

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



LONDON'S LEADING PLATFORM FOR STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

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

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



PARASHA INSIGHTS

As we complete the first book of the Torah we are left with a subconscious message hinted throughout the Parasha.

It all begins with the name of this week's Parasha - Vayechi.

In essence the Parasha relates Yaakov's last years and final blessing to his children. After passing away and a national mourning, Yaakov is taken up to Eretz Yisrael to be buried. Thereafter the children of Israel return to Egypt, where they continue to flourish. At the end of the Parasha we are told about Yosef gathering his brothers and asking them to ensure his remains will be taken up to Israel at the time of the exodus. They concur and end the book of Bereishit with the passing of Yosef.

There are two Parshiot in the Torah that are called with reference to life. The first is Chayei Sarah - the life of Sarah, and the second is this week's Parasha - Vayechi (and he lived).

It seems strange that that the two Parshiot which seem to talk about death are the ones that are named with life? Is there a connection?

Our Sages teach that we should bless G-d one hundred times a day. (See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 46:4, 284:4, 290:1).

Unfortunately sometimes due to habit, we miss out on the beauty found within so many of our blessings.

The aim is to constantly recognise Hashem in everything we do.

As part of our blessings in the silent Amida there is a special blessing where we praise G-d for being Mechayeh Hametim - resurrecting the dead.

Have you ever noticed how many times within that blessing the words relating to life and death are mentioned?

Although we say this blessing three times a day, many people have not noticed the seemingly repetitive theme of Techiyat Hametim within the blessing. In total this is mentioned five times! (Mechaye Metim Ata, Mechayeh Metim Berachamim, Melech Memit Umechaye, Neeaman Ata Lehachayot Metim, Baruch.. Mechayeh Hametim)

Why the repetition?

The Gemara Avoda Zara 5a mentions that there are four types of people that although they are alive, nevertheless are considered dead.

The first is a poor man.

The Torah relates that Hashem told Moshe that all the people that wanted him harmed had died (Metu Kol ha'Anashim). Our Rabbis explain that this refers to Datan and Aviram, who although were still alive, because they had lost their wealth, were considered dead.

The second is a blind person. This is learnt from a Pasuk which compares a blind man to dead "b'Machashakim Hoshivani k'Metei Olam";

The third is a Metzora, one who has (spiritual) leprosy. After Miriam received Tsarat for speaking against her brother Moshe, Aharon defended her and asked "Al Na Tehi (Miryam) ka'Met"; Please don't let Miriam be like a dead person.

The fourth category is a childless person. This is learnt from Rachel's request from Yaakov to have children "Havah Li Vanim v'Im Ayin Metah Anochi - grant me children otherwise I am (like) dead". ▶

TEVET 13th 5780

SHABBAT BEGINS: 3:55 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 5:11 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

> MAZAL TOV

Dina Cohen & Avi Kestenbaum
on their upcoming wedding.

Audrey & Mikey Epstein
on the birth of their baby boy.

Samara & Richard Levicki
on the birth of baby Racheli

> UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ 17th Jan Friday Night Dinner
- ▶ 23rd Jan YP Event
- ▶ 9th Feb Children Tu B'shvat Event

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



DVAR TORAH

Parasha Insights
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

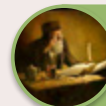
P1



DVAR TORAH

Women's Liberation
RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM

P2



OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI ABBA

P3



HALACHOT

Reciting Berachot Over Fruit Eaten as
Dessert / RABBI ELI MANSOUR

P3



Q&A & CARTOON

P4

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

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We all yearn for the Messianic era daily where eventually we will witness ultimate physical and spiritual bliss. All will be healed. The blind, the deaf and the dumb, the lame, whosoever has any blemish or disability, shall be healed from all their disabilities: "The eyes of the blind shall be clear-sighted, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened... the lame shall leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing..." (Isaiah 35:5-6). Death itself shall cease, as it is said, "Death shall be swallowed up forever and G-d shall wipe the tears from every face..." (Isaiah 25:8)

There will be a life of ease. Our physical needs will be taken care of by others, as it is said, "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks and aliens shall be your ploughmen and your vinedressers." (Isaiah 61:5)

The time will come when G-d resurrects the dead. But which 'dead' will be resurrected.

