

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### TAKING HER CLEANING LADY

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about the Yefas Tohar, a captured woman.

This leads us to the following story that was recently asked to us. You may note that a similar scenario was raised in the Double Take column in Mishpacha Magazine. We aim to share a Torah opinion about how this should be handled.

Esti was a busy mother who lived in Lakewood, New Jersey. Like thousands of other women in her stage in life, she desperately needed a housekeeper, a cleaning lady, to help with the chores. The problem was that there were roughly ten to fifteen thousand women in the Lakewood area who needed cleaning ladies, and



### CHANGING PERSPECTIVE

This week we will read the fifth Haftorah of the prophet Yeshayahu consoling his people over their impending galus. They were told of all kinds of horrible punishments that were awaiting them in galus. From the Tochacha of the Torah and from the prophecies of Yishayhu and Yirmiyahu we knew that a very unpleasant journey lay ahead of us. In response to that anticipated journey, Yeshayahu gives us a consolation that will tide us over until the coming of Moshiach.

These words were meant for the people of his time as well as the entire nation that would follow the exile, including us today. We are not so far away from the most recent churban of World War II and we know how absolutely devastating that churban was. The words of Yeshayahu were also meant to give us consolation for that most recent tragedy. When contemplating the Holocaust it almost seems irreverent to accept any type of consolation. However, Yeshayahu did offer it so let us attempt to glean some insight from his consolation.

Before we make this attempt it is important to appreciate that the word 'nechama', which means consolation, derives from 'hinacheim' which means to change one's mind. The connection of those two words offer an insight into how one is able to become consoled.

Whenever a tragic event occurs which brings despair and anxiety to the subject there is always another perspective that could switch the reaction of the subject. So many survivors from the Holocaust turned their backs on G.D and nobody can judge them. And at the same time and the very same circumstances, there were many survivors who became so dedicated to HaShem through their survival. Much of Torah that was built in America after the War was built by the dedication of these survivors. How do we explain the dichotomy between the different reactions of their common experience?

The answer lies in their perspective. The former saw a G.D filled with vengeance who

there were not more than 3000-5000 cleaning ladies available. This means that roughly three Lakewood women were competing for every cleaning lady in Lakewood. This obviously led to supply and demand problems.

The going rate for cleaning help was 20 dollars an hour. Esti knew a capable and experienced cleaning lady who worked for someone in the neighborhood. Esti needed a cleaning lady every day, and she was willing to pay 25 or even 30 dollars an hour to get the help.

Esti considered offering the cleaning lady 30 dollars an hour to come work for her instead.

But then Esti felt very torn. If she sniped away another person's cleaning lady, there was a good chance that her neighbor won't be able to find a new one for a while. Even if she did find one, perhaps by offering so much more money, she would be raising the prices for everyone in the area, making it inaccessible for all but the wealthy.

What do you think the Torah's perspective is on this question? Is Esti allowed to hire the neighbor's cleaning help if that will leave the neighbor with no help or unable to afford cleaning help in the future?

This question was presented to Rav Tzvi Berkowitz.



cared only for destruction. The latter saw HaShem filled with mercy and kindness Who cared enough to save him.

Perhaps we can find Yeshayahu's shift in perspective through which we will be consoled. The prophet says to his people in the Name of HaShem; "in one short moment I distanced you and with tremendous mercy, I will gather in your exiles. With a small amount of anger, I removed My Presence from you for just a short moment and with eternal goodness that never ends I will have mercy upon you."

Yeshayahu contrasts the degree of the anger and the duration of the anger to the degree and the duration of the subsequent redemption. The anger was small and very short-lived as opposed to the kindness which will be great and will endure to eternity.

The image of a nightmare comes to mind when reading the words of Yeshayahu. While the person is in the middle of his nightmare, it is very real. There is real pain, despair and anxiety during the dream. However, once he wakes up and realizes that it was only a dream he is relieved. Why? During the moments of the dream there was real

pain, there was real despair and anguish. The answer is that once he awakes and realizes how it was only a passing moment there is no need to fret over it.

Once Eliyahu announces the arrival of Moshiach, a clarity will fill the world as to what was the purpose of the destruction of Europe. We will see the great salvation that came to us as a result of that destruction. However, we will still be left with the expensive price for which we paid for that salvation; the millions of our people and the thousands of communities that were destroyed. How can we ever accept consolation for that?

For this Yishayhu tells us how it was but a nightmare that lasted a short moment in the span of eternity. It was a prick in the context of everlasting joy.

May we soon experience the nechama about which Yishayhu will tell us this Shabbos.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION THE NATURAL FORCE FIELD, OUR ATMOSPHERE

Last week we learned about the far side of the moon and how it is covered with impact craters from meteorites that have struck the moon. This leads to the question, why doesn't Planet Earth have the same surface? Why isn't the Earth filled with impact craters like the moon? (Pic 1)

The truth is that we should not take such a question lightly. In 1908, in Siberia, there was an incident called the Tunguska event. A meteorite that was about 160 feet wide hit the Earth. It created an explosion that was around 12 megatons. Twelve megatons is close to the same force as the nuclear bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. (Pic 6) Fortunately, this meteorite hit an uninhabited area. It flattened an estimated 80 million trees over an area of 830 square miles of forest. (Pic 4 & 5) A relatively small meteorite has the same force as a nuclear bomb that can level a city. So what protects the Earth from meteorites all the time?

