

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE NURSING HOME

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion talks about the mitzvah of Kibud av va'em, to honor our parents. Our Sages teach that honoring our parents is compared to honoring Hashem. Why is that? Because we really have three parents, our mother, our father and Hashem. The mitzvah of Kibud av va'em teaches us to treat all of our parents, Hashem included, with respect and reverence.

This leads us to the following true story.

The Greenbergs were an elderly couple in their late eighties. They had a long and loving marriage. They were relatively healthy in their old age and lived independently in their home.

Sadly, Mrs. Greenberg, developed dementia as a result of Alzheimer's. Mrs. Greenberg who in the past was friendly, loving and kind was now angry, anxious and suspicious. She was easily agitated, would shout and argue and would often ask the same question over and over again. She would also wander off occasionally.

The Greenberg children brought their mother to an Alzheimer's specialist. The doctor carefully examined

NO PLUMBING NECESSARY

Adapted from a talk from Rabbi Lopiansky.

In this week's Parsha, Kedoshim, HaShem tells us that He separated us from all the other nations and made us His. The Ramban, in explaining the nature of how we are different, opens for us a window from which we get a magnificent view of the greatness of the Jewish people.

The Ramban lays down the following principle. Every land on Earth has its unique source of energy. This source finds itself in the realm of astrology. Each astrological source has its own higher source in the spiritual realm in the form of an angel. Hence, every land on Earth has its own angel through which HaShem sends energy to it. These forces of energy are referred to as 'elohim' or as 'elohim acheirim'. This is true with England, Germany, America and every other land with one exception. The Land of Israel has no astrological source and has no spiritual source. Eretz Yisroel receives her energy directly from HaShem Himself!

The same is true with every nation. Every nation is the product of the land upon which it was born and so the French people receive their energy from France's angel. This is true with every nation with one exception - the Jewish people.

For the sake of clarity it must be pointed out that these sources of energy are not independent of HaShem. They are similar to the plumbing system that delivers water to the house. The pipes and faucets do not produce the water, they only deliver the water that is sent through them. The origin of all energy is HaShem. These angels and astrological sources are only HaShem's energy delivery system (EDS). The question we may ask is what difference does it make that we have a direct line to HaShem? Either way, the world is run by HaShem. These spiritual and astrological sources of energy have no free will; they are simply the plumbing system that brings the energy from HaShem to this world.

Mrs. Greenberg and recommended that Mrs. Greenberg live at home, with a nurse. She shouldn't be admitted to a facility because being in a family environment like her own home would be much healthier for her. She still had some memory, knew where the kitchen and all the rooms were. Being home would help prevent her from deteriorating. However if she would go to a nursing home, she would be in a totally unfamiliar environment and her dementia might deteriorate more rapidly. The doctor felt that if she lived at home it would extend her life.

However after a short while, the situation became progressively intolerable for Mr. Greenberg. It was devastating to see his lovely wife so different: so angry, argumentative, cantankerous and troubled. After a while Mr. Greenberg said that he could no longer handle the status quo. "I feel that I'm getting sicker every day", Mr. Greenberg told his children. "My mental health has precipitously declined. I'm depressed and no longer have the will to live. I very much want you to move her to a nursing home where she can get excellent, loving, 24 hour care.

The Greenberg children felt torn. On one hand the specialist told them that their mother's life would be extended if she stayed home. But on the other hand their father was saying that he was getting very sick as a result of having her home.

They tried exploring other options such as having each live at home separately, but that was not feasible.

They brought this question to Rav Elyashiv.

In this case which would be preferred:

To keep their mother home to help extend her life, or to move their mother to a nursing home to prevent their father from getting sicker?

What would you say?

See Hebrew Veharev Na Volume Three page 300

If you have a true mitzvah dilemma that you would like us to share, please email it to rabiweiner@gmail.com



There are several distinctions whether we get direct energy or if we go through the EDS..

