

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



LONDON'S LEADING PLATFORM FOR STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

This weeks Parasha is sponsored Lirfuat Rav Yona Ben Chava Betoeh Shaar Cholei Yisrael

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT!

Enter a synagogue during the week and take a look around.

What are people's facial expressions? Tired, overworked, stressed?

When it comes to Shabbat morning however, it would seem that you are entering a different place with completely different people.

Everyone seems to be happy, excited and well rested.

Why is that?

Perhaps it's the long Friday night 'shluf' or the fact that a delicious Kidush is around the corner, but I would like to share with you an amazing thought.

First a fascinating story from June 2014.

Hundreds of Cinema goers in Hong Kong gathered for a short film.

During the interval, they were shown an advert from Volkswagen.

The advert shows a point-of-view account of a person getting into their car and setting off on a drive. The scenery is lush and there is classical music in the background.

The idea seems to be that this car is smooth and great to drive - very relaxing!

What the people didn't know was that the Cinema was equipped with a location-based broadcaster that could send a mass text to everyone in the room at once.

Shortly into this advert operators sent a simultaneous text to everyone in the Cinema.

Imagine, everyone's phones pinged and beeped to receive the message.

There were hidden cameras catching people's reactions. The room was full of people looking into their phones, intrigued as to who was sending them a message.

Just at that split second, the advert turned sour – and a large crash is heard as the ad comes to an end. The audience is taken completely by surprise and shocked faces appear around the room.

The message was piercingly clear, do not text whilst driving – the effects could be deadly.

We live in a society that is run on technology.

It's difficult if not impossible to get by nowadays without mobile phones, emails, internet shopping, sat nav etc.

We have become very reliable on this, perhaps too reliable.

Yet there is a repercussion from such a connection; the more we connect, the more we really disconnect. The more we engage in our phones, the less time we have to speak directly to other people.

When we are at dinner with loved ones and our phones ping as a message is delivered, how many of us really concentrate on what our dinner partner is saying or are we too busy thinking "who is contacting me now, perhaps it's more important".

There are times at work where we receive a phone call, and trying to multi task so as not to waste time, we type away at the desk losing real concentration on the person to whom we are speaking.

Shabbat is different! ▶

9th TAMMUZ 5779

SHABBAT BEGINS: 8:56 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 10:23 PM

> MAZAL TOV

Rabbi and Mrs Nissim
on the upcoming wedding
of their son Naftali to Esther
Benchimol

David & Raphaella Douer
for their wedding

Udi & Leah Ibgui
for their wedding last week



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."

> UPCOMING EVENTS

• 17th JULY
Young Professionals event

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



DVAR TORAH

Disconnect to Reconnect!
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

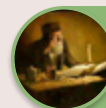
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This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

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It's a time of blessing, a time when we rid ourselves of our technological connection in order to increase our communal and G-dly connection.

It is a time we disconnect in order to reconnect!

Perhaps that is why people seem so happy on Shabbat. We are actually getting to sit down and understand others without interruptions. We are able to concentrate on our prayer and Torah, learning much more without momentary distractions.

In this week's Parsha we are told: "This is the law (Torah), when a person dies in a tent..." [Bamidbar 19:14]. There is a famous teaching of our Sages regarding this verse: "Torah does not become established within a person, unless he is prepared to die for the Torah" [Berachot 63b].

I'm confused?! Suicide is forbidden! How can a dead man study Torah?

The simple answer is that here our Rabbis are teaching us that in order to become accomplished in Torah learning, a person must make sacrifices for Torah. You

must be willing to give up of your time and exert extra effort in Torah study.

There is a further explanation. Often when people sit down to study, they permit various factors to interrupt them such as a telephone call or the arrival of visitors. There is no way however, of disturbing a dead person with a telephone call or the like. The Gemara is teaching us that a person who wants to succeed in his learning must consider himself "dead". He cannot permit anything whatsoever to interrupt him.

