

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



SHARE THE PAIN!

The Gemara Sotah (11a) tells us that Pharaoh had three advisers: Yitro, Iyov and Bilam. Pharaoh wished to decide how to deal with the Israelite "problem". He sought the opinion of each of his three advisers.

Bilam was an evil man and relished the prospect of eradicating the Jewish people. He advised Pharaoh to kill the male Israelites.

Iyov was opposed to any plan to destroy the Jewish nation. Rather than display his true feelings on the issue, he refrained from offering any opinion and he remained silent.

Yitro on the other hand, vocally rejected Pharaoh's idea of exterminating the Jewish people. Yitro believed it was wrong that these people should be made to suffer for no crime other than being Jewish. Yitro's loud protests angered Pharaoh and Yitro had to flee Egypt in order to save his life.

The Talmud continues by telling us that each of the three advisers were rewarded or punished according to his deed. Bilam was killed by the very people he sought to exterminate. Iyov, who remained silent in the face of Jewish oppression, was afflicted with a life of pain and suffering. Yitro, who fled because of his opposition, sacrificing his position of leadership and life of comfort and wealth in Egypt, eventually became the father-in-law of Moshe and his descendants merited serving as prominent judicial leaders in the Sanhedrin.

Hashem dealt Mida Keneged Mida - measure for measure with all three of them.

On retrospection one can understand both Yitro and Bilam's reward and punishment, yet it is difficult to comprehend why Iyov's punishment was so severe. In fact, even if Iyov had objected, Pharaoh would have still enacted his decree. Iyov's only sin was remaining silent. Why then did he have to suffer such a harsh life, where tragedy followed tragedy?

The Mishnah in Pirkei Avot lists 48 ways to acquire Torah. We are taught for example that studying, listening and minimising one's sleep are all ways of acquiring the Torah.

One way out of the 48 seems to stand out. The 39th way is - Nosei Be'ol Chaveiro - participating in the burden of one's fellow. Why should participating in the burden of one's fellow enable us to acquire Torah?

Hashem gave Am Yisrael the Torah as a nation. We were all there at Har Sinai, in fact all the future souls of our nation were there. The Torah was not handed down to one individual; rather it was handed to the nation. One of the intrinsic messages in this action was that in order to uphold and learn this Torah, there needs to be unity. One needs to see himself as part of the other person, one big family.

Choosing a leader isn't easy. When it came to redeeming Am Yisrael, Hashem chose Moshe from the tribe of Levi. What actions reveal Moshe's potential as a leader, and what was so special about the tribe of Levi?

When the Torah relates the lineage of Reuven, Shimon and Levi (Shemot 6:14-16), the Torah states the sons of Reuven... The sons of Shimon... yet when it comes to Levi, the Torah states "These were the NAMES of the sons of Levi..." Why does the Torah emphasize the names of Levi, whilst those of Reuven and Shimon are seemingly ignored?

The Sh'lah HaKadosh (Rav Yeshayahu HaLevi Horowitz) explained that in Egypt the nation were subjugated to servitude. The tribe of Levi however were not. ▶

TEVET 20th 5780

SHABBAT BEGINS: 4:09 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 5:17 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"Always turn a negative situation into a positive situation."

> MAZAL TOV

Joana & Abraham Cohen
on the birth of a baby girl

> UPCOMING EVENTS

▶ 23rd Jan YP Event

▶ 9th Feb Children Tu Bishvat Event

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DVAR TORAH

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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

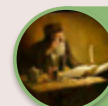
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One might have expected them to enjoy this status and “forget” about their brothers.

It is to this that the Torah emphasises the names of Levi's children. He named his sons after his brothers' bondage. "Gershon" -- for they were "Gerim" (aliens) in a foreign land. "Kehat" -- for they gritted their teeth in their suffering. "Merari" -- for their lives had been embittered (Maror). Levi wished to actively participate in his brothers' anguish, identifying with them in their times of stress and he named his sons accordingly. It is for this reason the Torah stresses their names.

