

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



THE ZOOM HESPED

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha opens with the death of Sarah and the eulogy that Avraham gave about her. This leads us to the following true story that happened recently.

Dovid was living in the US and his sister lived in Eretz Yisrael. Sadly Dovid's sister passed away in Yerushalayim. The custom in Yerushalayim is to do the levaya and burial right away, even at night.

The funeral was going to be on a Thursday night. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, Dovid was unable to travel to Israel in time for the funeral. He was asked to give one of the eulogies. Since he was unable to be there in



CONNECTED TO THE SOURCE

The Torah dedicates this week's Parsha to the passing of our mother Sarah. Regarding the verse that states that Sarah died in Kiryas Arba, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, goes to great lengths explaining that Sarah dies only in the physical material world but her life continues uninterrupted. The basis of this notion is taught in the Talmud; "Tzadikim, even in their death, are considered alive, and the wicked, even in their life are considered dead."

I want to share an insight I gained from a talk given by Reb Aaron Lopiansky.

We usually use the word 'alive' in the context of animation, which is a correct usage. So that any creature that has animation is clearly alive. This includes any form of movement whether its feet move or its heart pumps.

There is however a situation that we consider dead even though there is much movement. In the case when an animal continues to move immediately following its slaughter. For those initial moments or even a minute after the animal is dead, it continues to move. While those movements are genuine movements and the animal is contracting its muscles, we still recognize that this movement is just coming from residual energy left in the animal but there is no life left.

Behold! Alive is not defined by actual movement but by the question of, is there life within this animal. In a similar vein our Sages teach us that being alive is not defined by our ability to practice our creativity and other forms of animation but whether there is life within us.

The question then remains, if being alive is defined by if there is life within we need to

person, he was asked to deliver his eulogy at the funeral over Zoom.

Dovid faced the following dilemma. The halacha states that we don't give a eulogy on Rosh Chodesh. Rosh Chodesh is a holiday and we are unable to eulogize it because it will diminish the joy of the holiday.

Dovid was in the US and Thursday was Rosh Chodesh. But in Eretz Yisrael, which was 7 hours ahead, it was already night and Rosh Chodesh was over.

Dovid wondered if he was allowed to give the eulogy to the crowd gathered in Eretz Yisrael. It was no longer Rosh Chodesh for them, and perhaps it was permitted.

But on the other hand, for him it was still Rosh Chodesh. Was he, the brother of the deceased, allowed to give a eulogy if it was Rosh Chodesh for him, but not for the crowd who was attending the funeral?

Does the halacha prohibiting a eulogy on Rosh Chodesh, revolve on the listeners of the eulogy, or on the giver of the eulogy?

This question was asked to Rav Yosef Berger.

What do you think?



know what is life? What is the criteria which defines life? The world defines life as some form of spirit that exists within an organism. It is that spirit which allows for movement. The movement itself does not define life; it is only an indication that there is life within. However, when we know that there is no longer any life left and the movement is simply residual energy we correctly identify the animal as dead.

Our Sages, however, have a different criteria for life than simply if there is a spirit within. Life is defined by being connected to the eternal source of life; be connected to HaShem Himself.

We find this definition regarding the Talmud's distinction between the flowing stream coming from a spring and the flowing stream coming from rainwater. (pictured: The Banias Spring) The former is called 'living water' and the latter is called simply a 'stream'. The former comes from an ongoing flow of water that never ceases, hence it is living. The latter has no such source and cannot be called living.

Hence, true life is actually, true existence that never ceases to exist. Therefore, true life does not exist in our finite material world. The source of life which is true existence can only be found with HaShem, the Creator of all existence. To the extent that one is connected to that Source there is life. When there is no connection to that Source. When our Sages teach that even in this world when the wicked are living they are still considered dead, they are saying that although they are certainly alive and well and enjoying the pleasures of this world, nevertheless, they are cut off from the Source. They are no different than the dead carcass that jerks and spasms once it is slaughtered.

Our mother Sarah lived every moment in complete connection to HaShem. Any connection she had to this finite world was only in the context of connecting to HaShem.

It is not the quality of life that counts, it is the eternity of life that counts.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

SPRINGS

This week's parsha talks about how Eliezer met Rivka by an Ein Hamayim, a spring of water. We are familiar with the idea of drinking spring water. What exactly is a spring of water? How is it different from a river? How is a spring different from a lake or from a well?

Let's look a bit deeper. A spring results when surface water sinks through the Earth's surface becoming part of the groundwater underground. The groundwater then travels through a network of cracks and fissures and eventually emerges from beneath the surface, in the form of a spring. One form of a spring is when the water emerges from below. Another form of a spring is when the water simply flows from a higher elevation through the earth to a lower elevation and exits in the form of a spring like a drainage pipe.

