



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



HIDING INSIDE THE SAFE ARON KODESH

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

There was a young boy, about ten years old, whom we will call David. David came from a completely secular family, but he had a very special neshama. One day, he became friendly with a frum neighbor who invited him to a weekly Torah shiur for children at a nearby shul. The Rebbi was wonderful. He told fascinating stories, gave out popcorn and nosh, and made every boy feel special. David absolutely loved it. Week after week, he attended the shiur, made friends, and slowly developed a deep love for Torah and Yiddishkeit.

There was only one problem. David's father was strongly opposed to religion and absolutely forbade him from attending the shiur. He warned David that if he ever caught him going, he would be severely punished. But David's neshama was drawn to Torah, and despite his father's



WHY HASHEM TESTS THE BEST

As we begin the series of Parshios that introduce us to our Avos, Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov, it is valuable to have an insight to the function of nisyonos, the 'tests' which HaShem subjected our Avos to. In explaining why HaShem only 'tests' the tzadikim and not those less worthy, the Midrash explains using three parallels; the potter, the linen maker and the farmer.

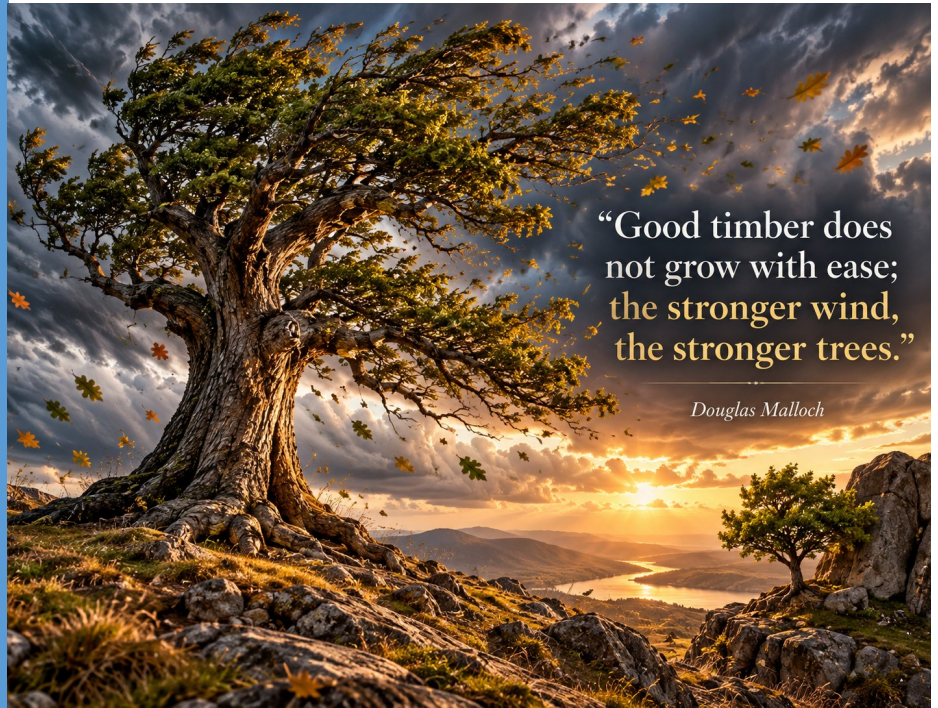
The potter who wishes to demonstrate how strong his pots are, takes a strong pot and bangs on it showing his customer how the pot withstands his banging. The potter would not use a weak pot for this demonstration as this would actually break the pot.

The linen maker takes his unfinished flax which still contains impurities and beats it until it is brilliantly white. He will not beat his lower grade flax as this would actually cause the material to fall apart.

The farmer who needs to plow the unbroken earth will place his yoke upon the neck of the strong ox. If he were to place it upon the neck of the weak ox the field would not be properly plowed.

Using this Midrash, Maharal explains that there are three functions of the various tests that HaShem gives to his righteous. One function is to demonstrate to the world the righteousness of this tzaddik. The purpose is to expose his greatness to the world and to give them a paradigm of the potential greatness a person can achieve.

