

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



LONDON'S LEADING PLATFORM FOR STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

The community wishes a massive Mazal Tov to Rabbi Jonathan and Raaya Tawil on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Moshe. May Hashem Bless Moshe with much health happiness and success. Amen.

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



UNITY

Late June 1976; passengers boarding Air France flight 139 discover it is now stopping in Athens en route to Paris. Some, like George and Rivka Karfunkel don't want to board; Athens airport was renowned for its terrible security; indeed it was from this very airport a plane was hijacked in 1970. But their luggage is already on board so they board as well...

In Athens, two Germans join the flight: Brigitte Kulma, and Willie Burs along with two Arabs who are connecting from Bahrain. There was no security inspection for transit passengers in Athens so they were able to board with the weapons they brought from Bahrain... The two Germans were members of Baader Meinhof and the two Arabs were members of the PFLP (Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine), an organization founded by Wadi Hadad, who broke off from Yasser Arafat whom he did not consider radical enough ... he was the same individual who masterminded the Maalot massacre in 1972 when 22 children were murdered.

Five minutes after takeoff they hijacked the plane, refuelling in Benghazi and eventually ending up in Kampala, Uganda, in the old airport terminal. (The new terminal continued to service flights throughout the affair...)

One hundred and ten Ugandan soldiers guarded the old terminal including the guard towers, to protect the terrorists. The terrorist gave a deadline:

on July 1, if their demands were not met they were going to start killing hostages. Almost immediately, while still in Benghazi, the terrorists began calling out names; it did not take a genius to quickly figure out what they were doing: not thirty years after the Holocaust, German terrorists were separating the Jews ... ninety three Jews and Israelis were separated and, along with the crew who refused to leave, were taken to Uganda.

Yitzchak Rabin who was Prime Minister, upheld Israel's policy of not negotiating with terrorists, and eventually approved the mission, led by Yoni Netanyahu to fly thousands of miles, through enemy territory, to rescue the hostages and bring them home.

There is a legend about Yoni Netanyahu; just before boarding the planes and beginning radio silence he gathered his men, Israel's most elite commandoes, and tried to put into words why they were doing what they were about to do, risking everything for people they did not even know, many of whom were not even Israelis. Simply put: '... we may not know who they are but they are our brothers and sisters, and we are going ... because if we don't go no-one will.'

A moment that recalls the well-known Jewish axiom: Kol Yisrael Areivim zeh ba'zeh: All Israel (i.e. every Jew) is responsible for (literally 'mixed in' with) every other Jew. Ultimately, we are all one.

Achdut: Unity; a powerful idea, which cuts to the core of what the Jewish people are all about. And ultimately it's not only about Jews; we are meant to be a model for the world of what brotherhood and unity is all about. What could be more beautiful than true unity, when we all put aside our differences in deference to something greater than ourselves?

This week's portion, Noach, however, seems to suggest otherwise:

Everyone knows the story: the world created with such hope and light has sunken into idolatry and violence, to such a degree that there is no longer ▶

Cheshvan 3rd 5780

SHABBAT BEGINS: 4:16 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 5:24 PM

> MAZAL TOV

Raaya & Rabbi Tawil
on the Bar mitzvah of Moshe

Cheski & Rivka Bassous
on the birth of baby boy

Yehuda & Elisheva Cope
on the birth of a baby boy



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"Today's accomplishments were yesterday's impossibilities"

> UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ 13TH NOV Caffeine for the Soul Ladies program
- ▶ 14TH NOV Challah Bake
- ▶ 15TH NOV Young Professional Friday Night Dinner
- ▶ 26TH NOV Students Drinks Event
- ▶ 27TH NOV Young Married Couples Event

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



DVAR TORAH

Unity
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

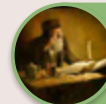
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This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

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a point to its continued existence. After all, if G-d and G-dly ethics no longer matter, then we no longer matter. So G-d brings a great flood that destroys the world and pushes the 're-start' button with Noah; the world gets a second chance.

Yet, later in the portion it looks like humanity is about to make the same mistake. Deciding to build a city and a monstrous tower, our Chachamim tell us they were going to war with no less than G-d Himself! Only this time, despite the fact that all of mankind seems united against G-d, the world is not destroyed; why? Why this time does G-d spare the world?