Imagine that Google, Wikipedia, Facebook and Waze are all in the room together having a discussion of who's the best.

Wikipedia says "I know everything".

Google answers back "I have everything".

Waze says "I know the way to anywhere!"

Facebook says "I know everybody".

Just then there is an interruption and the internet comes in saying, "without me your all nothing!"

Think it's all over??

Then there is a blackout.

This time Electricity opens its mouth and says "Now who is talking!"

During the week we think we are our own bosses, we get carried away into the imaginary internet and mobile world. On Shabbat we are able to lose that and reconnect to our real selves. We are reminded that it is Hashem that is in charge! He created the world in six days and rested on the Seventh. We have been blessed with this special day accordingly and are able to reconnect to Him.

Wouldn't it be amazing if we tried that during the week?

It's difficult but perhaps for one Shiur or lesson a week, we can really turn off the phone and concentrate. Let us uphold the words of the Gemara; for it is only if a person is prepared to die and act dead to the outside world that he will be able to succeed in real Torah advancement.

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM - SHALOM LAAM DIASPORA



WHO IS TO BLAME?

Having suffered more setbacks on their journey through the desert after some thirty-eight years on their way to the Holy Land, the Jewish People were getting weary. They began complaining about their general predicament and about the manna, with which they were divinely-sustained on a daily basis. G-d punished them by sending poisonous snakes, which attacked those who complained, injecting them with venom and killing many of them. Realising that their complaining was unjustified, and full of remorse, the people came to Moshe Rabbenu, asking forgiveness and requesting him to intercede on their behalf with G-d, to remove the plague. After Moshe prayed, G-d instructed him to prepare a copper snake and to hang it up high, as a banner for the people to look at. Anyone who had been bitten and would look at the snake, would live.

Let us understand, why did G-d command Moshe Rabbenu specifically to make a snake for the people to look at, in order to cure them, if snakes were used to punish them? Moreover, the Ramban (Chukat 21:9) points out that medically, if one was bitten by a certain animal, to then go and stare at that animal or even to mention its name may cause the victim irreparable or even fatal damage. The emotional trauma will cause the victim to deteriorate further. If so, what was the rationale to make a snake figure in order to heal them?

The Ramban explains that G-d specifically wanted them to be healed through what naturally would be fatal for them. By doing so, the people would understand that it is not a snake which causes death, or, which brings a cure. Rather, when a person follows in G-d's ways then he is spared, but if he falls to sin, then a snake may be used as a means for getting him back onto "the straight and narrow." When we realise that crises come in order to make us contemplate our actions and raise our hearts to heaven, then, to blame the crisis on the snake is as irrational as to credit the snake with the cure. G-d wants us to stay on "the straight and narrow," with our

hearts and intentions corresponding to the will of Hashem. The objective of a crisis is not to give us a hard time, but rather, to restore our connection with G-d. When it seems to us that "we got out of bed on the wrong side" and that nothing seems to work, let us not blame our wives, children, the traffic, the bank manager or the postal service. Rather, let us contemplate our ways and pray for divine assistance, to get ourselves "back on track" as soon as possible.

When travelling recently by bus, I noticed that whenever the driver wandered slightly into another lane, or came too close to a car in front of him, a sensor started beeping him, signalling him to reposition and drive safely. This system helps him to be able to reach his given destination safely and happily. Similarly, G-d sends us warning signals when we start to deviate from the correct path, to encourage us to reposition ourselves back onto our appropriate paths.

Have a safe, enjoyable and fulfilling journey to your destination!

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI SHLOMO BEN YITZHAK – RASHI

Born in the town of Troyes, France in 4800 (1040), Rabbi Shlomo ben Itzhak, better known as Rashi, stemmed from a prestigious line of rabbis that included the Tanna Rabbi Yochanan HaSandler, himself a descendant of King David. After having studied in the yeshivas founded by the disciples of Rabbeinu Gershon (the "Light of the Diaspora"), Rashi went to Mayenne, Germany to the yeshiva of Rabbi Yaakov ben Yakar. Following the death of the latter, Rashi traveled to the yeshiva of Rabbi Yitzhak ben Eleazar Halevi in Worms. There he continued to study, after his marriage, in conditions of extreme poverty.

