

A MITZVA DILEMMA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE



“THE COMBAT MEDIC IN GAZA ”

By Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

In this week's Torah portion, we find that Reuven tried to save the life of Yosef. There is a mitzva in the Torah called *lo samod al dam reacha* which means that one is not permitted to be inactive, when someone is in danger.

This brings us to the following story that was brought before Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv Zt"l.

During the Gaza War called Operation Cast Lead, an experienced front-line combat medic, named Avi was imbedded in a platoon of 36 IDF soldiers. There was also another soldier named Tomer who was not a medic, but had basic trauma first aid training.



GREEK MYTH AND JEWISH MATH

With Chanukah beginning immediately following Shabbos, I would like to look past this week's Parsha of Vayeishev and turn our attention to Chanukah. Chanukah is a most beloved holiday as it celebrates the trust our people placed in HaShem. With the trust that the few Maccabees placed in HaShem they turned a fatal situation into the source from which the Jewish people continue to draw from 2,300 years later.

The conflict between the Jews of 2,300 years ago and the Greeks from which our holiday came was an ideological one. The Greeks believed in Nature and Science as an authority that decided the fate of all matter. We, on the other hand, certainly recognized the reality of nature and science but nevertheless we did not ascribe the authority of a decision maker in their hands. Rather we recognize that HaShem is the only authority and He alone decides and carries out His decisions. While it is true that He uses nature and science but they are only tools in His Hands.

On the surface there is no apparent disagreement. The Greek scientist and his Jewish counterpart will both do the same studies in the lab and come out with the same results. Both will take the same medication for their sickness. Both ascribe importance to nature and science. The difference between them will only be recognized when you see in what or Who they place their trust.

Let us take for example the story of Chanukah when the Jewish people were under the reign of the Syrian Greeks. The Greeks were oppressing us to abandon the belief of our people. A small group of very religious people, the Maccabees, revolted against this oppression and chose to fight the Greeks rather than yielding to them. Their revolt escalated into a full war between these two sides. One side was a well trained, well supplied army with many troops and the other side was a group of religious folks who had no experience fighting with very little supplies and very few fighters. The laws of math and nature would decide the conflict even before it be-

During an exchange of fire with the enemy, a soldier named Netanel was shot in the torso. Doctor Avi did a field surgery, and stabilized Netanel, but Netanel needed to be transported to a safe zone by a Humvee, and then airlifted to a hospital, for his life to be saved. Still under fire, Avi had a dilemma about who should accompany Netanel in the Humvee. If Avi would accompany Netanel, Netanel will have a better chance of surviving than if Tomer, the soldier with medical training accompanied him. But if Avi accompanied Netanel, and left Tomer with the unit, he would leave the entire unit without a qualified doctor.

Avi was torn about whether he should leave the unit to accompany Netanel.

Which is more important, to improve the chances of one person who is critically wounded, or make sure to be available for the rest of the thirty five soldiers in the unit, who are currently healthy?

What do you think?

See Veharev Na Volume Two page 343

You can email me at Rabbiweiner@achim.org to receive the answer.

You might have noticed that our Moral Dilemma has been renamed to Mitzvah Dilemma; a Torah twist on the term Moral Dilemma. Rav Tzvi Berkowitz suggested that "moral" implies a question whose decision is based on what we feel as opposed to halacha or mitz-

that HaShem is his support when he relies upon Him. If he will rely upon nature, science and statistics then they will be his support.

For the duration of Chanukah we recite a special prayer in which we state "You (HaShem) in Your great mercy stood up for them in the time of their distress. You took up their grievance, You judged their claim and You avenged their wrong." The implication of this statement is that HaShem fought their battle. Ought we not give some credit to the great Maccabees? Was it not they who undertook the fight? Would it not be more appropriate to say that HaShem assisted them in their fight, or HaShem took their side? But the answer is that the Maccabees placed their entire trust, their entire reliance was upon HaShem. They knew that working within the parameters of statistics they could never attempt such a revolt. Instead they placed their entire hope and destiny in His Hands. It was He, not they who delivered victory to us.

So as we sit back 2,300 years later and that autonomy that they won is barely a memory, we still cherish the enriching strength that we gained from that fight. Still today whether we find ourselves in a difficult financial situation or difficult medical situation or any other impossible situation we never have the need to give up - we always have our Father in heaven upon whom we can rely. He is not subject to statistics. He can use Nature herself to give us the solution. All we need to do is rely upon Him.

