



A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



FORGOT MY BULLETS

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Torah portion says, "And you shall choose life so that you will live" (Devarim, 19). The Talmud Yerushalmi (Kidushin 1,7) writes that included in the mitzvah to choose life, is the mandate to earn a parnasah, a livelihood, to sustain your life. All that you do to sustain your life is a mitzvah. The mitzvah to earn a parnasah leads us to the following interesting true story:

Avi lived in the United States and he and his wife wanted to plan a family trip to celebrate his son's bar mitzvah on the bo bayom (the day of his birthday) in Eretz Yisrael at the Kosel.

After davening at the Kosel, Avi wanted to take his family on a trip to the Old City in Yerushalayim. The problem was that this was in 2016 and it was a time when Jews were being stabbed frequently by our enemies.

Avi decided that he was going to hire an armed guard to escort his family on their tour of the old city. Avi did a bit of research and it was recommended that he hire Ronen, who was a former special forces soldier and was very experienced as a bodyguard.

Avi reached out to Ronen and they agreed that Ronen would be their bodyguard for the trip.

The bar mitzvah day came and the bar mitzvah boy read the Torah beautifully at the Kosel. The



TURNING TRAFFIC JAMS INTO SERENITY

The theme of Rosh Hashanah and its avoda is accepting upon ourselves the Sovereignty of HaShem as the absolute Sovereign of the universe. The expectation is to accept HaShem as our personal Master, our personal King. To accept His Sovereignty on a personal level means to live with the notion the same way we live with the notion of gravity. We understand gravity and live with it and anticipate its strength on a very actual level.

Accepting HaShem, Who is the most abstract concept imaginable, as our personal Sovereign would seem to be a very unattainable feat to accomplish in any meaningful way. How do we take such an abstract Being and integrate Him into our daily life, into our every action?

On an intellectual level we believe and we know that He controls all the details of our life but to make that a reality, as something that we live with in the same way we live with gravity is something very different.

Perhaps the following approach may help make this goal achievable.

Throughout our daily lives we often encounter frustration. It can come in the form of backed up traffic, it can come in the form of unexpected expectations that our boss may have of us and so on. These moments are often accompanied with some level of stress and tension. This is natural and understandable. Imagine you are heading to a meeting with a new prospect which can open many doors for you. On the way to the meeting you hit traffic that causes you

family ate breakfast, and then a tour guide took them on a detailed extensive trip of all of the sites at the Old City. Ronen, the bodyguard, was with them with a very large, very visible semi-automatic rifle swung over his chest.

The family saw all of the sites and had a great time. As the day came to a close, Avi paid Ronen 500 dollars for his services, and thanked him profusely.

Before Ronen left, Avi said, "By the way, can I see your rifle? I used to be in the military myself and I'm a bit of an expert about guns. "Sure," Ronen said, and he handed his rifle to Avi. As Avi examined the rifle closely he realized that there was no magazine in the gun and the gun actually had no bullets. "Where is the magazine?", Avi asked.

Ronen looked at Avi sheepishly. "In the middle of our trip, I realized that I forgot my magazines and my bullets at home. But I figured if I brandished my weapon openly, then no one would give us any trouble. And sure enough, I was right, we had a great day and no one caused us any trouble."

Avi felt annoyed. "If I would have known that you would have been guarding us with no bullets, I never would have hired you. I would have hired your competitor. I think I'd like my money back."

Ronen looked at him a bit offended. "But what difference does it make? We finished the trip and I watched you the whole day. I did my job and I guarded you, and everyone was safe.

Avi responded, "You actually put all of our lives at risk. We knowingly went to an area that had a potential risk. I wanted an armed guard to protect my family. If something would have happened you would not have been able to stop them. We were just lucky that nothing happened. I think you should refund the money."

Eventually, they agreed to bring this question to a Rav and this question was sent to Rav Zilberstein.

Did Ronen have to refund the money because he guarded them with no bullets?

On one hand he did guard them and they were safe, and perhaps showing his gun did something.

But on the other hand, going without any bullets was negligent on Ronen's part, and had Avi known that he would not have brought the proper "tools" for the job, he never would have hired him.

What do you think?

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“What should I daven for?
One thing.
Some one else.”

*Rav Nosson Tzvi
Finkel*

to miss the meeting. You lost any chance of meeting with this prospect again. The level of frustration can reach pretty high.

Now consider, if you received a direct message from HaShem, (perhaps you recognize His caller ID) in which He tells you not to meet with this fellow. He tells you that it is not going to turn out good if you meet him. If this were to happen to me, I would without any question follow HaShem's advice. I may want to know why HaShem thinks that it won't work out, but I will certainly take His advice and thank Him for it.

