

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### YOU'RE FIRED!

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion discusses the great dangers of machlokes, of having an argument. Engaging in a machlokes is actually a Torah prohibition, as it says, "You shall not be like Korach and his congregation." (Bamidbar 17:5).

Instead, we should do all that we can to pursue peace, harmony, and compromise.

This leads us to the following true story.

Yanky was a property manager for a successful real estate firm. For some reason Yanky never had great chemistry with Nachum, his manager. One day while Yanky was sitting with several of his coworkers in the office, Nachum approached Yanky. "Yanky, it's just not working out with you here. Please pack up all your stuff and find a new place to work."

Just like that, Yanky was fired. No warning, no explanation, and in public. Not only was Yanky out of work, he was deeply humiliated.

Yanky felt very broken. Initially, he felt enormous resentment towards the company that fired him. But after a while, with the gentle and supportive encouragement



### SKIN DEEP

In this week's Parsha, Korach, we find the cousin of Moshe challenging Moshe's authority which by extension is a challenge to the authority of HaShem and His Torah.

After the people stood behind Korach in his rebellion against Moshe, HaShem tells Moshe that He will destroy the nation instantly. Ramban explains that although they were not full participants in Korach's rebellion, nevertheless, they were lacking in their trust of Moshe and his mission. As such, they were no longer deserving to continue in their mission as the people of the Torah. Moshe undertook his recurring job to advocate for his people and succeeded in exonerating them before HaShem.

The question is how he accomplished such a feat. They were clearly guilty of the stated sin, not accepting Moshe's authority. If not, why would HaShem wish to punish them on that account? If so, how did Moshe succeed in changing HaShem's mind?

The Ramban answers this question with a very wide ranging principle which is applicable to ourselves and to others on a daily basis.

The weight and value of our deeds are determined by the intention that went into doing that deed. Let us take for example the story of Joe and Jack. When Joe finally gives in to Jack's untiring efforts to convince him to smoke on the Shabbos and they indeed both smoke, the weight and consequence of those two sins are not equal. Although they both smoked the same size cigarette at the same time, nevertheless,

of his wife, he decided that he wasn't going to feel sorry for himself. With his knowledge of the real estate industry, Yanky started a company of his own.

It wasn't easy. But with hard work and enormous Siyata diShmaya, Divine assistance, within five years Yanky was the CEO of a very successful real estate firm. He had a large staff and his firm held close to a billion dollars in assets.

One day, as Yanky was perusing a pile of job applications, he saw a familiar name. It was Nachum, the same Nachum who was his old boss. The same Nachum who caused him such trauma and pain. It was clear that Nachum had fallen on hard times himself and he was now applying for a new position in the new successful firm.

Yanky asked the HR manager who conducted the initial job interview about Nachum. The HR manager said that Nachum appeared to be very experienced and qualified. He was equally qualified as the other applicants.

