

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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This week's Parasha is sponsored Lirfuat Rav Yona Ben Chava Betch Shaar Cholei Yisrael

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



PRAYER

Praying isn't as easy as it seems. Sometimes we pray for something for years and never seem to be answered, yet on other occasions we can see immediate success in our prayers.

In this week's parsha we learn of one of the greatest prayers in history; that of Eliezer.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said, "Three people were answered while their words were still upon their tongues; Avraham's servant Eliezer, Moshe, and Shlomo."

Regarding Eliezer, the verse states, "He had not yet finished speaking and — look! — Rivkah... came out" (v. 15).

Regarding Moshe, the verse states, "When he finished speaking all these words [after his authority had been challenged by Korach], the ground split open" (Bamidbar 16:31).

Regarding Shlomo, the verse states, "When Shlomo finished speaking to G-d [at the inauguration of the holy temple], the fire descended from heaven" (Bereishis Rabah 60:4).

Three Tsadikim prayed and were answered. Yet there is a difference between Eliezer and the others. Eliezer's prayer seems to be even greater, as he was answered even before he had finished his prayer.

Upon inspection the torah goes to great lengths to tell us about Eliezer's mission. Much ink is spilled

(so to speak) from the time Avraham sends him away to the time he succeeds in getting Rivka's consent.

Why does the torah elaborate so much on his mission? Who was Eliezer and was he really so great?

The Midrash brings a famous encounter between Avraham and Nimrod. Nimrod was the ruler of a vast empire, and believed himself to be a deity. Avraham had other ideas and knew the truth. He challenged Nimrod and was thrown into the fire. Hashem saved Avraham, and shortly after Avraham left the country.

There is an amazing Targum Yonatan that states that Eliezer was none other than the son of Nimrod.

Nimrod seeing that this man Avraham had succeeded was so impressed that he said it would be better that his son clings to such a man, then to stay a prince in his palace.

Eliezer thus became Avraham's servant. But what kind of servant was he?

Avraham referred to his servant as 'Damesek Eliezer'.

Our Sages teach us that the word Damesek is an acronym of the words "Doleh Umashkeh", meaning the one who draws from the well and gives of it's water. Furthermore, "He (Eliezer) controlled all that was his (Avrahams)." This teaches us that Eliezer had dominion over the Torah of Avraham (Yoma 28b). Eliezer had complete mastery of Avraham's teachings and was authorised to disseminate his lessons to others. The Midrash adds that Eliezer had control over all that was his – himself; he had complete self-control and mastery over his yetzer hara.

He was Avraham's Talmid, his vehicle for fulfilling his mission in the world of spreading Hashem's life sustaining Torah. He drew from Avraham's Torah and fed others. ►

Cheshvan 24th 5780

SHABBAT BEGINS: 3:45 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 4:57 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself."

> UPCOMING EVENTS

- 25th NOV Wisdom & Knowledge Series
- 26th NOV Student Event
- 27th NOV Young Married Couples event

For our upcoming events check our website www.torahactionlife.com



DVAR TORAH

Prayer
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

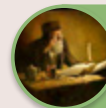
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Not only was he a Talmid Chacham but he was also the most faithful of servants to Avraham. Although he expounded on Avraham's teachings to the public, he managed Avraham's estate and was Avraham's representative to the world, he introduced himself to Betuel and Lavan as 'Eved Avraham anochi' - I am Avraham's slave. He considered himself to be a mere servant and did not take credit for his achievements.

When the time came to look for a wife for Yitschak, Avraham summoned none other than his top confidant Eliezer for the mission. Avraham did not want his son to marry any Canaanite women, and chose to send Eliezer in search of a wife to his family in Aram Naharayim. The Midrash enlightens us as to what occurred before Eliezer set off. Eliezer himself was father to a lovely daughter. In his eyes, it would have been the perfect match. He yearned that his daughter marries Yitschak. He approached Avraham and hinted to him that his daughter would offer the perfect match.

