



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE PERFUMES

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

I hope that each of you are enjoying the inspiration of Pesach. The following question came up this year.

The Frankel family sold all of their chometz with their Rav. In their list itemized of chometz that they sold, they included several expensive bottles of perfume.

The perfumes were put aside in a drawer and were not used for Pesach.

On Pesach, two-year-old Shoshana, ever curious, opened up the



WHAT WE LEARNED AT THE SEA

The Shiras Hayam which we sang at the splitting of the Red Sea, is a song in which every verse reflects the inspiration we experienced at that great event. In the beginning of Shiras Hayam we sang "This is my G.D and I will beautify Him". The Sh'lah translates this verse as "This is my G.D and I will be attached to Him". Note the first person possessive of my G.D, not simply our G.D, but my personal G.D. The Sh'lah explains that when a person recognizes that HaShem is his personal attendant and that He is intimately involved in all the minutiae of his entire life then he will be able to attach himself to HaShem.

How was this insight inspired with the splitting of the sea?

From a theological point of view, we are not unique in recognizing that there is only One Creator. The Christian world has already learnt that lesson from us. However, there is an area of understanding where their world is still backward. While they do recognize that the world in its entirety from the greatest galaxies to the smallest neutrons were the creation of HaShem. And they do recognize how small Man is relative to his Creator. Nevertheless, because of His awesome greatness they cannot comprehend that He is personally involved in caring for the needs of every person. How can such an awesome God be concerned with the petty needs of the infinitesimally tiny man? And certainly this God takes no notice of the small nuances that interplay within Man's psyche.

We, the people who are fortunate to be His nation, have experienced His direct Personal involvement in the minutiae of our personal lives. When a Jew wakes up every morning the very first words he utters are addressed to this awesome Being. The Jew expresses to this infinite Being his deepest gratitude for returning his soul back to him after having it all night long. Yes, we actually recognize that HaShem Personally held our neshama overnight, refreshed it and returned it back to us ready to take on a new day. This is the gratitude expressed in the Modeh Ani every morning.

drawer. In the drawer, she found the bottles of perfume. When she figured out how to use it, she began to spray herself all over with the perfume.

A minute later Shoshana's father found her with a huge smile on her face smelling like the perfume factory from the perennial question in Dayeinu.

Shoshana's father wondered if they would have to notify the non-Jew who bought the chametz for the use of the perfume. Would they have to pay him for the use of the perfume because it belonged to him?

On one hand, the non-Jew made a down payment on the chometz and he was the owner of the perfume.

But on the other hand, the amount of perfume that was used was relatively small and it was hard to put a price tag on what was used. In addition, the non-Jew did not yet pay in full for the chametz.

Mr. Frankel brought this question to his Rav. Did they have to notify the Non-jew about the perfume that was used?



From where did we learn this lesson? We learnt this at the Kriyas Yam Suf, the splitting of the Red Sea.

Let us examine what occurred at the Red Sea. Before the final plague of the first-borns, the Egyptians suffered a week of intense darkness. Wherever an Egyptian was it was pitch black, they were not able to see a thing. For the Jewish people there was light. During this period we were encouraged to go through the homes of our Egyptian neighbors to see what valuables they have. Some weeks later as we were preparing to leave we asked our neighbors to please lend us their precious jewelry. When they responded that they did not have such jewelry we told them where they could find it. Upon seeing how scrupulous the Jews were by not taking any of the jewelry during the period of darkness, the Egyptian neighbors graciously lent their jewelry to their Jewish neighbors.

Once we left Egypt and the Egyptians realized that we were not returning and their jewelry would be lost, Pharaoh was able to arouse his people to chase after the Jews to bring them back and retrieve all the jewelry that they 'borrowed'. As our ancestors stood by the Red Sea

they recognized that the purpose of 'Darkness' was to give them the opportunity by which to find favor in the eyes of their neighbors through which they would lend them their jewelry, through which they would be aroused to chase them through which the entire Egyptian nation would be decimated.

Behold! HaShem was Personally involved in the details of this ploy. He was not up in the cosmos keeping Earth on its orbit and keeping the Milky Way in line with the other galaxies. HaShem was with them planning all the future steps of their history.

Perhaps we can now appreciate the inspiration our people experienced when we saw how many details had been planned by HaShem to bring the Egyptians down into the Sea. They were inspired by the extent of details that this Mighty Creator arranged to bring about their salvation.

When we look into our personal experiences throughout our life we, too, will find how close HaShem is to us. And as the Sh'lah teaches, we will be able to attach ourselves to Him.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and a joyous Yom Tov.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

DEW & ITS BLESSINGS

Last week we said the tefilla for dew and many Jews have the custom to pray for dew every day. What exactly is dew? Where does it come from, the sky or the ground? How can dew benefit us? How much dew falls a year? And can dew ever be harmful? Let's look at this a bit deeper.

Dew is the moisture that forms as a result of condensation. Condensation is the process a material undergoes as it changes from gas to liquid. Dew is the result of water changing from a vapor to liquid. Dew forms as temperatures drop and objects cool down. If the object becomes cool enough, the air around the object will also cool. Colder air is less able to hold water vapor than warm air. This forces water vapor in the air around cooling objects to condense. When condensation happens, small water droplets form—dew. So dew doesn't come from the sky or the ground. It comes from the air around an object.