The second function of the test is to elevate the tzaddik to higher levels of greatness. No matter how righteous a tzaddik may be, he nevertheless finds himself entrenched in the material world which by its very nature weighs the tzaddik down, preventing him to reach yet higher levels of purity. HaShem therefore subjects the tzaddik to



“Good timber does not grow with ease; the stronger wind, the stronger trees.”

Douglas Malloch

warnings, he continued sneaking out to attend the shiur.

One afternoon, while David was sitting in the shul enjoying the shiur, one of his friends suddenly rushed over. "David! Your father is coming!" David panicked. He knew that if his father caught him, he would be in terrible trouble. He frantically looked around for somewhere to hide, but there was nowhere to go. Suddenly, he had an idea. He ran to the Aron Kodesh, opened its heavy metal doors, climbed inside next to the Sifrei Torah, and pulled the doors shut behind him.

Moments later, his father entered the shul and began asking if anyone had seen David. Nobody revealed where he was hiding. After searching unsuccessfully, his father finally left. David waited until the coast was clear, then quietly climbed out of the Aron Kodesh.

Later, this question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. Had David done the right thing by hiding inside the Aron Kodesh? On the one hand, an Aron Kodesh is an extremely holy place, designated for the Sifrei Torah. Surely, it is disrespectful for a person to climb inside and stand alongside the Torah scrolls.

On the other hand, David was hiding there because he desperately wanted to continue learning Torah. Perhaps, under these circumstances, hiding inside the Aron Kodesh was actually an expression of kavod haTorah!

See Chashukei Chemed Nedarim Page 233

tests whose function is to break away the influence of the material world from him, thereby allowing him to rise. The third function of the test is to get the job done. There are times when the generation needs to undergo difficulties to correct the wrongdoings of the generation and these corrections are achieved by the people of the generation going through certain challenges. Tzaddikim are individuals who can carry the weight of the entire generation. If this tzaddik will struggle through the given challenge for his generation, his struggle will accomplish the same as if the entire nation struggled through that challenge. For the benefit of His people HaShem will subject the tzaddik to the test thereby sparing the rest of the nation.

Not every nisayon given to the tzaddik has the same function, but every nisayon carries at least one of these functions.

Maharal explains that Avraham had to endure 10 tests to demonstrate to the world the power of a tzaddik. For the first

2,000 years since creation the world had no redeeming factor to exist. Although the world with all its laws of nature were at play, however, the purpose of creation remained empty.

With Avraham's entry to the world, he moved the world into its next phase of 2,000 years of Torah. With Avraham the world entered the stage of being worthy of existence. When He created Adam and Chava, HaShem made clear what He expected from Man. "And HaShem blessed them and instructed them 'be fruitful and multiply and fill the world and control it...'" With this mandate HaShem revealed that Man is empowered to control the world. Although the world has its own limitations and is bound by the laws of nature that govern it, nevertheless, Man, endowed with free-will can transcend these limitations.

The tests to which Avraham was subjected required him to break out of his nature, following his natural tendencies, Avraham would never succeed in passing those 'tests'. By overcoming those challenges Avraham demonstrated that Man is capable of taking control of his nature. The righteousness of Avraham was his ability to overcome and transcend the natural limitations. Those 'tests' served to create the paradigm for humanity of what Man can accomplish.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

THE AMAZING BENEFITS OF WIND

You step outside on a cold winter morning, and WHOOOOSH! A powerful gust of wind hits your face. Your coat flaps, your eyes water, and you pull your scarf up to your nose. You can hardly wait to get indoors. Yet throughout the colder months, when we daven Shemoneh Esrei, we praise Hashem with the words "Mashiv haruach umorid hageshem," Who makes the wind blow and the rain fall. We understand why we thank Hashem for rain. Without it, crops would dry up and people would go thirsty. But wind? Why should we thank Hashem for something that makes a freezing day feel even colder?

That chilly gust is part of an enormous system that helps water forests, feed oceans, and grow our food. Let's discover what Hashem's invisible wind is doing when we aren't paying attention.

