

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE WILL POWER!

Willpower is what separates us from the animals. It's the capacity to restrain our impulses, resist temptation – do what's right and good for us in the long run, not what we want to do right now. It's central, in fact, to civilisation.

The disciplined and dutiful Victorians, all stiff upper lip and lashings of moral fibre, had willpower in spades; as, sadly, did the Nazis, who referred to their evil adventure as the "triumph of will". In the 60s the world thought otherwise: let it all hang out; if it feels good, do it; I'm OK, you're OK.

But without willpower, it seems, we're actually rarely OK. In the 60s a sociologist called Walter Mischel was interested in how young children resist instant gratification; he offered them the choice of a marshmallow now, or two if they could wait 15 minutes. Years later, he tracked some of the kids down, and made a startling discovery.

Mischel's findings have recently been confirmed by a remarkable long-term study in New Zealand, concluded in 2010. For 32 years, starting at birth, a team of international researchers tracked 1,000 people, rating their observed and reported self-control and willpower in a different ways.

What they found was that, even taking into account differences of intelligence, race and social class, those with high self-control – those

who, in Mischel's experiment, held out for two marshmallows later – grew into healthier, happier and wealthier adults.

Those with low willpower, the study discovered, fared less well academically. They were more likely to be in low-paying jobs with few savings, to be overweight, to have drug or alcohol problems, and to have difficulty maintaining stable relationships (many were single parents). They were also nearly four times more likely to have a criminal conviction. "Willpower," is one of the most important predictors of success in life."

We find this important tool of life well versed in our Torah.

The Gemara Megila 13b states, "Rabbi Shimon Ben Lakish said: it was obvious and clearly known to the Creator of the Universe that Haman would weigh coins to kill the Jews. Therefore, he had their (the Jews) coins proceed his coins, and that is what the Mishna says "on the first day of Adar we make announcements about the giving of the yearly Shekalim/coins to pay for the communal sacrifices in the Bet Hamikdash."

Tosfot explains that the 10,000 Kikar of silver offered by Haman was the same amount of silver the Jews donated for the Adanim (sockets at the base of each of the Mishkan's beams).

Why was Hashem worried about how much money Haman would donate? Why was it so necessary to have a counterbalance in effect?

Rabbi Shalom Schwadron answers, in the name of his Rebbe, that the Midrash in Parshat Teruma, tells us Haman's entire fortune consisted of 10,000 Kikar of silver. Haman was so willing to annihilate the Jewish people, that he was willing to give up all his wealth in pursuit of his desires. ►

ADAR 3rd 5780

SHABBAT BEGINS: 5:24 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 6:26 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"Encouragement is awesome; it can actually change the course of another person's day."

> MAZAL TOV

Mazal Tov to Guy and Vanessa Avital on the birth of their baby boy.

> UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ 28th February Friday Night Dinner
- ▶ 3rd March Monday Nights Wisdom & Knowledge
- ▶ 4th March Challah Bake
- ▶ 25th March Busy in Brooklyn

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DVAR TORAH

It's all about the will power!
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

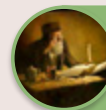
P1



DVAR TORAH

Terumah - Where is G-d found?
RABBI ALAN GARBET

P2



OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI RAPHAEL ENCAOUA

P3



HALACHOT

Must One Recite a Beracha Before Tasting Food? RABBI ELI MANSOUR

P3

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

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Hashem created the world in such a way that when one shows Mesirat Nefesh (willingness to give up everything for his desires), then he will be helped from heaven. Even if it were Chas Ve Shalom for the bad.

Thus even though Haman's intention were bad nevertheless because of his full conviction, he was doomed to help from heaven. It is for this reason that the Jewish people needed to have a counterbalance to Haman's wickedness. This counterbalance came in the form of donations of 10,000 Kikar for the Adanim.

Similarly we find that Bilam was determined to curse the Bnei Yisrael in the Midbar. He awoke early in the morning, saddled his own donkey and went on his way. Our Sages teach us that this dedicated action of Bilam had already been counterbalanced by Avraham's action of waking early, saddling his own donkey in pursuit of fulfilling G-d's command to sacrifice his son Yitschak.

What was so special about the half a Shekel donation? Why wasn't it the other donations that were brought to the Mishkan such as the

gold, copper or other precious materials that counterbalanced Haman's 10,000 Kikar?

The Gemara (Kiddushin 31a) says that "Gadol hametzuvah ve'oseh mimi she'eino metzuvah ve'oseh" – "The one who is commanded and fulfils is greater than the one who fulfils without a command." Tosfot explain the reason is that the one who is not commanded has the option of not performing the precept at all, while the one who is commanded is worried and anxious due to his obligation and feels a natural tendency to rebel and be left alone. He needs to fight of the Yetzer Hara (bad inclination) pushing him to desist from the Mitzvah.

Thus the fight to perform the Mitzvah will be harder, when someone is commanded, and therefore he will receive a greater reward.

