



## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



## CONFISCATED PHONE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Dovid and Eliezer were friends in a high school in Israel. The rules strictly prohibited students from bringing phones to school for educational reasons. These rules were strictly enforced and students caught with phones could have them confiscated and would be sent to speak with the principal, who would decide the consequences.

One Monday, for whatever reason, Dovid felt he needed to bring his phone to school. He did, and used it when necessary. Eliezer then asked, "Can I borrow your phone? I have to make an important call." Dovid didn't mind and lent it to Eliezer, who took the phone outside to make the call.

While Eliezer was on the phone, he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned around and saw that it was the high school principal, Rabbi Silver. The rabbi held out his hand and asked for the phone. Eliezer complied and said, "It's not my phone; I just borrowed it." Rabbi Silver



## THE SECRET INGREDIENT

In discussing which blemishes disqualify the korbanos (animal offerings) the Torah states "A person, person from the house of Israel who shall bring an offering to fulfill their pledge should bring an Olah...it must be without blemish" Our Sages interpret the extra "person" mentioned in this verse to refer to people who are not members of the House of Israel. The verse is therefore instructing us that a non-Jew may bring an Olah offering to our Beis Hamikdosh.

The Gemara in Menachos teaches us that the non-Jew can only bring the Olah offering and may not bring the Shelamim offering. Even if the non-Jew specifies that he wishes to bring the Shelamim offering we only accept his pledge in the form of an Olah.

What is the difference between these two offerings and why should the non-Jew be excluded from the Shelamim?

The Olah is the offering which once the primary service is done by sprinkling its blood on the side of the mizbeiach (altar), the entire animal is placed on top of the mizbeiach and is entirely burnt. The Shelamim offering, on the other hand, once its primary service is done the animal is divided into three parts. One part is placed on top of the mizbeiach to be burnt. The second part is given to the kohein, and the third part is given to the person who brought the Shelamim for them to eat.

Any animal that is designated to be an offering receives intense kedusha which forbids any person to derive benefit from it. With regards to the Olah that kedusha never leaves and at no point can a person eat it. However with regards to the Shelamim once the primary service is done, parts of the animal become accessible for human consumption. Hence the kohein receives his portion and the owner receives his portion. It is noteworthy that most of the animal is enjoyed by the one who brought it while the kohein a smaller portion and the mizbeiach received a small portion as



replied, "Okay, tell whoever owns the phone that I have it and need to talk to him. After we talk, he can get it back, but of course, he'll have to face the consequences."

Eliezer went back to Dovid and told him that the phone had been confiscated. Dovid became very agitated. "There's no way I can talk to the principal," he said. "My parents will find out, and I'll get into huge trouble. I just can't go to the principal."

Eliezer responded, "Well, it's waiting for you. You can go anytime."

Dovid replied, "I can't go. I can't face the consequences. I want you to buy me a new phone."

Eliezer said, "I feel terrible about what happened, but I can't buy you a new phone. It's not lost, the phone is still there. You just need to man up and get it."

Dovid insisted, "You can't just tell me to man up. You don't know what kind of trouble I'll get into. I can't get my phone back, and I want you to buy me a new one."

They agreed to bring the question to a rav.

What do you think?

Does Eliezer have to buy Dovid a new phone, or does Dovid simply have to face the consequences of breaking the school rules and retrieve the phone himself?

On one hand, one might argue that Eliezer should buy a new phone since Dovid can't get the original one back under the current circumstances. On the other hand, Dovid can retrieve it, he simply doesn't want to face the consequences. What do you think is Eliezer's obligation?

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well.

In previous TableTalks we discussed how the kedusha of the Jew is greater than the kedusha of the angel. The angel is completely excluded from the material plane of existence and its kedusha is of the simplest form. The Jew on the other hand, is involved and depends upon the material world and in spite of that he is able to maintain an unwavering focus on spiritual growth. Through his interaction with and his dependence on the material world, the Jew actually infuses the material world with kedusha.

With almost every expression of kedusha found in the Torah we find the participation of enjoying the material pleasures. (I say almost for we do find Yom Kippur when we abstain from all pleasures. However, that is the exception.) On the days of the Jewish calendar which are designated as holy one may not fast. One must participate with much enjoyment. The Torah wants us to eat the matzo at the Seder with an appetite. When we sit in the Succah we are encouraged to make it a most pleasurable experience. The Jew recognizes that the world HaShem gave us is

meant for us to enjoy and take pleasure in the context of serving Him. It is specifically when we enjoy this world in the context of His service that we are able to elevate the material world to higher levels. Maybe the special ingredient that makes cholent taste so delicious is the flavor of the kedushas Shabbos

This concept is unique to the Jewish worldview. Our Sages explain that the idea of integrating the material world into spiritual existence is a completely foreign concept that the non-Jew is incapable of appreciating.