Consider an astonishing delivery service. Every year, winds lift enormous clouds of dust from Africa's Sahara Desert and carry them across the Atlantic toward South America. You might think dust only makes a mess. But the Amazon rainforest needs something that dust contains: phosphorus, a mineral plants require to grow. Heavy Amazon rains continually wash nutrients out of its soil. NASA researchers estimated that winds carry roughly 182 million tons of Saharan dust past the desert's western edge annually. About 28 million tons settle over the Amazon, delivering an estimated 22,000 tons of phosphorus. Imagine that! Hashem uses one of the driest places on Earth to fertilize one of the wettest.

Wind provides another surprising benefit to trees. Have you noticed how a young tree bends in a breeze? It looks as though the wind is bothering it. In reality, that movement helps train the tree to become stronger. Scientists call the response thigmomorphogenesis. Repeated bending can encourage a thicker trunk and stronger roots. The resistance that challenges the tree helps it stand tall later.

Wind also plants forests. Think of a dandelion's fluffy parachutes or maple seeds spinning like tiny helicopters. Their remarkable shapes allow wind to carry seeds far from their parents, sometimes into open ground. After a wildfire, windblown seeds can help begin the work of regrowth.

Even the ground beneath great farming regions owes something to wind. Over thousands of years, gusts carried fine mineral dust left by glaciers and deposited it in deep layers called loess. Some of the world's most productive agricultural soils, including parts of northern China and the American Midwest, formed on these windblown deposits.

Now look at your Shabbos table. The corn in your salad owes something to the wind! Corn releases pollen from tassels at the top of the plant. Moving air carries it to the silky strands of ears of corn, allowing kernels to develop. Rye and many grasses also depend on wind pollination. Hashem provides pollination without a single bee.

Wind even helps leaves breathe. Every leaf is surrounded by a thin layer of nearly still air. As the leaf absorbs carbon dioxide for photosynthesis, that gas can become scarce right next to its surface. A gentle breeze replaces the used air with a fresh supply, helping plants make the food they need to grow.

Perhaps wind's greatest delivery job is invisible. Sunlight causes ocean water to evaporate into vapor, which winds carry inland. As moist air rises and cools, vapor condenses into clouds and eventually falls as rain or snow. Powerful streams of moist air, called atmospheric rivers, can carry astonishing quantities of water through the sky. Mountain snow that later melts into drinking water may have begun over a distant ocean. The rain

we thank Hashem for, often arrives because wind delivered its ingredients! In India and neighboring countries, farming seasons depend on a change in winds called the monsoon. During warmer months, winds bring Indian Ocean moisture onto land, producing rains on which enormous populations rely. A change in wind direction can determine whether farmers have enough water for their crops.

Wind also works beneath the ocean's surface. Along certain coasts, it pushes surface water away from shore. Cold water rises from below, bringing nutrients into the sunlight. This process, called upwelling, supports some of Earth's richest fishing grounds. Tiny drifting organisms called phytoplankton use those nutrients. Small fish eat the plankton, bigger fish eat smaller fish, and an underwater food chain comes alive.

Out on the open ocean, winds deliver another kind of fertilizer. Dust from distant deserts contains tiny amounts of iron, which some phytoplankton need to grow. Where iron is scarce, airborne dust can help nourish these microscopic organisms. Who would imagine that a desert could help feed creatures in the sea?

Those phytoplankton have another astonishing job. Like trees, they use sunlight to make food and release oxygen. Scientists estimate that ocean life produces roughly half of the oxygen generated by photosynthesis on Earth! Wind also stirs surface waters and helps oxygen enter the sea. An ocean breeze does far more than make waves.

Have you watched a seabird glide above waves without flapping? The wandering albatross travels tremendous distances by exploiting differences in wind speed just above the ocean. It swoops up and down, drawing energy from moving air. Scientists call this dynamic soaring. Imagine traveling thousands of miles while barely flapping your wings. Hashem provides an invisible source of power!

Wind helps regulate Earth's temperature. The sun heats the equator more strongly than the poles. Moving air carries warmth toward colder regions, reducing the temperature differences between them. Ocean currents, partly driven by wind, also transport heat. The air that chills us one winter morning is part of a system distributing warmth across the planet.