Rashi, widely recognized as the leader of Jewry at the time, never accepted the post of rabbi. He preferred to gain his livelihood as a wine merchant. He returned to Troyes and founded a yeshiva that attracted students from France and Germany. Among his students, three would end up becoming his son-in-law: Rabbi Yehuda ben Nathan (who completed the commentary on the Talmudic Tractate Makot, which Rashi had been working on when he died); Rabbi Meir ben Shemuel (who married his second daughter and fathered three illustrious Torah commentators: Rabbi Meir [the Rashbam], Rabbi Yaakov [Rabbeinu Tam] and Rabbi Yitzhak ben Meir [the Rivam]); and Rabbi Ephraim (who married his third daughter).

Rashi commented on the written Bible (the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings), as well as on the Oral Law (which is to say, on the Talmud). Thanks to his writings, Jewish children acquire a good understanding of the Biblical text at the beginning of their education, an understanding according to the perspective of the oral tradition, just as it has been transmitted without interruption from generation to generation from the time of Moses our Teacher.

In our days, the study of the Talmud without Rashi's explanations would be absolutely unthinkable, to the extent that Rabbi Yitzhak bar Sheshet (the Rivash) and Rabbi Betzalel Ashkenazi (the Shitah Mekubetzet) have affirmed that without Rashi, the Talmud would be a "sealed book".

Rashi died on Tammuz 29, 4865 (1105), yet because of the fact that Jews the world over learn and comment on his work day and night, we may say that "his lips move in the grave" (Yebamot 97a), on which Rashi simply remarked: "It's as if he's alive." Rashi's work remains alive in the mouths, the hearts, and the minds of students, which is the reason why the name Rashi also means Rabban Shel Israel (the teacher of the Jewish people).

In Calabria in southern Italy, Rashi's commentary on the Torah was the first Jewish book to be printed in Hebrew. The year was 1475. Owing to its simple and precise language, this commentary can be understood by a five-year-old who just beginning to study Torah. Jewish tradition acknowledges that Rashi's commentary was written with Divine inspiration (Ruach Hakodesh). Every expression, every word carries an importance of its own. Concerning Rashi the Chida wrote: "Rashi fasted 613 fasts [according to the number of Torah commandments] before beginning his work." He also asserted that once this commentary was completed, Moses our Teacher appeared to Rashi in a dream and told him, "Rejoice, for your commentary has been approved by G-d Himself!" Moreover, Rashi wrote in his commentary on the book of Ezekiel, "As for me, I had neither Rav nor any help for this entire undertaking. Rather, I only wrote what was shown to me by Heaven." ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

IF ONE FORGOT TO RECITE "YA'ALEH VE'YABO" ON YOM TOB

The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 188:5) addresses the case of a person who was reciting Birkat Ha'mazon on Yom Tob, and immediately after reciting "Boneh Yerushalayim" he realized that he had forgotten to insert "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo," as is required on Yom Tob. In such a case, the Shulhan Aruch rules, the individual recites at that point a special Beracha that was instituted by the Sages specifically for this case, and which appears in some Siddurim: "Baruch Ata Hashem Asher Natan Yamim Tobim Le'Yisrael Le'sasson U'le'simha Et Yom...Ha'zeh, Baruch Ata Hashem Mekadesh Yisrael Ve'ha'zmanim." The Shulhan Aruch notes that even if one had begun reciting the next Beracha of Birkat Ha'mazon before he realized his mistake, he may recite the Beracha of "Asher Natan," unless he had already reached the word "La'ad." At that point, the Shulhan Aruch writes, one can no longer recite "Asher Natan," and so he must return to the beginning of Birkat Ha'mazon.

