

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE LOST BABY GIFT

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha, Korach, reminds us of the importance of avoiding machlokes, or arguments. This leads us to the following true story.

There was once a seminary class taught by a teacher named Mrs. Katz. As the school year was drawing to a close, Mrs. Katz had a baby. Shoshana, one of the girls in the class, had an idea that the class should chip in together to buy a baby gift for their teacher. All thirty girls in the class agreed to chip in to buy the gift for their beloved teacher's newborn.

The class gave the money to Shoshana, and entrusted her with the task of purchasing the baby gift. Shoshana found a wonderful baby outfit that she believed would make a delightful present. Later

YOU DO NOT TAKE IT WITH YOU

The uprising against Moshe that Korach began needed to be suppressed immediately and that could only happen with the elimination of Korach. This is why Moshe davened that Korach be swallowed up. However, why did Moshe ask for such an odd death? What difference would it make whether he died in a plague or by fire or in some other manner?

The man who is driven by greed has an intense desire to attain something that is not his. If this person believes in GD and recognizes that he cannot have anything that GD does not give him then he will convince himself that this is what GD wants; that he should attain the thing that he desires.

This is the story of our Parsha. Korach had an intense desire, albeit a spiritual desire, to be the Kohein Gadol. In order for him to believe that this is what HaShem wanted, he needed to convince himself as well as the nation whom he wished to lead, that Moshe Rabbeinu spoke on his own and did not truly represent the Word of HaShem. For Korach's success it was imperative that he discredit the authority with which HaShem endowed Moshe.

How did Korach convince himself that HaShem really wanted him to be the Kohein Gadol? Our Sages tell us that Korach saw that Shmuel Hanvi would descend from him. The prophet Shmuel was equivalent in spiritual greatness to Moshe and Aaron combined. Korach understood that if he was truly not deserving to be the Kohein then his sin would be so outstanding that no descendant of his could ever rise to such a high spiritual level. He therefore concluded that he must be truly deserving of that position. Of course we know that Korach was blinded by his greed and could not think clearly. The ques-

that day, she happened to run into a friend who was heading to the same neighborhood as their teacher. Shoshana saw this as an opportunity and asked her friend to deliver the present to Mrs. Katz's home.

A few years later, Shoshana and her friend crossed paths again in the US. During their conversation, Shoshana discovered that her friend had completely forgotten about the gift. The outfit had been left covered in her car and had ultimately been thrown out.

Shoshana was aghast at the realization that she had collected money from her classmates to purchase a gift that never reached its intended recipient. She found herself grappling with a difficult dilemma. Should she contact all the girls, confess the mishap, and try to return the money? Should she perhaps simply ask them to be mochel (forgive) her?

Alternatively, should she buy a new gift for the teacher, because the baby is now much older and a baby outfit wouldn't be appropriate anymore? But perhaps that was not a good solution because that was not what the classmates designated their money for.

Perhaps Shoshana should simply send the teacher the money, and the teacher can do what she pleases with it. But then again, that is not what the students designated the money for.

What do you think Shoshana should do next?



tion therefore must be asked; if Korach was so filled with greed, how, in fact, did Shmuel Havi descend from him?

When a person dies his qualities are transferred to his offspring. These qualities include both his positive and his negative qualities. In fact, this is exactly what Korach understood, that if he was truly filled with unwarranted greed, his descendants could never rise to such great spiritual levels.

The Sfas Emes explains that the qualities of a person are inherited by his offspring only if the person and when the person dies in this world. However, if the person does not die in this world, those qualities remain with him. Moshe understood as well that Shmuel was destined to descend from Korach. Moshe therefore did not want Korach to die in this world because his offspring would carry on the legacy of greed. Therefore, Moshe, in the interest of Shmuel

Hanavi, davened that Korach be swallowed alive and his greed with him so that there should be no trace of that greed.

When applying this principle taught by the Sfas Emes, we must be overwhelmed by the spiritual greatness of every Jew living today, whether they are observant or otherwise. Consider the scores of generations that preceded us. In every generation so many of our people perished in spiritual plagues. Throughout the ages many movements challenged the way of Torah and her principles. Some movements came from the outside in the form of Christian and Moslem pressures and many came from within such as Communism, Haskalah, Reform and so on. Many of our brethren fell by their wayside and have no trace of them left. Anyone who is a Jew today whose family still identifies themselves as being Jewish has ancestors who fought those waves of destruction. They were truly great people. If all those grandparents were able to withstand those pressures it tells us of their incredible spiritual fortitude. Their grandchildren are the heirs of that spiritual fortune.

There is no way to overstate the spiritual potential of every Jew you meet.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE SARCASTIC FRINGEHEAD

Allow me to introduce you to a fish that has one of the most strange names in the world, and also one of the most unique appearances. Please meet the Sarcastic Fringehead. Yes, that is its real name.

Located off the Pacific coast of North America, these fish are usually less than 10 inches long. They are small but very hardy saltwater fish. They are found in the Pacific waters from San Francisco to central Baja California in the USA, living at depths of 10 – 250 feet. The Sarcastic Fringehead is elegant and slender, mostly scaleless with large pectoral fins. They are generally brown in color. Their swimming consists of short, fast, dart-like movements. At first glance, they're not much to look at. But don't be too quick to judge—these guys are fascinating once they “open up.”

