



## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

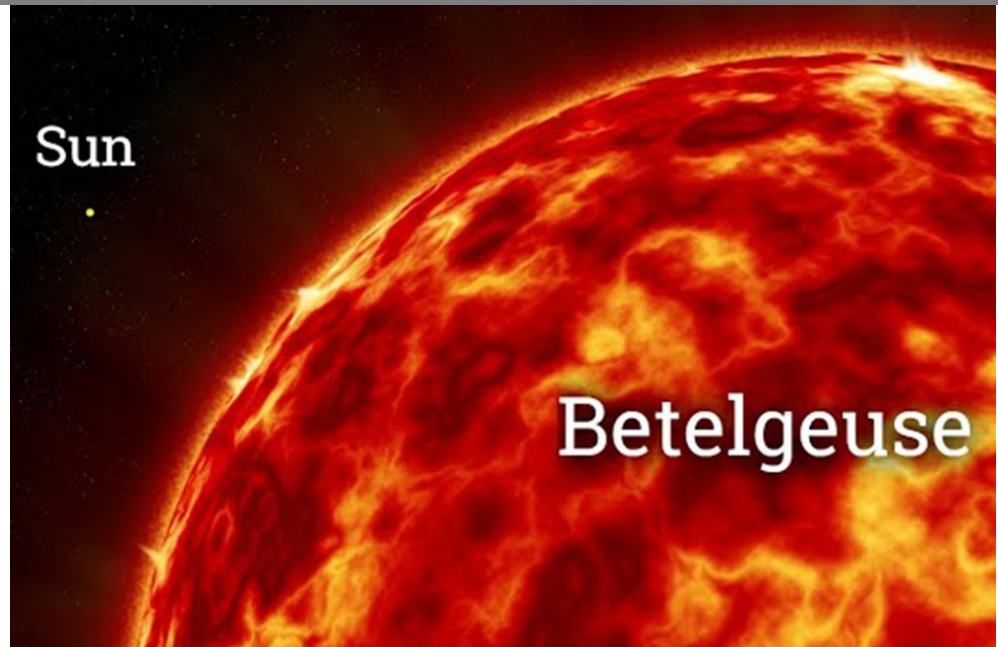


## THE REPENTANT BULLY

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Our Sages (Brachos 48b) teach that just as one makes a blessing for good, one must make a blessing for the bad. They learn this from a verse (8:10) in this week's Parsha, You shall bless Hashem, Elokecha, Hashem is the attribute of kindness and Elokecha is the attribute of judgment. This idea leads us to the following true story.

There was a young boy named Eitan, who attended an elementary school in Israel. He was a diligent student, always seeking to make the most of his academic pursuits. However, Eitan's daily school life was marred by a classmate named Yoni, a charismatic leader who, for reasons unknown, harbored ill-will towards him. Yoni persuaded the entire class to ostracize Eitan, giving him the silent treatment. This isolation led Eitan to feel miserable. Eventually, he decided to switch classes to escape Yoni's oppressive influence. Yet, surprisingly, Yoni's influence stretched to Eitan's new class, where once again, the silent treatment persisted. Eitan was utterly humiliated and his desire to attend school waned. His mother, helpless and concerned, made a pivotal decision. She enrolled him in a local religious school, hoping for a more nurturing environment. Eitan agreed, and with that, he embarked on a new educational



## LARGER OR MORE SIGNIFICANT

In Moshe's speech to his people he encourages them to draw themselves close to HaShem. "What does HaShem ask of you but that you shall fear Him to walk in His ways and to love Him and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, to observe His mitzvos and chukim that I command you today." Moshe introduces his point with the implication that HaShem is not asking so much, just to fear Him. When in fact, he presents quite an extensive list of very great expectations.

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh explains that Moshe's introduction refers only to fearing HaShem. The rest of the list will follow naturally. The Ohr Hachaim continues to explain that the goal of the Jew is to love HaShem, which is far greater than fearing Him. However, one cannot come to love without first achieving fear of HaShem. Once he will achieve fear of HaShem love will follow.