The clear implication of this final ruling is that one who forgot to recite "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo" in Birkat Ha'mazon on Yom Tob must repeat Birkat Ha'mazon. Maran here states that once a person reached "La'ad," his only option is to return to the beginning of Birkat Ha'mazon - implying that the mistaken omission of "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo" on Yom Tob invalidates Birkat Ha'mazon, requiring one to recite it again.

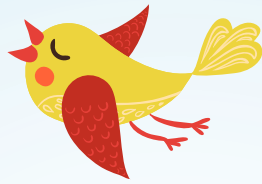
The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), however, rules differently, noting the position of the Rashba (Rav Shlomo Ben Aderet of Barcelona, 1235-1310) distinguishing in this regard between different occasions. The Rashba maintained that on the first nights of Pesach and the first nights of Sukkot, when eating a meal is strictly required, one who omits "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo" must repeat Birkat Ha'mazon. On all other days of Yom Tob, however, according to the Rashba, one who forgot to recite "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo" in Birkat Ha'mazon has nevertheless fulfilled his obligation, and is not required to repeat Birkat Ha'mazon. In light of the Rashba's opinion, this situation qualifies as one of a "Safek Berachot" - where there is uncertainty surrounding one's requirement to recite Berachot. Accordingly, we apply the rule

of "Safek Berachot Le'hakel," which says that when in doubt we do not recite a Beracha. Although the Shulhan Aruch clearly requires one to repeat Birkat Ha'mazon if he forgot to add "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo" on any Yom Tob, the view of the Rashba makes the obligation to repeat Birkat Ha'mazon questionable in such a situation.

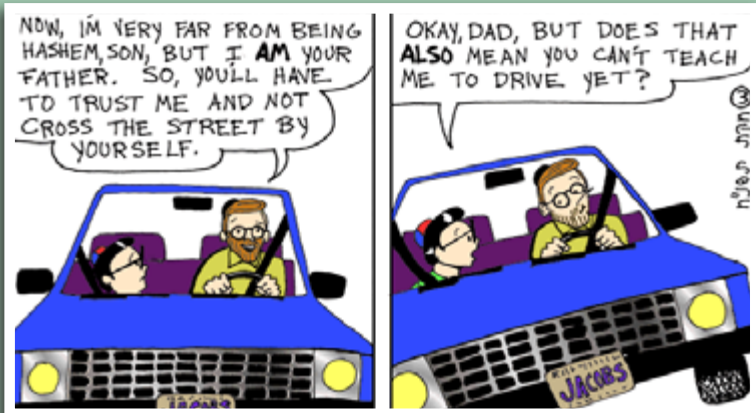
This is the opinion accepted by Hacham Ovadia Yosef, both in Halichot Olam and in Hazon Ovadia. He explains that although Birkat Ha'mazon constitutes a Biblical requirement, such that one might have assumed that in this situation of doubt one must repeat Birkat Ha'mazon (as we always follow the stringent possibility in situations of doubt relevant to a Torah obligation), nevertheless, the recitation of "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo" is required only Mi'de'rabbanan (by force of Rabbinic enactment). Therefore, if one recited Birkat Ha'mazon on Yom Tob but mistakenly omitted "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo," he has fulfilled the Biblical obligation of Birkat Ha'mazon, and the uncertainty revolves around the Rabbinic obligation of "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo." Therefore, given the uncertainty, he should not repeat Birkat Ha'mazon.

According to the final Halacha, then, one who forgot to recite "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo" in Birkat Ha'mazon on the first nights of Pesach or the first nights of Sukkot should repeat Birkat Ha'mazon, but if this happened on a different Yom Tob, one does not repeat Birkat Ha'mazon. On any Yom Tob, if one realizes his mistake before reciting the word "La'ad" in the next Beracha, he inserts the special Beracha of "Asher Natan Yamim Tobim Le'Yisrael."