It is clear in this week's Parsha as well as in other places throughout the Torah that HaShem has such a strong aversion to immoral behavior that He simply cannot tolerate it. Naturally, if a nation is engaged in immoral behavior it will pay the price sooner or later. However, since HaShem does not deal directly with this nation and their energy goes through the plumbing system the consequence of this behavior may be delayed. They may be able to continue operating for many decades before they feel the consequence. If, however, HaShem delivers our energy directly in Person without the system and we are behaving immorally we can expect the consequence more immediately and perhaps with even more brunt because of the close proximity in which we find ourselves to Him.

By the same token, when we repent and mend our ways we have a

better chance of survival. The system which has been set up by HaShem was built to shut off power when there is an overabundance of immorality. Once that level has been reached the system shuts down. However, if our delivery is outside of the system and is delivered directly by the Boss Himself, and He cares about us and He is not bound to the rules that govern the system, then if we appeal to Him and plea and repent, He can continue delivering.

There is yet another distinction that we could expect to find. If we are on the delivery system we should not expect to discover any remarkable display of direct intervention. The energy will be delivered in a timely fashion in a natural way. However, if HaShem delivers it Personally, we should expect to find remarkable displays of divine intervention, after all, He is the One delivering it! It is noteworthy, everyone I speak to who talks about their experiences in the Land of Israel will share some story of divine intervention that occurred to them on their visit. It is no wonder, it is the His Land, He delivers the energy Personally,

How fortunate we are to be so close to Him.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



Pictured: Huge hailstones, the façade of a Starbucks chipped away by a hailstorm, cars in a lot damaged by hail

SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION THE POWER OF HAILSTORMS

Last week we discussed the Crocodile which was part of the plague of Tzfardea. In the past we explored Blood, Fleas and Grasshoppers. Lets now explore another of the Plagues, - a Hailstorm.

How does hail form? Hail forms in strong thunderstorm clouds, particularly those with intense updrafts, high liquid water content, and where a good portion of the cloud layer is below freezing 0 °C (32 °F). Hail starts its life as a tiny droplet of supercooled water. This means that it is water that is still liquid at below-freezing temperatures. Instead of condensing into a raindrop and falling to the ground, the droplet can freeze onto a condensation nucleus like dust or dirt that's lofted into the storm.

A newly formed hailstone is too light to fall to the ground, so it remains suspended in the thunderstorm by its updraft. An updraft is the fast upward wind that maintains the storm. The storm's updraft, with upwardly directed wind speeds as high as 110 miles per hour blows the forming hailstones up the cloud. As the hailstone ascends it passes into areas of the cloud where the concentration of humidity and supercooled water droplets varies.

Hailstones move through the thunderstorm sort of like lottery balls mixing in a tumbler, bouncing around in the wind and collecting water on their surface. The hailstone grows as it collects water on its surface and freezes. This process forms ice in layers like an onion.

The hailstone will keep rising in the thunderstorm until its mass can no longer be supported by the updraft. It then falls toward the ground while continuing to grow, based on the same processes, until it leaves the cloud.

How big are hailstones when they fall? Hailstones usually measure between 0.2 inches and can grow to 6 inches and weigh more than 1.1 lb. The heaviest hailstone recorded in modern history was 2.25 lbs, found in Bangladesh, in 1986. The largest diameter officially measured: was 7.9 inches in diameter, which was found in Vivian, South Dakota in July 2010. Just to appreciate how large that is, it is almost the size of a volleyball which is 8.15 inches!

Kericho, Kenya experiences the most hailstorms. This is because Kericho is close to the equator and the elevation of 7,200 feet contributes to it being a hot spot for hail. On average, it has 50 days of hailstorms each year. Kericho once reached the world record for 132 days of hail in one year. Imagine having hail for nearly half the year!