Of course, one might suggest that G-d promises he will never bring another flood, but technically, G-d has no shortage of options; if you don't want to destroy them with a flood; explode them with fire!

The Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah) suggests that what saved the builders of the Tower of Babel was that they were unified (Bereishit 11:1), and unity is a good thing which is beloved before G-d, so they were spared.

I had always imagined that the Torah was describing an idyllic society that had learnt from the mistakes of the generation of the flood. The generation of

the flood had no respect for one another, they stole, they murdered, they were promiscuous – thus they were destroyed. The generation of Migdal Bavel learnt the lessons of the past, they were united, and they were together – so why were they punished, why were they dispersed?

There is a comment by Rashi that has always puzzled me. When the verse describes the reality in Bavel after Hashem changed the one accepted language into many differing languages.

Rashi describes a scenario where if two men were involved in a specific area of the building project, one would ask the other for a specific material, the other now not being able to decipher his fellows request, handed him the wrong material, as a frustrated reaction the one man killed the other (literally – smashed his head).

If we accept the premise that the people were totally united, that they had learnt their lessons from the previous generations, then surely the fact that they could not understand each other temporarily, would not bring on such a violent response?

It is quite possible that Rashi in this comment is alluding to the fact that the unity as described at the beginning of the Chapter was superficial to say

the least. There were public statements of unity, of caring, and of oneness, but when put to the test, when in times of trouble, the unity of the people disintegrated into the violence of the previous generation.

Hashem dispersed the people to teach them that real unity is not defined by superficial acts and popular clichés. Two people can be separated by hundreds of miles, yet have more care and love for each other than next-door neighbours.

It is for this reason that after the dispersion the Torah focuses on Avraham and eventually the building of Am Yisrael. We realise that external unity will only be true unity, if we follow the path of Avraham serving G-d, internalising the inherent values of Torah, and applying them to our everyday lives.

We are the "smallest amongst nations"; nevertheless we remain a strong united nation both internally and externally. No matter where we live in the world, we are all brothers and sisters.

■ Shabbat Shalom

RABBI MEYER AMAR - SENIOR KODESH TEACHER AT HASMONEAN HIGH SCHOOL



NOACH'S KOACH

Cher Ami was one of the 600 pigeons of the Signal Corps of the US Army, which were used to exchange important information during World War II. In just one year, Cher Ami made dozens of combat flights and delivered 12 messages of particular importance. Cher Ami's last trip took place in October 1918, during the Meuse-Argonne offensive. The bird was injured in its chest, blinded in one eye, and lost one leg, but still managed to reach its destination and delivered its message. It helped save almost two hundred soldiers of a battalion which had been cut off from its allies. In 2011, TIME Magazine included Cher Ami in the top ten most heroic animals in the world.

Where did the animals learn to be so heroic and selfless, perhaps from Noah, let's take a closer look and see;

H'shem said to Noah,

וַתֵּן קֹחַ לָךְ

מִכָּל-מִאֲכָל אֲשֶׁר יֹאכֵל וְאִסַּפְתָּ אֵלָיךְ וְהָיָה לָךְ וְלִבְנֵיךְ לְאֶכְלָהּ:

"V'ata kach lecho mikol ma'achal asher yochal...vehaya lecho v'lahem l'achla

" And you shall take for yourself of every food that you will eat...and it will be food for you and for them (Bereishit 6:21).

3 questions arise from this possuk asked by different Mefarshim;

The Alshich Hakadosh asks the obvious question. Of course you will eat the food you bring in the Teivah. That being the case why does the Torah say 'the food that you will eat'?

The Kli Yakar focuses on the words 'Take for yourself..from the food', what does the Torah mean to add by the word 'yourself' it could just as well have said 'take from the food'.

The Chatam Sofer notes that the wording of the Passuk seems to contradict a well known Halacha. The Gemara in (Gittin 62) rules that a person must feed his animals before he feeds himself and his family. How, then, do we explain, H'shem's instruction to Noah in which he puts Noah before the animals?

