

# THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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## RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR  
TAL



### ALARM BELLS RINGING

The alarm rings. It's six thirty in the morning and your head is spinning. You wonder to yourself what day is it? After a few seconds you realise its Thursday and that Shul awaits you. You convince yourself, just another a few minutes in bed, its warm and cosy; after all it only takes you a few minutes to get ready. A few minutes pass, and if you are still conscious, you convince yourself that a further few minutes can only do good. Surely you need extra strength for the day ahead; a few more minutes in bed will help your day so much more!

Before you know it, you awaken to a thump, your ears hearken to your father's yell, and you realise - yet again you are late for Shul.

For most of us, this has happened more than once in our lifetime. Waking up is not easy. In this generation of overworked and strained energy, everyone is tired. Yet when it comes to Torah and Mitzvot, the great sage Yehuda ben Tema said: "Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion to carry out the will of your Father in Heaven." (Pirkei Avot 5:23)

We must make that extra effort.

Our body might feel tired, yet our intellect is constantly battling to have us up and on the move in search of life's beauty.

Some of us are conscious and take on the laziness, yet others prefer to lay back and give in. Shlomo Hamelech (in Mishlei) states: "A lazy person considers himself wiser than seven sages."

The lazy person finds it hard to get out of his routine. He is in the right; everyone else is in the wrong. It is difficult for him to take any criticism and thus improve.

On the other hand, those that possess the opposite character to laziness (that of Zerizut - zeal and energy) race to fulfil G-d's commandments.

We are told that the angels were blessed with Zerizut.

Concerning them it says: "Mighty in power, they do His word, to listen to the voice of His word." Our Sages explain from this Pasuk that they do His word "even before hearing His word."

True, man is no angel, and it is therefore impossible for him to ever attain the sort of strength that an angel possesses. However, we must certainly strive to come as close as possible to reaching this level.

When King David wished to anoint his son Solomon as his successor, he told Benayahu the son of Yehoyada to take Solomon down to the Gihon River and anoint him there as king over Israel. Benayahu answered, saying: "Amen, let G-d say so." The Sages seem to find Benayahu's comment problematic. What kind of prayer was this? Surely, David had already designated Solomon as the future King, so why say let G-d say so?

Our Sages explain "Many a prosecutor will appear between here and the Gihon."

If an act is not carried out immediately, who knows what sort of disturbances will appear and prevent it being carried out at all? It is for this reason that Benayahu prayed that David's will be fulfilled.

Acting on a good thought and putting it to immediate practice can be crucial.

Yet there are times when Zerizut and acting fast can be detrimental.

The Torah states that for every sacrifice that was offered, the Chelev (certain animal fat) and Dam (blood) are not to be eaten. Instead they must be offered up on the altar. ►

17 CHESHVAN 5779

SHABBAT BEGINS: 5:27 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 6:34 PM

” THE WEEKLY QUOTE  
"Live life to the fullest, and focus on the positive."

### > UPCOMING EVENTS

• 29<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2018  
JUDAISM 101 SERIES

• 31<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2018  
YOUNG MARRIED COUPLES PROGRAM

• 16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2018  
STUDENT DINNER AT KINLOSS

• 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY INTERNATIONAL WEEKEND  
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### DVAR TORAH

Parasha Insights  
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

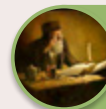
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Our Sages explain that the blood represents the zeal of man; it is constantly flowing and gives life to the animal's body. The Chelev represents heaviness; that which slows man down.

The Torah's message is to use both of these to the best ability in the service of Hashem. There will be times when acting slow is good, perhaps someone makes a sly comment at you, and you chose to ignore it, not reacting immediately. Alternatively, it could be that someone offers you the chance to do an enticing Avera and you are slow to act. In these cases, it is as if you have sacrificed the Chelev. You are acting slow in face of wrong doing.

Then there are cases in which one must act fast; getting out of bed to go and serve our Creator, running to fulfil the needs of our parents. These times are represented by sacrificing the blood on the altar.