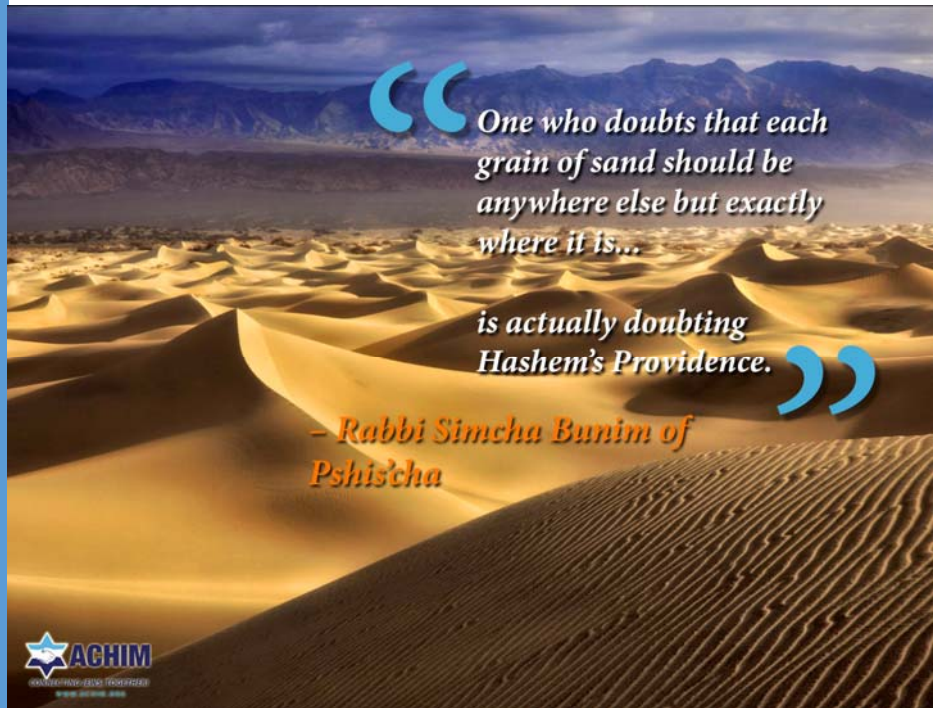
Yanky had the following dilemma. Yanky did not hold a grudge against Nachum. He forgave him. In fact, he felt gratitude to Nachum because he led Yanky to his current success. There is a concept in the Gemara that if one has to help two people load their packages, and both are equally needy, one should help the one he dislikes first in order to overcome his evil inclination (Baba Metzia 32b).

In this case, should he specifically hire Nachum to demonstrate his complete forgiveness for what happened? Or would it be wise not to hire Nachum? Perhaps when Nachum realizes who the owner of the company is, it might be embarrassing to him and to Yanky and bring a feeling of awkwardness to the workplace. And even if Nachum already knew who the owner was, perhaps that would bring feelings of awkwardness into the team. Perhaps it would be best to hire someone who did not have such baggage and history.

What do you think? If Nachum is qualified for the job, should Yanky go out of his way to hire him or not?

See Hebrew V'harev Na Volume three page 282.

If you have a true mitzvah dilemma that you would like to share, please email it to [rabiweiner@gmail.com](mailto:rabiweiner@gmail.com)



their intentions were not identical. Jack thoroughly enjoyed his cigarette with no compunctions. Joe, on the other hand, really wished that Jack had not convinced him. He may even regret having anything to do with Jack. Joe's cigarette was smoked with much regret. The level of intent is a major factor in the equation that establishes the degree of the sin. When the level of intent is only on the surface it carries much less weight than when that level finds itself in the deeper recesses of the person's soul.

Ramban explains Moshe's success in altering HaShem's verdict to destroy the people was because Moshe was able to shift the weight of that sin onto the shoulders of Korach and his band of cronies. Korach and his co-conspirators were passionately intent on infiltrating the minds of the people. The nation who followed Korach were actually not convinced that Moshe was wrong, they were just under the influence of Korach. While it was true

that the people were very wrong in their standing behind Korach, nevertheless, their sin was only skin deep. In the deeper recesses of their soul they truly trusted Moshe.

From time to time we encounter folks whom we judge as being less perfect than ourselves. When we bear in mind the influences that impacted those folks we can appreciate that they might be very honorable people deep inside. The behavior they display is only skin deep - deeper inside they are beautiful people. When we consider how significant that factor impacts the overall equation, we can reevaluate those folks and we may actually come to admire them.