Summary: If one forgot to add "Ya'aleh Ve'Yabo" in Birkat Ha'mazon on Yom Tob, and he realized his mistake after "Boneh Yerushalayim," then as long as he had yet to reach the word "La'ad" in the next Beracha, he should recite at that point the special Beracha of "Asher Natan Yamim Tobim Le'Yisrael" which appears in some editions of the Siddur. If he realized his mistake after reciting "La'ad," then he simply continues reciting Birkat Ha'mazon, unless this happened on the first nights of Pesach or the first nights of Sukkot, in which case he must start Birkat Ha'mazon again from the beginning. ■



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STORY

THE "RED" REWARD

Chaim, how red was the Parah Adumah (red cow)?

Avi, do you mean the red cow from the times of the Beis HaMikdash whose ashes were used to purify people who had come in contact with dead bodies?

That is the Parah Adumah that I am talking about.

It was so red that if it had just two black hairs it was posul (unfit for use).

That is really red, Chaim. It must have been very rare. I never saw a cow with hair that was all one color. And I never saw a red cow at all.

It was very, very rare, Avi. In fact, it was so rare that it was worth a lot of money. Whoever was fortunate enough to have one born into his flock became a wealthy man.

Do you know, Chaim, there is a famous story in the Talmud and the Medrash about a man who merited having a Parah Adumah born in his flock.

Who was he Avi?

His name was Damma Ben Nesina. He was a Gentile who lived in Ashkelon. Do you remember what the garments of the Kohen Godol looked like?

Sure.

The Choshen (breastplate) had twelve precious gems, one for each tribe. One of the gems was lost, and Damma Ben Nesina had the gem to replace it. The sages went to him to buy the stone. They settled upon 1000 gold pieces, a fair price. Damma Ben Nesina entered his father's room to get the stone. He found his father sleeping with his leg on top of the box that contained the stone. He did not want to disturb his father's sleep, so he left the room empty handed.

The sages probably thought that he was trying to get a better price.

Exactly. They upped the price, but he refused. They offered an even higher price, but he would not wake his father. This was how much he valued the mitzvah of honoring his parents. He turned down great sums of money to avoid disturbing his father's sleep.

I must hear the end of the story, Avi, or I won't be able to sleep tonight.

When his father finally woke up, the price was up to 10,000 gold pieces!

Wow! What a profit!

Damma Ben Nesina refused to take more than the original offer of 1000 gold pieces. He put off the sale because he respected his father. Not because he wanted to make a profit.

That's a great story, Avi, but what is the connection to the Parah Adumah?

That very year, G-d sent a reward to Damma Ben Nesina. A Parah Adumah was born in his flock. He sold it for much more than 10,000 gold pieces that he was offered for the gem.

Look at how great the mitzvah of honoring parents is.

That is exactly what the Medrash says, Chaim.

I have a lot of room for improvement in this area, Avi.

We all do Chaim. Let's start today. When our fathers come home tonight, let's roll out the "red carpet" for them.

What a great idea, Avi! If we give our fathers the "red carpet" treatment, maybe G-d will give us the "red cow" as a reward.

Chaim, may the "red" reward be all yours.

TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 Why does the Torah stress that all of the congregation came to Midbar Tzin?
- 2 Why is Miriam's death taught after the laws of para aduma?
- 3 During their journey in the midbar, in whose merit did the Jewish People receive water?
- 4 Why did Moshe need to strike the rock a second time?
- 5 When Moshe told the King of Edom that the Jewish People would not drink from the well-water, to which well did he refer? What do we learn from this?

Answer
1 20:1 - To teach that they were all fit to enter the Land; everyone involved in the sin of the spies already died. 2 20:1 - To teach that just as sacrifices bring atonement, so too does the death of the righteous. 3 20:2 - Miriam's. 4 20:11 - After he hit it the first time, only a few drops came out since he was commanded to speak to it. 5 20:17 - To the well that traveled with the nation in the midbar. This teaches that even if one has adequate provisions he should purchase goods from his host in order to benefit the host.

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