Similarly, the Torah relates that “Moshe grew up, and he went out amongst his brethren and he saw their suffering” (Shemot 2:11).

Moshe was a prince in Pharaoh's palace. He had everything going for him. Yet he knew his identity and he yearned to relate to his people.

The Midrash comments that Moshe saw their suffering and cried: "How my heart goes out for your suffering! If only I could die for you, to spare you your suffering." Moshe removed his princely garments and went out into the field to try to help his brethren make the bricks and mortar, just so that he could be a part of their pain.

According to the Midrash, Hashem said to him: "You left your comforts to participate in the pain of Israel as an equal; I will leave the company of the Higher Ones so that I may speak with you."

It is for this reason that Moshe was chosen as a leader. A leader must be able to see beyond the physicality to delve deep and feel the emotional suffering as if that suffering is happening to him. Moshe felt it, he was distressed and he acted accordingly.

The Alter of Kelm comments that earlier we find the Torah relates that “Hashem Saw and Hashem Knew” (that the time had come for redemption) (Shemot 2:28).

Rashi, explaining this verse, uses virtually the same expression as he did concerning Moshe: "G-d placed his eye upon them and did not remove his heart from them." The Alter of Kelm explains that G-d was inspired - as it were - by the actions of Moshe. It was Moshe's own similar actions that triggered G-d's looking at and taking to heart, so to speak, the troubles of the Jewish people.

Such is the power of Am Yisrael, when we are together, when we truly feel for our brothers and sisters; then Hashem's redemption is sure to follow.

We can now understand why Iyov suffered for his silence.

Iyov was not sure what possible good would come out of him voicing resistance to Pharaoh's evil edict. He reckoned it would not change anything. Even if Pharaoh would not change the edict, he still should have voiced his opinion. When Iyov personally suffered, then he did not remain silent, rather he raised his voice beseeching G-d.

Thus Iyov's punishment stirred him to react in a manner that in turn demonstrated the error of his failure to raise his voice in protest against Pharaoh's heinous plan.

I was once in Yerushalayim talking to a Gadol Hador when an ambulance with its sirens wailing whizzed by. The Gadol stopped in the middle of talking to me, and with his eyes closed started to say a prayer. At first it didn't hit me, but then I realised what had happened. The Rav didn't see the ambulance as a piece of scenery in the background. He saw it as a person in distress, a person who is being rushed to hospital, a person in need of help. This is how we must approach the suffering of our fellow Jews.

Just as we share in our nation's sorrow, so too may Hashem Bless us to always share in our people's Simcha Bekarov. Amen

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM - SHALOM LA'AM DIASPORA



WHAT IS FAITH?

As we start the book of Shemot, let us delve into its general message and central theme. The Parasha begins with the descent of Yaakov Avinu and his family to Egypt. They were only a small group when they arrived, but in the course of their sojourn there for two hundred and ten years, they became a multitudinous people. During this time, the persecution and slavery that they endured brought out from within them the attributes of faith and trust in G-d, giving them the emotional strength to withstand their oppression.

Our Sages refer to the Jewish People as “believers, the sons of believers”. Our faith in G-d is hereditary – inherited from our forefathers. We have emunah – faith in G-d that He created the world, and is directly involved with all that happens to each Jew individually, and to all of us as a people. He will ultimately

reward us for every good action that we do and mete out punishment for any transgression of His word. It is true that we are commanded to constantly have emunah – faith in G-d, and to put our hope and trust in Him, but what exactly is faith?

Faith is the knowledge that another party has complete reliability. If, for example, we have a faithful friend, that means we can have trust in him. If he gives us his word that he will do a particular action, or that he will be a specific place at a certain time, we know that he will do his utmost to fulfil this, as with him “a word is a word,” and we can certainly rely on him.