Avraham's response was startling. "My son is Baruch, blessed, and you are Arur, cursed, and one who is Arur cannot cleave to one who is Baruch." Eliezer was a descendent of Canaan the son of Cham who was cursed by Noach, whereas Avraham was descended from Shem, who received Noach's blessings - they could not match.

Wow. If we were Eliezer, I wonder how we would have reacted to hearing that. Something like - I have been your confidant, your servant for years. I do all you say, I teach your Torah, I am in charge of your house, you are everything for me, how can you call me cursed?!

However, Eliezer's reaction was far from that. Instead he kept quiet, and fulfilled his master's request to go to Aram Naharayim many miles away to find a wife for Yitschak.

He arrived at the well and makes a supplication to the G-d of his master Avraham, and before he knows it he is answered. We can now understand why his prayer was so potent.

The Gemara states 'The world subsists only through the merit of he, who in a quarrel restrains himself to nothingness - "bolem azmo beshaat meriva". As it says "He hangs the earth upon nothing" (belima) (Iyov, 26:7). R. Abbahou said: the World rests only upon the merit of the one who thinks of himself as nothing, as it says "Underneath are the arms of the world" (Devarim 33:27).

His prayer was potent because the whole world rested upon his shoulders. The Midrash (Bereishit Rabba 60:7) relates that through Eliezer's dedication and loyalty to Avraham, he changed from Arur to Baruch!

He might have been justified to answer back, to

even renegade against his Shelichut, but that wasn't Eliezer. Eliezer was an Eved Ne'eman, a true servant, true to Hashem and true to Avraham. This was a massive merit.

Yet this was not the only thing Eliezer had going for him.

Before he set out, Avraham had prayed that Hashem send before him his Malach to help Eliezer. And once Eliezer reached the well, he prayed in the merit of Avraham. Thus Eliezer had the help of Zechut Avot. He prayed to Hashem in the merit of Avraham.

With these two powerful antidotes, his massive merit after an act of Belima, and the merit of Avraham enabled his prayer to reach the highest of heavens and he was answered even before he finished praying.

The best time to pray is after an act of selflessness. When one acts against his will but for the will of Hashem. When we conquer our Yetser hara, that is the sha'at Ratson.

That Et Ratson together with the Zechut Avot will surely lead to success.

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI MASCHIAH KELATY - RABBI OF STANMORE SEPHARDI KHEILLA



PARASHA INSIGHTS

This week's parasha discusses the purchase of a burial plot by Avraham Avinu for his wife Sarah. He buys the plot from the newly elected head of the Hittites, a scoundrel of a fellow by the name of Ephron.

The Medrash describes Ephron as a person who was "nivhal l'hon" - a person who became confused when he saw the money Avraham was prepared to give for the burial site.

However, something does not seem right. Avraham approached the sons of Chet. He told them that he needed a burial plot. Ephron got up in front of everyone and magnanimously told Avraham that he would GIVE him a burial plot, no charge what so ever. He offered it as an outright present, stating basically that it was a privilege to be able to give Avraham the land.

But Avraham insisted that he did not want the field as a gift. He wanted to pay for it. Ephron responded, "What is a mere 400 pieces of silver between friends. You don't have to pay me."

Suddenly, Ephron mentioned a price! What happened? Where is the transition? Why does Ephron suddenly switch from being the gracious generous giving person to 'What is 400 bucks between friends?'

Rav Simcha Zissel records an incident in the life of the Rambam. A group of wise men approached him and told him that they could change the nature of a cat, training it to be as gracious and polite and as giving as a human being, making the cat into a servile butler. The Rambam argued that it was impossible to change the nature of a cat.

The group of 'wise men' set about for weeks and weeks to train a cat. They trained it to walk on its hind legs. They dressed the cat up in a little suit. It was trained that when people came into the room the cat would escort them to their seats. In fact, the cat acted just like a butler. They further trained the cat to hold a little cup and to serve the people when they got to their seats. They invited the Rambam to show him their accomplishment and to prove to him that it is possible to train an animal to be just like a human being.

