

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



TAKING BLOOD TO CATCH A THIEF

BY RABBI YITZI WEINER

This week's Parsha discusses the feud between Korach and Moshe. The Torah gives us a prohibition not to engage in a feud like Korach did. There is a similar prohibition not to cause physical pain to another person. This leads us to the following dilemma.

There was once a string of robberies, all occurring in the same neighborhood, in a town in Israel. One morning, a shopkeeper opened his store and noticed that someone had been there the previous night. Suddenly he heard the breaking of glass in the rear of the shop. He ran to the back of the



BREATH TAKING!

This week's Parsha, Korach, introduces us to Moshe and Aharon's cousin, Korach. Korach was an enigma. From one side we know that Korach was a great person. He was both a Torah scholar and a man of much spiritual greatness. On the other side, however, we know him to have been a man of much arrogance. His arrogance had reached such a level that he actually challenged the veracity of Moshe's integrity with the intent to advance his position. Every mitzvah that Moshe commanded us as well as the appointments that Moshe made as well every word that Moshe included in the Torah were all by the word of HaKadosh baruch Hu. With Korach's challenge he was casting doubt on the entire legitimacy of Moshe's word. This would in turn throw the entire Torah into question.

Let us attempt to understand the point of Korach's mistake.

The entire nation of Israel experienced the most prophetic vision that Man has ever had; they received the Torah at Mount Sinai through a revelation of HaKadosh baruch Hu that transcended anything that Man could possibly conceive. No man that has walked on this earth could ever comprehend the revelation that HaShem revealed to us at the giving of the Torah. Korach, an accomplished man of spirituality even before the giving of the Torah, recognized that every single member of the Jewish people stands on an extremely high spiritual level. For if that were not true, the people could not have had such an experience.

This notion, that every member of the Jewish nation carries within them an extremely high level of kedusha (sanctity) is true. However, the following was Korach's fatal mistake. Nobody, even Aharon, the High Priest, has achieved that elevated level on their own merits. That level is only the achievement of the Nation of Israel. Even the Nation of Israel itself could not have accomplished this level on its own merit. It was in combination with the merit of our forefathers. The reason every member of our nation was able to experience the revelation at Sinai was because every person

store to catch the thief but the culprit got away. As he got closer to the broken window he saw it was covered with blood. It was clear that the thief had received a significant injury while leaving. He quickly called the police. They arrived promptly, and were convinced that this thief was the perpetrator behind all of the other robberies that had recently taken place in the neighborhood. Finding blood on the window could be a huge breakthrough if they could use it as forensic evidence to track down the thief. They had an idea. They would go to the local hospitals and see if anyone was admitted with significant lacerations. They would then require blood to be drawn from all of those patients and see whose blood matched the blood on the window.

Some people objected. "It is a sin to hurt someone (chavala). Drawing blood unnecessarily from innocent people is forbidden," they said. However, not everyone was convinced. "We can catch a criminal who has been causing so many people harm. Its for the greater good to carry out this investigation We will stop further damage."

According to the Torah, who is right? Is it permissible to require innocent people to have blood drawn, in order to catch a thief? See *Ve-harev Na Volume Three page 92*



“A chassid commented on R’ Moshe Leib of Sassov’s depth of compassion to share the suffering of others. “What do you mean the suffering of others?” R’ Moshe Leib asked. “It is my suffering.””



there identified themselves as members of the Jewish people. In that context they achieved those lofty levels of kedusha. That exalted level was not the personal accomplishment of any single member. It was the accomplishment of the nation as a unit

Korach, however, thought his experience at Sinai was his own accomplishment. He therefore argued that every member of our nation is capable of being a Priest.

The model that best illustrates this point is the picture of a great nobleman who chose a beautiful woman as his wife. After being chosen she has a dream in which she saw all her body parts arguing who is the most worthy to communicate with this nobleman. The heart argued that it is he who captured that love of the nobleman while the brain argued that he is the one best suited to communicate since he is the source of the woman's intellect. The nose argued that he is the one who got the nobleman to notice her striking beauty. This went on until her breath argued that since he is the one who provides oxygen to all the organs and none of them could survive without a moment of breath, he

should represent the woman. All the organs argued that the breath is not even a member of her organs, how could he represent them? To which the breath responded that no single organ can properly represent her since each one is so limited in the scope of the totality of the woman. The only one to represent her must be someone that transcends the singularity of the individual organs.

Aharon was chosen because of his humility. Aharon was able to see beyond himself and recognized that HaKadosh baruch Hu's relationship with His beloved people was not with any individual. It was a relationship with the totality of the nation.

Korach, on the other hand, was short-sighted and could not see past himself. He saw HaKadosh baruch Hu's relationship through his own lens and therefore thought that he was just as worthy as Aharon. He, in fact, may have been on a higher personal level than Aharon but that was of no consequence. He could not represent the nation in her totality.