Our daily blessing of Mechayeh Hametim is teaching us that all these four categories of 'dead' people will be resurrected. Those that are childless will bear children, there will be no poverty, no lepers and all will be able to see. The fifth and final reference to resurrecting the dead refers to the real dead that have passed away being resurrected.

Thus what we think is the end is only a transition period. We are born, we live and pass on, but one day we have faith we will be resurrected.

For the righteous we have a stress on life particularly in the place that death is mentioned. Sarah lived a fulfilled life, she passed away and the Torah relates, "Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and li'vkotah/to cry for her." (23:2)

In the Torah, the word "li'vkotah" is written with a small letter "kaf". In this way, the Torah tells us that Avraham did not cry or mourn excessively for his wife Sarah.

R' Ovadiah Yosef Z'l explained that our patriarch Avraham was a prophet. When Sarah died, Avraham knew that she was in Gan Eden with other righteous people who had died. Since the sages teach, "One hour in Olam Haba is more worthwhile than all life in This World/Olam Ha'zeh," Avraham had no reason to cry. Thus his mourning was not excessive.

Then why did he cry at all? Only because of "what people would say." In reality, though, we all should recognize that the deceased is in a better place. This is why we comfort mourners with the words: "Hamakom ye'nachem etchem..." / "May Hashem (who we refer to as "Makom" because He is everywhere) comfort you . .

." The word "makom" literally means "The Place" - thus we are saying, "May your knowledge that the deceased is in a good place comfort you." Sarah was the first mother of our nation and taught us this important message.

Hence Chayei Sarah - the life of Sarah teaches us that although she passed away, she lives on.

Perhaps it was taught yet again with Yaakov as he lived a life full of trials and tribulations and represented the Jew in exile. He saw beyond the pain, perceived beyond the troubles, because his life source was Hashem. Yaakov's inextricable bond to the Almighty was an enduring quality, which he infused in his descendants throughout the generations. Vayechi Yaakov B'erez Mitzrayim is the catchphrase for Jewish transcendence in the diaspora, for the almost daily confrontation with adversity and pain. This emotion comprises our generative force that keeps us strong and committed despite the overwhelming challenges which confront us at every turn.

Remember everything will be ok in the end, if it's not, it's not the end!

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM - SHALOM LA'AM DIASPORA



WOMEN'S LIBERATION

At the conclusion of the Book of Bereshit, our forefather, Yaakov, blessed each of his sons before he died. Yosef, who merited becoming second-in-command of Egypt, was blessed by his father to have special favour in the eyes of all who beheld him. Our sages teach us that the reason why Yosef merited such stature and greatness was as follows. When Yaakov met up with his brother Esav after returning from Haran, Yaakov introduced his wives and children. Firstly, Bilhah and Zilpah and their children, followed by Leah and her children. When it came to introducing Rachel however, Yosef moved in front of his mother and stood erect, in order to protect her dignity and modesty. He did not want his wicked uncle to be attracted by her beautiful appearance, and therefore, he stood in front of her to obstruct Esav's view. In the merit of protecting his mother's dignity, greatness was bestowed upon him.

The Medrash relates that when G-d created woman, He deliberated (in a figurative sense) from which of man's limbs to create her. If He would create her from part of man's head, it may make her haughty, from his eye - over-inquisitive, from his heart - she may be jealous, from his foot - she may wander off. Thus, G-d chose to create her from a modest and concealed part of man - his ribs.