The cat greeted the Rambam and guided him to his seat. When the Rambam got to his seat he removed a box from his pocket. In the box was a little mouse. He dropped the mouse on the floor. The cat suddenly forgot that it was a butler and scampered after the mouse. The Rambam turned to the wise men and said, "A cat is a cat and will always be a cat."

Rav Simcha Zissel concluded that unless a human

being learns to train himself, he will also be like a cat. There are times when he may act kind and gracious and cultured. But when his button gets pressed and he is no longer in control, he can lose it all - to his own equivalent of the mouse.

Avraham's words to Ephron: "I am prepared to give money for the field. Take it from me" pushed Ephron's button. Reaching into his pocket and taking out the shekels of silver was equivalent to the Rambam's dropping the mouse in front of the cat. Ephron lost it right there. The jingle of the money was all he needed to throw off his magnanimous show of generosity and become a greedy money-lusting estate agent.

Every human being potentially has his own 'mouse', whether it is a real mouse or money or food, or whether it is other physical lusts. We all have that thing that can reduce us from being a human being to just a two-legged animal.

A cat cannot become a 'mensch'. But a man CAN become a 'mensch'. A person can learn to control himself. That, in fact, is man's spiritual task in this world. The challenge of man is to not 'lose it' when confronted by all the potential lusts of this world. We don't want to become like the cat that chases after the mouse.

As Jews, we are built for better things. And that makes for a lot of happy mice.

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI ELCHANAN WASSERMAN • "THE ROSH YESHIVA OF BARANOVITCH"

Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman was born in 5635 (1875) in the Lithuanian city of Birz. When he was 13 years old, his parents went to live in the tiny Latvian city of Boisk, and he went to study in the famous Telshe yeshiva. The young Elchanan became the favorite student of two great Rabbis: Rabbi Eliezer Gordon and Rabbi Shimon Shkop Zatzal. He quickly became known as one who was exceptionally diligent in study, being careful not to waste a single moment of his time. Each hour was devoted to a certain task, and everything went according to the clock. He was never the least bit late, nor was there ever a time in which he had nothing to do, not even for a single instant.

"How will I be able to explain idleness in the future, when I will have to stand before the Celestial Court and explain what I did at that point? Am I not going to give an accounting for every moment in my life?"

The Rav of Ponevezh recounts that when they were studying together in the Radin yeshiva, a telegram was brought to him stating that his wife had just given birth to a son. He then arose, recited the blessing HaTov VeHaMetiv, and immediately returned to his studies and continued to delve into his subject as if nothing had happened. Similarly, he was once about to leave for the United States, but since he still had an hour before his train was set to depart, he went to the yeshiva with suitcase in hand and gave a course to some students.

In 5659 (1899), Rabbi Elchanan married Michle, the daughter of the Gaon Rabbi Meir Atlas, the Rav of the Lithuanian city of Shavli. After the wedding, he went to Radin to infuse himself with the teachings of the Chafetz Chaim. Rabbi Elchanan spent three years in Radin and became attached to his Rav, the Chafetz Chaim, with all his soul, to the point of resembling him. He devoted himself to acquiring his character traits – the same simplicity, the same integrity, the same fervent faith, both profound and simple, and the same attitude concerning the problems of the hour. It is therefore not surprising that after the passing of the Chafetz Chaim, many people recognized his successor in the person of Rabbi Elchanan.

From Radin, Rabbi Elchanan was called upon to become the Rosh Yeshiva of Brisk. He was happy with the prospect of finding himself in the shadow of the Brisker Rav, Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik.