While the heathen world appreciates the higher levels of existence than our current base material world, nevertheless, he cannot comprehend merging the latter into the former.

Therefore, when the non-Jew pledges to bring any offering even if he states that he wants to bring a Shelamim we recognize that his intent is for the offering that will be entirely burnt on the mizbei'ach. He cannot fathom such a heightened level of kedusha being enjoyed by Man.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE SENSITIVE PLANT, MIMOSA PUDICA

In the heart of the tropics, nestled in warm, sunny meadows, curling along the edges of forest paths, lives a plant that doesn't just sit there like other plants. It moves! Meet *Mimosa pudica*, also known as the sensitive plant, touch-me-not, or shameplant. When you brush your fingers across its delicate, feathery leaves, something extraordinary happens: the leaves fold inward and the plant seems to shrink away in embarrassment. Within seconds, the once-spread leaves have disappeared, tucked away in a posture of polite refusal. Why? Because this plant has a mind of its own, or at least a very clever system that mimics the quick reflexes of animals.

Let's dive into the marvelous world of *Mimosa pudica* and discover what makes it one of nature's most sensitive, and sensational, stars.

You might be wondering: why would a plant fold up its leaves when touched? That's not how plants are supposed to behave, right? But *Mimosa pudica* is no ordinary plant. Its scientific name comes from Greek and Latin roots: *mimos* means "mimic" or "actor," and *pudica* means "shy" or "bashful." Together, they describe a plant that seems to imitate a bashful animal, reacting quickly and visibly to touch. In India, it's called *Lajwanti* (meaning "modest woman") and is tied to Indian ideas about humility.

But this sensitivity isn't just for show, it's a survival tactic. The folding leaves may make the plant look wilted or dead, making it less appealing to hungry herbivores. In some cases, this movement might even expose small thorns along the stem, nature's version of saying, "Back off!" Also, insects may be discouraged by the sudden motion or the difficulty in accessing tender leaf tissue. This gives the plant a natural edge in the wild without needing chemical defenses like some other species.

What's even more amazing is that this movement happens in a matter of seconds. Most plants are slow movers, shifting over hours or days in response to sunlight or seasons. But *Mimosa pudica* acts in real time. That's one of the reasons it's become a favorite among kids, gardeners, and scientists alike, it doesn't just grow, it performs.

So how does it do that? Inside the base of each leaflet and leaf stem is a structure called a pulvinus (plural: pulvini). These little pads are filled with special cells that control water pressure. When you touch the plant, it sends a quick signal, an electrical one, much like the ones in your nerves! This signal causes potassium and calcium ions to move around inside the cells, which then shifts the water balance. Water rushes out of certain cells, the pressure drops, and boom, the leaves collapse inwards. It's like the plant's version of taking a deep breath and folding its arms. Leaf folding happens in about 4–5 seconds, while reopening can take 10–20 minutes. This "recovery phase" requires the plant to actively restore ion balance and turgor pressure, a process requiring significant energy.

Scientists call this movement thigmonasty or seismonasty, depending on whether it's a reaction to touch or shaking. And it doesn't stop there. *Mimosa pudica* also closes up at night in a process known as nyctinasty, following its own internal clock.

But here's the kicker: these movements come at a cost. When the plant folds up its leaves, it stops photosynthesizing, that's the plant version of eating. In fact, repeated or excessive stimulation drains energy and can slow the plant's responses. In extreme cases, it may even shorten the plant's lifespan.

So it has to weigh whether that tap on the leaf is a real danger or just a gentle poke from a passing breeze (or a curious kid). This leads us to another mind-blowing discovery...

Believe it or not, some scientists think *Mimosa pudica* can

"learn." In studies where researchers repeatedly dropped water droplets on the leaves without causing any harm, the plant eventually stopped responding. It realized the stimulus wasn't dangerous and saved its energy. This process is known as habituation, a simple form of learning we often associate with animals. That's right, this plant may not have a brain, but it seems to have a memory. That discovery has challenged the way we think about intelligence in nature. Can plants "know" things? Can they change their behavior based on experience? With *Mimosa pudica* leading the way, scientists are asking those questions more seriously than ever.

Fast reflexes and plant "learning" would be enough to put *Mimosa pudica* on any nature-lover's radar. But this plant has even more tricks up its leaflets.

