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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR  
TAL



## LOBSTER

The lobster is a soft mushy animal that lives inside a solid shell. That rigid shell doesn't expand. So how does the lobster grow? As the lobster grows it feels under pressure of its shell. It goes under a rock to protect itself from predatory fish, casts off its shell and produces another bigger one. Eventually that shell becomes uncomfortable and again it goes through the same process.

The stimulus for the lobster to grow is that it feels uncomfortable. Perhaps if lobsters had a doctor they would never grow; as soon as they felt uncomfortable they would go to the doctor and get a quick cure.

Times of stress are also signals for growth. A tough ride shouldn't be viewed as adversity, rather as an opportunity to renew, revitalise and strengthen oneself.

The Torah goes into great detail regarding the fine nuances of the lives of our patriarchs and matriarchs, for it is written, Ma'aseh Avot Siman L'Banim - Whatever happened to the forefathers, is a sign for the children. Therefore, by studying their lives, we can better appreciate the meaning of our own lives.

Our father Avraham was challenged with ten tests, all of which he passed with great distinction (Pirkei Avot 5:4). Rabbi Dessler Z"l

explains that all of the trials and tribulations of future generations are traceable to those ten tests. If, through our long and painful history we have remained faithful to G-d and never lost sight of our calling, it is because Avraham created the character traits that enabled us to prevail.

But tests are hard, so what is the real purpose of a divinely ordained test?

A student is tested in school so that the teacher can find out how much the student knows. The omniscient G-d, by contrast, is already aware of a person's capacity before the test. The purpose of a divine test, therefore, cannot be to reveal any new information to G-d.

The Hebrew word Nisah, "tested," is derived from the word Naseh, which means flag. The Midrash explains that just as a flag flies high above and identifies an army or ship, so too a test is meant to elevate and reveal the innate potential of the person being tested.

A test is always a choice at the upper limit of a person's capacity. Passing the test actually changes the person. Potential becomes actualized. A rose bud contains all the petals of the opened rose, but a rose in full bloom is far more beautiful than a bud.

The Mishna in Yuma (5:3) relates how the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur would sprinkle blood on the Mizbeach (altar). He would sprinkle once upwards and seven times downwards. Each time he would count. He started with the first one above and counted "one", then made the second sprinkle which was downwards and said, "one and one". He continued with the third sprinkle and said, "one and two", followed by, "one and three" etc. Our sages are perplexed why at each count the Kohen Gadol had to continue to say "one and". ▶

**CHESHVAN 10<sup>TH</sup> 5780**

**SHABBAT BEGINS: 4:07 PM**

**SHABBAT ENDS: 5:10 PM**



## THE WEEKLY QUOTE

*"Good Judgment comes from experience, and a lot that comes from bad judgment"*

## > UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ 13<sup>TH</sup> NOV Caffeine for the Soul Ladies program
- ▶ 14<sup>TH</sup> NOV Challah Bake
- ▶ 15<sup>TH</sup> NOV Young Professional Friday Night Dinner
- ▶ 26<sup>TH</sup> NOV Student Event
- ▶ 27<sup>TH</sup> NOV Young Married Couples event

For our upcoming events check our website [www.torahactionlife.com](http://www.torahactionlife.com)



**DVAR TORAH**

Lobster

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

P1

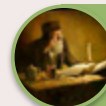


**DVAR TORAH**

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**HALACHOT**

The Beracha for Coconut Milk and Fruit Juices / RABBI ELI MANSOUR

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**Q&A & CARTOON**

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Why didn't he just say number two three etc.?

The Yismach Moshe explains that the first sprinkling the Kohen Gadol carried out would be infused with emotion. But as with everything in this world, the more action we perform the more we lose the original inspiration. The Kohen Gadol wanted to keep that original inspiration with him and so he constantly reminded himself of the first sprinkling throughout the process.