Concerning such a person, whatever the situation and however hard or even seemingly contradictory it may be for him to do what he said, we can nevertheless be confident, rest assured and even relaxed, that he will be true to his word. If however, we find that he deviates, even slightly, from his given word, then he loses his complete reliability. We cannot rely on him totally, nor have complete confidence in him anymore.

Someone once told me that as kids they would play a game, that one of them would be

blindfolded and would have to fall backwards, relying on their friend to catch them before they fall to the floor. Although not advisable, this game portrays complete reliance.

We, as Jews, are commanded to have faith in G-d, that He is always in complete control of everything, and nothing in the world takes place that is not His will. In other words, we must have total reliance on Him.

In all situations, whatever may be, whether it seems feasible or not, whether we understand or not, when a person has complete reliance on G-d, and says “I can rely on You (G-d), I know that it is You and only You, and that there isn't and cannot be a safer place to be other than under Your complete protection” – this is faith. Concerning such a person it can be said: “He is living with G-d!”

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI SHLOMO IBN DANAN

The Ibn Danan family is among the most illustrious and ancient families of Morocco. In the Jewish quarter of Fez stood the "Ibn Danan" Beit Midrash, the property of this renowned family. The chanting of prayers and the hum of Torah study were heard in this place day and night, sounds whose echoes carried far.

The Ibn Danan dynasty of Morocco goes back all the way to Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon Ibn Danan, known by the name of Rambam Elfassi, a man who lived at the same time as the author of the Mishnah Torah, known as the Rambam HaSephardi.

Among the immigrants arriving from Spain were Rabbi Maimon Ibn Danan and his son, Rabbi Moshe. They settled in Fez, a city filled with sages and scholars. Rabbi Moshe was a Gaon in Torah, and as soon as he arrived he founded a yeshiva in the city. Many students gathered around him in order to drink from this living source of water. He quickly became famous in all of Morocco as a Gaon of great ability. Besides his great Torah scholarship, the Rambam Elfassi also had a reputation as a prodigy and worker of miracles.

Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Danan, who occupied the position of Dayan in Fez for 50 years, was a descendant of his holy man, the Rambam Elfassi.

From his earliest years, we could see in him a future star that would shine in the firmament of Moroccan Judaism. All his family and friends praised this young boy, and remained astounded by his sharp mind and intelligence that was faultless and clear. He was gifted with an incredible intellect, an unerring memory, and a profound sense of logic. The students of the Beit Hamidrash delighted in being able to discuss Torah with the young scholar, and more than once did his apt replies and ingenuity make their jaws drop. Certainly, everyone's hopes were placed on this adolescent who, with time, promised to be a Gaon that would be the glory of his people.

Rabbi Shlomo's boyhood was very difficult. His father, the Tzaddik Rabbi Moshe, died well before the young Shlomo was ten years old. Despite this great tragedy and the pain that he experienced for having lost his much beloved father, the young boy did not turn away from the study of Torah. He pushed himself with even more diligence, and he felt that the spirit of his father hovered above to guide him in all his steps. His mother did everything in her power so that her gifted son could continue, without bother from any concerns, his Torah studies. The young Shlomo elevated himself day by day in the study of Torah and the fear of G-d. His behavior was full of grace, and his dignity and intelligence captivated everyone who approached him. He was very meticulous when it came to the performance of mitzvot, be they simple or more serious ones. He placed humrot (stringencies) upon himself concerning

the laws of purity and asceticism. At the age of 13, he already began to learn the basics of esoteric matters. Later on, he became famous and known as a teacher of this ultimate knowledge. At 18 years of age he married and then began to give Torah courses to students. He initiated his students in the study of Shas and Halachah. The majority of the many students that he educated became, in turn, renowned Talmid Chacham and Rabbis.

In the year 5629 (1869), at the age of 21, he was admitted into the rabbinic court of Fez. The older judges recognized his immense Torah knowledge and took his opinions into account for each of the decisions that they had to deliberate. Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Danan aspired to go up to the Holy Land and settle there. In the year 5638 (1878), at the age of 30, he left Morocco with his uncle and went to the Land of Israel.