Closer to home, a breeze can clear polluted air, dry wet streets, and cool us in summer by helping sweat evaporate. It carries smells that help deer detect predators and moths find mates. Gentle air movement can sometimes protect orchard blossoms from frost by mixing warmer air above with cold air near the ground.

People harness this gift too. Sailing ships crossed oceans for millennia. Windmills ground grain and pumped water. Today, giant turbines generate electricity from moving air. In 2025, wind supplied about 8.5 percent of the world's electricity, without burning fuel as the turbines operate. Next time a cold gust surprises you on the way to shul, consider what else that wind might be doing. Somewhere it may be carrying rain toward thirsty fields, feeding a forest, bringing nutrients to fish, or strengthening a young tree. We see leaves moving, but most of the wind's blessings remain invisible.

Now we can hear "Mashiv haruach" with a new appreciation. The wind is not merely cold air rushing past our faces. It is one more astonishing part of Hashem's carefully connected world.

Thank you Hashem for Your wondrous world!

HER TEFILLOS INFLUENCED HER ZIVUG

R' Toivy's daughter, Chana, had been in shidduchim for three years. From the time she entered the parshah, Chana davened each day to meet her zivug, asking Hashem to send her a husband who is a talmid chacham and with whom she can build a home filled with Torah and yiras Shamayim. The wait was agonizing, but Chana tried her best to maintain a positive disposition, reminding herself that shidduchim, like everything else in this world, are orchestrated by the One Above. One day, a shidduch was redt to Chana. R' Toivy was thrilled to learn that the bachur, Dovid, was a metzuyan, a star ben Torah who was among the elite talmidim of his yeshivah. In short order, a "yes" was given and Dovid and Chana met. The two clicked and their engagement followed. It was not long after that they celebrated their wedding, a truly joyous occasion for both sides, but especially for Chana, who had waited over three long years for this special day.

One night shortly thereafter, Chana, observing her husband's sterling middos and unbridled ahavas haTorah and hasmadah, shared with him how much she had davened for a husband of his caliber. "Baruch Hashem, my dream came true," she said, her eyes moistening. Dovid listened, his forehead furrowed. Turning to his wife, he asked, "Do you remember precisely when you began to daven for this?" Chana thought for a few moments and then recalled exactly when she was inspired to begin davening for a husband who would be a genuine talmid chacham. Dovid grew emotional and began to cry quietly. Chana noticed that they weren't tears of sadness. They were something else entirely. "I must share the following with you," said Dovid. "As a bachur, I struggled with my learning. As hard as I tried, I just couldn't seem to excel. At one point, however, my fortunes began to change drastically. It happened suddenly. I felt like a new person. I began to have a cheishek. I had a drive to learn. And I began to understand what I was learning. It was a remarkable transformation. With time, I was zocheh to great hatzlachah: the very hatzlachah you had been davening for. And it was, remarkably, at the exact time that you began davening that my personal turnaround took place."

This story was related by Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz, who commented that we often don't know what our tefillos are accomplishing. For three years, Chana had davened for an outstanding husband, but, as each day passed without any progress shidduch-wise, she felt like her prayers were in vain. She had no idea that her tefillos were impacting her future zivug, helping him grow in Torah and avodah. And Dovid had no cognizance of the tefillos of his future wife that were being accepted in the Heavenly realms, giving him siyata d'Shmaya to become the talmid chacham who would ultimately marry the person davening for that success.

From Food For Thought 2 By Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger by ArtScroll



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the man who threw a shul's shtender at a terrorist, Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein (C" C Nedarim p. 226) ruled that the man was exempt from paying for the damage. He explained that the shtender was provided for the use (hishtamshus) of the people in the shul. In this extraordinary situation, the most important use of the shtender was to stop a terrorist and save lives. Therefore, by throwing the shtender at the terrorist, the man was actually using it for its purpose under the circumstances. Consequently, he was exempt from paying for the damage.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of Reb Pinchos Marder

פנחס בן יצחק ז"ל

By Reuven and Rachel Yablonovsky



Brad E. Kauffman Esquire and Kauffman and Forman P.A.
specializing in corporate and construction law,
estates, wills and trusts and business litigation.