In today's world, there are those who fight for women's equality rights, whether in the marketplace, in other positions or just for them "to be more in the limelight". Their understanding is that since women should not be worse off than men, they should have the same opportunities available to them. The roles that Jewish women have taken traditionally over the centuries do not seem to satisfy their criteria. Their attitude however, is based on a grave misconception. By no means does the woman's role, as prescribed by our Holy Torah, make a woman worse off, imprisoned, mistreated or undermined in any way. On the contrary, the way the Torah defines her essence and role is truly liberating for a woman. When a person operates in a way that opposes their true nature, that is the worst form of imprisonment for them. A woman naturally shuns being exposed to men other than her husband. For

this reason, the Torah guards her honour, modesty and dignity. Her role is defined to be within the framework of the home. She is entrusted with being the mainstay of the home - bearing the responsibility of supporting her husband, encouraging him in his endeavours, and providing his physical needs, as well as the encompassing task of raising her children to love Torah and mitzvot. Her essence comprises of internal strength, faith and modesty, while being alert, focused and in control of different, mundane but necessary chores. These traits are essential for her being able to care for her husband and to raise children, especially in trying situations, and to observe Shabbat, Kashrut and other pertinent laws. These qualities assist her in ensuring the smooth functioning of the home, supporting her husband and raising her children.

The nobility of a Jewish lady - the King's daughter, is to be found within her privacy. The more her true essence is acknowledged and respected, the more fulfilment and liberation she will feel, and her marriage will be a faithful and harmonious one.

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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RABBI ABBA

OUR CHACHAMIM

Rabbi Abba was among the great Amoraim. He was the student of Shemuel, and though he learned from the great Babylonian Rabbanim, he often traveled to Eretz Israel to learn Torah from its Rabbanim.

The Gemara recounts that Rabbi Abba traveled to Eretz Israel by sea, and when his boat arrived by the shores of Akko, he embraced the earth. He had the merit of seeing Rabbi Yochanan, who headed the great yeshiva of Tiberias and was extremely old at the time. He also saw Resh Lakish (who died before Rabbi Yochanan). We also see just how much he loved Eretz Israel from a story found in the Gemara. Rabbi Abba purchased a plot of land in Eretz Israel, then returned to Babylon. However, what he didn't know was that another Amora, by the name of Rav Gidel, had previously begun negotiations to purchase that same plot of land. Rav Gidel went and complained about Rabbi Abba to Rav Zeira, who in turn told Rabbi Yitzchak bar Napacha of the incident (the latter were old friends of Rabbi Abba, and all three of them were among those who had come to Eretz Israel from Babylon). Rabbi Yitzchak bar Napacha said, "Wait until he returns for the holidays," meaning that they should wait until he comes back from Babylon to verify the story with him.

When Rabbi Abba came back, his friends asked him what was the law concerning "a poor man who awaits his portion, but then another comes and takes it." In other words, what was the law concerning a person who acts maliciously with the poor, trying to seize what awaits him before he has time to take possession of it? Rabbi Abba responded that such a person was a wicked man. And when he was asked why he himself acted in this way concerning the land of Rav Gidel, he replied that he was not aware that Rav Gidel had wanted to purchase it.

Rav Yitzchak bar Napacha therefore decided that he should give up the plot of land for Rav Gidel's benefit. Rabbi Abba replied that he didn't want to sell the plot of land, for it was his first purchase in Eretz Israel, hence it didn't bode well to sell it. Rather, he said that he was ready to give it to Rav Gidel as a gift.

For his part, Rav Gidel didn't want the land as a gift because of the principle that "one who hates gifts will live" (Proverbs 15:27). The Gemara concludes the story by saying that neither of them wanted to use the land in question, and so it was abandoned. This plot of land came to be known as "the land of the Rabbis" (see Kiddushin 59a for details).

