wrote: "This is what I did. It turned out to have a happy ending. I understand that in many cases like this, it would not end this way. But I knew my friend well, and I believed there was a good chance it would turn out well. He broke up with his fiancée and returned to Judaism. My question is: Was I permitted to do what I did? Was I allowed to trick him and cause him to miss his own wedding, with all the embarrassment that entailed? I also caused him to miss several days of work. Was I allowed to do that, and do I owe him anything for his losses—the missed wages and the humiliation?"

What do you think?"

See Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 460



“The main thing in Torah study is not how much you know, but how much you want to know, because the more you want to know the more will be revealed to you.”

-The Vilna Gaon

This is because it is, to some degree, understandable that people do not submit to Him. Without the undeniable exposure of His revelation, one may think that he exists independently of HaShem. There are many intelligent people in our current era who genuinely believe that there is no GD, and they do not submit themselves to anything higher than themselves. We are creatures who tend to believe in what we see, and many choose not to see HaShem. However, once HaShem reveals Himself in a clear and unmistakable way, demonstrating that there is no existence outside of Him, any individual who maintains his denial of HaShem will be deserving of complete destruction. At that point, we will be expected to make a full reversal of our worldview.

Much of science is built on the denial of a Creator, and even strained theories of evolution are developed to avoid

the conclusion that design implies a Designer. Scientists construct theories to protect themselves from the notion of creation. If HaShem were to appear in a completely clear and rational way, demonstrating not only that He created the world but that He has sustained nature and directed history for the past 6,000 years, how would these individuals respond? Many would still deny it. The concept has become so distant that it is treated as impossible.

HaShem wants humanity to be prepared, to be open to the possibility of submitting to Him. Only once Man is open to the idea of HaShem will that great and awesome day arrive. Only then will HaShem openly reveal His greatness and awesomeness.

Eliyahu HaNavi comes before that day to prepare us, to awaken us to the reality that is about to unfold. Even if we do not fully accept this notion before that revelation, the world will at least be ready to receive it when it comes.

Have a wonderful Shabbos HaGadol and a beautiful Pesach.



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

BOLD AS A LEOPARD: THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE WISDOM OF OUR SAGES

In the Mishnah in Pirkei Avos (5:20), Rabbi Yehuda ben Tema teaches us to be "az ka'namer", bold, brazen, and fierce like a leopard, and "gibor ka'ari", mighty and strong like a lion. At first glance, it might seem strange that the leopard gets one quality and the lion gets another. After all, aren't they both just big, powerful cats? But when you look at how these animals actually live in the wild, the distinction made by our Sages thousands of years ago turns out to be remarkably precise and wise.

Our Sages assigned *azus*, audacity, brazenness, and nerve, to the leopard. They gave *gevurah*, raw power and dominance, to the lion. Modern science and animal behavior research have discovered exactly why. Here are five ways that leopards display *azus*.

1) Standing Alone

Lions live in prides. Their strength comes from their massive size and the backup of their family unit. They are apex predators who can afford to be comfortable, sleep in the open, and roar to announce their presence. They have safety in numbers and power to spare.

Leopards are entirely different. A leopard is solitary. It has no pride, no backup, and no safety net. Every meal it catches and every threat it faces must be handled completely alone. Think about what that requires. A lion can be brave because it has fifteen relatives standing behind it. A leopard must summon that same courage with no one standing behind it at all. That takes a different kind of bravery, not strength but sheer nerve and self-reliance.

2) Punching Above Its Weight

Consider the size difference. A leopard weighs roughly 60 to 90 kilograms. A lion weighs 150 to 250 kilograms, often more than double. Yet leopards routinely take down prey far larger than themselves, including eland, wildebeest, and even young giraffes. They attack animals that logic says they have no business taking on. That is *azus* in its purest form: acting beyond what your size and standing would normally permit.

And it does not stop there. Scientists have documented numerous cases of leopards charging at lions, fighting off packs of hyenas, and flat-out refusing to give up kills to animals that vastly outweigh them. A leopard will snarl, swipe, and attack a lion rather than simply retreat. It seems to have a built-in psychological refusal to be intimidated by superior force.

3) Defying Gravity and Competitors

Because lions and hyenas will gladly steal a leopard's meal, leopards have developed a wildly audacious habit. They drag their prey straight up sheer, vertical tree trunks. A leopard can haul a carcass weighing up to twice its own body weight high into the branches, gripping the prey in its jaws while climbing. Lions cannot follow. Hyenas cannot follow. The leopard's answer to a world full of bigger, stronger competitors is not to run or give in. It is to carry its prize somewhere no one else can reach. That takes grit determination, a perfect biological display of *azus*.