After many episodes, as many on sea as on land, they finally landed on the shores of the country. For 33 days they traveled the length and breadth of the land and made pilgrimages to the tombs of the Tzaddikim.

On his return to Fez, Rabbi Shlomo was welcomed with great honor by the entire Jewish community. He was named treasurer and leader of the community, a role occupied only by great Rabbis who possessed a tremendous fear of G-d. For three years he occupied this honored position, devoting himself day and night to the study of Torah. The leaders of the community decided to name him Chief Rabbi and President of the Rabbinic Court, even though he had just reached the age of 30.

The Moroccan government, which knew of the great respect that his people had for him, confirmed his nomination as Chief Rabbi and President of the Court, conferring upon him the full powers of an official judge. It was thus that each of this young Rabbi's legal decisions was stamped with the seal of the government. He was revered by all the people, who strictly observed all his decrees and instructions.

Rabbi Shlomo Ibn Danan held this position for 50 years. He had the custom to registering each of the legal decisions that had been taken by his court, and he had them printed and published in 5661 (1901) in a book entitled Asher LeShlomo. Since that time, numerous Poskim have used this book to make their own decisions.

Rabbi Shlomo rendered his soul to his Creator in 5629 (1929). His passing marked great mourning for the Jews of Fez and all the communities of the Diaspora. A large crowd, consisting of the majority of Jews from Fez and those from other cities, attended his burial.

Two years after Rabbi Shlomo's death, his two sons published the book Biquesh Shlomo, which contains a compilation of his responses on Halachah, and which was written by their father near the end of his life. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

THE PROPER SEQUENCE OF BERACHOT WHEN ONE EATS TWO FRUITS OR VEGETABLES

If a person plans on eating two fruits that require the Beracha of "Ha'etz," and one of them is from among the special species of Eretz Yisrael (grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates), then he recites the Beracha over the fruit from the special species. Thus, for example, if one plans on eating grapes and pieces of orange, he recites the Beracha of "Ha'etz" over a grape and then eats the grape, before eating the orange. This applies even if he likes oranges more than grapes, since fruits belonging to the special species are considered more prominent and thus take precedence.

Another basic rule governing the sequence of Berachot is that a more specific Beracha precedes a less specific one. And thus if one is eating two foods, one which requires "Ha'etz" or "Ha'adama," and one which requires "She'ha'kol," he must first eat the food requiring "Ha'etz" or "Ha'adama," before the food which requires "She'ha'kol."

The Shulhan Aruch rules that if one is eating a food requiring "Ha'etz" and a food requiring "Ha'adama," he may choose whichever sequence he prefers. For example, if a person eats apple and melon, he may choose whether to first recite "Ha'etz" and eat a piece of apple, or to first recite "Ha'adama" and eat a piece of melon. The Shulhan Aruch's ruling applies even if the fruit requiring "Ha'etz" is among the special species of Eretz Yisrael, such as if one eats an olive and a radish. He has the option of either first eating the olive or first eating the radish. The Shulhan Aruch maintains that since two separate Berachot must be recited, there is no required sequence, and one may choose which food to eat first.

Others, including the Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) and the Kaf Ha'haim (Rav Yaakov Haim Sofer, Baghdad-Israel, 1870-1939), disagree, and maintain that a person in this case must first partake of the food requiring "Ha'etz" before partaking of the food requiring "Ha'adama."