If this is true, why am I frustrated when the traffic jam destroys my opportunity to meet my prospect? It is because I do not associate the traffic as being a direct intervention of HaShem to stop me from meeting him. It is interesting to

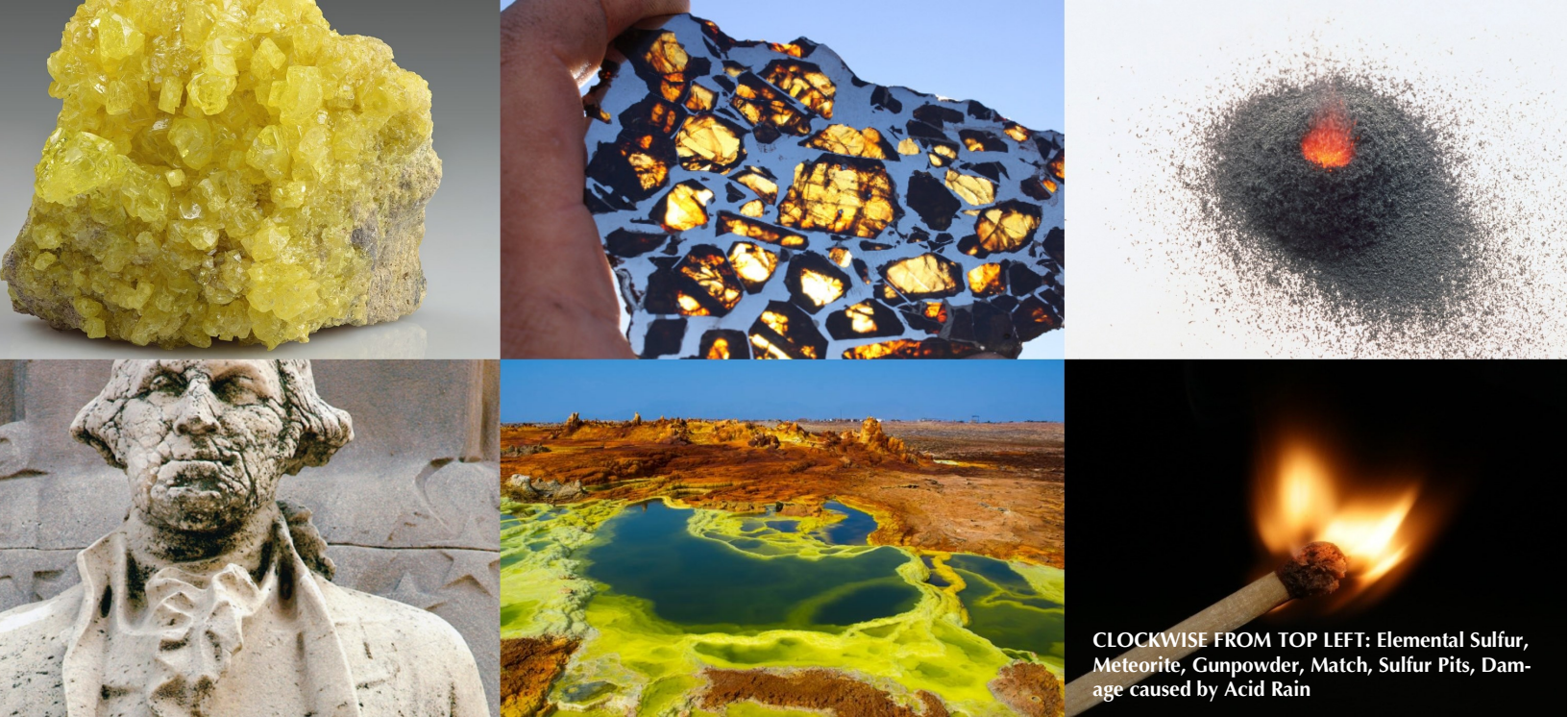
note that even though I truly believe that HaShem runs all events in my daily life, nevertheless I still get frustrated. Why? The reason is that there is a disconnect between our intellect and our emotions.

When we allow our intellect to direct our emotions then we are effectively bringing HaShem into our daily life in a most profound way. Some much of our stress would be relieved once we could integrate this thinking into our lives. The very exercise of training our minds to think on these lines brings HaShem into our lives in real-time. The more we master this technique the greater HaShem's Presence exists in our world. As that increases we experience more and more blessings.

Behold! The very cause of our stress becomes our source of welcoming HaShem and accepting His Sovereignty on a most personal level.

Have a very wonderful Shabbos and a very successful Rosh Hashanah.

Paysach Diskind



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Elemental Sulfur, Meteorite, Gunpowder, Match, Sulfur Pits, Damage caused by Acid Rain

SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

SULFUR

This week's Parsha mentions sulfur, gafris. Let's explore this fascinating element together. Sulfur is a chemical element with the symbol S and atomic number 16. It is abundant and nonmetallic. Elemental sulfur is a bright yellow and crystalline solid at room temperature.

Sulfur is the tenth most common element by mass in the universe and the fifth most common on Earth. Interestingly when meteorites land on earth from outer space, they contain sulfur compounds.

Sulfur was known in ancient times, being mentioned for its uses in ancient India, ancient Greece, China, and Egypt. Originally sulfur was called brimstone. Brimstone comes from the old English word Bryn Stone, which means "burning stone". This is because sulfur was an element that could burn, unlike a typical rock.

