

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### BROKEN TILES

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Parsha our Sages teach us that the generation of the flood would steal small amounts from each other, and because the amounts were so small, they could not be adjudicated in court.

This leads us to the following story. Yoni went to Miami for a summer vacation. He rented a luxury apartment there, from a Jewish landlord named Michael. The apartment was truly stunning. One thing that Yoni and his wife really appreciated was the custom inlay tile design in the kitchen. The tiles were shaped to create a scene of a beach and ocean.

Yoni and his family were staying in the apartment for two weeks. A few days before they were supposed to leave, Yoni accidentally dropped a heavy can of vegetables on the floor. The can fell on the tiles with a crash and two of the



### THE TREE GROWS CLOSE TO THE SEED

Taken from Rav Hirsch on Chumash

All of humanity as we know it today began with Noach and his three sons. Many of the unique traits of the various societies find their roots in the development of the three sons of Noach. The Torah highlights the story of Noach's becoming drunk and how his three sons reacted to his drunkenness. From their varying reactions we can see the seeds of the future nations and societies that sprouted from them. It is evident that the Torah is highlighting this sorrowful story to give us a direction on living our own lives.

If we apply the following notion in studying the Book of Breishis we will gain much Torah understanding about the world around us. The notion is that just as a tree sprouts from the seeds from which it began, so it is with nations and societies; they are who they are from the progenitors who gave birth to them. The seeds of a plant contain everything that will sprout from them. If there is a depravity in the seed we should expect to find that flaw in its offspring. If the seed contains a quality of kindness and dignity we should expect to find those qualities in its offspring.

Immediately after Noach and his family emerged from the Teiva, Noach planted a grape vine. This was his first attempt to test the new Earth. We can well imagine his euphoria when he saw how successful the vine grew and how beautiful and tasty the fruit was. We can certainly appreciate how Noach became intoxicated just with the idea that the Earth was viable and that Mankind had been given a second chance. After enjoying his fresh new wine, Noach became truly intoxicated. When Noach realized his state of drunkenness he was careful to hide himself in his wife's tent so as not to expose himself in the presence of his children. How-

large tiles in the middle of the design were smashed.

Yoni felt terrible. He quickly took a picture of the broken tile to the nearest Home Depot and asked the clerk if they had a tile that could replace the broken one. The man said that the company that made those tiles went out of business years ago and he would not be able to find a replacement. Yoni went to several other hardware stores to find replacement tiles but to no avail.

There were tiles that had similar shapes and colors but nothing was exactly right. Finally, Yoni came clean with Michael and told him what happened. Michael said, "As you know one of the best features of the apartment is the tile design. You have a few days to find a replacement tile. But if you can't I'm afraid I will have to ask you to pay to redo the entire tile design".

"What!" Yoni responded. "But I only broke two tiles. How can you expect me to pay for the whole design?"

"Yes you broke two tiles," Michael calmly replied, "but by breaking those tiles you ruined the entire floor. Anything other than the exact tile replacement will spoil the design that I spent thousands of dollars on creating."

This question was brought to Rav Zilberstein. What do you think? Does Yoni have to pay for the whole new tile floor? Or can he simply pay for the tiles that he broke?

On one hand, he only broke two tiles, but on the other hand, breaking those two tiles ruined the entire floor design.

See Upiryo Matok Bereishis Page 408



“A benefit of being attentive in the **present** is that in the **future** you will have beautiful memories of the **past**.”

ever, Cham, went into his mother's tent, ostensibly with no permission to look for his father. When he saw what he saw he reveled at the opportunity to show the nakedness of his father to his brothers. When Shem was informed of what occurred he together with Yefes covered their father and only by walking backwards to avoid seeing their father's degraded state.

There is a well known principle; the way people treat their parents is the way their children will treat them.

With the incident of Noach's sons the Torah teaches us that this principle applies not only to individual families but to societies as well. Consider how Shem treated his father with the greatest respect. Shem saw the greatness of his father as being identified by HaShem as a perfect righteous man in his generation. When exposed to the shortcoming of Noach's intoxicated state, Shem refuses to identify Noach as a drunk. With this approach, Shem had set the perspective for his descendants.

Shem sees parents as the carriers of moral strength from the morals they received from their parents. Even if there may be shortcomings, those can be dismissed. Those are certainly not emulated.

It is no wonder that the Jewish people who descend from Shem are able to carry the tradition of Sinai for 100 generations. With each successive generation the new one accepts the tradition of the previous one. Any moral shortcomings are disposed of.

Cham, on the other hand, reveled in seeing the shortcomings of his father in spite of the moral greatness he embodied. With this approach Cham set the perspective for his descendants. Cham looks upon the older generation with disdain. With each successive generation they fall further into decadence and moral depravity.

It is no wonder that the Torah identifies Egypt and Canaan as the most morally corrupt nations of the world, both being the descendants of Cham.

Let us celebrate that we find ourselves members of the descendants of Shem!

Have a very wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

### THE HICKORY HORNED DEVIL & THE REGAL MOTH

Let's return to our discussion of Hashem's fascinating and unusual creatures.

We have all seen advertisements of "before and after photos" showing off the latest diet or the skills of a nutritionist. Usually, in those pictures, you can see a similarity between the before and after images.

