

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### THE BURGLAR BARS

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion opens with the importance of having a system of adjudicating disputes in a Godly manner.

This leads us to the following true story.

Aron lived in an apartment building on the ground floor. There were a rash of burglaries and break-ins in his apartment building. One night his apartment was broken into. The



### EYE DAMAGE

This week's Parsha, Shoftim, begins with the Torah's instructions to our people to place judges and law enforcement officers at all of our gates. The simple meaning of this mitzvah is to establish a court system for every city. However, since this verse can be translated as we did, there is room for another meaning as well.

The suggestion that many commentaries give is that *gates* refer to the gates or ports of entry on our person. This would refer to our eyes, our ears, our nose and any other port of entry by which we take in information and pleasure from the outside. The implication is that we should carefully guard those gates allowing in only that information and pleasure that will be healthy for us and keep out that which will harm us.

How appropriate it is that as we welcome the month of Elul which ushers in the great holiday of Rosh Hashanah and the Days of Awe, the Torah instructs us how to prepare ourselves.

This week's event of the solar eclipse and all the warnings that accompanied it, reminded me of a story from the Chofetz Chaim. This story was related by a student of the Chofetz Chaim who was with him as he recited the early morning brachos. As the Chofetz Chaim recited the bracho of *Elokei neshama*

thieves forced open the widow and robbed him. After that incident, Aron decided to install bars on his windows. The bars that he installed protected his windows, but they had vertical and horizontal posts.

After Aron's upstairs neighbor saw the new bars, he complained that the bars reach high up close the second story and can now allow people to climb onto his porch on the second floor. After Aron looked at it again he could not deny the fact that now a burglar can use the bars on his window to climb to the second floor porch.

However, he argued that he already paid for the installation and he was doing what he could to protect himself. The neighbor argued that it was wrong for him to protect himself in a way that can facilitate the robbery of someone else.

Who do you think is correct. Can Aron protect himself with security measures that make it easier for another to be robbed?



*Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you do not have; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for.*



*he let out a deep sigh, the kind of sigh that one emits when reminded of something sad.*

In this bracho we acknowledge the great kindness HaKadosh baruch Hu extends us each morning by returning our souls back to us. At night, when we lay down to sleep, we return our tired soul to Him. He then freshens it up takes away the tiredness and perhaps some of the unhappiness and then returns it the next morning refreshed and ready to go.

The student asked the Sage why did he sigh, is it not a truly inspiring and uplifting bracho?

The Chofetz Chaim responded; in this bracho we mention how Hakadosh baruch Hu will eventually take our soul

away and will return it at the time of the resurrection. The Chofetz Chaim continued, when you give your jacket that is filthy dirty to the cleaners you can expect it to be cleaned when it will be returned to you. However, if the sleeve is missing you cannot expect the jacket to be returned with a new sleeve on it. As we travel through life we confront challenges which endanger our soul and we can, G.D forbid, lose a spiritual limb in the process. Those missing limbs will not be replaced when our souls are returned to us at the resurrection; they will be eternally missing. Imagine! For the rest of my eternity I will be missing my tongue! That is why I sigh.

As the signs and flyers were being distributed warning and cautioning everybody of the tremendous consequence that can result from looking directly at the eclipse, it reminded me of this powerful lesson the Chofetz Chaim taught his student how careful we must be with what we allow our eyes to see and what we allow our ears to hear and we allow our tongues to say.

There is nobody distributing such flyers and the consequence is far more reaching than staring at the eclipse. Even a momentary glance of inappropriate images can cause much damage to our eyes and to other parts of our souls. The consequence cannot be overstated.



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE PIPEFISH

This little creature is somewhat like a seahorse, but it is shaped like a tiny vertical pipe, 1/4 of an inch wide and 6 inches long. The pipefish can change its colors from brown to green to match the grass it is in.

It has special cells which send a signal to the brain, which then studies the message to determine the exact color of green, etc. Then a signal is sent to the pigment glands in the skin. The dark green pigment gland squirts out some dark green pigment. Or several glands will squirt out a combination of colors to provide an exact color-match to the background! That entire process takes about 20 seconds. Many other fish, as well as some reptiles and amphibians, can also do this.

Ocean currents move and sway the eelgrass, so the little pipe fish must move

and sway with it also. Sensitive to grass movements, the fish sways back and forth with the grass.

Because the eelgrass is vertical, the pipefish swims vertically also, but if it wants to do so, it can just as easily swim horizontally. Only the pipefish and the sea horse routinely swim vertically.

Like the seahorse, the pipefish cannot open its mouth. It only has a small hole opening, so it must suck in its food.

When mating time arrives, the female swims up to the male and lays her eggs in a pouch on his stomach. He carries the eggs till they hatch. The same process occurs with sea horses.

In the case of the seahorse, the female inserts eggs in the pouch of the male,

## GRATITUDE TO THE LANDLORD'S

### GRANDCHILDREN

In the beginning of his married life, Rav Shach and his family rented an apartment in Yerushalayim from Reb Alter Shub. Although Rav Shach paid rent for his living quarters, he nonetheless felt gratitude towards the Shub family for conferring this benefit to him. Rav Shach considered it his duty to treat the Shub family exceptionally well, even extending this treatment to the family's offspring.

Many years after Rav Shach moved to Bnei Brak, it happened that some of Reb Alter Shub's grandchildren found themselves in Bnei Brak late one evening, without means of transportation available to take them home to Jerusalem.

Rav Shach was overjoyed to host them in his home for the night as a way of expressing his gratitude to his "landlord," as he referred to Reb Alter.

Rebbetzin Guttel Shach later quietly told the guests that Rav Shach had been planning to go out somewhere that night, but because of the mitzvah of hospitality and Hakaras



ACHIM IN A NUTSHELL

*"Veyached l'vaveinu l'ahava es Shimecha."*

"Please bring our hearts together so that we can love Your Name".

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