Let's start with its fascinating name, Sarcastic Fringehead. “Fringehead” refers to the frills lining its forehead. Scientists called it sarcastic not because of its withering sense of humor, but for its propensity to lash out at anything threatening its nest — even humans. They were referring to an ancient Greek word that means “stripping off flesh.”

“Sarcastic” came to English in the 1500s from the Greek *sarkasmos*, meaning “a sneer, jest, taunt, mockery.” But that word comes from an earlier Greek word *sarkazein*, which literally meant “to strip off the flesh” (with the word *sarx* meaning “flesh”). The idea is that a sarcastic remark is a biting humor that reveals the intention “beneath the skin,” or beneath the literal meaning of the words. In the case of our fish, it simply means that this fish is capable of stripping off flesh with its sharp teeth.

Sarcastic Fringeheads are unique for being fiercely protective of their homes. The defining personality trait of these fish is that they're aggressively territorial. They fight off anything that comes too close, no matter the size of the intruder. They have sharp, needlelike teeth they can use to attack their targets, and they don't tend to back down from a fight. Many divers have reported being harassed by a grumpy fringehead after getting too close to its home. Thankfully, their small size means they're not a threat to humans, so long as you don't poke your fingers where they don't belong.

The fascinating part about these fish is how they fight. Once one of them decides an animal has gotten too close, it'll warn them by opening its mouth as wide as possible. Suddenly, this little brown fish gets much more interesting. The open mouth may be as much as four times its closed size. When they open their mouths, you'll see them parachute their mouths outward like a lion's mane. The display exposes a curtain of flesh that beams with yellow out-

lines, indigo tie-dye, and an ultraviolet glow. The mouth's intimidating coloration, combined with the extreme nature of its size, allows it to establish dominance.

And while watching them scare off animals much larger than themselves is impressive, the best part is seeing two fringeheads fight over territory. Rather than trying to bite the other fish, the two fringeheads will move from intimidation to mouth-wrestling. Opening as wide as they can, the fringeheads will throw their mouths together in an effort to see whose jaw is larger. They wrestle by pressing their distended mouths against each other. They press against each other until one is able to bite the other's head. This allows them to determine which is the larger fish, which establishes dominance.

Once a winner is established, the bigger of the two makes himself at home while the smaller one swims off to find a new shelter.

These fish will make homes out of just about anything: shells, crevices in rock or clay, and even human trash like bottles and jars, soda cans, or plastic snorkel tubes.

Why is the competition for shelter so fierce? Female Sarcastic Fringeheads choose males with the most desirable homes as their mates. This makes competition between males particularly intense. What is a desirable home? To a Sarcastic Fringehead, a high-quality home is a secure space of just the right size, positioned in an area with a dependable food source. These are few and far between, so fringeheads aggressively defend their territories against other ocean creatures and even human divers.

Sarcastic fringeheads are caring fathers. Once a female has found a male with a desirable territory, she lays her eggs inside the male's home and then leaves. The male then guards the eggs on his own until they hatch.

During squid spawning season, Sarcastic Fringeheads eat large numbers of squid eggs.

The skin stretched around the elongated jawbones of the sarcastic fringehead is known as the buccopalatal membrane, and has been observed to reflect ultraviolet light. The yellow outer edges of their mouths are also fluorescent, and it is thought that the brightness of these pigments relates to the fitness of each individual.

Thank you Hashem for Your amazing world!

THIS WAY, THE NEW ALMANAH WILL REALIZE THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT HER AND ARE SINCERELY CONCERNED FOR HER WELFARE

The father-in-law of an avreich who attended R' Aharon Leib Shteinman's shiurim passed away at a young age. After each shiur, R' Aharon Leib would ask the young man, "How is your mother-in-law feeling? Is everything well with her?"

When this had gone on for a while, the avreich asked his mother-in-law if she or her late husband knew R' Aharon Leib. "No," she replied, "I think he is probably confusing me with someone else."

More time went by, and R' Aharon Leib continued to inquire about her welfare. The avreich finally asked him if he knew his mother-in-law or her family.

R' Aharon Leib replied, "I don't know them at all. I heard that your father-in-law passed away at a young age, and I feel pain for his almanah. I inquire about her after the shiur; hopefully, you will tell her that I am asking. Until now she had a husband who inquired daily about her welfare, but she has lost that. I was also hoping that if a stranger asks how she is faring, you would also inquire, or ask your wife to ask about her well-being. This way, the new almanah will realize that there are people who care about her and are sincerely concerned for her welfare."

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THE ANSWER

Regarding the question of Itamar's rubix cube which he tossed in the garage and was later retrieved by Nesanel the answer is as follows. Since these boys are below Bar Mitzvah, they are unable to relinquish their ownership by simple hefker and Nesanel must return it to Itamar. However, if the garbage can was a large dumpster where people do not usually go to retrieve anything, it is considered lost from everybody. Therefore, even if it was a katan who tossed it into the dumpster, the rubix cube would be considered hefker.

This week's TableTalk is dedication to the memory of
Shmuel Fleischman z'l
שמואל יודל בן בנימין יעקב
By his family



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