

## Wonders of Creation

### Arapaima

by Alex Isaacson

The Arapaima is not your everyday, ordinary fish. Most of these fish reside in the Amazon floodplains. It is torpedo-shaped with large blackish-green scales and red markings, streamlined and sleek. It can reach lengths of more than 6.5ft, in some exceptional cases even more than 8ft and over 220 lbs. Its local name, *paiche*, derives from the indigenous words for "red" and "fish".

Arapaima scales have a highly mineralized, very hard outer layer with a corrugated surface under which lie several layers of collagen fibers. In a structure similar to plywood, the fibers in each successive layer are oriented at right angles to those in the previous layer for maximum toughness. The hard corrugated surface of the outer layer, the soft but tough internal orthogonal collagen layers, and the hydration of the scales all contribute to their ability to flex and deform while remaining strong—a solution that allows the fish to remain mobile while heavily armored.

Lastly, Hashem created this unique fish in such a way, that unlike most fish, it has a fundamental dependence on surface air to breathe. In addition to gills, it has a modified and enlarged swim bladder, composed of lung-like tissue, which enables it to extract oxygen from the air. This is an adaptation to the often hypoxic conditions of the Amazon floodplains, but requires the arapaima to surface for air every 5-15 minutes. Unfortunately, this tendency to stay at the surface makes it more vulnerable to attacks from spear fishermen. Therefore, its numbers are dwindling faster than it can reproduce.

## challenges

### Making a Drink from Syrup

compiled by Shlomo Epshteyn

reviewed by Rav Chaim Malinowitz



Shaina had a Shabbos party in her house. Her friends brought various treats for the party. Maya and Rivki brought "Petel" (syrup) to make delicious drinks.

Shaina took out the cups from the cupboard and filled up the pitcher with water. She was about to pour the syrup into the pitcher, when she realized that by doing this she would be "coloring" the water.

"*Tzoveya* (dyeing) is one of the 39 *melachos*. I don't know if this *melacha* applies to foods," said Shaina. Her sister, Rina said: "But anyway, you are only adding flavor; you are not trying to dye the water!"

**Question:** Can Shaina add the syrup to the water?

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This issue is dedicated  
anonymously

**Answer:** Yes [1]. It's best, though, to pour syrup into the empty pitcher and then add water to it [2].

[1] Since *Tzoveya* was performed in the construction of the Mishkan with non-food items (i.e. wool), some Rishonim hold that *Tzoveya* does not apply to foods (*ein tz'via b'ochlim*)<sup>1</sup>. Even though some Rishonim argue on this *din*, the *Shulchan Aruch* rules according to the lenient opinion<sup>2</sup>. [2] Since some Rishonim are stringent in the *din* of *tz'via b'ochlim*, some *poskim* write that, when possible, it is best to add non-colored food to the colored food<sup>3</sup>. It is also important to know that some *poskim* hold that although it is permitted to mix foods/drinks where one food item will be colored by another food item, it is proper not to do so if a person's intention is to change the color of the food item<sup>4</sup>.

1. בעל יראים שהביא ב"י בסוף סימן שכ. 2. שו"ע סי' שכ סעיף יט. 3. שעה"צ בסימן שיח ס"ק סה, ששכ"ה פרק יא סי' לט. 4. נשמת אדם שהובא במ"ב בסימן שכ ס"ק נו.

### עיריך עיון: Difficult Questions—Profound Concepts

- In this week's Parsha the verse says [Bamidbar 23:21] ...לא הביט און בנעקב... (*[Hashem] does not look at evil in Yaakov...*). Based on Midrash Tanchuma, Rashi explains: כשהן עוברין על דבריו אינו מדקדק אחריהם להתבונן באוניות... (*When they transgress His words, He does not deal punctiliously with them to contemplate about their sins...*). How do we reconcile this with the famous words of Chazal (Baba Kama 50a): כל האומר הקב"ה ורתן הוא, יותרו חיי (to paraphrase: "A person who says 'Hashem does not pay attention the sins of a man' will be taken away from this world.")?

[Sources for עיון: Rashi (Baba Kama, 50a); Tomer Devora (Ch.1, Midda 8); Kedushas Levi (Balak, 23:21); Minchas Refoel (p.520)]

### Riddle

I'm too young to be *parve*.

Who am I?



### Last week's riddle:

I am a fascinating word. In this week's parsha my meaning is "purification". Yet, in a different parsha my meaning is "sin". What am I?

**Answer:** I am the word טהרה

# Sweet & Short



## Lessons from Tehillim

לולא האמנתי לראות בטוב ה' בארץ חיים:

*If I wouldn't have believed in seeing the good of Hashem in the land of the living.* [Tehillim 27:13]

We saw in the last issue that the Malbim explains that "the land of the living" is Eretz Yisroel. We explained based on various sources that the very air of Eretz Yisroel gives an extra measure of vitality to a person's soul.

Similarly, Chazal teach us: "The air of Eretz Yisroel makes one wiser." (Baba Basra 158b). The *Yaivitz*\* takes this teaching of Chazal to a practical level in the following way. As we know, Gemora tells us that it is (or perhaps, can very possibly be) counter-productive when a person learns on his own (i.e., without a *chavrusa*). The *Yaivitz* learns that this does not apply when one learns in Eretz Yisroel, due to the fact that "the air of Eretz Yisroel makes one wiser." Perhaps, the *Yaivitz* is teaching us that the air itself serves as a *chavrusa* for a person who is learning Torah in Eretz Yisroel.

\*[the *Siddur of the Yaivitz, Hakdama*]

### Excerpts from the *kuntras Ahavas Yisroel* by the Chofetz Chaim

[translated from Hebrew]

[Chapter 1, § 3]

*And when we contemplate thoroughly and delve to analyze the ramifications of this bitter sin (i.e., the sin of hating another Jew), we'll see that through this sin, a person draws upon himself a spirit of impurity.*

*The reason for this is as follows: As known, a spirit of purity rests on the part of the body through which a mitzva was performed. Consequently, through fulfillment of all of the mitzvos, the entire body of a person becomes sanctified, as the verse says (Bamidbar 15): 'So that you will remember and do all of My commandments and you will be sanctified to your G-d'.*

*Conversely,...(cont. in the next issue)*