From time to time we encounter within ourselves a shortcoming that needs to be corrected. We might judge ourselves quite harshly and even lower our self esteem because of this shortcoming. However, when considering the factors that influence our behavior we realize that deep inside we are quite perfect, this problem is only skin deep. While this does not free us from our obligation to correct the shortcoming, nevertheless, it elevates our self esteem. We can respect ourselves knowing that we are not defined by our actions only.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### BUILDING A NEST OF BUBBLES

Anabantoid fish, which include Labyrinth fish, Gouramies, Betta, and the Siamese fighting fish, are unique. These fish can breathe underwater through their gills, but they can also obtain oxygen directly from the air. They have a special organ called the labyrinth organ that allows them to take in oxygen directly from the air, instead of taking it from the water through the use of gills. The labyrinth organ helps the inhaled oxygen to be absorbed into the bloodstream. Because they can inhale the air around them, these fish can survive for a short period of time out of water as long as they stay moist.

Anabantoid fish are also known for their unique bubble-nesting behavior. As the name suggests, the bubble nests are floating bubbles coated with oral mucus from the males. With their special air breathing lungs, the males gulp in air from the water's surface, and blow bubbles, coating each one with a sticky secretion from his mouth. Blowing them up into a pile, he gradually makes a nest out of a floating raft of bubbles. He will do this in rapid succession, sometimes for hours, until the nest is complete. Soon the little raft or floating nest is ready. Bubble nests are built even when not in the presence of a female though often a female swimming past will trigger the frantic construction of the nest. Males will build bubble nests of various sizes and thicknesses, depending on the male's territory and personality. Some males build constantly, some occasionally, some when introduced to a female. Some nests will be large, some small, some thick. Bigger males build larger bubble nests. Large bubble nests are able to handle more eggs and larval fish and can thus be handled only by larger males.

In the wild, Anabantoid fish first establish their territory through combat with other males. Once he's staked out his territory, the winner begins build-

ing his floating bubble nest.

The female comes and lays eggs, which he then blows into the nest. Two or three days later they hatch while he continues to guard and defend them vigorously. Typically, the male bubble nesters stay nearby to guard the nests and constantly retrieve any eggs and baby fish that fall from the nest. The male is a good father, taking sole responsibility for raising the young spawn as a single dad. He vigilantly guards the nest until the eggs hatch one to two days after spawning. The young fish, also known as fry, have special cells along their bodies that keep them attached to the nest. In the wild, bubble nests attract infusorians, microscopic organisms that serve to feed the newborn anabantoids. The fry will stay in the nest, watched over by their father, until they are old enough to swim away in search of a more substantial meal.

Most bubble nests are found in shallow and marginal areas of water. These areas are typically slow water habitats with dense vegetation. Water in these areas is often differentiated by having a higher temperature, lower salinity, oxygen level and alkalinity (e.g. acidic).

In contrast to bubble nesters, some fish species from fast-flowing waters are mouthbrooders and do not build bubble nests. In these species, males hold the eggs and fry in their mouths. They hold the eggs in their mouth for about a week to 10 days! Only after that do they release the free-swimming fry.

Thank you HaShem for showing us such displays of Your Wisdom!

## THE LEAST I CAN DO TO DEMONSTRATE MY HAKARAS HATOV IS TO PROVIDE THEM WITH SOME FINANCIAL BENEFIT

A car pulled up to the pump at the gas station. The passengers, one of whom was Harav Chaim Kreisworth, zt"l, took the opportunity to use the gas station's restroom.

After using the facilities, Rav Kreisworth then went into the little gas station shop and bought a can of Coke.

The others were somewhat puzzled by his behavior. Rav Kreisworth almost never drank soda; it was out of character for him buy a can of Coke.

When Rav Kreisworth saw their puzzled expressions, he explained as follows:

"I have hakaras hatov to the gas station owner for allowing me the use of the facilities," he explained. "The least I can do to demonstrate my hakaras hatov is to provide them with some financial benefit."

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### THE ANSWER

Regarding the question of whether it would be okay to leave his father's name off the invitation, Rav Zilberstein answered that it would be forbidden to cause pain and embarrassment to his father by leaving off his name. Correction: Last week we wrote Rav Nissim Karelitz Zt"l. Instead we should have written Rav Nissim Karelitz Shlit"a. May Hashem bless him with many more long and healthy years.

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