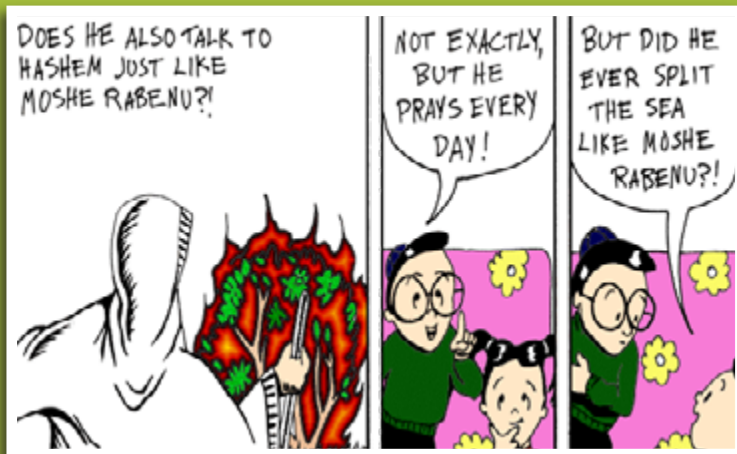
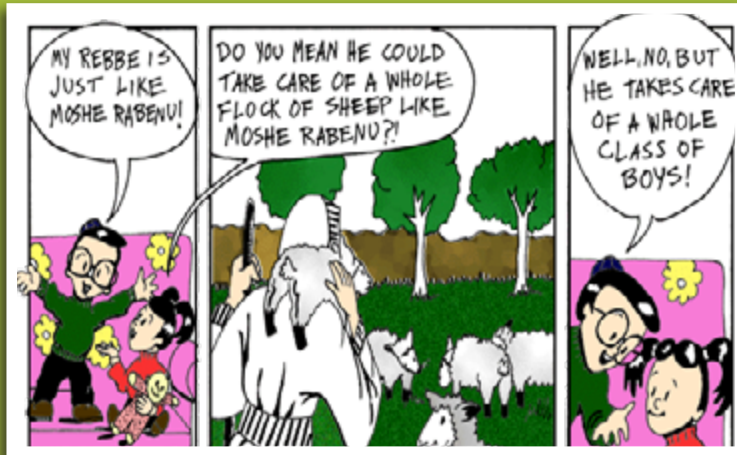
Hacham Ovadia follows the opinion of the Shulhan Aruch, allowing one to choose which food to partake of first in this case. However, he maintains that if there is some other factor to consider, then one should determine the sequence based on that factor. This means that if one of the two foods is more preferred by the person, is one of the seven species of Eretz Yisrael, or is whole and complete, it should be partaken of first. This applies regardless of whether the food with this additional factor is the "Ha'etz" food or the "Ha'adama" food. (An example of a "Ha'adama" food from the seven special species is a stalk of wheat that is roasted, over which one recites the Beracha of "Ha'adama.") But in the absence of these factors, one can choose which food to eat first.

Summary: If one is eating two foods, one of which requires the Beracha of "She'ha'kol," he should recite the Beracha over the other food and then partake of it, before reciting "She'ha'kol." If one is eating two fruits which both require "Ha'etz," one of which is from among the special species of Eretz Yisrael (grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates), then he recites the Beracha over the fruit from the special species, and this Beracha covers the other fruit. If he eats one food which requires "Ha'adama" and another which requires "Ha'etz," then he may choose which to eat first, unless he prefers one of the two foods, or if one of the fruits is from among the special species or is a whole entity, in which case that food should be partaken of first. ■

I had a fantastic time at the TAL cocktail Night on the 26th November 2019. It was a cool venue with welcoming vibes. I felt like I had a chance to meet some great new people.... and I got a free drink too!

By Talia Jacob

KidsTime



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ For how long did Moshe refuse to be the redeemer of the Jewish People?
- ❷ Why didn't Moshe want to be the leader?
- ❸ "And Hashem was angry with Moshe..." What did Moshe lose as a result of this anger?
- ❹ How many names did Moshe's father-in-law have?
- ❺ What was special about Moshe's donkey?

Answer
❶ 4:10 - Seven days. ❷ 4:10 - He didn't want to take a position above that of his older brother, Aharon. ❸ 4:14 - Moshe lost the privilege of being a kohen. ❹ 4:18 - Seven. ❺ 4:20 - It was used by Avraham for akeldat Vitzchak and will be used in the future by mashiah.



FOR AGES 4-12

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