It must be understood that this fear which Moshe refers to is not the fear of HaShem's punishment because that fear will not necessarily lead to the love of HaShem. Rather it refers to an awe of HaShem's great Majesty. Moshe implores his people to be in awe of HaShem so as to lead them to loving Him.

How does the recognition of HaShem's Awesomeness lead us to loving Him? Are not fear and awe emotions that distance us from the other person?

If we consider the greatness and power of the Sun's influence on Earth and realize how the Sun is dwarfed by Betelgeuse, a star which is 700 times larger than it with a diameter of  $12 \times 10^8$  Km and then consider the size of the Milky

Way whose diameter is  $9.5 \times 10^{17}$  Km and finally consider the size of the universe as being  $8.8 \times 10^{23}$  and then we acknowledge that the Creator of all this is HaShem, we might abandon any hope that our actions have any meaning to Him. However, once we remember how He took us out of Egypt and was intimately engaged in our becoming a nation and have seen how we have survived two millennia we will be overwhelmed with awe that our people mean so much to Him and that we really are the purpose of ALL that was created! Once we allow ourselves to be overcome with that awe, how careful we will be to live up to His expectations. If He placed Betelgeuse and the other 200 billion stars in the Milky Way so that His people do their job, we would certainly be driven to do so. That is the fear and the awe that Moshe refers to when he implores us to fear HaShem.

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The second step is to recognize how much we mean to Him. Once that is accomplished we will achieve the fear of HaShem.

## How do we go from here to love?

In his explanation of the mitzvah to love HaShem, Rav Hirsch defines love as follows. "You know that you love someone if your existence and your actions and your aspirations become meaningful as a result of that person."

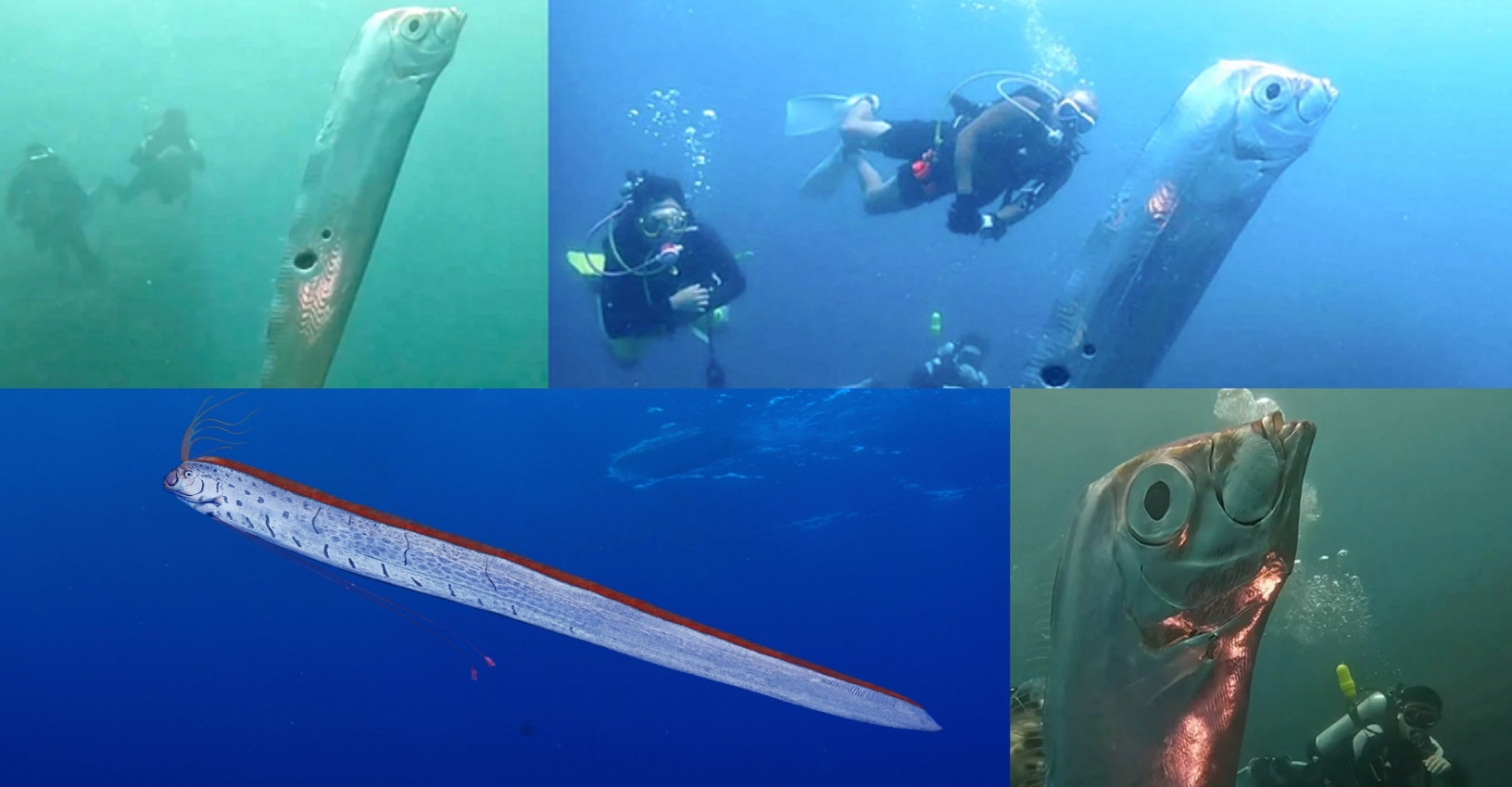
Using Rav Hirsch's insight we can appreciate that as our awe of HaShem rises so will our sense of purpose rise. As we become more aware of HaShem's awesome Greatness together with our significance and meaningfulness our love for Him will grow naturally from that.

