

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



WAKING THEM UP

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Torah portion, we have an allusion to the mitzvah of Chinuch, to educate our children to follow the ways of the Torah. The Torah writes that Avraham took his "chanichav" to go to war against the four kings. (Bereishis 14,14) Our Sages teach that chanichav is a reference to Eliezer, whom Avraham was mechachech (educated) to do mitzvos.

This leads us to the following true story. Alyssa and David had two teenage children who lived at home with them. They were beginning to learn more about Torah and Mitzvos and slowly became more Shabbos observant. They were growing but they still had a lot to learn. They were trying to observe Shabbos in its entirety but the children were not fully on board yet. They still went to a secular school and all of their peers were not observant. The children were not yet ready to become Shomer Shabbos. One summer when Shabbos started late, David



CLEAR THE VISION

Excerpted from a talk from Rabbi Aaron Lopiansky

This week's Parsha, Lech L'cha opens with HaShem instructing Avraham "Go from your land, from your birthplace and from your father's home to the Land that I will show you." If HaShem wishes for Avraham to go to an unidentified place that will only be revealed later why is it necessary to instruct him to leave these three places? Would it not be sufficient to instruct Avraham to "go to the Land that I will show you." Naturally, if Avraham will go elsewhere he will be leaving these three places.

Our Sages distinguish between sight and sound as the former originates from inside the observer and the latter originates from outside the listener. Although on a physical basis both experiences originate from outside the person; the scene that is observed by the person occurs outside of himself, it is not imagined, just as the sound originates outside the person. Our Sages, however, are talking about understanding the message that is transmitted through the sense of sight and understanding the message that is transmitted through the sense of sound. When a person comes to listen to what another person has to say, he opens his mind and allows the words of the speaker into his mind. To the extent that the speaker articulates himself, the listener will understand what the speaker is conveying. There is no input on the part of the listener; he is just listening to the speaker. On the other hand, regarding understanding the message that is transmitted through the sense of sight it begins from within the observer.

Consider the following scene which is observed by three different people. An otherwise handsome fellow comes walking down the street with tattered shoes. He approaches

came home from shul and was ready to make kiddush. The table was set but the children were not there. "They were tired and went to bed early", Alyssa told David.

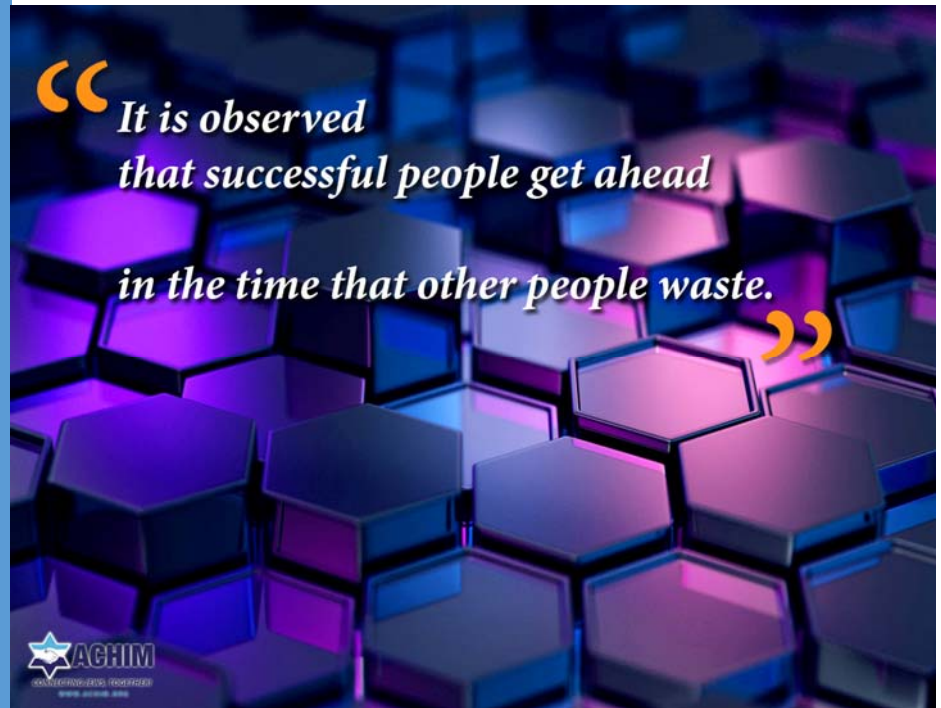
"Should I go upstairs and wake them up?", David asked his wife. "I considered that" Alysa, answered. "It would be wonderful to have them with us for kiddush and for at least part of the meal. But I had the following thought. If we let them sleep they would be not doing any activities that break or desecrate Shabbos. They would not be doing any melachah. If we wake them they may join us for kiddush, but then they will get on their phones, computers and may go out with their friends. Perhaps letting them sleep would be a better way for them to keep Shabbos.