Have a wonderful Shabbos and a brilliant Chanukah.

Paysach Diskind



“There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread.”

gins in the favor of the former. This was the position and belief of the Greeks. The Jewish position, however, was that although math and nature dictate a victory for the former, nevertheless, they (math and nature) have no authority. All decisions are decided by HaShem. If He wishes the latter to be the victor then nature herself will carry out His Will and by natural means the latter will prevail!

With the long hard fought war and the eventual freedom which the Maccabees accomplished, we achieved a strength that remains with us still today. That is the strength of bitachon, an unwavering trust and reliance upon HaShem that there is no other decision maker in our lives. We have only One Individual upon whom we rely.

When the prophet Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) tells us "Blessed is the man who relies upon HaShem, then HaShem will be his support." he is telling two things. The first is that one who relies upon HaShem is blessed. The second lesson he is teaching us is



SHABBOS: CELEBRATING HASHEM'S CREATION

Consider another miracle of Hashem's design.

The atmosphere serves, among other things, as a shield that prevents space debris from falling and harming earth.

It also allows us to breathe. The atmosphere around us is made up of two main ingredients—nitrogen and oxygen—whose mixture is always the same, whether at the highest mountaintops or in the deepest caves. The perfect balance is 79 percent nitrogen and 21 percent oxygen. You might ask, "Why is it this way?" Is there some particular reason for it? Is it important that we have this exact mixture of nitrogen and oxygen?" Yes, I can assure you it is most important. If the nitrogen were increased, our life processes would slow down and we would die. If the oxygen were measurably increased, our life processes would be rapidly increased. Our pulse rate would just run away and soon we would wear out and die. But Hashem made it just right.

Suppose, for example, it was two-thirds nitrogen and one-third oxygen. If that proportion prevailed, and an electrical reaction caused the elements to combine, do you realize that the whole world

INCREDIBLE ATMOSPHERE!

would be turned into laughing maniacs? Everybody would be laughing because that would produce the laughing gas, N₂O, the same kind dentists sometimes use when extracting teeth. Or suppose it was divided half and half. That would produce nitric oxide, which is quickly fatal to all forms of life.

This world would become truly chaotic if this atmospheric mixture slipped out of control for just a single instant. We would see one of the most tremendous of all explosions, because nitrogen is the basic component of gunpowder; and oxygen, of course, makes for rapid combustion. It would be "Goodbye, world!"

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THE HOLY RESCUER

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik's dedication to the people of his city was expressed poignantly the day a great fire swept through Brisk in 1895. As was the norm in those days, most buildings in the city were made of wood, and when a fire began in one house, the flames spread quickly to the rest. There was little hope to put out the flames, and the main concern was to make sure no one remained trapped in the houses. Rav Chaim ran from house to house frantically searching for anyone still inside. He found many little children, and, charging through the smoke and flames, he led them to safety. He made many trips in and out of the danger zone, carrying infants in his arms, and did not stop until he was sure all were accounted for. When the fire finally came under control it was discovered that half the homes in the city had been destroyed, and many families were left without a roof over their heads. Those whose homes had been destroyed moved into the shuls and other public buildings, and a committee was established to build new houses for the many homeless." In the meantime, while the construction of new homes was still going on, R. Chaim refused to sleep in a bed, but rather slept on a hard wooden bench. He said he was unable to sleep on a bed while others in the city had no homes. After a while, when he sensed that the people in the city who did have homes were becoming lax in their efforts to rebuild the city, he went to sleep in a small room under the stairwell in the Great Synagogue." All the pleading of his congregants that this was beneath his dignity and that he should return home was unsuccessful. Ultimately his action had the desired effect: and the pace of rebuilding quickened, and the houses were eventually rebuilt. The Brisker Rav, By R' Shimon Yosef Meller, Published By Feldheim page 67

RAV CHAIM RAN FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE FRANTICALLY SEARCHING FOR ANYONE STILL INSIDE. HE FOUND MANY LITTLE CHILDREN, AND, CHARGING THROUGH THE SMOKE AND FLAMES, HE LED THEM TO SAFETY.



The Jewish people need connection; both a connection to Hashem as well as to each other, now more than ever. Achim is building a community-wide learning network for all members of our Jewish community in order to deepen their relationship with Hashem and deepen their relationship with each other.

Please continue Davening for Tamar Adina Bas Kayna Shulamis for a complete recovery along with the other cholei Yisrael

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