



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



HOLY WATER

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion discusses how Rivka gave water to Eliezer and his camels. This leads us to the following true story of powerful water.

Yoni, a rabbi from Eretz Yisrael, was hired by a congregation in Paris to be their rabbi. Yoni moved with his young family to this new congregation. It was a mixed congregation with varied levels of observance.

On the first week of his job, a couple came to Rabbi Yoni with a problem; they were experiencing marital disharmony, problems with shalom bayis, and were constantly getting into arguments. One would say something hurtful, the other would lash back, and it would create a cycle of disharmony.

They came to Rabbi Yoni for advice on how they could restore their shalom bayis. Rabbi Yoni recalled a teaching from the Talmud (Bava Basra 160b) which addresses how a Cohen gives a divorce. It was done with a Get Mekushar, a tied-up divorce document which has multiple folds and each fold was tied. The purpose of this was to create a pause between the desire to give the divorce and the actual delivery of it, and this would give the husband more time to reconsider. (This was only done for Kohanim who could not remarry their wives after they got divorced.)

Rabbi Yoni turned to the couple and said, "I want to give you some advice based on the se-



THE ENTIRE TREE IS NEEDED

Towards the end of our Parsha the Torah tells us how Avraham remarried Hagar and had many more children from her. Finally, Avraham gives them all gifts and sends them off, retaining only Yitzchok as his son to the exclusion of all others. It appears to be the epilogue of Avraham Avinu's life in a sort of anticlimactic ending of his life. The Malbim, however, gives much meaning to the lesson of this chapter. He draws the analogy of Avraham's relationship with humanity to the relationship of the tree with its multitude of components.

We know the purpose of the almond tree is the almonds that it produces. Nevertheless, there are many more components to the tree than just the almonds. The leaves outnumber the fruits and each leaf comes with its own stem by which it is connected to the tree. The nut, as well, comes well dressed in a complex shell. The tree, also, comes dressed in its bark. If the purpose of the tree is the almond why all the accessories? The answer, of course, is that all the other details of the tree are there to allow for the tree to produce the almond. Some things are necessary for the tree itself and some are there to protect the nut but every component is needed. There is nothing that is unimportant. That notwithstanding, the fruit is the purpose of everything. It gives meaning and purpose to everything there.

When HaShem changed Avram's name to Avraham He did so because Avraham was to be the father of all nations. Humanity was to call Avraham its father. The purpose of humanity was to produce the Jewish people. However, the nation of Israel cannot live and thrive in a vacuum. Just as the fruit grows on a tree and requires the entire infrastructure that it provides, so too, Klal Yisroel cannot be a nation by itself. She requires the infrastructure of humanity.

The Torah therefore states that Avraham had many children from which the world grew. However, he gave them all gifts and sent them away because the primary pur-

crets of the Torah. Take this bottle of water. It is holy water that is blessed and has the power to restore shalom bayis. Whenever you get into an argument and want to say something harsh, that's fine. But first, pour from this bottle of water, fill a cup of water, boil the water, and then drink the boiled water. After you drink the boiled water, say what you wanted to say. Then, the other person, whenever you want to respond, that's fine—first fill up the water, boil the water, drink the entire cup, and then say what you wanted to say. Please try this for a month and then come back to me."

The couple came back in a month and said, "We'd like to buy another one of your holy water bottles. It actually worked, and our arguments have really decreased. Rabbi Yoni said that it was free of charge. He gave them another bottle of this holy water, and sure enough, after a few months, the couple's marriage was restored, and they had an incredible renewed relationship.

This couple shared their experience with other couples, and soon, other couples started coming to Yoni to buy his holy water. Yoni would say the same thing and give the water for free. Word quickly spread around the city that Yoni was a miracle worker, a Mekubal, a Kabbalist, who distributed this special holy water that could save marriages.

While Yoni saved many marriages he became increasingly uncomfortable with this role. He knew it was a bit of a farce calling him a miracle worker; he was simply creating space between stimulus and response, a pause between the desire to be angry and the response. He knew he wasn't warranted in being called a miracle worker.

There is a Talmudic teaching (Yerushalmi, Shevi'is 10:3) that if one knows only one Masechta (Tractate) and he is being honored for knowing two tractates, it's important for him to disclose that he knows only one. The reason for this is because he is benefiting from the honor of the Torah when he does not deserve it.

So, Rabbi Yoni had the following question: Should he make an announcement that the water was not really special and had no holy powers, and that it was simply a psychological tool to create a space between stimulus and response? Or should he not do that because if he did, it might disrupt the shalom bayis in the homes, as people might feel they were tricked? Also, he was not purposely trying to benefit from the honor of the Torah as being known as a miracle worker.