"That's a good point", David responded. "You may be right. But perhaps waking them for kiddush would be a more effective way to educate them about the beauty of Shabbos. If they hear kiddush and join us for the meal and zemiros, they may become more inspired to keep Shabbos in the future. If they simply sleep, they may not do melacha, but there is less of a chance that they would be inspired to keep Shabbos in the future.

This question was brought to Rav Zlberstein.

What would be a preferred thing for David and Alyssa to do? Should they let their kids sleep Friday night to ensure that they keep Shabbos by not doing any melacha. Or should they wake them up to join them for the mitzvah deoraisa, Torah mitzvah of kiddush, but may likely do more melachah, forbidden activities, over Shabbos?

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our group of three folks and asks them if they can help him get a pair of shoes. He says that he is a man of means from out of town but has no cash with him.

Before we demonstrate how these three folks will see different things from the same sight, we must first know more about these folks. Our first fellow is a person who is always looking to do chessed for another person. Our second fellow is a businessman always looking for an opportunity to make a sale. Our third fellow is a scam artist and is always suspicious that others are trying to scam him.

All three folks meet the same person at the same time. However, the first fellow sees an opportunity to help a man out and is motivated to get him a pair of shoes. The second fellow sees an opportunity to sell this poor visitor a pair of shoes on credit and charge him a 20% finance charge. The third fellow sees this visitor as a

scam artist. Behold! Each fellow sees something different.

The disparate understanding from the same scene is due because it is being filtered through the observers' minds. This is what our Sages are saying. The sense of sight originates from the observer while the sense of sound originated from outside the person.

HaShem wanted Avraham Avinu to see the Land which He was going to show him. However, before Avraham would be able to see that Land, it was critical that Avraham's context be purified. HaShem therefore told him to first leave your homeland and the influences that it had on your vision. Then leave your birthplace; the place that had an impact on your way you see the world from when you were a child. Then leave your parents' home; the place which had the greatest impact on your worldview. Once you have cleared the fog that may have seeped into your perception, then go to the Land which I will show you. Only then will you be able to see that Land.

May HaShem clear our fog as well so that we may merit to see the return of the Shechina to Zion speedily in our days.

Have a very safe and very wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

A LIVING ROCK AND LIVING STONE

Can a rock or stone be alive? Let's learn about two fascinating creatures.

Pyura chilensis, also called a Living Rock, (pictured on the left) is a mass of organs surrounded by a layer of muscles and skin. From the outside it looks like a gray rock, sometimes covered with molluscs. It is found on the rocky coasts of Chile and Peru. *P. chilensis* belongs to the Ascidiacea class of non-moving, sac-like marine invertebrate filter feeders that are otherwise known as sea squirts. They belong to the Tunicata subphylum. They are called that because they wear thick 'tunics' made of tunicin, which is a strong matrix of molecules that help the animal attach itself to a hard surface where it will live for its entire life. The insides of this tunic are lined with an epidermis and a muscular band, and inside these layers lies the main part of the animal.

P. chilensis can often be found in densely packed aggregations of thousands or small handfuls of just a few. They can also be found on their own. If you were to step on one, you would get a surprise because on the inside it looks like the living organism that it actually is. It acts like a rock in the sense that it is completely immobile. It eats by sucking in water and algae, and filtering out microorganisms, back into the sea. Superficially it bears some resemblance to sea urchins, which are spiny, globular animals that live on seabeds.