In short, as Moshe said, all we need to do to achieve the highest levels of closeness to HaShem is to become inspired by HaShem's awesome Greatness.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

## Paysach Diskind





## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE GIANT OARFISH

On the fifth day of creation, Hashem created the *tanimim* *hagedolim*. Our Sages teach that these were the *Livyasan* and its mate. But what exactly is the *Livyasan*? We cannot know. But what's interesting is that the word *tannin* means serpent, or snake in other places. This is why Rabbi Arye Kaplan in *The Living Torah* translates the *tanimim* as "sea monsters or dragons". When we envision the *tanimim*, it is easy to think of giant mammals like whales. But the truth is there are also giant fish in the ocean that might be described as sea serpents. Please meet the fascinating Oarfish. It is possible that the *tanimim* were even bigger versions of fish like this.

The Giant Oarfish, scientifically known as *Regalecus Glesne*, often referred to as the king of herrings or ribbonfish, holds the remarkable title of being the world's longest bony fish, reaching an astonishing length of up to 65 feet. In addition to its formidable size, it has a long, slender, serpent-like body, covered in silvery, guanine-based scales, giving it a shimmering, metallic appearance.

The Giant Oarfish has a red dorsal fin crest on its head. This red fin runs the entire length of its body. It possesses an unusual ability to orient itself vertically in the water like a column, with its head up and tail down, a rarity among bony fish. So instead of swimming horizontally like a regular fish, it swims vertically. Imagine a giant sea horse, with a long starry tail down, that's what this fish looks like. It has a unique method of propulsion, using this long dorsal fin instead of undulating its entire body like most fish.

Like other deep-sea fish we have learned about, it has a low-density body structure which allows it to inhabit the very high-pressure environment of the deep sea, between 600 to 3000 feet beneath the surface. It relies on its large, silvery scales to reflect light and create a shimmering effect that helps to camouflage in the deep sea.