It is the initial test that carries us through all the other trials and tribulations. We sap energy from our tests and use them to grow. Sometimes we fall, but our approach must be based on understanding that Hashem runs the show and only tests those that can withstand and be strengthened from these tests.

When man was created, the Torah relates that the Almighty said, "Let us make Adam (man) in our image and our likeness" (Bereishit 1:26). The commentators explain that G-d wanted to include His heavenly tribunal of angels in the decision to make man. Even though He did not need to do so, He wanted to teach us to always include others when making a decision

, even if they are less worthy than us.

I once heard an amazing idea on this. The Pasuk can be read in a different light. G-d at the outset was teaching us that He will have an input in our lives. He will test us, and it is up to us to withstand this and build ourselves. Both of us are partners in man's creation. G-d says to us – let us make man.

Join Me says G-d in making you into who you can be. Together we will form the real person in you.

Avraham was tested ten times to bring out different facets of his potential. According to the Rambam the first test that the Torah mentions is when G-d instructed Avraham and said to him (Bereishit 12:1): "Go for yourself, from your land, your birthplace, and from your father's house." Avraham was comfortable where he was. He had built up a fantastic name for himself, people knew him and it would be difficult to leave the country and live in an unknown land. Nevertheless he went forth. Through passing this test he was able to build an even greater family, bearing children in the land of Israel.

Avraham's tenth and final test is also introduced with the words "Go for yourself". He was told to sacrifice his beloved son Yitschak. Ten tough tests culminating in the ultimate challenge; being ready to accept that all that you have been blessed with and worked hard for should ultimately belong to G-d. He withstood the test, became our patriarch and gained a nation.

Until today we reap the rewards of his actions. We tap in to his stamina, eagerness and selflessness in the service of G-d. It was through him "going for himself" that he was able to realise himself and create the future Jewish people.

We are all tested on our own level, but this week when we read the Parasha and take pride in our ancestor's strength of character let us apply it to our own lives. We can pass any test that G-d gives us, it is for our good, and we will only grow from it. I never thought I would say this, but next time you get tested, just remember the lobster!

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

## RABBI DOVIE SHOCHET - RABBI AT HASMONEAN HIGH SCHOOL AND AUTHOR FOR CHABAD.ORG



### PARASHA INSIGHTS

***"Do not fear Avram for I am a shield for you..."(15:1)***

Have you ever wondered why in the first blessing of the Amidah we bless Hashem as the "shield of Avraham"? What exactly is this supposed to mean and why do we specifically mention Avraham as oppose to Yitzchak and Yaakov?

Chassidus explains that Avraham symbolises unbridled kindness. Avraham was a firm believer in seeing the good in everyone and everything. This is why despite the wicked actions of Sodom, Avraham sought to save them from total destruction and pleaded on their behalf to Hashem. This is why later in the parashah, despite Yishmael being a

grave sinner Avraham prayed to Hashem that Yishmael should be the one destined to follow in his footsteps. Avraham truly believed that everyone, no matter how far they may have strayed, is worthy of Divine sustenance and mercy.

Therefore, when Hashem refers to Himself in the parashah as a "shield of Avram" He was allegorically referencing to the need of shielding and restricting His own attribute of kindness into this world. Though at face value this may seem cruel, in truth, Hashem is doing us a favour. If Hashem were to indiscriminately distribute kindness and sustenance into this world, then evil would have the strength to live eternally. It is precisely through restricting His kindness to only those that are worthy that limit and weaken the sustenance that is given to evil in this world, thus enabling the strength to battle evil and defeat it.

It is also for this same very reason why in parashas Bereishis Hashem exiled Adam and Chava from Gan Eden, ensuring that they would not now eat from the עץ החיים after eating

from the עץ הדעת. Chassidus explains that before Adam and Chava ate from the forbidden fruit, the world was holy and good. There was no need to ban Adam and Chava from the עץ החיים, on the contrary, eating from the עץ החיים ensured that goodness would last forever. However, once they had eaten from the עץ הדעת which introduced evil into this world, Hashem banished Adam and Chava from Gan Eden and kept them at arm's length from the עץ החיים out of fear that if they were to eat from that too, then evil would also become eternal.

