

## A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



### THE SALON

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

This week's Parsha talks about "Doing what is just in Hashem's eyes" (Shemos 15, 27) This leads us to the following story.

Esti owned a successful hair and wig salon. She had five employees and thankfully she had a thriving business. One of her employees, Tehilla, was with Esti for more than 15 years. Tehilla was very experienced at her job, and was very dependable. Tehilla was also extremely loyal, having worked with Esti for more than 15 years. But there was a problem. Tehilla was much older than the rest of the employees. Tehilla was not as "with it", not as fashionable as the other workers. Because of her age, she was also not able to relate as well to the mostly younger clientele that came into Esti's salon. And finally, because Tehilla was getting older, she did not move and work as quickly as she used to. She was much slower than the other employees.

Esti considered telling Tehilla that she should retire or perhaps find a new place to work, but she just didn't have the heart to fire Tehilla. Every time Esti thought she would tell Tehilla that



## JUST ONE OF SO MANY NUGGETS

The splitting of the Red Sea was a seminal event in the development of Klal Yisroel. Our Sages teach us that even those who were least initiated in the realm of spirituality were exposed to revelations that even our prophet Yechezkel could not see. The Shira that was sung by our ancestors on the banks of the Sea was incorporated into the words of Torah. One cannot properly comprehend what great revelations were seen. We do know that there is much to learn and much to gain.

Using the insight of the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, I would like to take out one nugget of understanding from which we may gain. The Ohr Hachaim learns the details of this event as follows.

HaShem took out His beloved people from Egypt under the leadership of Moshe Rabbeinu. Through Moshe's direction HaShem ordered Bnei Yisrael to take a detour on their journey and encamp in front of the single surviving idol of Baal Tzfon, which was by the banks of the Red Sea. The reason for this detour was to create a trap to cause Pharaoh to chase after them. Once he and all of his armed forces would come, HaShem would destroy them in full sight. Our ancestors would then have a complete sense of closure and finally cut their ties with Egypt and its culture. They would never see Egypt again.

she would have to let her go, she just couldn't follow through with it, and Esti kept Tehilla on the staff.

One day Tehilla came to Esti and asked if she could ask for Esti's advice. "Of course", Esti said. Tehilla began. "You might know that I have a pretty long commute to work here, and I work a whole day. As you know I'm not young anymore, I was thinking that perhaps I should find a new salon to work at that is much closer to my home and that would have lighter hours. But I'm not sure if I should go in that direction. I thought you might be able to give me your honest opinion since you know me so well."

When Esti heard this, she thought that this was her perfect opportunity. She had been trying to find an opportunity to let Tehilla go, and now was the perfect time to do it. She should encourage her to find a job somewhere else.

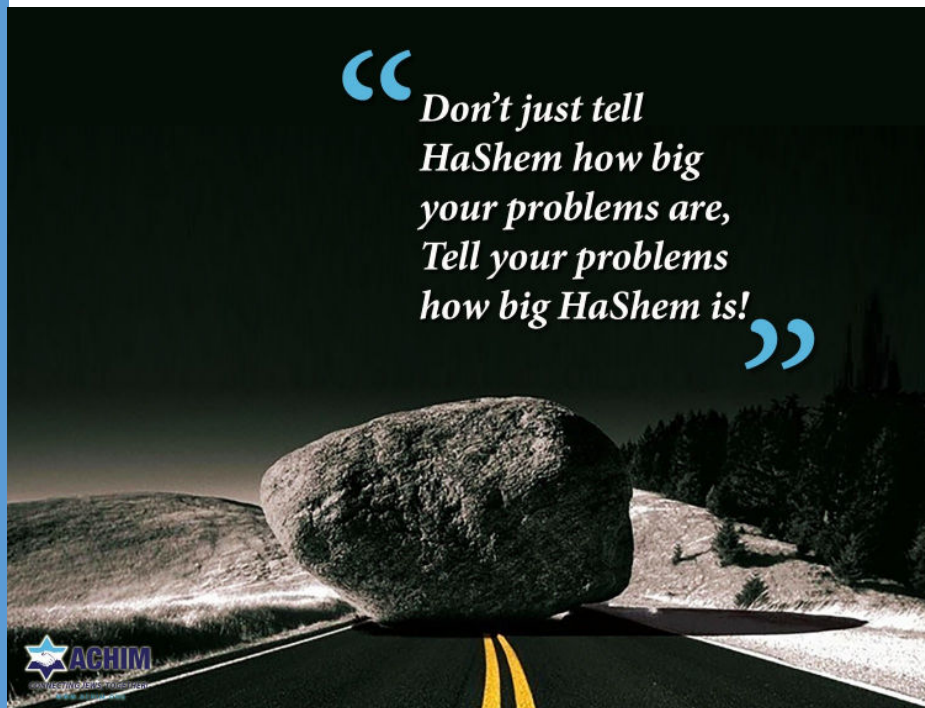
But then Esti stopped herself. Tehilla was looking for her honest advice. Advice that is in the best interest of Tehilla. The truth is that it would be difficult for Tehilla to find another job in a hair salon. Other owners were looking for young energetic people and Tehilla really didn't fit the bill. It would actually not be in her best interests to leave. Maybe she should give the best advice to Tehilla and tell her to stay.