On somewhat rare occasions, a thunderstorm can become stationary or nearly stationary. This produces hail storms with enormous accumulation. On June 5, 2015, hail up to four feet deep fell on one city block in Denver, Colorado. The hailstones were described as between the size of bumble bees and ping pong balls. The hail fell in only one area, leaving the surrounding

area untouched. Imagine ping pong size hail at the depth of 4 feet on the ground!

How fast does a hailstone fall? Of course it depends on its size. It is estimated that a hailstone of 1 centimeter (0.39 in) in diameter falls at a rate of 20 mph, while stones the size of 8 centimeters (3.1 in) in diameter fall 110 mph. Of course other factors like wind and shape affect its speed as well. Imagine the force of a 3 inch ball of ice, falling at the speed of 110 mph!

Hail like that can clearly cause much damage. In fact, hailstorms can be a greater threat than tornadoes. Today hail causes serious damage to skylights, glass-roofed structures, livestock, and most commonly, crops. Wheat, corn, soybeans, and tobacco are the most sensitive crops to hail damage. Hail is one of the most significant thunderstorm hazards to aircraft. When hailstones exceed 0.5 inches (13 mm) in diameter, planes can be seriously damaged within seconds. Hail is also a common hazard to drivers of automobiles, severely denting vehicles and cracking or even shattering windshields and windows. Occasionally, massive hailstones have been known to cause concussions or fatal head trauma. In May 8, 2017, the damage to the Denver Metro area because of a hailstorm was approximately \$2.3 billion dollars.

Is it possible to prevent a hailstorm to prevent all this damage? There is a procedure used called cloud seeding. Cloud seeding is the process of spreading tiny particles, commonly, silver iodide aerosols, into the upper part of the cloud. This is normally done to try to stimulate the precipitation process and form rain from clouds that otherwise would not produce precipitation. These particles of silver iodide gather water around them and they grow instead of the liquid droplets. If sufficient growth takes place, the particles become heavy enough to fall as precipitation. Interestingly, Israel has been using this process since the 1950s in the northern parts of Israel to enhance rain in clouds and encourage more rain.

In the Soviet Union the strategy of cloud seeding was used, not to encourage rain, but to prevent hailstorms, by attempting to make the droplets fall as rain before it formed into hail. By seeding the clouds with silver iodide, the drops fell before they formed into hail, because they were too heavy to grow further. The Soviet Union claimed that they achieved a 70-98% reduction in crop damage from hail storms by deploying silver iodide in clouds using rockets and artillery shells.

Of course, such intervention is bound to occasionally cause accidents. On June 17, 2008, in Moscow, the Russian Air Force tried seeding clouds with bags of cement. One of the bags did not pulverize and fell straight down, right through the roof of a house!

Thank you Hashem for showing us Your Power and Might from Your Hailstorms.

I CANNOT ALLOW MY FATHER TO STAND UP FOR ME

When visitors would come to the home of Rav Chaim of Brisk, they were witness to a very strange custom. Rav Chaim's son, Rav Yitzchak Ze'ev (known as the Brisker Rav) would always enter the house through the back window, instead of the front door (there was no back door)!

The explanation for this mysterious behavior was later explained.

When The Brisker Rav would come into the room where his illustrious father, Rav Chaim was sitting, Rav Chaim would rise from his seat, out of respect for his son who was a great Talmid Chacham.

The Brisker Rav, however, was not able to accept such honor from his great father. He was unable to bear his father standing up for him.

He therefore found another solution. Since Rav Chaim usually sat in the front room, near the door, he would sneak into the house through the back window. Rav Chaim was thus unaware that he had entered.

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THE ANSWER

Rav Zilberstein quotes the Gemara in Kesubos 67b that if one refuses to accept a chesed, we are allowed to trick him in order to accept the chesed. For example if a person needs tzedaka, one can say "you won a raffle and here is the money". Therefore in this case it would be permitted to say he is getting off at the next step in order for the man to sit down. Of course if one could find a way to do it without deceit that would be preferable.

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