

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



VERY INTERESTED SEAT-MATE

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

As we approach Shabbos Shuva, also known as Shabbos Teshuva, let us explore a true story about Teshuva.

Rabbi Shiff, a Rebbe who taught in a Yeshiva, was riding on a bus in Eretz Yisrael, while studying from a Mishnah Berurah, a book of Jewish law. As he was studying, a young secular Jewish teenager sat next to him. The teenager turned to him and said, "Excuse me, may I bother you?"

Rabbi Shiff responded, "Sure." The teen was taken by the layout of the Mishnah Berurah and asked Rabbi Shiff to tell him what this book discussed.

Rabbi Shiff explained that it was a Mishnah Berurah and detailed what it was about and its background. The teen was very interested. Throughout the duration of the bus ride, they discussed the signifi-



OUR LIFE IN FIRST PLACE

For the duration of the Ten Days of Teshuva we insert a request at the end of the first bracha of the Shmone Esrei. This first bracha is dedicated to the Honor of HaShem. It identifies Him as the G.D of Avraham of Yitzchok and of Yaakov. It asserts the attributes of Great, Mighty and Awesome to Him. Before the close of this bracha we insert the following. "Remember us for life, O King Who wants life, and inscribe us in the book of life, for Your sake the G.D of life." While it is certainly appropriate for us to request that He remembers us for life at this time of the year, nevertheless, it seems out of place to make this request in the bracha which is dedicated to the Greatness of HaShem. Although we do include the fact that our request for life is for "Your sake", nevertheless, we are focusing on our life, albeit for His sake. Shouldn't this bracha be exclusively dedicated to His Honor only?

The unique mission of our people is to proclaim HaShem as the Manager of history as well as the Manager of every person's daily life. There are many nations who have already conceded that HaShem created the world. There are many who recognize how without HaShem nothing would exist. However, our message to the world is that HaShem continues to manage, direct and guide all of nature and all events that occur. From our very birth as a nation 3,300 years ago until today our existence testifies to this outstanding proclamation.

HaShem's Management of this world was first manifest when HaShem associated His Name with Avraham, with Yitzchok and with Yaakov. Once Yaakov's descendants galvanized into a nation, HaShem attached His Name to the nation itself. He is now known as Elokei Yisroel, the Guide of Israel. He is our personal Guide. We submit to His Will and He carries us through histo-

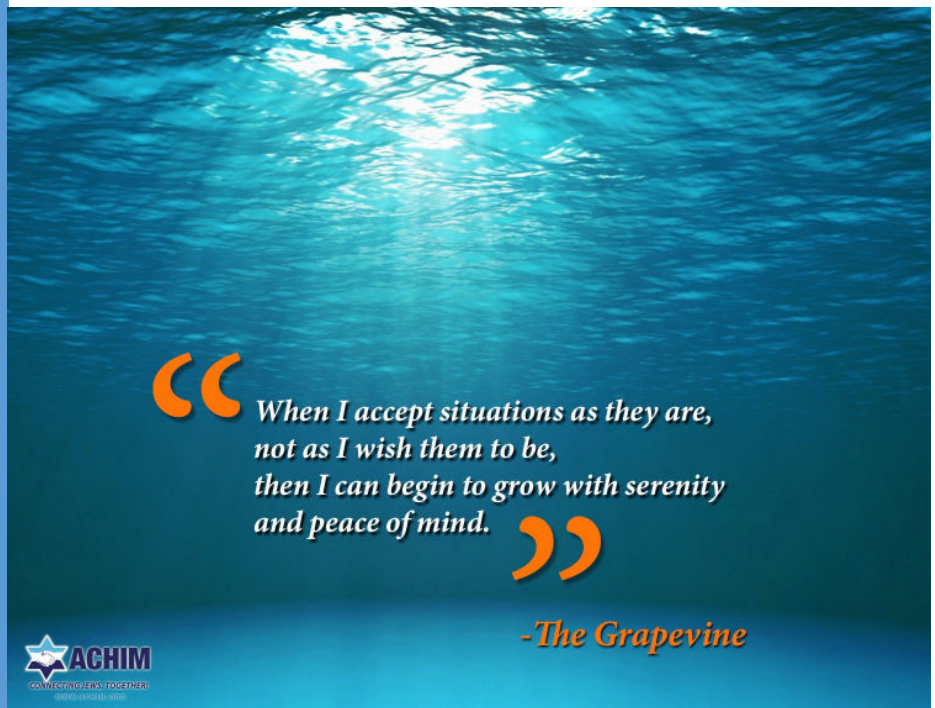
cance of the Shulchan Aruch and the Oral Torah. They even discussed Hashem and the idea of living a life based on Halacha and improving one's midos. The teen soaked it all up and was extremely interested and eager to learn more. After talking for a while, they finally arrived at their destination, the Tachana Merkazi (Central Bus Station).