But on the other hand, if Tehilla stays, Esti might eventually overcome her hesitation and actually fire Tehilla. Perhaps it would be in Tehilla's best interest to leave now even if she can't find a new job, to avoid her getting fired which would likely be much more painful.

Esti was not sure what the proper Torah approach was.

This question was brought to Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein. What do you think?

See Upriyo Matok Shemos page 212



“*Don't just tell HaShem how big your problems are, Tell your problems how big HaShem is!*”

The directions were followed and, as expected, Pharaoh and his army came chasing after them. As Pharaoh came near, the people looked up and saw that the angel of Egypt was leading the troops in hot pursuit of them.

They expected that the Egyptians would chase them and knew that HaShem would assist them in battling the Egyptians to a complete victory. However, once they saw how the spiritual forces of Egypt were unleashed, they cried to HaShem saying that they had never agreed to this! There was no way they would be able to defeat these forces.

Moshe turned to Bnei Yisrael and directed them: "It is not you who will fight this battle. You will be quiet and not raise a hand. HaShem is fighting your battle. For

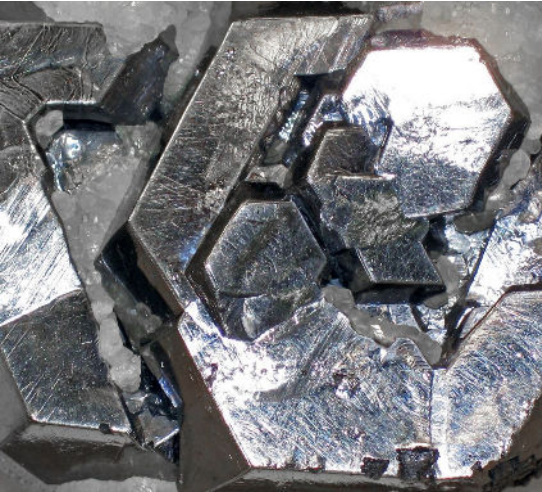
Him, even if the Egyptians harnessed all the spiritual forces available they would be no match to the strength of HaShem.

So often we face conflict and stress which we feel is so overwhelming. We know we cannot possibly overcome it. Even with HaShem's assistance it may seem impossible. HaShem taught our ancestors that when the challenge reaches that point, He will be there. We need only to turn to Him. Of course, we must do our part, but ultimately rely upon Him; He will be there for us.

May HaShem grant us the strength and courage to harness the power of emunah which lies within the heart of every Jew.

Have a wonderful Shabbos.

**Paysach Diskind**



## SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION OFERES, PLUM, AND LEAD

Last week we learned about silver. This week's Parsha says that some of the Egyptians sank into the sea like "oferes", like lead. Rashi (Shemos 15, 10) says that the Old French word for lead is "Plum". Let's, therefore, learn about Oferes, Plum, and Lead.

Lead is a chemical element with the symbol Pb. This is because the Latin word for lead is plumbum. The word plumbum may look similar to the word plumbing. That is because pipes were often made of lead, so the lead pipes were called plumbing. You might also have seen a lead kosher seal on a chicken called a "plumba". That was called plumba because it was made of lead.

Pure lead has a bright, silvery appearance with a hint of blue. It tarnishes on contact with moist air and takes on a dull appearance. Lead is a very soft metal and it can be scratched with a fingernail. It is also quite malleable and somewhat ductile. The melting point of lead is only 327.5 °C (621.5 °F). That is very low compared to most metals. Lead also has a high resistance to corrosion. Lead is relatively abundant and is very inexpensive. These factors resulted in lead's extensive use in construction, plumbing, batteries, bullets, weights, solder, pewters, fusible alloys, white paints, leaded gasoline, and radiation shielding.

Lead is a highly poisonous metal (whether inhaled or swallowed), affecting almost every organ and system in the human body. Most ingested lead is absorbed into the bloodstream. The primary cause of its toxicity is that it interferes with the proper functioning of enzymes. It does so by binding to the sulfhydryl groups found on many enzymes, or mimicking and displacing other metals which are needed in many enzymatic reactions.

Lead is easily extracted from its ores, and ancient people in the Near East were aware of it. Metallic lead beads that were more than 5000 years old have been found in Asia Minor and they may represent the first example of metal smelting. The Ancient Egyptians were the first to use lead minerals in cosmetics and makeup. This later spread to Ancient Greece and later to Europe and to Asia. The Egyptians also used lead for sinkers in fishing nets and for ornaments. In Roman times, lead was used to make sling bullets. Lead sling bullets were effective at a distance of up to 450 feet. The Balearic slingers, who were used as mercenaries in Carthaginian and Roman armies, were famous for their shooting distance and accuracy with lead sling bullets.

