

THE WONDER OF THE NATURAL WORLD

Background

HASHEM created the world in a particular manner, with given rules and in a set manner. According to that system, oil burns and vinegar doesn't. So how can Rebbe Chanina Ben Dosa say with such assurance that HASHEM will make vinegar burn? First off, it goes against the rules of nature. And second, if the vinegar would burn, that would constitute a great miracle, a change in the order of creation. Not only aren't we supposed to rely on miracles, but when a person has a miracle brought about for him, it takes away from his *zchusim*. It doesn't make sense that Rebbe Chanina ben Dosa would be willing to give up some of *zchusim* just to make a point.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת תענית דף כה/א

... רבי חנינא בן דוסא חד
בי שמשו חזייה לברתיה
דהוות עציבא אמר לה
בתי למאי עציבת אמרה
ליה כלי של חומץ נתחלף
לי בכלי של שמן והדלקתי
ממנו אור לשבת אמר לה
בתי מאי איכפת לך מי
שאמר לשמן וידלוק הוא
יאמר לחומץ וידלוק תנא
היה דולק והולך כל היום
כולו עד שהביאו ממנו אור
להבדלה

[An event happened to] Rebbe Chanina Ben Dosa. One Erev Shabbos, he saw that his daughter was disturbed. He said, "My daughter, why are you sad?"

She responded, "I made a mistake with the vessel that I was pouring from, so instead of filling the cups with oil, I filled them with vinegar, and I lit them as Shabbos candles."

[Therefore in a moment or two, they would go out.]

He said, "My daughter, why do you care? The One who said that oil should burn will tell vinegar to burn."

We learned that the vinegar remained burning the entire day of Shabbos until finally they took light from it for Havdalah.