Minerals become dissolved in the water as it moves through the underground rocks. This mineral content gives the water flavor and even carbon dioxide bubbles, depending on the nature of the geology through which it passes. This is why spring water is often bottled and sold as mineral water.

Springs that contain large amounts of dissolved sodium salts, mostly sodium carbonate, were called 'soda springs'. Soda, from the word sodium, was the term for bubbly mineral water (like the original Pierre water), and the term was used long before seltzer or Coca Cola was invented. This leads us to the distinction between Mineral water, Club Soda and Seltzer. Sparkling mineral water has natural carbonation like we discussed above. But Club Soda is artificially infused with mineral salts like sodium chloride, disodium phosphate and sodium bicarbonate to enhance its taste and bubbles. The goal of Club Soda is to replicate the natural carbonation. Why is it called Club Soda? This is because the original trademarked Club Soda was commissioned by the Kildare Street Club in Dublin Ireland in 1877. Seltzer (named from springs in Selters Germany), on the other hand, is made similarly to club soda but is artificially carbonated under pressure without any added minerals, giving it a more "true" water taste. This is why Seltzer usually says sodium-free. This is to distinguish it from club soda and natural sparkling mineral water which do have sodium.

A spring is distinct from a river or a lake in that a spring is the source of the water. A river is a flow of water, but it may have a source from somewhere else. A lake is a body of water. It is passive and it is not the water's source.

What's the difference between a well and a spring? A well is similar to a spring in that both come from underground water. A well however is a hole bored in the ground you can pump water out of. A spring is where the natural hydraulic forces cause the water in a spring to rise to the surface

What is a hot spring? A hot spring or geothermal spring is a spring produced by the emergence of geothermally heated groundwater onto the surface of the Earth. The groundwater is heated either by shallow bodies of magma (molten rock) or by circulation through faults to hot rock deep in the Earth's crust.

Eretz Yisrael has many hot springs. The Gemara and Rashi talk about the Chamei Tveria, the hot springs of Teveria. These were natural hot springs. The Romans installed a large set of baths at the site, whose waters were considered healing. The healing power of the waters made the site popular in the Roman world.

The original name of Teveria was called Rakat. However, during the time of Hillel and Shamai it was renamed Teveria by Herod's son, who named it after the Roman emperor Tiberius. Teveria is where the Sanhedrin was situated during the time of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi.

Who is the Roman emperor who is the namesake of the holy city of Teveria? Tiberias was certainly not as cruel towards the Jews as his successors like Vespasian, Titus or Hadrian, but he was not a lover of Jews like the later Antonius. In 19 CE, a high-ranking Roman woman or Matron converted to Judaism. (The Gemara and Midrashim often talk about the interactions of a Matronisa with our Sages, particularly Rav Yosi.) This angered the emperor Tiberius so much that he issued a decree that exiled all Jews from the land of Italy. In another interesting note, the name Tiberias means "born near the River Tiber" which was a large river in Italy. This means that the city of Teveria is indirectly also named after that Roman river.

A geyser has similarities and differences to a hot spring. Geyser activity, like all hot spring activity, is caused by surface water gradually seeping down through the ground until it meets rock heated by magma. With geysers, the water is explosively forced upwards by the high pressure created when water boils below and steam rises to the top. In normal hot springs, however, the heated water then rises toward the surface through porous and fractured rocks but is not explosive.

(Pictured, Left to Right: A Hot Spring In Wyoming, and a Geyser In Nevada)

THE ARTILLERY SHELLING

During the war of Independence the city of Jerusalem was under siege, and all its residents terror-stricken as the Jordanian legion bombarded the city mercilessly, causing many casualties and damage. One day during this traumatic period, those around the Brisker Rav witnessed behavior that seemed to defy logic: When the shelling was somewhat far away, the Brisker Rav paced around the house restlessly like a caged lion.

But, strangely enough, when the shelling came closer, just outside his own home, his face changed. Suddenly, he became relaxed and the tension melted away from his countenance, as if he were not threatened by the barrage.

Everyone wondered about this: What was the logic behind his behavior? When the danger was far away, he exhibited anxiety, yet when it was nearer, he became calm!

Later, the Brisker Rav explained: As long as the danger was distant, he was concerned that he was transgressing the prohibition of "Do not stand by regarding your brother's blood and his conscience was bothering him, as he thought he might not be fulfilling his obligation. Perhaps he should run out and help his fellow Jews in distress?

But when the shelling had come closer, he was required by halachah to remain indoors because of the danger. Knowing he was no longer at risk of transgressing the prohibition, he relaxed.

R. Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, who related this story, pointed out how the Brisker Rav's tension and agitation were due only to his pure yiras cheit and constant concern for keeping every last detail of a mitzvah.

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THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's questions about the kitchen cabinet that collapsed, Rav Zilberstein answered that the kitchen remodeler would have to pay to replace them because he gave the impression that one can stand and jump on them.

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