

The Gemara (*Tannis 24a*) recounts: One day Rav Yosei from Yokras hired day laborers to work his field. It grew late and he did not bring them food. The workers said to the son of Rav Yosei from Yokras: "We are starving." They were sitting under a fig tree, so the son said: "Fig tree, fig tree. Yield your fruits, so that my father's workers may eat." The fig tree yielded fruit, and they ate. In the meantime, his father came and said to the workers: "Do not be angry with me for being late, as I was engaged in a Mitzva, and until just now I was traveling for that purpose and could not get here any sooner." They said to him: "May the Merciful One satisfy you just as your son satisfied us and gave us food." He said to them: "From where did he find food to give you?" They said: "Such-and-such an incident occurred." Rav Yosei from Yokras said to his son: "My son, you troubled your Creator to cause the fig to yield its fruit not in its proper time. So too, you will die young." And indeed, his son died before his time.

Later on in the very same Gemarah, Chazal relate: One Shabbos evening, Rav Chanina ben Dosa saw that his daughter was sad. He said to her: "My daughter, why are you sad?" She said to him: "I confused a vessel of vinegar for a vessel of oil and I lit the Shabbos lamp with vinegar. Soon the lamp will be extinguished and we will be left in the dark." He said to her: "My daughter, what are you concerned about? He Who said to the oil that it should burn can say to the vinegar that it should burn." A Tanna taught: That lamp burned continuously the entire day, until they brought from it light for Havdala.

The question is asked: Why were Rav Chanina's actions not considered "troubling the Creator" to reverse the laws of nature as Rav Yossi's son's actions were?

Perhaps we can answer this based on the words of Rav Chaim Volozhiner z"l (*Nefesh HaChaim*, Shar 3): "And he (one who has complete Bitachon) will decree and it will be fulfilled, causing wondrous miracles, contrary to the natural forces of the world, for he makes subservient and clings the purity of the Emunah of his heart, unceasingly, only to Him, and may He be blessed. And by Him, may He be blessed, all is equal, all the time, to conduct according to the natural order He has established or in contrast to the natural order. As we find concerning Rav Chanina Ben Dosa [see Gemarah quoted above] who would decree and accomplish at will regularly opposite the natural order. As he said: He who said to the oil and it lights will say to vinegar and it will light, meaning, by Him may He be blessed, there is no difference between the two.

It seems that there is a natural order by which Hashem runs the world and there is a higher order by which Hashem runs it contrary to nature. When one focuses completely on Hashem's ultimate and total control of the world as in the case of Rav Chanina Ben Dosa, this brings him under the direct control of Hashem bypassing all natural laws He has established. In this realm, "There is no difference between the two." However, perhaps Rav Yosei Ben Yokras's son [above] was not on that level and therefore he was considered to have "troubled" his Creator.

*Established By:*