The two parted ways and Rabbi Shiff realized that it was time for Mincha and that sunset was imminent. He rushed to a nearby shul and began davening Shemoneh Esrei.

In the middle of Shemoneh Esrei, Rabbi Shiff realized that the teen he spoke to had so much potential and was so interested that he likely could have continued teaching him or perhaps encouraged him to study in Yeshiva. He never got the teen's name or number. Rabbi Shiff also remembered a concept in halacha where, in instances where a girl was kidnapped and taken to a monastery, it is allowed to even break certain laws of Shabbos to save her. He wondered, would he be allowed to stop in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei to go after this interested young man? If he waited until the end of the davening, the boy would most likely be gone.

Rabbi Shiff found himself grappling with the dilemma: Would he be allowed to stop in the middle of his Shemoneh Esrei to catch up with this young teen? On one hand, it might be akin to breaking Shabbos to save someone's soul, as with the case of someone being kidnapped. But on the other hand, it is not guaranteed that the teen would embrace a Torah life.

What do you think?



ry.

This message that our people carry is expressed in the first bracha of the Shmoneh Esrei. It is for this reason that the bracha is called "Avos", Fathers, because in this bracha we articulate how HaShem is the personal G.D of our fathers.

The Sfas Emes explains that the ability for us to do a complete teshuvah lies in the fact that HaShem placed His Name on us. By virtue of this intimate association with the Name of HaShem, we are able to return to HaShem. In expressing the mitzvah of teshuvah the Torah states "And you shall return until HaShem..." Behold! The expectation is that we can actually return to HaShem! The implication is that we started our journey with HaShem. We were not some distant creation which was brought about from the creation of the world. Rather, we were a people who carried His Name. Due to our straying from His path we some-

how lost that connection. With the mitzvah of teshuva we are able to return to that original status.

Beginning from Rosh Hashanah we enter a period of time when HaShem draws us very close to Him. So close that as we reach the climax on Yom Kippur He purifies us from any filth that may have accumulated during the course of the year. We become so close to Him on Yom Kippur that in some ways we actually resemble angels.

During these ten days of teshuva when we are able to sense how close we are to Him, we come to realize that we do not have our own existence. Our entire being exists only for the Honor of HaShem.

When we make the request to be remembered for life in this first bracha, it is exclusively for His sake. During these ten days our awareness of who we are; the people whose very existence is exclusively to carry His Name, we have no interest in life outside of this mission. When we ask for life during these ten days it is only for the purpose of carrying His Honor through the world. How appropriate it is to be expressed in the first bracha!

Have a wonderful Shabbos, a beautiful Yom Kippur and an easy fast.

Paysach Diskind



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

RED SPRITES

Have you ever heard of sprites? No, we aren't talking about the popular beverage or mythical creatures. In the atmospheric sciences, "sprites" refer to large-scale reddish electrical discharges that occur high up in the mesosphere, a layer of the Earth's atmosphere. These fascinating phenomena create a spectacular display in the sky, flickering above thunderstorm clouds. Unlike cloud-to-ground lightning, a sprite travels upward. Let's delve deeper into the captivating world of sprites and learn some truly interesting facts about them.

Sprites are one of the most exciting phenomena occurring high up in the Earth's mesosphere. Different from the regular lightning we are accustomed to seeing during thunderstorms, sprites are large-scale electrical discharges that bring a variety of colors and shapes to the night sky.

To understand sprites, it is important to first have a basic understanding of the Earth's atmosphere, which is divided into several layers. The troposphere is where we live and where most weather phenomena occur, including thunderstorms that play a crucial role in the occurrence of sprites. Above the troposphere lies the stratosphere, followed by the mesosphere, which hosts our elusive sprites between 30 to 55 miles above the Earth's surface.

Sprites primarily occur above large thunderstorm clouds, appearing as luminous red-orange flashes in the night sky. They are quite different from regular lightning as they are colder and occur much higher in the atmosphere. These high-altitude discharges have a fleeting existence, appearing for just a few milliseconds.

They manifest in various shapes, with some resembling jellyfish with tendrils reaching down towards the Earth, while others take on a columnar form. The vibrant red hue that characterizes sprites is a result of nitrogen in the atmosphere interacting with the electrical discharge, creating a glow that lights up the night sky in these fantastical shapes. Sprites can also exhibit bluish-hanging tendrils below their reddish upper regions. While red is the dominant color, they can sometimes exhibit pink or purple tones, especially in their upper regions.

Here are some other forms that sprites can appear in:

Carrot Sprites: These sprites bear a resemblance to the shape of a carrot, with a broader top and narrowing as it extends downward.