Imagine that the army invented an invisible shield around soldiers. Whenever and wherever a person shoots a bullet at the soldier wearing the shield, the invisible shield automatically turns on and either detonates the bullet or melts it completely. That sounds like science fiction, right?

But the truth is, that type of shield is exactly what Hashem made for Planet Earth to protect it from the approximately 17 meteors that strike the Earth's atmosphere every day,

What is this invisible shield that protects the Earth? It is our atmosphere. (Pic 2 & 3) The atmosphere is a combination of gasses that surround the Earth. It is composed of approximately 78 percent nitrogen, 21 percent oxygen, and one percent other gasses (water vapor and carbon dioxide). The Earth's atmosphere is essential to the protection and survival of the planet and its living organisms. The Earth's atmosphere works as a natural force field, and its high-pressure air ringing the Earth will either burn up striking meteors or will cause them to explode in the atmosphere.

How does the atmosphere, a ring of high-pressure air, heat up and melt a meteor? When the meteor hits the atmosphere, the air in front of it compresses incredibly quickly. When a gas is compressed, its temperature rises. This causes the meteor to heat up so much that it glows. The air burns the

meteor until there is nothing left. Re-entry temperatures can reach as high as 3,000 degrees F (1,650 degrees C)!

Sometimes, as in the case of a bolide meteor, the atmosphere causes the meteor to explode in a huge explosion. How does the atmosphere detonate it? As meteoroids plunge, the high-pressure air they push against finds its way into the objects' pores and cracks, forcing their bodies apart from the inside. The result is a kind of detonation that looks like an explosion.

Such a detonation of a bolide meteor occurred in 2013 in Chelyabinsk, Russia. (Pic 7) A meteor exploded with the energy of around 500 kilotons of TNT. Its shock wave shattered windows in thousands of apartment buildings and sent more than 1,200 people to the hospital for injuries. The Chelyabinsk meteor was so bright—30 times brighter than the sun at its most intense—that it left people with skin and retinal burns. Imagine what would have happened if our atmosphere did not detonate that meteor in space!

You might ask: if our atmosphere burns up or detonates objects that try to penetrate it, then how can space rockets and spaceships return to Earth without getting burned up or detonated?

Space ships are covered with ablative technology. With ablative technology, the heat shield's surface on a spaceship melts and vaporizes, and in the process, it carries away heat. The first spacecraft to carry a human to space and back was the Vostok, created by the Soviet Union in 1961. The heat shield on the Vostok was created by a plastic resin-drenched asbestos fabric. Basically, it was asbestos cloth drenched in hard plastic. (Pic 8 & 9, note the burned fabric on top.)

On modern spacecraft, like the Orion (Pic 10) that NASA has been trying to launch unsuccessfully over the past two weeks, the heat shield is not entirely different. The heat shield is made of a titanium truss covered with a composite substrate with several layers of carbon fiber, with blocks of an ablative material called Avcoat.

Thank you Hashem for the miracle of the atmosphere!

## IT IS ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVE

Rabbi Mordechai Finkelman, a presenter on Torah Anytime, shared the following story. Shortly after their marriage the Finkelmans rented an upstairs apartment in Brooklyn. The owner, a 70 year old fellow and his wife, lived on the first floor. It used to be a large house but he split it to accommodate a rental to bring in some more income. His landlord lived very simply, drove an older car, spent his free time studying Torah and was a very happy person.

During a conversation with his landlord, Rabbi Finkelman learned that he worked for the Postal Service. In his curiosity Reb Mordechai asked him why he still works; "I know that the Post Office has a good pension plan for their workers". His landlord told him that he has not been working there long enough. "Oh! What did you do before working for the Post Office?" His landlord responded "I used to be a wealthy diamond merchant until one day. On that fateful day I came to work to discover that my partner emptied the safe and took off with all the diamonds and jewelry. Besides having lost my entire inventory I also lost a number of diamonds and pieces of jewelry which I took on consignment for which I now was in debt. That was when I decided to start from scratch and took a job at the Post Office."

Reb Mordechai was mortified. "I feel so bad for you! How do you and your wife carry yourselves with such a happy disposition?" His landlord responded, "You feel bad for me?! I did nothing wrong. Baruch HaShem I have what I need. I feel bad for my partner, look what he will have to deal with!"

Written By R' Paysach Diskind



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about buying the condo without mentioning that it was for the deaf brother, Rav Zilberstien said that this was not a problem, as the apartment was truly, objectively worth less because it had a flaw in it. This is because the value does not go based on who is buying it, but rather on the market value.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated for the zechus of a refuah sheleima for

**Rena Esther bas Yaffa Gitah**