Every morning, Hashem renews His desire to create and sustain this world with boundless acts of Kindness. By reciting the blessing, "Blessed are You Hashem...Who shields Avraham", we are asking Hashem to limit His sustenance given to evil, thereby giving us the strength to battle the evil and overcome any obstacles in our lives, enabling us to bring Moshiach and thus banishing evil from the face of the earth.

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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## OUR CHACHAMIM

### RABBI AKIVA BEN YOSEF

Rabbi Akiva was among the greatest of the great, as it is written, "Are you like Akiva ben Yosef, whose renown fills the entire world?" It was thus that one day, Rabbi Dosa ben Hyrcanus, whose eyesight had dimmed though age, called out to the great man (whose precept we present today in order to comment on it). He was the first that we know of who endeavored to systematically classify the immense knowledge base that is the Oral Law. It is to him that we owe the first manuscript of the Mishnah, and it is to him that we may attribute Tosefta, Sifre, Sifra, and the historical work Seder Olam Rabba.

Just as important as his scholarship was his teaching abilities, as well as his work for the good of the community. His piety, fear of sin, love of G-d, and submission to the Divine Will always came to the fore in both major and minor things.

His life's destiny was incredible. His father was an idolater who had converted to Judaism. The son grew up in ignorance and earned a living in keeping sheep, until eventually a young noble woman won him over to Torah study. He left his father's home to follow his greatly loved wife, yet in poverty and penury.

There was perhaps never a man who had to fight and battle to acquire knowledge as much as Rabbi Akiva did. Although no longer young, he had to begin by the most rudimentary of lessons, learning how to read and write at the same time as earning a living for his wife and children. No one ever had to show as much patience and perseverance as Rabbi Akiva. He learned for 16 years with his teachers, without ever speaking, until eventually he raised his voice to utter a decisive statement, finally triumphing over his own teacher.

Probably no other man was involved in such prodigious teaching activities as Rabbi Akiva. Around him were 24,000 followers, men young and old that he would instruct in the

fields. Perhaps no other man lived through such terrible events as Rabbi Akiva. His disciples were taken before his very eyes, the man that he had thought was the Messiah (Bar Kochva) succumbed in combat to the Romans, and Israel suffered a defeat the likes of which it had never previously undergone, nor undergone since. All seemed lost, but Rabbi Akiva didn't lose his faith in G-d. This confidence gave him the courage to begin his teaching activities anew, at an advanced age, and to develop men who would become the pillars of Judaism. His work, blessed by G-d, nevertheless aroused the anger of the Romans. He was thrown into prison and gave his life for the sanctification of the Divine Name. When he was being executed by the most horrific means of torture, he proclaimed the unity of G-d and praised his Creator for his being able to give witness, through his death, to his infinite love for the Master of the world.

The precept that the great Sage left us (See Perkei Avoth, The Rights of Man, above) forms the beginning of a series of statements that gives us some perspective on the depth of his thought.

After the return of the captives from Babylon, when the Men of the Great Assembly founded a new Jewish state, they uttered a profound statement: "Make a fence around the Torah" (Perkei Avoth 1:1). The Torah resembles an exquisite garden where the most precious trees, the most useful plants, and the most beautiful flowers grow, thrive, and flourish. Tame and wild animals, wicked and dishonest men, and children and thoughtless people would quickly wreck the garden if a protective did not encircle it.

As he lay lifeless on the ground, bleeding from a thousand wounds, Rabbi Akiva revealed to our people that he was the man worthy of grabbing hold of the principle uttered by the Men of the Great Assembly. ■



## HALACHOT

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR

### THE BERACHA FOR COCONUT MILK AND FRUIT JUICES

Many vacation spots such as Florida and the islands serve coconut milk. What is the proper Beracha that one should recite before drinking coconut milk? Although on cow's milk one recites "Shehakol," perhaps coconut milk should require the Beracha of "Boreh Peri Ha'etz," as it is grown on trees.