4) The Buzzsaw Defense

When a leopard is cornered by a larger predator or a pride of lions, it will often flip onto its back. This might look like surrender, but it is anything but. By rolling over, the leopard frees up all four paws, turning itself into a

thrashing buzzsaw of claws. It is a fierce, defiant stance against overwhelming odds, choosing to fight with every weapon it has rather than simply cower.

Famous hunters throughout history, including Jim Corbett and Kenneth Anderson, all agreed on one point: a wounded or cornered leopard is far more dangerous than a wounded lion or even a tiger. A wounded leopard will actually stalk the hunter back, circling around to ambush the very person pursuing it. A lion may charge head-on. A leopard will scheme and then attack with fury. That is not mere strength. It is brazen, aggressive defiance.

5) Fearless Adaptability

Lions need vast, undisturbed territories and specific ecosystems to survive. Leopards are the most widespread big cat on Earth, thriving from the snowy mountains of Russia to the sprawling suburbs of Mumbai, India. In Mumbai, wild leopards routinely navigate through densely populated urban neighborhoods at night to hunt. They live among humans, sneaking into villages, taking livestock from under people's noses, and operating in spaces where no other big cat would dare to go. This is not just power. This is *chutzpah*.

Researchers at the wildlife organization Panthera have noted that leopards are unusually adaptable, especially in landscapes dominated by humans. That adaptability looks a lot like boldness because they keep functioning in places where most predators would collapse. So the *azus* of a leopard does not mean reckless aggression. It may mean fearless adaptability — the nerve to keep moving, keep hunting, and keep asserting yourself even when conditions are stacked against you.

A Different Kind of Courage

This brings us to the heart of the matter. A lion's courage is dominant and secure. It has the size, the pride, and the power. A leopard's boldness is scrappy, fiercely independent, and requires overcoming its own vulnerabilities through sheer grit. As one researcher summarized it, the leopard's special quality is not greater courage than a lion's. It is a different kind of courage: audacity without backing.

The Rama, Rabbi Moshe Isserles, explains in his commentary on Shulchan Aruch that the *azus* described in Pirkei Avos means not being ashamed before those who mock you. This maps perfectly onto the leopard. It is never the strongest animal in any ecosystem it inhabits, but it absolutely refuses to be intimidated by those who are stronger. It acts with a confidence that has nothing to do with whether it is the most powerful creature around.

A lion can afford to be brave. It is the strongest. That is *gevurah*.

A leopard is brave despite not being the strongest. That is *azus*, and that is exactly what our Sages are asking of us.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

Note: Last week we wrote that *kankantum* (called "kopper vasser" by the Mishnah Berurah) was copper sulfate, also known as blue vitriol. A sofer told me that nowadays, what is usually used is iron sulfate, which is green vitriol.

SHE TAUGHT HIM HOW TO MAKE THE PIZZA

Rabbi Mordechai Machlis shared a story about his wife, Rebbetzin Henny Machlis, at her levayah:

There was a destitute, lonely man whom Rabbi Machlis would often see at the Kosel. One day, he invited him home for a meal. That night, Henny served her homemade whole wheat pizza, and the man loved it.

He began coming back every day, asking for another slice. Finally, Henny suggested that instead of coming each time, she would teach him how to make the pizza himself. With care and patience, she showed him step by step, repeating it until he understood.

A few nights later, at three in the morning, there was loud knocking. Not on the front door, that door was always unlocked. The knocking was on their bedroom door.

Startled, Rabbi Machlis got up and asked, "Who's there?" "It's me," the man answered.

"What's wrong?"

"I forgot how to make the whole wheat pizza. I need your wife to explain it to me again."

Even Rabbi Machlis, known for his patience, felt a moment of exasperation. "At three in the morning, you need to remember how to make whole wheat pizza?"

Henny gently calmed him. "It's a test," she said. "It's from Hashem."

Then she got up, and once again, step by step, she taught him how to make the pizza.

From *Emunah with Love* and *Chicken Soup* by Artxcroll



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the truck, Rabbi Zilberstein (Chashukei Chemed, Bava Kama, p. 439) cites the Terumas HaDeshen, who says that one is allowed to use another person's animal without asking permission in order to prevent a significant loss, as long as one pays for any expenses incurred. It seems that the example given by our Sages—using a barrel of wine to save a barrel of oil—can be applied in other cases as well. However, Rabbi Zilberstein adds that this may only be done if one is absolutely certain that the animal (or, in this case, the car) will not be needed. Otherwise, it could potentially lead to a case of pikuach nefesh, since someone might need their car for an emergency.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated l'iluy nishmas
Frimit Bas Reb Michoel, Frieda Friend a"h
whose yahrzeit is on the 19th of Nissan

By the Friend and Ritholtz Families



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