The story is told of a tailor who decided that he would go every morning and study in

the Bet Hamidrash and work in the afternoons. He specifically told his wife not to accept anyone in the morning. One morning, a rich merchant came to his house looking to do a large deal. The wife told the merchant that the husband was not available. The merchant decided to go elsewhere. When the husband returned that afternoon and heard what happened he yelled at his wife asking her why she hadn't sent the merchant to the Bet Hamidrash. A few months later, the tax man turned up at this man's house in the morning, asking to see him. The wife told the man he was not at home but he could find him in the Bet Hamidrash. Needless to say when the man got home, he was furious with his wife. 'When we could have earned money you turned the merchant away and when we are going to lose money you send me the tax man!?!'

Hashem has granted us so many great qualities, but we must make sure that we focus them in the right direction – zeal to fulfil Mitzvot and laziness in the face of Averot.

In this week's Parsha Avraham is tested to the full. He is told to sacrifice his designated child Yitzchak. He could have many questions arising in fulfilling this command, yet we see his reaction is immediate; he will do whatever it takes to fulfil the command of Hashem. Not only did he perform this hard task, but Vayashkem – he arose early in the morning, he was Zariz Lidvar Hashem.

It is for this reason that Avraham was the father of us all; he had the power in him to constantly fulfil Hashem's Will with such eagerness that the repercussions of his positive actions are still felt today.

Next time we hear the alarm clock ringing, let us try and make that extra effort, fight off the laziness and rise and shine for a fulfilling day.

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

## RABBI YEHOATAM SALEM - SHALOM LAAM DIASPORA



### THE BEST IN THE WORLD!

The beginning of the Parasha relates how, following Avraham Avinu's circumcision, three angels came to visit him. After having been served their meal, the angels enquired of Avraham: "where is Sarah, your wife?" He answered that she was in the tent, meaning, that she was attending to the matters of the home.

What was the purpose of the angels posing such a question to Avraham? Being angels, they certainly knew where she was, and Avraham also knew. Our sages tell us that the angel's motive was to make Sarah even more beloved to Avraham, her husband. He knew that his wife was the personification of modesty and privacy, shunning the limelight. However, now that he was questioned about his wife's whereabouts, he was made to understand that she was more private than any other woman. Other women would have been there serving

their guests, while Sarah chose to remain in the confines of the kitchen. After he realised this and verbalised the answer, he internalised that her real beauty was that she was more modest than any other woman.

Every woman wants to feel that she is unique in her husband's eyes and "the best in the world." This is part of her natural makeup. It is therefore incumbent upon her husband to generate that feeling that he considers her to be the most exceptional woman in the world. How can a man achieve this? By giving her the three "A"s: Attention,

Appreciation and Affection. Firstly, a man must work at giving his wife attention, constantly acknowledging that he is aware of her. Secondly, he must show appreciation for all the kindnesses that she does, however small they may seem. Moreover, he should tell her sincerely: "You are the dearest present that G-d has given me in my entire life". Lastly, he must show her affection, to intensify their relationship and their feelings towards each other.

"Many daughters (of Israel) have succeeded, but you have surpassed them all" (Eshet Chayil, Mishlei 31:29). When the man truly feels this way about his spouse, she will intuitively detect this. The more she feels it, the more her emotional focus will be directed towards him. She will then find within herself the ability to strengthen, encourage and inspire him to higher goals and aspirations. Often, a man's ability to initiate and to attain is stunted by his lack of belief in his capabilities. When he receives an injection of emotional strength from his wife, though, his belief in his ability to achieve his aspirations soars upward. No boundaries or obstacles will limit his rising and achieving, especially and most importantly, in spiritual endeavours and goals.

May we be granted the sense and understanding to work on making our spouses feel "the best in the world", thereby strengthening our relationships and commitment in marriage.

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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## OUR CHACHAMIM

### RABBI SHIMON BAR YOCHAI

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was one of the most remarkable men to have ever lived. Very few in number are those individuals whom his contemporaries, as well as his posterity, have held in such high esteem. In the era in which he lived, people would oftentimes say, "Happy are the days in which a man like Shimon bar Yochai can be found." And today there are still tens of thousands of Jews that journey to his tomb on the anniversary of his passing (Iyar 18, Lag BaOmer) to pray there.