Pyura chilensis has no brain or sensory organs.

It is fished commercially in the Pacific Ocean, and is considered a delicacy in Chile and Peru. Fishermen have to cut it open with a strong knife or handsaw, to reach the meat inside. It is cut into strips and canned and can be eaten cooked or raw. It is said to taste bitter and soapy, with a weird iodine flavor.

Pyura chilensis has clear blood that can accumulate extremely high

qualities of a mysterious and rare element called vanadium. Vanadium is highly toxic, which raises some concern about eating *Pyura chilensis*. This element is found in the water around them, but can be up to ten million times higher inside of them! How and why these creatures are able to accumulate vanadium in such huge quantities remains unknown.

Pyura chilensis is a sea animal that looks like a rock. HaShem also created a plant that looks like a rock.

Lithops, also called a Living Stone, (pictured on the right) is a genus of succulent plants native to Namibia and South Africa. The name is derived from the Ancient Greek words lithos, meaning "stone," and ops, meaning "face," referring to the stone-like appearance of the plants. They avoid being eaten by blending in with surrounding rocks and are often known as pebble plants or living stones.

Individual Lithops plants consist of one or more pairs of bulbous, almost fused leaves opposite to each other and hardly any stem. The slit between the leaves contains the meristem and produces flowers and new leaves. The leaves of Lithops are mostly buried below the surface of the soil, with a partially or completely translucent top surface known as a leaf window which allows light to enter the interior of the leaves for photosynthesis. The leaves are multicolored and patterned, acting as camouflage for the plant, so it can blend in with the rocks around it.

The first scientific description of a Lithops was made by botanist and artist William John Burchell in 1811. He accidentally found a specimen when picking up from the ground a "curiously shaped pebble"

How wondrous are your creations Hashem!

I AGREE TO COME ON THE CONDITION THAT WE DO NOT SPEAK DIVREI TORAH AT THE TABLE

Rav Yosef Tendler would often speak about the principle of Mishkal Hachasidus, balancing two acts of piety, discussed by the Mesilas Yesharim. Sometimes a person may think that he is doing a mitzvah or a hidur of a mitzvah. But before you do that Hiddur mitzvah it's important to consider if you are causing any harm by doing the Hidur. To illustrate this consider the following two stories.

Rabbi Yisroel Salanter was once observed using a small amount of water to wash his hands. His talmidim asked why he did so, as it is written that one should wash his hands with much water, which brings extra berachah.

Rav Yisroel explained that the water was carried by the maid. If he washed with a large amount of water as usual, the maid would have to replace the water by going to the well. It is now very cold outside and I don't have the right to make her go out to get more water.

Rav Yisroel Salanter was once invited to dine with a talmid, a student of his, for the Friday night seudah. The talmid was known for having long Torah discussions at the Shabbos meals. Rav Yisroel told the talmid that he would agree to come on the condition that they would not speak divrei Torah at the table, only sing the Shabbos zemiros. The talmid agreed, although he was understandably surprised why his Rebbe did not want to have Torah discussions during the meal. The meal ended quickly and after the meal the cook in the home went to Rav Yisroel. She blessed Rav Yisroel for the brief meal. "I work hard and am so tired that I cannot stand on my feet. I really hope you come again next Shabbos." It was then clear why Rav Yisroel made his request.

Similarly, Rav Tendler said that some people like to stretch out the Pesach Seder. The wife is often very tired and there may be guests and children who have difficulty remaining awake at the table. Mishkal hachassidus suggests not prolonging the seder.

Coming late to a chavrusa because of another mitzvah may not be what HaShem wants.

Coming home late at night when the family is waiting and has not been told the reason, may not be what HaShem wants. Similarly people who hire a babysitter must consider her before deciding to stay out later than arranged.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the TENS unit, Rav Zilberstein wrote that the "tackler" should have been more observant and aware that it was really a sick man with a medical device, and he is therefore liable to pay for the damage.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memories of our dear Mother, Rebbetzin Malka Esther Shuvalsky, and our beloved Zaide, Chazan Hillel Shuvalsky, zichronam levracha
מלכה אסתר בת שמואל
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