The Alshich Hakadosh explains Noah's secret of food preservation. By nature any food taken into the Teivah locked into a hot environment (from the hot water of the Mabul) without any change of air is bound to spoil real quick not to mention the nasty smells it would generate in such an enclosed space! In the merit of collecting food not for himself but for all the animals the food will not spoil as it says at the end of the Passuk 'and it will be for YOU and them to eat'

The Kli Yakar expresses the honesty and integrity of Noah. H'shem was telling him 'take the food from what you own' (for yourself), meaning you may not take from anywhere else even though it was about to be destroyed and would be no use to anyone else in a short while. The Mabul came about through stealing, it cannot be that the one who is to be saved should be guilty of the same sin. He was literally relying on H'shem's miracles to allow the food to last the entire time he was aboard.

Many Mefarshim have suggested answers to the Chatam Sofer's question, amongst them the Maharil Diskin. Please allow me to humbly suggest another alternative;

The Midrashim are clear about the tremendous difficulty Noah and his sons had in feeding all the animals 24/7;

The Gemara Sanhedrin 108b brings a story that Eliezer, Avraham's servant, asked Shem, Noah's son, how they were able to take care of all of the animals and give them individual attention, given that the habits and needs of different species of animals are so diverse.

Shem replied: my father did not know what the food of the Zekisa was (the chameleon and some say a small bird like quail), one day he was sitting and cutting up a pomegranate, when a worm dropped out of it, which the Zekisa consumed. From then onward he mashed up bran, and when it became wormy, it ate it up.

There was a constant demand. It would be impossible not to eat before the animals as there was always an animal bird or insect to feed. Therefore it stands to reason that they could eat whenever they needed to and there would be no better time anyway! Furthermore they needed the Koach (strength) to be able to complete the almost impossible task of feeding the world's largest zoo in the smallest place, hence they were allowed to eat whenever the need arose.

This was the message of H'shem to Noah. Noah needed the Koach to perform his kindness to the animals and therefore he needed to eat whenever it was required.

Noah had to show great integrity and be totally enveloped in acts of kindness and in doing so merited to amazing miracles with his food supply. Perhaps the animals were influenced.....Either way we should aim to take these lessons to heart and find the Koach to be like Noah.

■ Shabbat shalom

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI AVRAHAM IBN EZRA

The following story is one that pertains not only to Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra, but also to Shabbat.

In 1159 (4919), more than 840 years ago, Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra had a dream. It took place on a Friday night, and after Shabbat ended, he wrote down what he had dreamt.

"I was pleasantly sleeping, and in my dream I saw an angel standing in front of me that resembled a man. He was holding a sealed letter, and he said to me, 'Take this letter. It is on Shabbat that I send it to you.' I bowed before G-d and I blessed Him for having granted me such a great honor. I took hold of the letter with both hands and read it. It was like honey in my mouth.

"This is how the letter began: 'I, Shabbat, crowned by those who are valued, the fourth of the Ten Commandments, an eternal covenant for all the generations. ... Every day one may find the doors of understanding open, but on Shabbat a hundred doors are opened. My honor desires that one not behave on Shabbat as during the week, neither in moving about, nor in business, nor in speech. And I kept watch over you everyday because you carefully guarded me since the days of your youth.' "

However when Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra arrived at the end of the letter, he saw that it contained an open rebuke. Stunned, he began to tremble.

"My heart is hot within me, and my soul almost escapes me, and I ask the one who is standing in front of me, 'What is my error, and what is my sin? For since the day that I knew awesome G-d - Who created me and from Whom I learned His mitzvot - I

have always loved Shabbat, for whose arrival I would go out to greet it with all my heart, and for whose departure I would accompany it with songs of joy. Who was more faithful among its followers than I, and why am I being sent this letter?' "

The angel let him know that one of his disciples had let himself become seduced by false ideologies that had "decided" that Shabbat began on Saturday morning and continued until Sunday morning. It was as simple as that, a "discovery" without any foundation, contrary to all tradition that we hold since Moses, and contrary to what is written in the Torah: "And there was evening" followed next by "and there was morning." Thus in all eras there arise "Sages" that propose all sorts of things. This one believes that such and such is not considered forbidden work on Shabbat, another gives "proof" for neglecting something else on Shabbat, and so on and so forth. However the Torah is eternal, and Shabbat complains about the insults that it receives.

Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra ends by writing, "Whoever adopts such an explanation, G-d will take vengeance on him in honor of Shabbat. Whoever reads this explanation, may his tongue stick to his palate. And whoever writes this explanation, may his arm be torn off and his eye grow dim. Thus there will be light for all the house of Israel!"