Through his own efforts, this great man raised himself out of a position of the greatest hardship. In Jerusalem, it is said that Rabbi Akiva refused to admit Rabbi Shimon as one of his students, and that he only did so after making him take an exam. His father Yochai had been on the Roman side during the terrible time in which Emperor Hadrian had ordered the Jews persecuted (Pesachim 112a). This is probably the reason why Rabbi Akiva refused to take in the young Rabbi Shimon among his students. Yet, all the same, Rabbi Shimon managed to stand out among all the students and thus become (along with his companions Rabbi Jose, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehudah, and Rabbi Nechemia) one of the pillars of Torah.

As opposed to his father, Rabbi Shimon was pursued by the Romans and condemned to death. The situation was so serious that he, along with his son Rabbi Eliezer, had to hide in a cave for 13 years where together they studied Torah incessantly. After the death of

Emperor Hadrian, he was sent to Rome by his fellow Jews. There he succeeded in curing an imperial princess from a serious illness, at which time Emperor Antoninus suspended Hadrian's decrees.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai also attained importance in a domain other than the study of Talmud. He achieved a profound understanding of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism), of which he became the main guide. When we say that he was the author of the holy Zohar, one should nevertheless not take this to mean that he himself wrote it, but rather that it was the Sages after him who did so. His son and his students received their understanding from him, so well in fact that the Zohar carries the imprint of his spirit. One day, one of his students went abroad to devote himself to business. Returning some time later with great wealth, his former fellow students saw him and were seized with a desire to become wealthy, and so they also wanted to give up on their studies and go off in search of riches. When Rabbi Shimon learned of this, he brought his students to a vast plane. There he prayed to G-d that He cover the entire area with gold, and it was so. "The one whose heart clings to gold," said their teacher, "should take what he wants. But know that the one who now takes of this gold loses his share in eternal life." No hands reached out to take the gold, and his students abandoned the idea of exchanging the precious good of the Torah for gold (Midrash Rabba Pekudei). ■



## HALACHOT

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR

### FADED INK ON A SEFER TORAH, TEFILLIN, AND MEZUZOT

It is very common that over the course of time the black ink on a Sefer Torah fades. Although the letters are still fully visible, at times, they are no longer black. Does this affect the validity of the Sefer Torah?

The Hatam Sofer (Teshuvot, Yoreh De'ah 256) rules that even if the ink fades, that is considered to be normal 'wear and tear' and the Sefer Torah is still valid. R. Ovadia Yosef agreed, especially in light in the position of the Rambam (Teshuvot 294), who maintains that an invalid Sefer Torah may be read publically. He adds that it is proper to go over the letters and darken them. Regarding Shabbat Zachor, which many view as a Biblical obligation, one should be strict and not read from a Torah with faded letters.

However, this is only true for a Sefer Torah. Regarding Tefillin and Mezuzot, a person should not wear tefillin, or use the mezuzot, until a sofer goes over the letters and darkens them with black ink. He notes that darkening the letters does not violate the principle of "kesidran," i.e., that one must write the parshiot of tefillin in the order in which they appear in the Torah. ■

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## TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Why did Hashem appear to Avraham after the brit mila?
- ❷ Why was Avraham sitting at the entrance to his tent?
- ❸ What were the missions of the three angels?
- ❹ Why did Avraham enjoin the guests to wash the dust off their feet?
- ❺ Why did Avraham ask specifically Yishmael, and not someone else, to prepare food for the guests?

### Answer

❶ 18:1 - Avraham was sick, so Hashem came to "visit" him. ❷ 18:1 - He was looking for guests. ❸ 18:2 - To announce Yitzchak's birth, to heal Avraham and to destroy Sodom. ❹ 18:4 - He thought they were among those who worship the dust, and he didn't want any object of idolatry in his home. ❺ 18:7 - To train him in the performance of mitzvot.



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