



## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### SHMASHED!

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha, Pinchas, the Torah states that Pinchas was blessed with the "covenant of peace". You might wonder how that is a blessing. Our Sages teach that it was actually the most significant blessing because having shalom, or peace, is the vessel that leads to all other blessings.

The importance of peace brings us to the following true story.

There was once a woman named Rachel who lived in Israel. She worked at a school during the academic year and, due to her employment, was permitted to borrow a very expensive camera that belonged to her school for the summer.

One day, during the summer, Rachel



### WHOSE PAIN IS GREATER?

This week we will read Yirmiyahu's first prophecy to his people. This prophecy is so drastic and so terrifying that HaShem actually prepares Yirmiyahu not to cower before and not to cave under the pressures of the officers to whom he will address. Yirmiyahu is going to deliver HaShem's argument against the Jewish people. He will warn them of the impending destruction of the State and the doom that will befall her people. The consequence will be so catastrophic that one would imagine that HaShem has completely abandoned His people. There will be such a state of despair that the survivors will question if their destiny has terminated.

Therefore, to address the concern of complete despair HaShem instructs Yirmiyahu to begin his reprimand to his nation with remarkable introductory remarks. "So says HaShem, I still remember the kindness of your youth and the love of our first encounter. How you followed Me into the desert without questioning, into a land where no plants grow. Israel is sanctified to HaShem, the choice of His produce. Anyone who dares eat them, evil will befall them. So says HaShem!" Once this statement is proclaimed Yirmiyahu begins his unending prophecy of doom.

Imagine peeking into a home where you see a person tied down to the top of a table surrounded by folks wearing masks with knives in their hands engaged in removing the leg of the victim. We would probably assume one of two possibilities; either these are cruel sadistic characters or they are physicians who are saving the life of the 'victim' by removing an infected

took the camera to the zoo with her friends, hoping to capture some memorable moments. During a particularly photogenic moment, she handed the camera over to one of her friends to take a group picture. However, just as the friend was about to take the shot, she decided that she also wanted to be in the picture. So, this friend passed the camera to a random stranger to take the shot.

The stranger was willing and took several photos, much to the delight of everyone. However, disaster struck when the stranger accidentally dropped the camera, and it hit the floor hard.

This accident led to a complicated question: who should bear the cost of the damaged camera?

Was it the stranger who physically dropped it?

Or was it the friend who initially had the camera and then handed it over to the stranger?

Perhaps the responsibility fell on Rachel, as she was the one who borrowed the camera in the first place. However, some might argue that she was protected under a special exemption called "baalav imo" due to her status as a school employee.

Who do you think is responsible for paying for the camera? Rachel, Rachel's friend, or the stranger who dropped it?



leg.

If we see that the main surgeon is crying as he performs his act of amputation we might assume that this is the father of the 'victim' and he has no choice but to remove his son's leg. His amputation is perhaps more painful to him than to his son. The pain of removing the leg of his son is beyond description. We can also be certain that there was no way to save his son's life other than this amputation, for surely the alternate option would have been taken.

So as we begin the mourning period of the destruction of our State and the demise of our people, HaShem wants us to know before anything else that He remembers the days of old when we demonstrated our absolute love of Him and our absolute trust in Him. He also tells us that

anyone who will abuse us will pay dearly for that.

Before we are told of the unspeakable terror that will face us, HaShem sets up our perspective that His love for us is overwhelming. We should not despair. His love is never ending. Even in our worst moments He remembers that love. HaShem wants us to appreciate that the punishments are meant only for our best interests. There was no way to save us other than through this awful golus. As painful as the golus will be, we must remember that it is that much more painful for Him. When we cry from our pain we must not forget His. His pain is greater than ours.

May we merit to mourn for HaShem and then merit to see His grand return speedily in our days.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE FLOWER MANTIS

Hashem has given each creature the tools to eat and to survive being eaten. Let's look at a fascinating creature that has been given a remarkable set of camouflage that is used for both defense as well as offense. It is used to both escape from predators as well as to catch and eat prey. This dual-purpose camouflage is called aggressive mimicry.

Look at the picture above, it is a beautiful praying mantis that looks just like a flower. Beautiful, no? This stunning beauty is a reason why many species of flower mantises are popular as pets. They're rare, exotic, and beautiful. There are over 40 species of flower mantises, each with its own unique coloration and pattern. The flower mantis's camouflage is so effective that it can fool even experienced entomologists.

But at the same time, this beauty masks its stealthy danger. Flower mantises are praying mantis species that use aggressive mimicry. These mantises have specific colorations and behaviors that mimic flowers in their surrounding habitats. This helps them not only use it to attract prey, but avoid predators as well.