Despite being the world's longest bony fish, the Giant Oarfish isn't a powerful swimmer due to its weak muscles. Instead, it's a filter feeder, relying on gill rakers that sieve small organisms such as plankton and shrimp from the seawater flowing over its gills as they swim. With no stomach for digestion, it absorbs nutrients directly through its gastrointestinal lining. This feeding behavior plays a critical role in the marine ecosystem by controlling populations of small marine organisms.

Oarfish lack scales on their heads and pelvic fins. Their eyes are small and they have a small mouth with no visible teeth. Unlike other bony fish, oarfish have no swim bladder to control buoyancy. The name "oarfish" is derived from the elongated shape of its pelvic fins, which

resemble oars.

Oarfish are solitary creatures, typically living and traveling alone. They are oviparous, releasing eggs in large, gelatinous masses that can contain up to several million eggs. Surprisingly, they lack certain cranial nerves present in most bony fish and have a relatively small brain. It's estimated that they live around 20 years, but there are records suggesting a lifespan of over 50 years.

Oarfish have an intriguing relationship with human culture and scientific exploration. Their elongated bodies led early taxonomists to mistakenly relate them to snakes. Oarfish have been responsible for fueling legends of giant sea serpents dating back to Medieval times. When sick or injured, they have been observed 'rafting' or floating near the water's surface, sometimes even breaching the surface after storms, contributing to these mythical sightings.

Oarfish are rarely seen, and even more rarely seen breaching or jumping out of the water. However, when they do, it is a truly spectacular sight. The oarfish's long, slender body allows it to generate a lot of lift when it leaps out of the water. The fish will then land back in the water with a loud splash, creating a large wave that can be seen from a distance. The reason why oarfish breach is not fully understood. Some scientists believe that it is a way for the fish to escape predators, while others believe that it is a way for the fish to communicate with other oarfish. Whatever the reason, oarfish breaching is a rare and awe-inspiring sight. Despite its commanding size and mythic status, surprisingly little is known for certain about the giant oarfish. They are rarely seen alive and most information we have comes from specimens that have washed ashore or been caught accidentally. This rareness has made them difficult to study, and much of their lives remain a mystery.

Interestingly, in Japan, where oarfish are known as "Ryugu no tsukai" or "Messenger from God's Palace," there's a folklore belief that their beaching portends earthquakes. This belief is likely due to the fact that oarfish are often found washed up on shore after large earthquakes. Despite such awe-inspiring legends, oarfish are harmless and have never been known to attack humans.

Unfortunately, these intriguing creatures are vulnerable to extinction due to being frequently caught as bycatch in fishing nets. Their meat, though gelatinous, is edible and in some cultures is dried or pickled for preservation. Additionally, their skin is utilized to make leather products, and silks and isinglass, a substance used for clarifying liquors, can also be made from their gelatinous fillets.

## "IT IS ONLY FOR RABBIS"

There was a meeting of leading roshei yeshivah at the Brooklyn office of one of the askanim. Because the organizers knew that a gathering of prominent gedolim in Boro Park would inevitably attract attention and create a commotion, there was security at the door, ensuring that only invited participants could enter the building.

Reb Dovid arrived in his short jacket, carrying a shopping bag with the groceries he had just purchased, and he was turned away at the door.

"It is only for rabbis," he was informed.

He smiled and shrugged. "Please, if you don't mind, can you go tell them that Dovid Feinstein is here?"

From Reb Dovid, By R' Yisrael Besser, Published By Artsroll Mesorah and reprinted with their permission



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the suit, Rabbi Zilberstein writes as follows. In this case, there does not seem to be sufficient proof to be sure that the young man used the suit for the wedding. Therefore, he would not be allowed to be tofes, to take the money out of the possession of the young man. Nonetheless, the Aruch HaShulchan writes that in this case where the money already comes into the hand of the one who was owed, he is allowed to keep the money owed to him.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to thank Hashem for all the many brachos He has given and continues to give us.

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