Lead was used for making water pipes in the Roman Empire. Its ease of working with it and its resistance to corrosion ensured its widespread use in other applications as well. The ancient Roman author Vitruvius reported on the health dangers of the lead pipes and modern historians have suggested that lead poisoning may have played a major role in the decline of the Roman Empire.

Lead played a crucial role in the development of the printing

press because movable type could be relatively easily cast from lead alloys. Lead dust was commonly inhaled by print workers, causing lead poisoning.

Lead also became the chief material for making bullets for firearms since their invention in the Middle Ages. This is because it was cheap, less damaging to iron gun barrels, had a higher density (which allowed for better retention of velocity) and its lower melting point made the production of bullets easier as they could be made using a wood fire and minimal technical equipment. Even today, lead remains the main material for bullets, alloyed with other metals as hardeners.

Until the 1930's lead was commonly used to make paint. This is because it gave paint a high opacity and it was water-resistant. While lead paints have been phased out in Europe and North America, they remain in use in less developed countries such as China. Lead was the main ingredient of the skin whitener called "Venetian ceruse". This was extensively used in cosmetics by Western European aristocracy as whitened faces were regarded as a sign of modesty and feminine virtue. A similar fashion appeared in Japan in the 18th century with the emergence of the geishas and lead was commonly used in the whitener. Queen Elizabeth I used the lead-based Venetian Ceruse extensively to whiten her face, and some say that she may have died of blood poisoning, brought on by her use of the lead-based makeup.

Nowadays we buy unleaded gas. Have you heard of leaded gas? In 1921 companies began creating gasoline with lead additives to fix knocking or pinging in engines that could damage them and waste gasoline. The lead product was highly promoted and popular, even though there were cleaner alternatives. In 1975 the U.S. began phasing out leaded gasoline.

Because lead has a very high density it is used as a barrier that absorbs sound, vibration, and radiation. Lead also has no natural resonance frequencies. As a result, sheet-lead is used as a sound deadening layer in the walls, floors, and ceilings of sound studios. Lead is an established shielding material from radiation in nuclear science and in X-ray rooms due to its denseness.

Despite lead's dangers, the production of lead is actually increasing worldwide due to its use in lead-acid batteries. Nearly all car batteries are some form of lead-acid battery. The lead-acid battery is the rechargeable battery used in a car. It was actually first invented in 1859 by French physicist Gaston Planté. The reactions in the battery between lead, lead dioxide, and sulfuric acid provide a reliable source of voltage. Their ability to supply high surge currents means that the cells have a relatively large power-to-weight ratio. These features, along with their low cost, make them attractive for use in cars.

## I DIDN'T WANT ANY OF THEM TO FEEL BAD IF THEY SAW ME HUGGING MY GRANDSON

In Ner Yisrael in the early 60's the front of the Beis Hamedrash was toward the dining room, and when a person exited the heavy metal door next to the Aron Kodesh, he would enter the stairwell with the stairs to the left and the principal, Rav Yosef Tendler's office was to the right.

One afternoon, some boys went running wildly through the Beis midrash to the stairs. As they charged through, the heavy metal door hit Rav Tendler, who was standing in the stairwell. The door gave a hard blow to Rav Tendler's head.

Rav Tendler immediately covered his face with his hands so as not to see who the boys were, and sat down to regain his balance. He never investigated the incident. He understood that they had not done it deliberately and that had learned their lesson.

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During much of the duration of WW II, Rav Issur Zalman Meltzer had his grandson, Rav Shneur Kotler, with him in Eretz Yisrael. Rav Issur Zalman and Rav Shneur grew very close as a result. Finally a few years after the war, Rav Shneur needed to go back to America to his parents. Rav Issur Zalman was a very warm person, and commonly embraced people, and gave them hugs.

But when they went to the ship port, to see R' Shneur off, Rav Issur Zalman just shook his grandson's hand and said goodbye.

Later someone asked Rav Issur Zalman why he didn't give his grandson a hug as he would normally do. Rav Issur Zalman replied as follows.

"I very much wanted to. But there are now so many holocaust survivors here who don't have any family, and grandparents, or any grandchildren. I didn't want any of them to feel bad if they saw me hugging my grandson."

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Pictured: Rav Shneur Kotler as a young man



### THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about the stained talis from the gadol, Rav Zilberstein cited the Chasom Sofer who quotes the Yerushalmi that wearing the clothing of a gadol has kedusha that can uplift a person. It is therefore an inyan to wear his grandfather's talis. However he should only do it if all the other people who daven with him understand that this is the gadol's talis, and why it is stained. Otherwise it would be preferable to wear a clean talis.

In memory of our dear Mother and grandmother  
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