He was torn about what to do.

What do you think?

See Upiryo Matok Vayikra Page109



“Happiness
is not a station
we arrive at;
it's a way of traveling.”

-The Grapevine



pose of his legacy was Yitzchok. It was through Yitzchok that the world would reach its destiny.

To best appreciate this notion we need only to identify the primary distinction that sets the nation of Israel apart from all other nations.

Every nation that has traveled along the road of history was born a natural birth in its motherland. Actually, the name motherland is given to the homeland because it is the land which gave birth to the people native to that land. The Italians did not become the nation in Spain and only later moved to Italy. The nation of Israel, however, did not become a nation in its homeland. We actually became a nation in Egypt! Only after two centuries when we were a formidable nation did we leave and travel to our homeland. This distinction is not yet the primary distinction that separates our nation from the others.

The nation of Israel was formed miraculously in a foreign land which has never since been duplicated, for a specific purpose.

From our very inception, even before we galvanized into a nation we were already destined to be created and were designated with a very specific purpose.

Our purpose is to bring an awareness to the world that HaShem is the Creator and there is none else. He is the Manager and Director and there is none else and in Him every person can find their ultimate fulfillment. There are nations who have adopted goals and destinies for themselves, but their nationhood preceded their goals. They were not designated for any goals before their birth. Our destiny was designated by HaShem to bring the world to the magnificent destiny HaShem planned for it.

It is no wonder that evil raises its ugly head and targets the nation of Israel. We, the embodiment of HaShem's reign in His world, is a matter that evil cannot accept.

May HaShem bring the day when He will be One and His Name will be One speedily in our days.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

SUNSETS

Sunsets can capture our imaginations and stir our souls. Let's explore the intricacies of sunsets, delving into the science behind their beauty, their significance, and the many factors that make each one unique.

At the heart of a sunset's allure is the science of light scattering. Rayleigh scattering, named after the British physicist Lord Rayleigh (pic 8), is a fundamental concept that explains why we see the vast canvas of colors at the end of the day. This phenomenon occurs because molecules and small particles in the Earth's atmosphere scatter sunlight in different directions, and it is more effective at shorter wavelengths, such as blue and violet light. Because our eyes are more sensitive to blue, the scattered blue light is what we see fill the sky during the day. This is why we see the sky as blue. However as the sun sets, the light must travel through a greater thickness of the Earth's atmosphere than when overhead. The increased distance causes shorter wavelengths to scatter out of direct sight, thereby removing much of the blue and leaving the longer wavelengths—reds and oranges—to dominate the sky. This is why, as the sun dips low on the horizon, we are treated to the rich red and orange colors that characterize sunsets.

It is not just Rayleigh scattering that influences the colors of the sunset; various atmospheric conditions play a part too. Aerosols, dust, and smoke particles contribute to what is called Mie scattering, which affects all wavelengths of light more evenly. This is why areas with higher pollution can sometimes exhibit more intense sunsets, as the fine particles scatter the shorter wavelengths and allow the reds and oranges to become more pronounced.

Natural events, such as volcanic eruptions, can throw vast amounts of particles into the atmosphere, leading to dramatic sunsets worldwide. For instance, the eruption of Krakatoa in Indonesia in 1883 is famous for the vivid red sunsets it caused for years afterward. Similarly, forest fires can create scary red or purple sunsets (pic 5), a stark reminder of the event's severity even as it creates something of beauty.

Pollution plays a role in the colors of sunsets. While it can intensify certain colors, making sunsets appear more dramatic, too much air pollution can make sunsets look duller. Smog and haze, composed of large particles, can dull and muddy the colors of the sunset. In areas with heavy pollution, the scattering of light is more uniform, which will reduce the dramatic filtering effects that lead to vibrant sunsets.

Sunsets are not static; they change with the seasons and the weather. During autumn and winter, the air is often drier and cleaner, providing less scattering and allowing for more vibrant sunsets. After a rainstorm, the air can be especially clear, leading to sunsets that are particularly bright and detailed. Cloud formations also play a significant role, with high clouds like cirrus and altocumulus often leading to the most vivid colors.

No two sunsets are the same because atmospheric conditions, such as weather systems and pollution levels, change daily. Even the angle of the sun's path changes throughout the year, altering the timing and quality of the light we see. This constant change ensures that each sunset is a unique event, never to be repeated in quite the same way. After a rainstorm, the air is often cleared of particulates, allowing for a more dramatic and clear sunset, which is why the "Golden Hour" following rain is particularly coveted by photographers and nature enthusiasts alike.