Hashem therefore commanded the Bnei Yisrael to give half a Shekel. The fact they were commanded to give half a shekel, no more, no less, opened the way for their Yetzer Hara come out and try to dissuade them from only giving half a shekel.

It was more difficult for the Bnei Yisrael to overcome their natural inclination to give more than half a shekel then it was for Haman to give all his wealth.

Thus in anticipation of Haman's dedication to the cause of annihilating the Jews, Hashem in his mercy gave us (many years earlier) the Mitzvah of Machatsit Hashekel. This allowed the Jews to demonstrate their dedication to Hashem by overcoming their natural instincts, and accepting Hashem as supreme King.

Sometimes we feel that the Mitzvah at hand is difficult. We should know that according to the pain is the gain! We have been blessed with immense will power; it is just a matter of starting it off and nurturing it.

It's certainly true "Willpower," is one of the most important predictors of success in life."

■ Shabbat Shalom

RABBI ALAN GARBER - SHENLEY UNITED JEWISH COMMUNITY



TERUMAH - WHERE IS G-D FOUND?

When I was working in The Great Synagogue, Sydney, I was asked to set up and run a Shabbat morning children's service. The first one was held on Sedra Terumah. I wanted to explain what the Aron HaKodesh – the Holy Ark looked like. There were two particularly lively children in the service and I thought that the best way to both engage and keep them under control would be to choose them as my "volunteers" for my explanation of what the Aron Hakodesh looked like. So I told these two children, a boy and a girl, that they were going to be "my angels" and would act out what cherubs (the angelic figures) looked like above the ark. I had them facing each other with their arms raised above their heads like wings.

Whilst they were in this position, happy being the centre of attention, and with the other children and some parents watching, I went on

to explain a powerful idea. The verse describes that;

וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לָךְ שֵׁם וּדְבַרְתִּי אִתָּךְ מֵעַל
הַכְּפֹת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרֻבִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל-אֲרוֹן הָעֵדֻת

I (Hashem) will make myself known there and I will speak with you from upon the cover, between the two cherubs that are on the ark" (Shemot 25:22)

The Torah tells us that G-d's Divine Presence specifically emanates from the space between the two cherubs. One might have thought that this would have come from the box itself, after all that is where the two holy tablets and the original Torah scroll, written by Moses where kept! Rather, the Torah is teaching us that G-d manifests Himself in the world when and where people learn how to face each other, whether it is husband and wife; parent and child; friends, siblings; or two lively kids in a children service!

How is this achieved? Well, the symbolism of the cherubs being able to face each other is that they are standing "on top of the on the Torah". In other words they are based on the teachings of the Torah. Loving, getting on with and dealing with other people is often not so

easy. The Torah is our instruction manual for life. As it says in Proverbs 3:17

דְּרִכָּהּ דְּרִכֵּי-נֶעֱמִים וְכָל-נִתְיָבוֹתֶיהָ שְׁלוֹם

"Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are of peace". Our Divine service in this world is learning how to face the "other" and by doing so we bring the Divine into this world.

We are now in the month of Adar, the 12th and final month of the Jewish calendar. The name אֲדָר Adar can be split into two parts; א is the numerical value of One, the One G-d; and דָּר – means to dwell. It is the month that we feel that G-d dwells amongst us, and therefore a month in which we naturally increase our joy.

The Torah portions about the construction of the Tabernacle invariably fall during Adar and at the time we celebrate the festival of Purim. Purim teaches us to see G-d in the "hidden miracles" of life and therefore feel and live with G-d's Divine Presence.

May we all merit to internalise the teachings of the Torah, so that we can interact with the world around us and bring G-d's Divine Presence into this world!

■ Shabbat shalom

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI RAPHAEL ENCAOUA

In 1912 Morocco became a French Protectorate, and it was the French (with Marshal Lyautey at their head) who were the real leaders of the country. The French demanded that the Jews name a committee to represent their community, and at its first session it was decided to ask Marshal Lyautey to establish the position of Moroccan Chief Rabbi to represent the Jewish community before the new government. In addition, it was decided that this position would be entrusted to Rabbi Raphael Encaoua, who was then the head of the Rabbinical Court of Sale.

The French authorities agreed to these requests, and representatives of the Jewish community went to see Rabbi Raphael Encaoua to inform him of his nomination. When he heard this, however, he jumped up and angrily exclaimed, "And who made me the Chief Rabbi of Morocco, since there is Rabbi Shlomo ben Danan in Fez, and in there is a Gaon in Marrakech, and there is the Chief Rabbi of Meknes, and in Sefrou there is...! How could you have even thought to choose me instead of one of these Torah greats?"

The members of the committee attempted to justify themselves by saying that it was Marshal Lyautey who had appointed him to the position. However he began to scold them: "How could a non-Jew have chosen me from among all these great sages? Only the Rabbanim are qualified to choose the most eminent among themselves. For that reason, you must tell Marshal Lyautey that I am not suitable for the job," he humbly concluded.