The beauty of our people is that every member carries within them all the greatness of our people. We need only to attach ourselves to the totality of our nation and to perceive ourselves a members of the larger unit. With that we can raise our heads high and carry the pride of being the most beautiful people that HaKadosh baruch Hu chose to be His Own.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

Butterflies of the genus *Heliconius* only lay their eggs on the tropical vine, the *Passiflora*, which is the passion-flower plant. The vine has features which appear to mimic the distinctive bright yellow eggs of the butterfly. Each species of this butterfly lays its eggs on only one species of the passion-flower. This makes it difficult for the female to locate the proper plant. For example, on the island of Barro Colorado in Panama, there are 1,369 plant species, but only 11 of them are passion-flower species. So the little butterfly has available to it only a few of all the plants on the island.

Lawrence E. Gilbert has carefully studied the little butterflies. Arriving at a passion-flower, the female must figure out if it is the correct species. Using a specially modified pair of front legs, it "drums" on the surface of the leaf, trying to figure out if it is the correct species. Somehow it is able to identify the plant in this way.

Next, the butterfly must ascertain whether the plant has room for more eggs. If too many are laid, the plant will later be stripped of its leaves by the butterfly's offspring - the caterpillars - and die. The death of that species of passion-flower will bring the end to the type of butterfly that depends on it.

The female must therefore make "an egg load assessment." This is a well-documented occurrence not only in *Heliconius* butterflies, but other insects as well. As a result of this survey, the female may lay her eggs or may fly off to check out another passion-flower plant. Research studies reveal that very few eggs are ever laid on any one plant. In addition, as part of the "assessment," the female will check on the possibility that the plant might be too young. If the eggs are deposited too early, the hatching caterpillars may devour the shoots before its new leaves appear. The caterpillars will then only have tough old

HELICONIUS AND THE PASSION FLOWER

leaves to eat and will die from starvation. A lot of careful, yet complicated, thinking must be done by that tiny insect.

Certain passion-flower species have yellow markings similar in color to the *Heliconius* eggs. It was found in greenhouse experiments that eggs were deposited on 5 percent of the plants which had the yellow markings, compared to 30 percent of those without them.

In another experiment, female butterflies were turned loose in a greenhouse with plants, some of which already had eggs on them and some of which didn't. The egg-free plants had new eggs placed on them 70 percent of the time, whereas only 30 percent of those with eggs had additional ones deposited. In addition, the butterfly took twice as long to lay eggs on that 30 percent of the plants, because it first checked out all the other plants, and finally, in desperation, laid additional eggs on plants that already had other eggs. But when this was done, the new eggs were laid on the plant as far as possible from where the other eggs were already laid to insure that there would be enough food for both clutches of caterpillars when they hatched.

Pretty smart butterflies; too smart for a creature that tiny.

Similar studies of butterflies and plants in America have resulted in similar findings. These include the swallowtail butterfly and plants of the genus *Aristolochia*. So there are a variety of other insects which go through the difficult decision making process about plant species, and egg assessment that the *Heliconius* must make.

How comforting it is know how much thought went into planning this complex world we live in. Why worry!

TO LOVE A YID

Reb Laizer Geltzhaler taught by example what it meant to be concerned for another talmid, another Yid. New blinds were installed in the Yeshivah's dining room, and a mischievous young talmid climbed up on the windowsill to check them out. Reb Laizer, the Rosh Yeshivah happened to walk into the dining room at that moment and the room fell silent as he entered. The Rosh Yeshivah took in the scene: the hapless boy suspended on the windowsill with no time to jump down, and two hundred other boys looking on in horrified fascination, wondering how the Rosh Yeshivah would react. Reb Leizer was furious, but not at the boy. "How can it be," he thundered, "that two hundred boys saw me coming and not one of you thought to tell him to jump down before I came in?" Another time, Reb Leizer was forced to ask a bachur to leave the Yeshivah. Later that night, he called a shmuess "Can it be that your friend was asked to leave and not one of you thought to come and share some words in his defense with me? Did no one care enough to plead his case?"

Reb Leizer once disciplined a bachur who had the bad habit of insulting and mocking other talmidim. "I need to send you home," the Rosh Yeshivah said, and explained. "A bachur who hits another boy and causes him pain has harmed another, but the victim goes home from yeshivah and lies down and feels better. But a bachur who teases another? The victim then goes home and lies down and tosses and turns, unable to sleep because the words keep playing in his mind, hurting him again and again. Such a bachur is dangerous, and he has to leave the Yeshivah." From Reb Laizer, Published by Judaica Press



ACHIM IN A NUTSHELL

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