Some sunset-related phenomena are quite rare and highly sought after. The green flash (pic 2), for instance, is a fleeting moment where the sun emits a green spot just before dipping below the horizon. This is caused by refraction, where the atmosphere acts like a prism separating the colors. Similarly, blue sunsets (pic 4) are rare but can occur after volcanic eruptions or fires when the particles scatter red light, allowing blue hues to emerge. Forest fires and volcanic eruptions can cause dark red or purple sunsets (pic 5). There is also the 'Belt of Venus,' (pic 6) a pinkish glow on the opposite side of the sun. Finally, there is the amazing phenomenon of 'Alpenglow,' where mountains seem to catch fire with the dying light (pic 7).

Sunsets don't just inspire awe; they can actually influence our biology. The diminishing light signals the body to produce melatonin, preparing us for sleep. This daily light show can help regulate our circadian rhythms, affecting our sleep patterns and overall well-being. In addition, the psychological effects of watching a sunset are also significant; they can reduce stress, encourage relaxation, and improve overall mood. Scientists suggest that this is due to its routine nature and the soothing quality of its colors.

Sunsets also do more—they also convey meteorological messages. A red sky at sunset can indicate that good weather is on the horizon, as it suggests that high-pressure moisture is moving eastward, leaving a clear sky in its wake. This adage has been encapsulated in the sailor's rhyme, "Red sky at night, sailor's delight." Wildlife also responds to sunsets, using the changing sky for navigation and communication.

Here is a final fun fact. Sunsets are really an optical illusion; by the time we see the sunset, the sun has already moved below the horizon. This is because when we observe a sunset, the sun appears to be on the horizon, but in reality, due to the Earth's atmosphere, the sunlight is being bent (refracted). This bending of light causes the sun to appear slightly higher in the sky than it actually is. Therefore, when the sun appears just touching the horizon, it has already physically passed below it.

Thank you Hashem for your wondrous world!

HERE ARE YOUR STUDENTS!

Rav Shlomo Rothenberg, the Rosh Yeshiva of Mountaindale, was once attending a wedding, and Rav Nosson Wachtfogel noticed him. Rav Nosson called him over and said, "I want to tell you something about your rebbi, Rabbi Yehuda Davis (Pictured Top). Half of the Torah in America is because of Rabbi Davis!"

What did Rav Nosson mean? Rav Shlomo Rothenberg would explain.

One summer, Rabbi Davis, who was from Baltimore, took a group of about ten boys to an old resort outside of Baltimore and learned Maseches Sukkah with them. When Sukkos was drawing near, they built a sukkah applying all they had learned during the summer.

Around that time, the Telshe Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Elya Meir Bloch (Pictured Bottom), who had just escaped from war-ravaged Europe, came to the United States. Rav Elya Meir had a strong desire to reestablish Yeshivas Telshe on American shores. He was looking for serious bachurim with whom to start the yeshivah but found his search to be unsuccessful, because of the lack of bachurim who were willing to devote themselves to serious learning. Rav Elya Meir expressed surprise upon seeing Rabbi Davis's American bachurim learning with great diligence. Rav Elya Meir's concerns reached the ears of Rabbi Davis. "Where will I find talmidim with which to establish Yeshivas Telshe?"

Rabbi Davis had the answer. "Here are your talmidim!" he announced to Rav Elya Meir, referring to, the ten bachurim with whom he had learned in Baltimore over the summer. And with that, by Rabbi Davis giving away his students, the great Telshe yeshivah was founded in Cleveland, Ohio.

Subsequently, because of this episode, when Rav Elya Meir would meet Rabbi Davis, he'd stand up for him and proclaim, "Er is der meysesed fun Telshe! The true founder of Telshe yeshivah is Rav Yehuda Davis!"

From You Made My Life! By R' Nachman Rothenberg, Published By Israel Bookshop, and Reprinted With Their Permission



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the hotel, Rav Zilberstein (Upiryo Matok Vayikra, page 117) wrote as follows: It was permitted for the gentleman to invite others into his room; however, he has a responsibility to pay for the additional fee for the extra people.

This week's TableTalk is sponsored by **Rivka** in appreciation of all calls, visitors, well wishes and other assistance during her continued recovery

A special thank you to **Avi and Esther Tannenbaum** for their unbelievably concerned and speedy responses no matter the hour and advice and assistance with suitable kinds of equipment.

MAY HASHEM GRANT US THE ZECHUS TO VANQUISH OUR ENEMIES



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