

Youthful

Wonders of Creation

A Small Spy - The Frogfish

by Alex Isaacson

Frogfishes, are found in almost all tropical and subtropical oceans and seas around the world.

This fish is an intelligent hunter. Its unusual appearance is designed to mimic a potential meal to its prey, commonly known as “aggressive mimicry”.



Their unusual shape, color, and skin textures disguise frogfish. Some resemble stones or coral, while others imitate sponges or sea squirts. Their camouflage can be so perfect, that sea slugs have been known to crawl over the fish without recognizing them.

Sponsored by



Free weekly publication | Copyright © 2015 by Shlomo Epshteyn | Distributed in Chicago, IL; Beit Shemesh, Israel. Contact info & electronic list: menucha613@gmail.com | Menucha online: www.btya.org | Clipart images © copyright of Walder Education Pavilion of Torah Umesorah.

◆ Please, don't read me during tefilla, kadish, etc. ◆

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

Volume V, Issue No. 18

משפטים

5776

Challenges

TOPIC

Halacha Challenge

The Best Time to Remove Spider Webs on erev Shabbos



Friday was a vacation day. Right in the morning, Sari, Sruli, and Simcha began planning how they will get the house ready for Shabbos. Everyone agreed on what each one will do, and they even had the times when each task will be done. “One thing we still need to decide,” said Sari. “Who will remove the spider webs? And when will it be done?”

“I’ll take care of this job right before going to *shul* with Abba” said Sruli. “Why wait? The earlier the better! Why don’t you do it now?” proposed Sari.

“But I heard that the best time to clean up the house on erev Shabbos is by *Plag HaMincha*,” said Simcha. “So why don’t you remove the spider webs at *Plag HaMincha*?”

Question: Who offered the best plan?

DEDICATIONS

- By the **Bronstein family**, l’ilui nishmas **Rifka bas Shimon**
- for refua shelayma for Chanoch Ben Chaya Tzurtal



*Special thanks to kehillas **Beis Tefillah Yonah Avraham***

◆ requires geniza ◆

Menucha's Answer: Sari.

Explanation: In the last article we learned that the *Sha'arei Teshuva* teaches that the prime time to tidy up the house on *erev* Shabbos is at *Plag HaMincha* [We also saw *poskim* writing that nowadays the minhag is to be lenient and to clean the house even significantly prior to *Plag HaMincha*.] Interestingly, the prime time for removing spider webs is not at *Plag HaMincha*. The best time for this is on Friday morning before the 5th halachic hour of the day.

Why does the time for removing spider webs differ from the time of cleaning the house in general? As we saw in previous articles, besides making the house look clean for Shabbos, removing spider webs has an additional reason: to some extent, spiders prevent Shabbos light from entering the house (see Footnote).

Due to this, spiders and their webs need to be removed before the rays of Shabbos are ready to begin shining into our homes. By the time the 5th *halachic* hour of the day arrives on a Friday, Shabbos light is ready to begin shining into our homes. As such, the spiders and their webs need to be removed before the 5th hour [see *Piskei Teshuva* 250:9].

»» As a conclusion to this series of articles on the topic of removing spider webs from our homes on *erev* Shabbos, we'll cite the following important words of the *Piskei Teshuva* [ibid.]:

Among other damages [that a spider afflicts], it causes a damage in shalom bais. Therefore, one should be especially careful about this on Shabbos [i.e., by removing the spider webs before Shabbos].

Footnote: The Midrash *Shochar Tov* on Mishlei (§30) says that a spider represents the nation of Edom who destroyed the Beis Hamikdash. Shlomo HaMelech hinted to this in Mishlei (30:28): וְהָיָה בְּהִיכָלִי מְלֶכֶד שְׂמָמִית בְּדָוִד תִּתְפָּשׂ, וְהָיָה בְּהִיכָלִי מְלֶכֶד — *A spider captures with its hands, and it is in the king's palace.* The Midrash explains, that the “king’s palace” in the verse is referring to ‘the palace of the King of the world’ - the Beis Hamikdash, and ‘a spider’ is Edom who went inside that palace to destroy it.

As we see from this Midrash, spiders represent the nation of Edom who destroyed the Beis HaMikdash. Shabbos and the Beis HaMikdash are similar in the way that both unite us to our Father in Heaven. Just like Edom caused the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, spiders—which symbolize Edom—have a negative influence on our experience of Shabbos.

Riddle



The last verse of this week's parsha tells us that Moshe Rabbeinu remained on Har Sinai for forty days...

Yosi likes to count. Today when he was sitting next to his father in shul, he opened his *siddur* to a random page and started counting the words. “One, two, three, ..., thirty nine, and forty!” counted Yosi. “Abba, look!

There are 40 words, here!” Yosi's father looked inside and said: “Correct! And the reason for why there are 40 words here, is because Moshe Rabbeinu remained on Har Sinai for 40 days!” What was Yosi counting?

Answer to the last riddle:

RIDDLE: I am a blessing. There are days when no one says me. In fact, some of you will never say me. Yisro is my favorite parsha, because at first, I praise Hashem for the Written Torah and then for the Oral Torah. Which blessing am I?

ANSWER: I am a blessing which is said after reading from Sefer Torah— “...*asher nosan lanu Toras emes, v'chayei olam notah b'socheinu...*” The Shulchan Aruch [OC 139:10] explains that “*Toras emes*” is referring to the Written Torah, and “*v'chayei olam notah b'socheinu*” is referring to the Oral Torah.

Kids Ask, Zeidy Answers



Zeidy – we heard that in a *bracha* which is said after reading from Sefer Torah, the words “*v'chayei olam notah b'socheinu*” is referring to the Oral Torah. Why are we saying that Hashem planted (“*notah*”) the Oral Torah?

Great question, kids! The Gemora Chagiga explains that just like something that's planted grows and increases, so too, the words of Torah grow and increase [Chagiga 3b].

How do we know about it? Shlomo HaMelech in his sefer *Koheles* (12:11) described the Oral Torah in the following words:

... דְּבָרֵי חֲכָמִים כְּדָרְבָנוֹת וְכַמְשָׁמְרוֹת נְטוּעִים ...

The words of the sages are like goads and like planted nails...