The committee members went back to Marshal Lyautey and told him that Rabbi Raphael did not accept the position and that he should choose another man. When Marshal Lyautey heard what Rabbi Raphael had said, he decided that he alone would make the best Chief Rabbi of Morocco. And if he absolutely refused to take the position, Morocco would have no Chief Rabbinate.

Once again the committee members went to find Rabbi Raphael and informed him of the governor's decision, explaining to him that this position was very important for the Jews of Morocco and that no one had the right to renounce it. The Rav asked that he be given some time to think about it, and after a week he went to Fez and met with Rabbi Shlomo ben Danan, the head of the rabbinical court. Rabbi Shlomo was an extremely learned Posek, and he had written several books of Halachah, including his responsum Bikesh Shlomo and Asher LiShlomo.

Rabbi Raphael told him that he had been offered a position that he was not entitled to. However he felt that

it was suitable for him, Rabbi Shlomo, which is why he came to see him, for he tried to convince him to become the Chief Rabbi of Morocco. He suggested that Rabbi Shlomo be the first to sign all rulings that would emerge from the country's top rabbinic court. The difference in salary between the position that he presently held and that of Chief Rabbi would be refunded to him as well, for Rabbi Raphael (who would obtain this difference from the government) would reimburse it to him. As regards outside appearances, Rabbi Raphael would be the Chief Rabbi of Morocco, and those rulings issued by the Rabbinical court that were translated into French would be signed first by Rabbi Raphael, then by Rabbi Shlomo.

After hours of discussing the matter, with each trying to convince the other that, in fact, the other was greater and better qualified for the position, Rabbi Raphael's opinion eventually won out. However Rabbi Shlomo only agreed on condition that the difference between his present and new salary would go to paying the expenses incurred by his move from Fez to Meknes, and other such costs. That condition was agreed to.

After several years, people noticed that all the rulings of these two Tzaddikim were unsigned. Apparently, there was a difference of opinion over who should sign first. As for the money that Rabbi Raphael reimbursed to Rabbi Shlomo, the latter protested it should actually go to Rabbi Raphael, yet because of the costs that he incurred by moving, he found himself obliged to use it.

The following story illustrates Rabbi Raphael's great modesty:

Someone once saw Rabbi Raphael going to pray in another synagogue in order to pay tribute to an important family. Naturally, his arrival in the synagogue was viewed with great honor, and when the Torah reading began the Chazan called out: "May our teacher and Rav arise, the crown of our head, the Gaon and flawless Dayan, a man humble and righteous..." along with other such accolades.

Rabbi Raphael did not move from his place when he was called up. Since everyone believed that he had not heard the Chazan's invitation, he was told that he had been called up to the Torah. He softly replied that he had heard what the Chazan had said, but that such a description did not refer to him. The Chazan was describing someone else, and Rabbi Raphael refused to move until the Chazan called out again and invited Rabbi Raphael Encaoua, without further qualification, to come up to the Torah. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

MUST ONE RECITE A BERACHA BEFORE TASTING FOOD?

If one tastes some food or drink purely for the purpose of tasting, and not for enjoyment, is he required to recite a Beracha?

This issue is subject to a debate among the Rishonim (Medieval Halachic authorities). The Rambam (Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon, Spain-Egypt, 1135-1204) ruled in Hilchot Berachot (1:2) that one does not recite a Beracha before tasting food, whereas Tosefot (Talmud commentary by the Medieval French scholars) in Masechet Berachot (14) held that one indeed recites a Beracha in such a case.

The Shulchan Aruch (210) codifies the position of the Rambam, that one does not recite a Beracha before tasting food even if he swallows, and then adds that some authorities disagree and require reciting a Beracha in this case. There is a standard rule that when the Shulchan Aruch codifies a certain ruling and then mentions the opposing view, he sides with the first ruling. (This principle is known as "Setam Va'yeish Halacha Ke'stam.") Hence, the accepted position is that of the Rambam, that one does not recite a Beracha if he tastes food or drink strictly for the purpose of tasting, even if he swallows the food or drink. Assuming he eats an amount less than a "Ke'zayit" or drinks less than a "Revi'it," he does not recite a Beracha Achrona after tasting, either.

Nevertheless, Rabbi Moshe Halevi, in his work "Birkat Hashem" (vol. 2, 1:18), advises that one should preferably avoid such situations, and expel the food or drink from his mouth after tasting it. Since by swallowing the food one subjects himself to this debate among the Rishonim, it is preferable not to swallow the food so that no Beracha is required according to all opinions.

Summary: A person who eats some food or drink purely for the sake of tasting, and not to derive enjoyment from the food or drink, does not recite a Beracha before tasting. If he eats less than a "Ke'zayit" or drinks less than a "Revi'it," he does not recite a Beracha Acharona after tasting, either. Preferably, however, a person who tastes food or drink should expel it from his mouth and not swallow it, given the different views among the authorities on this issue. ■

TAL IMPACT

Thanks for the shiur yesterday. Was amazing! Feel a new excitement about Shabbat to make it extra special and about the halachot!

Navah Cohen



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