They use this camouflage to catch prey in the following way. They position themselves on a plant and either insert themselves within the flower or on the foliage of the plant until a prey insect comes within range. They catch their prey by snatching it out of the air with their front legs and immediately and mercilessly devour it. In another ingenious method of hunting, this mantis's coloration has been shown to mimic tropical flowers thus attracting pollinator insects and the mantis catches them when they look to pollinate the flower.

Many of the pollinator insects that the mantis eats do not see colors the way we do. They are sensitive to UV light so the flowers which absorb UV light look blue to these insects, while the surrounding area appears red. In another display of the brilliance of Hashem's design, what is truly incredible is that the flower mantises also absorb UV light the same way that real flowers do, so that the flower mantis appears blue just like the flower, which contrasts against the foliage in the background that appears red.

Not only do they simply use camouflage to hide, but they also use it in the following ingenious way. They have a small spot on their abdomen which resembles a fly. The mantis climbs up the twigs of the plant and stands, imitating a flower. It then sways from side to side. Soon small flies land on and around the mantis, attracted by the small black spot on the end of its abdomen, which resembles a fly. But the mantis does not care about these small flies. These landing flies then attract larger house flies, which land nearby. The mantis then quickly seizes and eats them.

There is another way that the mantis' lure prey. Juvenile mantises secrete a mixture of the chemicals 3HOA and 10HDA, which imitates the pheromones of oriental bumblebees. This then attracts the bees which are one of their top food items.

Another fascinating detail is that orchid mantises can trigger slow color changes when they detect something new in their environment. They have the ability to change the colors of their "flowers". Another interesting point is that the mantises don't look like a specific flower. They look generic, this is by design of course. By having a generic color palette that suggests "flower" rather than an identical match to a living species, orchid mantises are able to pull in many types of prey instead of a specific type that feeds on a specific orchid.

While flower mantises' primary diet is other insects, they also have the ability to take down animals much larger than themselves, including frogs, and even rodents, lizards, and birds! They typically only do so if they are very hungry. How can they take down animals that are much larger than them? Orchid mantises have tiny teeth that they use to rip their prey into pieces; this helps them to take down animals two or three times their size. They also have spiky hairs on their forelegs for the same purpose. What happens if those teeth bite a person? Flower mantises are not venomous, but they can deliver a painful bite.

Flower mantises also have another strange eating habit. Females will eat the males if they are hungry! The females are much bigger than males and so when they are hungry they mercilessly eat their males.

## HAVE YOU EVER PULLED ME OVER TO COMPLIMENT MY DRIVING?

A police officer once stopped Rav Shlomo Rothenberg, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Mountaindale Yeshiva, on Mountaindale's Woodridge Road. "Officer," Rav Shlomo began, "I've driven down this road thousands of times. Have you ever pulled me over to compliment my driving instead of giving me a ticket? You see, I'm a teacher, and I know that I can't merely rebuke my students. I must also encourage and compliment them!" Rav Shlomo's sincere words made an impression, and the officer waived the ticket, allowing Rav Shlomo to continue on his way.

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A student recalled, "Rav Shlomo taught me something remarkable: 'Do you know the difference between a college professor and a rebbi? One difference is that a professor won't teach his students everything he knows, because he feels a need to be above them. A rebbi, on the other hand, will teach everything he knows to his students, because his greatest desire is for them to one day surpass him!' Another difference is that a professor's job is to impart knowledge to his students. But the role of a rebbi is to forge a deep and lasting connection with them."

"And what's the difference between the college student and the yeshivah student?" Rav Shlomo continued. 'Have you ever met a college graduate reviewing the material he learned in college, just for the sake of knowledge itself? Never! He will only review the material he needs for his career. The yeshivah student, on the other hand, will review what he learned in yeshivah over and over again for the rest of his life. Because he is in love with the Torah!'"

From You Made My Life! By Rabbi Nachman Rothenberg. Published By Israel Bookshop and reprinted with their permission



## THE ANSWER

Regarding the competing snack machines; If there is enough business for two stores one may open a competitive store alongside an existing store. However it is minhag chasidus not to do so. The Pischei Choshen (CM 89:1) argues that in a large market it is absolutely acceptable to do so, not even minhag chasidus. Therefore, Reuven acted inappropriately but cannot be required to pay since it was only grama. In dinei Shamayim he will be held responsible to pay.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of Benyomin Nusbaum  
בנימין בן נתן ז"ל  
Beloved father and beloved grandfather

An activist who would never compromise his erlichkeit.  
By Mrs. Suzette Munk and family



Brad E. Kauffman Esquire and Kauffman and Forman P.A.  
specializing in corporate and construction law,  
estates, wills and trusts and business litigation.