This letter was published for the first time at the end of the Arizal's Shulchan Aruch, and it teaches us just how much one should watch over the honor of Shabbat.

Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra's Hilloula is on Adar 1. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING CHARITY BEFORE PRAYING; IF ONE'S PRAYER IS DISRUPTED BY CHARITY COLLECTORS

The Gemara in Massechet Berachot cites the verse in Tehillim (17:15), "Va'ani Be'sedek Ehezeh Panecha" ("I shall behold Your countenance with righteousness"), and explains it to mean that when we come before G-d in prayer, we must first give charity. The Arizal (Rav Yishak Luria of Safed, 1534-1572) taught (in Sha'ar Ha'kavanot) that during the Shaharit service, as one recites the words, "Ve'ata Moshel Ba'kol" in the section of "Va'yebarech David," he should give three coins to charity. One should first place two coins in the charity box, and then a third coin. This practice is rooted in Kabbalistic teachings.

Rav Haim Vital (1543-1620), the Arizal's primary disciple, testified that the Arizal would give three coins to charity in this fashion also before Mincha. Before Arbit, however, this practice should not be followed. Since Arbit marks a period of "Dinim" ("judgments"), it is not a time for charity. It goes without saying that if a person is approached by a collector, he should generously donate, at any time of day or night. However, the practice to specifically donate coins to charity before prayer applies before Shaharit and before Mincha, but not before Arbit.

It sometimes happens in some communities that several, or even numerous, collectors come to the synagogue and approach congregants while they pray, which can be very disruptive and undermine one's concentration. The question arises as to whether one must nevertheless give to the collectors, despite the disruption they cause, in light of the ruling of the Rambam (Rav Moshe Maimonides, Spain-Egypt, 1135-1204) that one who is approached by a needy individual and refuses to give violates the Torah prohibition of "Lo Tikpotz Et Yadecha" ("Do not shut your hand closed" - Devarim 15:7). Seemingly, one would be required to give to everyone who approaches him, even during the Tefila. In truth, however, this is not the case. The Halachic authorities clarified that this prohibition is violated only if a pauper approaches with an immediate need - such as if he is hungry and has no food, and he approaches a person to ask for food or for money with which to purchase food. If one refuses this desperate plea, he transgresses the Torah prohibition of "Lo Tikpotz." However, the collectors who approach congregants in the synagogue nowadays are collecting for long-term needs, and, as such, the prohibition of "Lo Tikpotz" does not apply. Of course, in general, one should generously assist those in need to the best of his ability. But if collectors are disrupting his prayer, he is not required to give them money while he prays. This is the ruling of Rav Rahamim Shayo (contemporary), in his work Mehkereh Aretz.

It should be mentioned that when reciting the Shema, and of course while reciting the Amida, it is strictly forbidden to give charity. Halacha forbids even signaling or motioning to somebody during these sections of the prayer service, and so one certainly should not give charity while reciting Shema or the Amida.

The concept underlying the connection between charity and prayer, as the Arizal explained, is that the Shechina (divine presence) is with us even in our state of exile, but it is "weak" because of the absence of the Bet Ha'mikdash. By giving charity to strengthen a poor, downtrodden pauper, we also "strengthen" the Shechina.

Summary: It is a proper custom to give three coins to charity while reciting the words "Ve'ata Moshel Ba'kol" in "Va'yebarech David" during Shaharit, and also before Mincha. If one is approached by collectors during the prayer service, and thus disrupts his Kavana (concentration), he is not required to give them money, and while reciting Shema or the Amida, it is forbidden to interrupt to give charity. Needless to say, at all other times one should donate generously to those in need of financial assistance, to the best of his ability. ■



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 How long did the punishment of the flood last?
- 2 A solar year is how many days longer than a lunar year?
- 3 When did humans receive permission to eat meat?
- 4 What prohibition was given along with the permission to eat meat?
- 5 Why does the command to "be fruitful and multiply" directly follow the prohibition of murder?

Answer

- 1 8:14 - A full solar year. 2 8:14 - Eleven days. 3 9:3 - After the flood. 4 9:4 - The prohibition of eating a limb cut from a living animal. 5 9:7 - To equate one who purposely abstains from having children to one who commits murder.

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