The Ben Ish Hai (Rabbi Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) addresses this question in Parashat Pinchas (Shana Rishona, 9). (Interestingly, he refers to the coconut as "guz il hind" - "the Indian nut.") He notes that a basic rule in Halacha requires reciting the Beracha of "She'hakol" over all fruit juices, even if the fruit tree was planted specifically for the purpose of extracting juice. The only fruit juices which Halacha treats like the fruit itself are grape juice and olive oil. (See Shulhan Aruch, Orah Haim 208.) All other juices are looked upon as "Ze'a" - secretions of the fruit, and not as the fruit itself. Hence, one who drinks coconut milk recites the Beracha of "She'hakol Nihya Bi'dbaro," and not "Boreh Peri Ha'etz." This applies to all other fruit juices, as well. With the exception of wine and grape juice, over which one recites "Boreh Peri Ha'gefen," all other fruit juices - including apple juice, orange juice and grapefruit juice - require the Beracha of "She'hakol." Once again, this applies even if the fruit trees were planted for the specific purpose of producing juice. Thus, even though many Florida orange groves are planted especially for making orange juice, the Beracha over this juice would be "She'hakol," and not "Boreh Peri Ha'etz."

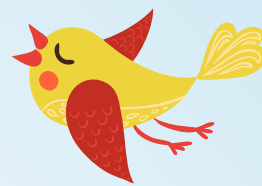
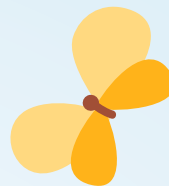
**Summary:** One who drinks coconut milk recites the Beracha of "She'hakol," just as one does over all fruit juices, with the exception of wine and grape juice, which of course require "Ha'gefen." ■

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## YOSSEI & Co.

RUCHY, WHAT'S THIS SUITCASE DOING IN YOSSEI'S WAGON?



YOSSEI DECIDED TO LEAVE HOME JUST LIKE AVRAHAM AVINU DID! HE'S IN HIS ROOM FINISHING PACKING.

HELLO YOSSEI



HI DAD, I'LL NEED LOTS OF SOCKS AND EXTRA PAIRS OF TARTZIS.

SHABBOS



YOSSEI, I'M SO PROUD THAT YOU WANT TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF AVRAHAM AVINU.



YOU MEAN YOU'RE NOT GOING TO STOP ME?



CERTAINLY NOT! I WAS THINKING, THOUGH, IT'S ALMOST SHABBOS, SO MAYBE YOU SHOULD WAIT UNTIL SUNDAY TO LEAVE.

WE'LL OKAY, BUT COME SUNDAY, DAD, I HAVE TO BE LEAVING.



OF COURSE!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING WITH YOUR WAGON, YOSSEI?



I DECIDED I'M NOT QUITE READY TO LEAVE, IF AVRAHAM AVINU WAITED UNTIL HE WAS 75, I COULD AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL I FINISH SECOND GRADE.

## TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 When did the decree of 400 years of exile begin?
- 2 What did Hashem indicate with His promise that Avraham would "come to his ancestors in peace?"
- 3 How did Hashem fulfill His promise that Avraham would be buried in "a good old age?"
- 4 Why did the Jewish People need to wait until the fourth generation until they returned to Eretz Canaan?
- 5 Who was Hagar's father?

1 15:13 - With the birth of Yitzchak. 2 15:15 - That his father, Terach, would repent and become righteous. 3 15:15 - Avraham lived to see his son Yishmael repent and become righteous, and he died before his grandson Esau became wicked. 4 15:16 - They needed to wait until the Amorites had sinned sufficiently to deserve expulsion. 5 16:1 - Pharaoh.

Answer

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& Lectures

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