Sulfur smells like rotting eggs, and indeed the reason why rotten eggs smell the way they do is because they are releasing sulfur in the form of hydrogen sulfide. Sulfur compounds also cause the strong smells of skunk scent, grapefruit, and garlic.

Do we need sulfur to live? Sulfur is actually an essential element for all life. Three amino acids (cysteine, cystine, and methionine) and two vitamins (biotin and thiamine) are sulfur compounds. Sulfur compounds give strength to our skin and hair in the protein keratin. Sulfur is also an essential nutrient for plant growth.

Elemental sulfur can be found near hot springs in Teveria, near the Dead Sea, and in many parts of the world, especially along the Pacific Ring of Fire. Lakes of molten sulfur up to 600 feet wide have been found on the seafloor under the sea.

We know that sulfur is used to make matches. It is used to make insecticides and fungicides. Sulfur is also used to manufacture detergents, cellophane, rubber and rayon. It is also used to bleach paper and to preserve dried fruit.

Sulfur is also used to make gunpowder. The chemical formula for gunpowder appeared in the 11th century Song dynasty text, written by Zeng Gongliang in China between 1040 and 1044. By 1083 the Song empire was producing hundreds of thousands of fire arrows for their garrisons. Soon the first device identified as a gun, a bamboo tube that used gunpowder to fire a spear, appeared in China. The cannon first appeared in China sometime during the 12th

and 13th centuries.

One theory of how gunpowder came to Europe is that it made its way along the Silk Road from China through the Middle East. But another is that it was brought to Europe during the Mongol invasion in the first half of the 13th century.

Which do you think was invented first, the cigarette lighter or matches? Would you believe that matches were invented later? A German chemist named Johann Wolfgang Döbereiner invented the lighter in 1823. It was known as a "Feurzeug" or "Döbereiner's Lamp" and relied on sulfuric acid, zinc, and hydrogen gas in order to work. However, in 1826 a British pharmacist named John Walker invented the match by accident. He was working on an experimental paste that might be used in guns. He had a breakthrough when he scraped the wooden instrument he was using to mix the substances in his paste, and it caught fire. He then produced "a flammable paste made with antimony sulfide, potassium chlorate and gum arabic, into which he dipped cardboard strips coated with sulfur." He started selling his "friction lights" to locals in April 1827 and they quickly took off.

You might wonder why matches were such a complex invention. Can't one simply scrape sulfur on sandpaper and watch it light? In fact, it won't. If you've ever tried to strike a match on sandpaper, you know that it won't ignite. The heads of these matches contain only sulfur, potassium chlorate, fillers and glass powder.

You need the special surface on the side of the matchbox that contains red phosphorus. When you strike the match on the special surface on the side of the box, the heat of friction converts a small amount of the red phosphorus in the surface to white phosphorus, which spontaneously ignites. The resultant spark starts the potassium chlorate oxidation reaction, and the heat from that reaction ignites the sulfur in the match head.

Sulfur does have a downside. The burning of coal and/or petroleum by industry and power plants generates sulfur dioxide (SO₂) that reacts with atmospheric water and oxygen to produce sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄) and sulfurous acid (H₂SO₃). These acids are components of acid rain, which lower the pH of soil and freshwater bodies, and sometimes cause substantial damage to the environment and structures.

THAT IS A KIDDUSH HASHEM!

A bachur named Chatzkel was once invited to attend the dedication of a public educational facility. Only a select group of people were invited, and he thought it would be a Kiddush HaShem if a yeshiva bachur was present. He asked his Mashgiach, Rabbi Avigdor Miller, if he should go and explained his rationale. The Mashgiach thought for a while as he always did before answering, and said he would leave it up to Chatzkel's discretion. Chatzkel went and it turned out to be a frivolous waste of time; he was sorely disappointed. He later told Rabbi Miller what had happened. The Mashgiach replied, "If you want to make a Kiddush Hashem, you should know that someone who sits in the corner of the Beis Medrash learning — even if nobody knows about it — that is a Kiddush Hashem!"

During Rav Avigdor Miller's early years in his shul, before the full schedule of shiurim that he had later, he was once talking to two close talmidim and told them with great excitement, "I am going on a vacation."

From the gleam in his eye they were sure that he was traveling to a resort for the first time, and they were truly happy for him.

But he then explained his itinerary: "My family is going up to the country while I will stay behind. I will close the shades, take the phone off the hook, spread out the seforim all over the dining room table and learn for ten hours straight. That's a vacation!"

(From Rav Avigdor Miller, *His Life and Revolution*, By Yaakov Y. Hamburger, Published By Judaica Press, Preprinted With Permission From The Copyright Holders)

Pictured: Front Row, Left To Right, Rav Avigdor Miller and Rav Chaim Eliezer Samson in Baltimore's Talmudical Academy in the 1920's



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the price matching, Rav Zilberstein wrote that based on the halacha in Even Haezer 114, 1, the price the seller meant was the normal price, and not a price based on a special promotion. Therefore the buyer would have to return the money.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in honor of
Rabbi Paysach Diskind and Rabbi Yitzi Weiner
Thank you for all you do.

By Steve Schwarz and Family

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