When does dew form? Dew is most likely to form at night, as temperatures drop and objects cool. However, dew can form whenever a dew point is reached.

Although warm, humid areas commonly experience heavy dew, dew generally does not form in amounts people could collect as a water source. Still, several organizations are working to develop technology that will allow them to harvest dew as a freshwater resource. They hope that foil condensers will help meet the water needs of arid areas. The most successful of these condensers have been put to work in Kutch, India, where hundreds of liters of water can be harvested every night at certain times of the year.

How does dew help the plants? As we will see, dew is a huge bracha from Hashem. Dew helps plants in the following five ways.

1) Water deposited on leaves and grass reduces transpiration (the release of water into the atmosphere through pores in the plant's leaves). Dew forms a protective barrier on the leaf; transpiration will not occur until the dew evaporates. This means that the plant retains more moisture in its cells, making it more resilient in hot, dry conditions.

2) As dew evaporates, it cools the plant down in much the same way that evaporating sweat cools your body on a hot day. This reduces heat stress in very hot environments.

3) Some species, especially desert plants, and lichens can actually absorb water directly through their leaves. For these species, dew is a direct source of hydration. It's a little bit like they are "drinking" the dew.

4) Dew may also play an important role in seed germination. High levels of dew in grasslands could provide the moisture needed for different types of seeds to germinate, perhaps even creating conditions that support the transition from grasslands to forests.

5) In semi-arid zones, like Eretz Yisrael dew helps create the ideal conditions for growth. Semi-arid zones are dry for over half the year. Dew is therefore an important source of moisture in the air. It surrounds the plant leaves nearly every morning for approximately two to three hours past sunrise. A plant's growth is based on photosynthesis, employing stomata, the small openings in vegetation, and fruit leaves that absorb carbon dioxide. The combination of water, carbon dioxide in the air and sunlight help a plant to produce sugars that allow it to grow. In temperate zones, most of a plant's growth occurs in the middle of the day, when the most sunlight is available. But there are climatic influences as well. Plants in a semi-arid zone close these stomatic openings in the midday as a defense mechanism, to avoid losing moisture when the weather is at its driest. When this happens, photosynthesis and plant growth cannot take place. For these reasons, the early-morning hours -- and not those of midday -- are the period of maximum growth for plants in the Eastern Mediterranean region and it's all due to the dew. "In the early morning, dew surrounds the leaves of a plant with moisture, and the plant does not close its stomata. Therefore, it can grow."

Dew is an important water source for plant life in climates such as those in the Eastern Mediterranean and parts of the U.S. Great Basin Desert. For example, In the Negev Desert in Israel, dew has been found to account for almost half of the water found in three dominant desert species, *Salsola inermis*, *Artemisia sieberi* and *Haloxylon scoparium*. There are some plants that probably have not had an inch of rain in 10 or 20 years. Yet, the plants grow and thrive because of overnight high humidities and dew that forms there.

How much water is produced by dew a year? Total annual dew precipitation may be between about half an inch in cold climates and in nearly arid warm climates, to about 3 inches in semi-humid warm climates.

Dew can sometimes have a negative effect as dew may stimulate the growth of fungi harmful to plants. For example, dew hydrates the fungal of substrates and the mycelia of species like Pleated Inkcaps on lawns and *Phytophthora infestans*. These fungi can cause blight on potato plants.

MUCH BIGGER MOFSIM HAPPENED WITH THE STEIPLER EVERY DAY AND EVERY MOMENT!

One Chol HaMoed after the Steipler Rav's passing, Rav Chaim Kanievsky visited Rav Elyashiv for his regular Yom Tov visit, and he related two incidents that had occurred during the last Yom Kippur of the Steipler's life.

That year, the Steipler was very weak, so before Yom Kippur a bed was placed in a side room of the Lederman shul so that it would not be necessary for him to go home to rest. At the beginning of the night, however, it occurred to the Steipler that there was a possible halachic issue related to the shul's ownership of the room he was in (which had been owned in the past by Mrs. Lederman), and he left the room and remained in the shul the entire Yom Kippur night, without sleeping. The Steipler stood on his feet for many long hours that Yom Kippur, and at some point, a bowl of water spilled on him accidentally. Concerned about violating the prohibition of sechitah (squeezing water from a garment), the Steipler held his foot in the air — standing on the other foot for two hours, until his sock dried. This was when he was already ill and weak, on a fast day, and after a night without sleep!

Upon hearing this, Rav Elyashiv responded, "It's true that standing with one's foot in the air for two whole hours is a mofes [marvell], but when talking about the Steipler, it's not necessary to tell stories like these, because much bigger mofsim happened with the Steipler every day and every moment!

The biggest mofes of the Steipler was that he was tormented with yisurim, but he exerted himself to learn b'iyun, in-depth, and to understand every Tosafos." Holding his leg aloft was difficult," he added, "but that lasted for only two hours. Learning biyun when he was no longer able to do so — that was something he did every day, every hour, and that is far more difficult than standing with one's foot in the air."

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about whether a man could daven that the chametz he sold does not get burned, Rav Zilberstein writes that he should not daven for it as he is demonstrating that he wants the chometz. Please consult with your own Rav regarding any matters of practical halacha.

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