After the First World War, Rabbi Elchanan went to the city of Baranovitch, where he directed a great yeshiva that flourished and attracted many students. He loved his students dearly and was devoted to them as a father to his children. Rabbi Elchanan did not wish to be a Rav, and instead he chose to become a Rosh Yeshiva and live in poverty. After the death of his father-in-law, the great city of Shavli invited Rabbi Elchanan to succeed him. His wife the Rebbetzin saw in this proposal an end to the terrible poverty that reigned in their home, however Rabbi Elchanan

– faithful to the path that he had always trod from his youth – absolutely refused to become a Rav. His wife therefore decided to travel to Radin and ask the Chafetz Chaim for his opinion. When the carriage arrived to bring her to Radin, the Rebbetzin saw that her husband was standing in a corner and weeping, for he feared that his teacher would order him to take the position. Seeing the magnitude of his grief, his wife changed her mind and did not go.

After a certain time, Rabbi Elchanan became the recognized leader of Jewish Orthodoxy, and his opinion was accepted as that of the Torah's. He wrote articles in Yiddish and Hebrew on numerous subjects, and every article that he signed carried tremendous weight. Even when he was in the United States, he published a brochure entitled Ikveta DiMashiach ("The Heels of the Messiah"), in which he called upon Jews to return to G-d. Rabbi Elchanan was accepted by all groups – Chassidim, Mitnagdim, Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews – and everyone heeded his word because of his Torah and great integrity.

When the Second World War erupted, Rabbi Elchanan fled with his yeshiva to Vilna. Before the Germans entered Vilna, he once traveled to the city of Slobodka, near Kovno, thinking to return to Vilna where he was then living. The Germans, however, quickly seized control of Lithuania and he was forced to remain in Slobodka.

On the 11th of Tammuz, 5701 (1941), the Nazis suddenly attacked the Jews of Slobodka and executed them. Before being murdered, Rabbi Elchanan addressed his friends, rabbis, and all Jews. He spoke softly, with the same inner calm that normally characterized his speech. These were his last words:

"Apparently they consider us Tzaddikim in Heaven, for we were chosen to atone for Klal Israel with our lives. If so, we must repent completely here and now. Time is short. The road to the Ninth Fort [where the Slobodka-Kovno martyrs were massacred] is rapidly approaching. We must realize that our sacrifice will be more acceptable when it is accompanied by repentance. We will thereby rescue our brothers and sisters in America. We are now about to perform the greatest possible mitzvah! 'You destroyed it by fire, and with fire shall You rebuild it.' The fire which will now consume our bodies is the very same fire which will give rise to the rebirth of the Jewish people."

With the cry of Shema Israel, his soul ascended to Heaven. Rabbi Elchanan left us many books, such as Kovetz He'arot on Tractate Yebamot, the three-volume work Ohel Torah, and others.

The world of Rabbi Elchanan was indeed destroyed, but the words of his pure soul flew off and reached us even in America. His books can be found in every yeshiva, and students study the great Torah that he wrote in holiness and purity. May G-d avenge the spilled blood of His servants. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

DOES A BERACHA RECITED OVER A FRUIT COVER ANOTHER FRUIT THAT IS CONSIDERED SUPERIOR?

The Bet Yosef (commentary to the Tur by Maran, author of Bet Yosef) brings a ruling of the Rashba (Rav Shlomo Ben Aderet of Barcelona, 1235-1310) concerning a person who recited a Beracha over an ordinary fruit (in the Rashba's case, it was an Etrog), and also had in front of him an olive. The Rashba maintained that since olives are among the Shibat Ha'minim – the seven special species of the Land of Israel, it is considered a superior fruit, and, as such, it is not covered by a Beracha recited over an ordinary fruit. Although normally a Beracha recited over one product covers all foods requiring the same Beracha that are served afterward (unless one specifically intended to limit his Beracha to that food), this rule does not apply, according to the Rashba, when the subsequent food product is considered superior.

Although the Rashba's ruling is not mentioned in the Shulhan Aruch, it is nevertheless accepted by Halacha. This is the position of both Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1924-1998) and Hacham Ovadia Yosef, who noted that the Bet Yosef mentioned this ruling without bringing any differing opinions, indicating that it is to be accepted.