Rabbi Abba lived temperately and was accustomed to praying that his Torah views be accepted by his colleagues. Among the Sages who had particularly great respect for Shabbat, Rabbi Abba is mentioned favorably. He had the habit of purchasing 13 selaim of meat in honor of Shabbat, and pressed his servant to prepare everything in the best possible way. Rabbi Abba apparently had many guests on Shabbat, and he wanted to honor them with the finest tasting meals. He lived an exceedingly long time, and in his latter years he was considered as a leading Halachic authority in Eretz Israel. He shared this distinction with Rav Ami, who was Rosh Yeshiva, while Rabbi Abba himself was the Av Beit Din. Rav Ami was named Rosh Yeshiva after the death of Rabbi Eliezer ben Pedat, who continued the academy of Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Shimon ben Eliakim. When Rav Ami moved the yeshiva to Cesarea, Rabbi Abba also joined him there. Rav Papa and Rav Ami called Rabbi Abba, "Our father of Eretz Israel."

The teachings of Rabbi Abba in Halachah and Aggadah are found throughout the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, as well as in the Midrashim. One of his famous parables, by which he explained what occurred between Ahasuerus and Haman, is cited in Megillah 14: "To what can the story of Ahasuerus and Haman be compared? To two men, one who had a mound in his field, and the other who had a pit in his. The latter thought, 'Who could sell me a mound?' while the other thought, 'Who could sell me a pit?' After a certain time, they encountered each other. The one who had a pit said to the one who had a mound, 'Sell me your mound,' to which the other replied, 'Take it for free! You're doing me a favor.' This is what happened when Ahasuerus said to Haman, 'The silver is given to you, the people also, to do with as you see fit' [Esther 3:11]."

To show just how catastrophic honor-seeking is, Gemara Sanhedrin cites the explanation of Rabbi Abba on the verse that states, "After this, Jeroboam did not repent from his evil way" (I Kings 13:33). The Gemara asks about the meaning of "After this," to which Rabbi Abba explains: "After the Holy One, blessed be He, grabbed hold of Jeroboam by his cloak and said to him, 'Repent, and I, you, and the son of Jesse will walk in Gan Eden,' Jeroboam replied, 'Who will be in charge?' to which the answer was 'the son of Jesse will be.' Jeroboam then responded by saying, 'In that case, I want nothing of it!'"

Rabbi Abba died at a great old age, apparently in Eretz Israel. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

RECITING BERACHOT OVER FRUIT EATEN AS DESSERT

It is well-known that the Beracha of "Ha'mosi" recited over bread covers all foods that are eaten subsequently as part of the meal, such as meat, rice, salads and so on. Therefore, one does not recite Berachot over these foods. When it comes to dessert, however, this is not always the case. If one eats fruits of fruit salad for dessert, the dessert is not covered by "Ha'mosi," and he must therefore recite a new Beracha. And thus, for example, if after the meal a person is brought grapes and cantaloupe, he must recite "Ha'etz" over the grapes and "Ha'adama" over the cantaloupe. After dessert, he recites Birkat Ha'mazon, which covers the entire meal, including the dessert. Even though a separate Beracha was required before eating the dessert, the person does not recite a Beracha Aharonah, as the dessert is covered by Birkat Ha'mazon.

There is, however, one situation where one would even be required to recite a Beracha Aharonah over the fruit eaten for dessert. The Gemara in Masechet Berachot (41) comments that if the table was removed after the meal, before Birkat Ha'mazon, and it was then brought back with dessert, then one would be required to recite Berachot both before and after dessert. It seems that in ancient times people ate on small, portable tables, and it was customary to remove the entire table after the meal. If the table was removed before dessert, Birkat Ha'mazon does not cover the dessert, since the table's removal signals the end of the meal, and thus the dessert was eaten separately from the actual meal. As such, a Beracha Aharonah is required for the dessert.

While at first glance this ruling does not appear to have any application nowadays, as our tables remain in place and are not removed after the meal, it in fact is very relevant even today. The work Nehar Misrayim (p. 13b) rules that this Halacha applies not only to the removal of the entire table, but also to the removal of the tablecloth. Meaning, if after the meal the table is cleared and the cloth is removed, and a new cloth is put on for dessert (or if the dessert is placed directly on the table), one would not only recite a Beracha over the fruit eaten for dessert, but also a Beracha Aharonah. In such a case, the fruit is not covered by Birkat Ha'mazon, since it was not eaten as part of the meal.