But in the following creature, the before and after images are both extremely dramatic, as well as completely different. Please meet the Hickory Horned Devil and the Regal Moth. Let's start with the hickory-horned devil. The hickory horned devil is among the largest caterpillars. It is considered a common species in the American Deep South, in the deciduous forests of Missouri, Pennsylvania to Massachusetts, and southward from Texas to central Florida.

They hatch out of yellowish oval eggs. The eggs are usually laid in groups of up to four on the upper surface of the leaves of walnut, persimmon, or hickory trees. As the caterpillars age, they feed during the day. They eat a great deal, reminiscent of the famous hungry caterpillar from the Eric Carle book.

The caterpillars molt four times. That means that they shed their skin four times. After each molting, they look a bit different. But on their fifth and final molting, they look very different. They become a bright green color, with huge, black-tipped red horns. These horns earn them their common name hickory horned devils. They feed heavily on their host plant for about 40 days and can grow up to six inches long. They look like fat, green six-inch hot dogs, with sharp horns.

For about 40 days, the hickory horned devils continuously eat, getting bigger and bigger every day. In late July to mid-August, they crawl down to the ground to search for a suitable location to burrow into the soil for pupation and to transform into a moth. Unlike other moths and butterflies, rather than spinning a cocoon on a tree, they burrow into the ground to pupate in an earthen chamber. They pupate in a well-formed chamber at a depth of five to six inches.

If you would see a hickory horned devil on the ground up close you might get frightened. The horns look sharp like they can sting or bite. The bright colors make it look like a toxic creature. But nothing to fear. These are very gentle and harmless. Their frightening appearance is purely a ruse. The spines,

though prickly, do not sting. The caterpillar is harmless and actually one of the more easily handled.

Why do they have these strange features? It is a costume to scare away predators. For potential predators, their bright colors, huge eye spots, and gigantic horns are clear signs to stay away. Those horns look like quite a bit to swallow, and bright colors often signal toxicity in the animal world. Their sheer size is enough to scare most away, even without the horns and spikes. And if that's not enough, when disturbed these caterpillars will rear their horned head back and vibrate violently to create a buzz that sounds alarmingly like a rattlesnake's warning. But don't be frightened, all of these histrionics are just a scam. They are harmless.

Even though these caterpillars eat a huge amount of leaves, the amount consumed does not even damage the host tree and does not warrant classification as a pest. If you see one wandering across the pavement, you might want to help it out by moving it to an open soil surface.

Now let's get to the part where these amazing caterpillars transform. They pupate in the ground over winter and they emerge in late June through August. When they emerge, they have to pump their wings with fluid called hemolymph to extend them. When the orange-veined, greenish-gray wings dotted with creamy yellow are smoothed open, they emerge as the Regal Moth.

The regal moth is one of the largest moths in North America, with a wingspan of as much as 6 inches. That is a literal handful. The magnificent Regal Moth easily earns its name. That's because it clearly stands out from many of its peers in terms of beauty and sheer size.

What is really interesting is that the regal moth lives only about one week and it never gets to eat! This is because the adults don't even have functional mouths anymore. It gets reduced during their metamorphosis. It goes from a caterpillar with a huge appetite, to a moth that can no longer eat at all. During its week of adulthood, it finds a mate and dies of exhaustion. Females begin laying eggs three days after emergence. The female lays about 250 eggs, but most are eaten by parasitic flies, hungry birds, or snakes. The eggs hatch in six to ten days. What an amazing life cycle.

Oh, Hashem! How wondrous is Your creation!

## “GENTLY SET THE BUG FREE IN THE GARDEN”

Rabbi Yitzchak Kessock told the following story, which encapsulates the love Rav Scheinberg had for even the smallest of the Almighty's creatures.

One time, when Reb Yitzchak walked into Rav Scheinberg's apartment, he noticed that Rav Scheinberg was holding his tzitzis close to his face. The rosh yeshivah asked Reb Yitzchak to see if there was an ant on one of his talleisim, since it was hard for him to tell. Reb Yitzchak found a tiny creature climbing up one of Rav Scheinberg's talleisim.

Reb Yitzchak offered to get a tissue to dispose of it. But Rav Scheinberg asked for a paper cup instead. After Reb Yitzchak brought the cup to Rav Scheinberg, Rav Scheinberg said to knock the bug into the cup and bring it downstairs. There, Reb Yitzchak should gently set the bug free in the garden just outside the apartment building.

With one seemingly insignificant act of kindness to a tiny bug, Rav Scheinberg exemplified “verachamav al kol maasav,” showing mercy and compassion in a manner most of us would never think of doing — and etching this memory and its lesson in a talmid's heart.

From Rav Scheinberg, By Rabbi Yechiel Spero, Published By Artscroll Mesorah. Reprinted With permission from the copyright holders.

**Pictured:** Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the burned stamp, Rav Zilberstien wrote that it appears that after the fact, the burner would not have to pay the market value of the stamp to the victim because he actually increased the market value of the remaining stamp. Instead he would just have to pay the face value listed on the stamp. See Chashukei Chemed Bava Kama Page 44

This week's TableTalk is dedicated to the memory of

**אסתר בת נתן הכהן**

May it be an iluy for her neshama

By Lev and Olga Kreymer