Its delicate, fern-like leaves are arranged in compound pairs that can grow in trailing stems up to 15 feet long. In summer, it bursts into globe-shaped pink or purple flowers, puffballs of tiny blossoms with long, waving stamens. These flowers attract all kinds of pollinators, bees, butterflies, and even the wind. After blooming, *Mimosa pudica* forms flat, bristly seed pods that latch onto passing animals or float away on water, helping the plant spread far and wide. That spreading habit has made it a well-known species throughout the tropics, and sometimes a problematic one. In places like Australia, Hawaii, and parts of Africa, it's considered an invasive weed, crowding out crops and native plants.

But not all its ecological effects are negative. Like other legumes, *Mimosa pudica* forms partnerships with nitrogen-fixing bacteria in its roots. These bacteria help fertilize the soil by converting nitrogen from the air into a form plants can use. So while it might crowd out some crops, it can also enrich the ground it grows in.

People have noticed the special powers of *Mimosa pudica* for centuries. In traditional medicine across South America, Asia, and Africa, it's used to treat everything from infections to insomnia. Scientists studying its chemistry have found that it contains compounds with antibacterial, antioxidant, anticonvulsant, and even antivenom properties. One of its key chemicals is called mimosine, an alkaloid that can be toxic to animals in high doses, but may also have therapeutic uses. Its roots are used in some cultures to help neutralize snake venom, and its leaves are used in teas or poultices to calm inflammation and aid digestion. Modern research is still catching up to traditional knowledge, but the results are promising. *Mimosa pudica* has been studied for its ability to protect liver function, combat stress, and even fight certain bacteria.

This plant loves warm weather and thrives in full sun with moist, well-drained soil. It's typically grown as an annual, but in tropical climates, it can survive year-round. Its preference for warmth also means it's a bit of a challenge to grow when temperatures drop, cold air can stop it in its tracks. But with the right conditions, it grows quickly and can even be grown at home. There are kits and seeds available online if you want to raise your own bashful little plant. It's a great way to learn about botany, biology, and plant behavior. In fact, *Mimosa pudica* is often used in classrooms and greenhouses as a teaching tool. Watching its leaves fold never gets old, it's one of those rare plants that instantly grabs attention and makes kids ask, "How does it do that?"

Wait a minute, isn't *Mimosa* the name of a drink? You bet! The bubbly brunch favorite gets its name because its golden color looks just like the bright yellow flowers of a related *mimosa* plant, though not the shy, touch-sensitive one we've been exploring here.



## IF I FAIL TO BRING ABOUT A RECOVERY, THIS DESECRATION OF THE SHABBOS WILL OCCUR BECAUSE OF ME

The following story is recorded in the t'shuvos (responsa) of the Maharsham, Rav Sholom Mordechai Szwadron vol 3:225. (Pictured. He lived between 1835 – 1911)

One Shabbos in the city of Zlotchov where the Maharsham lived, a local resident became very sick. At one point it appeared that their life was in serious danger. A local dayan advised the family to request a non-Jew to write the name of the sick person and their mother's name on a paper and bring the note to the Sar Hashalom, the Belzer Rebbe, who lived in the city of Brod. The hope was that if the Sar Hashalom would pray for this person he would recover. When the news of this story reached Rav Shlomo Kluger, the rov of Brod, he was infuriated and disqualified this dayan of Zlotchov from rendering any halachic decisions.

The sanctity of Shabbos was desecrated.

When the note arrived at the door of the Belzer Rebbe, he too, was terribly upset that this was done. Nevertheless, he told himself "Once the act was done, albeit wrongly, I must do my best to daven for this sick individual. If I fail to bring about a recovery, this desecration of the Shabbos will occur because of me."

The Maharsham who was familiar with the entire story concluded that, in fact, the sick person had a complete recovery.



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the baal simcha who was unable to get into the hall, Rav Zilberstein (Shabbos Besimcha Page 165) answered that the baal simcha is responsible to pay for most of the cost. However, the total amount owed should be divided into three parts: the fee for the food, the fee for the hall, and the fee for the waiters. The cost of the food must be paid by the baal simcha, even though it ultimately wasn't used. As for the hall, since it wasn't used and there was no actual loss to the owner, the baal simcha is not required to pay for that. However, when it comes to the fee for the waiters, this is considered *sheves be'adam* (lost labor), and he would be obligated to pay for that. So in short, the baal simcha would have to pay for the food and the waiters, but not for the hall rental, since it was never used.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of our dear parents

**Mr. and Mrs Labovitz and  
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