However, these Poskim do not go so far as to accept the Rashba's ruling in a case where both foods were present on the table when the Beracha was recited. In such a case, the Beracha covers both foods, even if it was made on the inferior food. However, if one made a Beracha on an inferior fruit, and then a superior fruit was brought to the table, one must recite a new Beracha – even though generally a Beracha is not repeated when another food is brought that requires the same Beracha as one which was already recited.

Another example of this Halacha is the case of one who recited "Mezonot" over pasta, and then cookies were brought to the table. Cookies and similar baked goods are considered "superior" to pasta because theoretically, one who eats a very large quantity of cookies will need to recite Birkat Ha'mazon, which is not the case with pasta. Therefore, one would have to repeat the Beracha of "Mezonot" over the cookies when they are brought to the table.

There is considerable debate, however, as to how precisely we determine "inferiority" and "superiority" with respect to this Halacha. For example, if a person personally prefers a certain fruit over fruits from the Shibat Ha'minim, it is uncertain which fruit is considered "superior." Therefore, in order to avoid this question, it is preferable whenever reciting a Beracha to have specific intention for the Beracha to cover all foods requiring that Beracha which will be brought afterward. This way, according to all opinions, he will not have to repeat the Beracha.

Summary: Generally speaking, if a person recited a Beracha and ate, and then another food requiring the same Beracha is served, he does not repeat the Beracha. An exception to this rule is a case where a superior food is brought – such as if one recited "Ha'etz" over an ordinary food, and then one of the seven special species was brought; or if one recited "Mezonot" over pasta, and then baked products were served. In these cases, the Beracha must be repeated over the superior food. However, as it is not always clear which food is "superior," one should preferably have in mind whenever reciting a Beracha that all foods he will eat afterwards requiring that Beracha should be covered. This way, he can be certain that he does not need to repeat the Beracha. ■

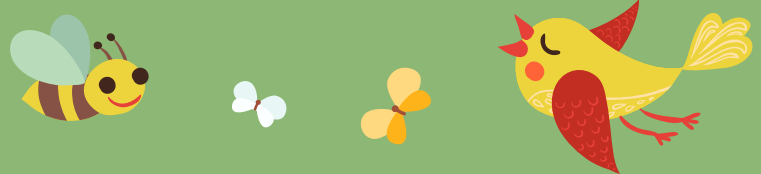
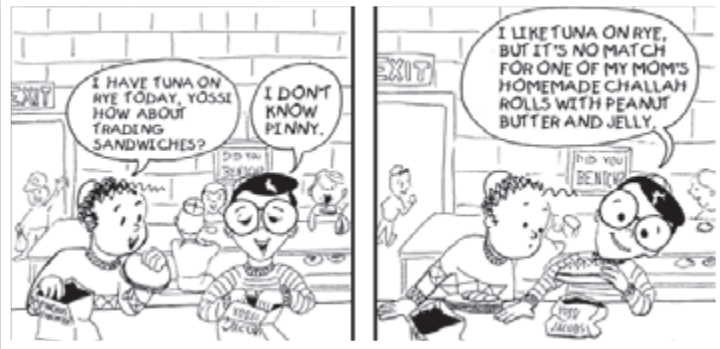


TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 When Lavan told Eliezer that the house was cleared out, what did he remove?
- 2 Who did Eliezer want Yitzchak to marry?.
- 3 Aside from Eliezer, to which other people did Rivka offer to give water?
- 4 Lavan answered Eliezer before his father, Betuel, had a chance. What does this indicate about Lavan's character?
- 5 What did Rivka mean when she said "I will go?"

Wicked. 6 24:58 - I will go even if you don't want me to go.
 8 24:44 - To the men who accompanied Eliezer. 4 24:50 - That he was
 1 24:31 - Idols. 2 24:39 - His own daughter

Answer



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