Column Sprites: As the name suggests, these sprites have a column-like structure, displaying a fascinating symmetry in their appearance.

Angel Sprites: Another interesting form is the angel sprite, characterized by its wing-like structures extending from a central column.

Jellyfish Sprites: Perhaps the most fascinating of all are the jellyfish sprites, with a rounded top and tendrils dangling down, resembling a jellyfish swimming in the ocean. These can be very large, measuring up to 30 by 30 miles. In fact, sprites are one of the largest forms of electrical discharge in the Earth's atmosphere, with some even being large enough to power a small city.

What triggers these sprites? They are typically initiated by positive lightning discharges between a thundercloud and the ground. This positive discharge sets off a chain reaction, leading to the appearance of sprites in the mesosphere. The interplay between the electric field generated by the lightning and the atmosphere results in the birth of sprites, marking the beginning of a spectacular atmospheric event.

Sprites love company! They often occur in clusters, giving a group performance in the sky that can span vast areas above the thunderstorm clouds.

Lightning sprites are named after the sprite, a creature from folklore similar to elves, fairies, and pixies. Both types of sprites got their name due to their elusive nature. Sprites are very short-lived, lasting only milliseconds. They are very difficult to photograph because of their short duration and faintness. Some explain that the word is also an acronym for "Stratospheric Perturbations Resulting from Intense Thunderstorm Electrification."

While sprites have been observed for hundreds of years, and across the globe, they were only first photographed on July 4, 1989, by University of Minnesota scientists. In fact, the photograph was taken accidentally by the team testing a low-light TV camera. Over the years, scientists have employed various techniques to study sprites. High-speed cameras, telescopes, and spectral analyzers are some of the tools used to capture and analyze these elusive phenomena.

Sprites are difficult to observe from the ground due to their height above the cloud layer. They can be more clearly observed from high-altitude planes or the International Space Station. In fact, astronauts on the International Space Station have observed sprites. June is the peak month for storms conducive to producing sprites, but they can occur at any time with the right conditions. Sprites are not rare; they are simply not commonly observed because people are not usually looking for them. Sprites can appear roughly once for every 200 lightning strokes, and observing them requires watching above the clouds, not directly at them.

Red sprites are not dangerous to humans, but they can interfere with aircraft communications and navigation. They have been blamed for unexplained accidents involving high-altitude vehicular operations above thunderstorms.

What is the purpose of red sprites? Scientists are not sure. But some theorize that they help in the creation of the Earth's ozone layer, the region of the stratosphere that contains a high concentration of ozone (O₃) molecules, protecting life on Earth by absorbing the majority of the sun's harmful ultraviolet radiation. Red sprites may facilitate the production of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) through high-energy electrical discharges that occur high above thunderstorm clouds, initiating reactions between nitrogen (N₂) and oxygen (O₂) molecules in the atmosphere. These nitrogen oxides can then participate in chemical reactions in the upper atmosphere that lead to the formation of ozone (O₃), helping to replenish the ozone layer.

From their magical dance in the mesosphere to the vibrant display of red and occasionally pink or purple hues, sprites offer a spectacular show in the night sky, turning it into a canvas of beautiful shapes and colors demonstrating Hashem's incredible artistry. The next time you find yourself under a starry sky, keep an eye out for the mesmerizing dance of the sprites, and you might just be lucky enough to witness one of nature's most captivating phenomena.

I HAVE A SORE THROAT...

For many years the Agudah of Park Heights had two main baalei kriyah, Reb Moshe Juravel z'l and l'hibadel Reb Izzy Strauss. They would take turns leining; one week Reb Moshe and the other Reb Izzy. One Shabbos morning before davening, the week for Reb Moshe was to lein, Reb Moshe approached Reb Izzy. "I have a sore throat and it will be difficult for me to lein, could you lein in my place?"

Reb Izzy, a well-seasoned baal korei, told Reb Moshe that it would not be a problem. "I have not prepared but I will be able to do it."

After giving a moment of thought Reb Moshe told Reb Izzy that he would like to lein the first aliyah. After that first aliyah the tzibur would already hear that it was difficult for Reb Moshe to lein. He would then step down and Reb Izzy would be called up to take over.

This way, if anyone would have any doubts about Reb Izzy's leining it would be understood and appreciated.



THE ANSWER

Regarding last week's question about having a friend call the references to see who was saying less than positive things Rav Tzvi Berkowitz answered that this should not be done.

This week's TableTalk is dedicated in memory of our dear parents

Leib ben Chatzkel
Baila bas Yosef
Moshe ben Leib
Tzilia bas Mottle

By Lev and Sarah Nemirovsky



K&F
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
406 W. Pennsylvania Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204

Brad E. Kauffman Esquire and Kauffman and Forman P.A.
specializing in corporate and construction law,
estates, wills and trusts and business litigation.