Hacham Ben Sion Abba Shaul (Israel, 1923-1998), in his Or Le'sion (vol. 2, p. 104), disputes this ruling, arguing that removing the tablecloth from the table cannot be compared to removing the entire table. Hacham Ovadia Yosef, however, in his Halichot Olam (vol. 2, p. 37), accepted the Nehar Misrayim's ruling. Accordingly, if the tablecloth was removed before fruit was served for dessert, one must recite Berachot both before and after eating the fruit.

There is a debate among contemporary authorities as to the status of disposable plastic tablecloths, which are placed over the actual cloth, with respect to this Halacha. Hacham David Yosef, in his Halacha Berura, writes that removing the plastic covering from the table differs from the removal of the actual tablecloth, and does not signify the formal end of the meal. As such, one would not recite a Beracha Aharonah after eating the fruit for dessert. The Yalkut Yosef (English edition, Berachot, p. 70), however, disagrees, and claims that there should be no difference between removing the plastic covering and the cloth (listen to audio recording for precise citation). In either case, the removal signals the end of the meal, such that the dessert should be viewed as separate from the meal and thus necessitates its own Beracha Aharonah. In light of this dispute, it is preferable not to remove only the disposable plastic, and to either remove the actual tablecloth, or leave on the plastic for dessert.

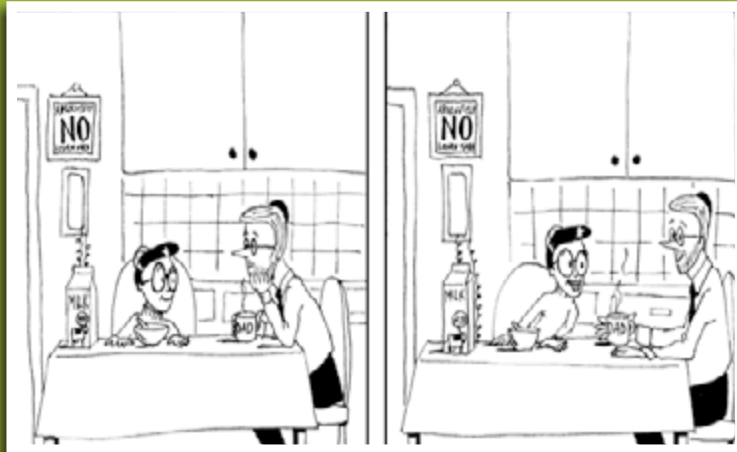
Summary: One who eats fruit for dessert after a meal with bread must recite a Beracha before eating the fruit, but does not recite a Beracha Aharonah afterward, as it is covered by Birkat Ha'mazon. If, however, the tablecloth was removed from the table before the fruit was served, then one must recite a Beracha Aharonah in addition to Birkat Ha'mazon. If one eats with a disposable plastic covering over the actual tablecloth, he should ensure not to remove the plastic without removing the cloth, as it is unclear whether removing only the plastic requires reciting a Beracha Aharonah over the fruit. ■

YP LADIES INSPIRATION

Danielle's talk was really inspiring. She explained to us that when you're a hard worker and passionate, you can achieve great things. She built up an incredible career, always driven by challenges. It reminds me a little bit of myself when I moved 4 years ago to London!

By Florence Ohana

KidsTime



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 What privileges did Reuven lose due to his rash actions?
- 2 What congregation from Yaakov's offspring did Yaakov not want to be associated with?
- 3 What did Yehuda do after he heard Yaakov rebuke Reuven, Shimon and Levi? Why?
- 4 What does milk do to teeth?
- 5 Why is Yissachar like a "strong-boned donkey?"

burden, so the tribe of Yissachar bears the yoke of Torah.
with Tamar. 49:8 - He drew back. He was afraid that Yaakov would rebuke him for the incident
49:3 - Priesthood and Kingship.
49:6 - Korach and his congregation.
49:12 - It makes them white.
49:14 - Just as a donkey bears a heavy

Answer

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