

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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This week's Parasha sheet is dedicated in the memory
of my late father Reuven Joseph zt'l by David Naomi Daniel and Michael Joseph

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



SHEMA YISRAEL!

Twenty two long years have passed and finally Yosef meets his father: "He [Yosef] fell on his [father's] neck, and wept exceedingly" (46:29). Yosef poured out his heart in a sea of tears at the emotional release of seeing his father after so many years. Yaakov's reaction, however, is not mentioned at all. In fact, at that very moment, the Mefarshim state that Yaakov was reciting the Shema.

On the surface, this seems strange. We know that there are certain times that we have to say the Shema – namely, in the morning Shacharit prayer and at night in the Arvit prayer. Perhaps this was the time to recite the Shema?

But, if it was the time to recite the Shema, then how come Yosef didn't do so? If, on the other hand, it was not the time for Shema, why did Yaakov recite it? R' Moshe Shick z"l ("Maharam Shick"; 1805-1879) answers that it was not the time for reciting the Shema, and Yaakov recited it for a different reason. He explains: One of the basic lessons of the verse Shema Yisrael is that "Hashem is Elokeinu." By saying Shema, we acknowledge that there is only One G-d, despite the fact that we see various manifestations of Him. For example, Hashem is sometimes merciful and sometimes strict. (The

Name "Hashem" represents G-d's Attribute of Mercy, while the Name "Elokim" represents G-d's Attribute of Justice.) Although we rarely understand how this is so, what we perceive as G-d's strictness is ultimately for our own good; in the long-run, it is merciful.

For twenty-two years, Yosef was missing, and Yaakov saw only the strict side of G-d's actions. But when he saw Yosef's royal entourage, he understood that Yosef's disappearance was part of Hashem's plan for saving Yaakov and his family from famine. Ultimately, everything that had happened was for the best: "Hashem is Elokeinu."

Realizing this, Yaakov recited the Shema. Yosef, however, had already learned this lesson when he was freed from jail and appointed viceroy. He had no reason to recite the Shema at this moment. R' Asher Zelig Schwartz z"l offers another answer to the above question: In verse 28, immediately preceding Yaakov's reunion with Yosef, we read: "[Yaakov] sent Yehuda ahead of him to Yosef, to prepare the way ahead of him in Goshen." Rashi explains that Yaakov sent Yehuda to establish a yeshiva for the arriving immigrants. In verse 30, immediately following Yaakov's reunion with Yosef, we read: "Then Yisrael said to Yosef, 'Now I can die, after my having seen your face'." What is the connection between verses 28 (establishing a yeshiva), 29 (reciting the Shema), and 30 (being willing to die)?

Gemara (Brachot 5a) R. Levi b. Chama said in the name of R. Shimon b. Lakish: "A person should always try and stir his yetzer tov against his yetzer hara, as it says: 'Tremble and sin not.'" (Tehillim 4:5) If he defeats it – good, and if not, he should study Torah, as it says: ►

TEVET 6th 5780

SHABBAT BEGINS: 3:46 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 5:03 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

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know the value of a moment
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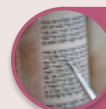
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DVAR TORAH

Shema Yisrael!
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

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DVAR TORAH

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DAVID JOSEPH

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HALACHOT

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Which is ...? / RABBI ELI MANSOUR

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"Reflect in your hearts." (ibid.) If he defeats it – good, and if not, he should recite Shema, as it says: "While on your beds." (ibid) If he defeats it – good, and if not, he should remind himself of the day of his death, as it says: "Be utterly silent, selah." (ibid.)

Says R' Schwartz: Yaakov was afraid that seeing Yosef in all his glory as Prime Minister would make him (Yaakov) feel pride, or would bring out some other improper feeling. Yaakov, therefore, took all of the steps suggested by the Gemara: he established a bet Midrash, he recited the Shema, and he imagined the day of death.

R' Schwartz adds: If imagining the day of death is an effective means of conquering the yetzer hara, why is it only the fall-back strategy? Why does the Gemara suggest first learning Torah and reciting Shema? The answer is that we are expected to serve Hashem with joy, something

to which the third strategy does not lend itself. For implicit in declaring that "G-d is One" is acknowledging that "His watchful concern and His ability extend over all and everything" (Sefer HaChinuch) – that His Providence governs what happens in this world. And when we serve Hashem with this knowledge, then we do so out of joy.

The Gur Aryeh answers further and states that a tzaddik harnesses every opportunity and emotion in the service of Hashem. When Yaakov felt a supreme surge of joy and love at the sight of his beloved son, his first wish was to suppress his own personal joy and channel his emotions into a sublime expression of his love for his Creator. Thus, he recited the Shema, the ultimate acceptance of Hashem's sovereignty: "And you shall love Hashem, your G-d with all your heart..." At a moment of supreme and almost unimaginably great joy in Yaakov's life, he makes sure to

connect it back to the One Who gave it, to acknowledge that everything has come, and comes, from Him Alone. "Ma'aseh Avot Siman LeBanim", the Shema has been a symbol of our existence facing against the odds of time, Jews throughout history have held this slogan high. Whether on their death beds, or in prayer, in the morning and the evening, in their Tefillin and in their Mezuzot, this statement has been exclaimed loud and clear. The next time we say the Shema, may we all try to do the same; to strive to reach the level of Yaakov, who, in all moments of life, "clung to the Source of Life. Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokenu Hashem Echad!

■ Shabbat Shalom

GUEST WRITER - DAVID JOSEPH



THE GREAT MITZVAH OF HONOURING ONES PARENTS

The "Holy Jew" of Peshischa (Rav Yaakov Yitzhak Rabinovitch zt'l) was once learning Torah with his students, when they reached a most difficult question. The Rabbi delved into the issue and did not pay attention to his surroundings; the students too, tried their hand at understanding the problem, but without success. They waited impatiently to hear the explanation from their admired Rabbi, but he was still engrossed in his study.

One of his students was feeling hungry, and his hunger was distracting him. He said to himself: "The Rabbi will probably continue learning for a while, meantime I can go home to mother and grab something to eat, as it is, now that I'm hungry I can't concentrate properly, and if the hunger persists - how can I continue learning?" With that thought he ran home, ate quickly and hurried back to the Beit Midrash. As he reached the door, his mother turned to him and requested; "Please my son! Can you go up to the attic and bring down a bundle of wood so I can warm the house, you know I cannot climb myself". "But mother", answered the young man, "I have to return to the Beit Midrash right away, the Rabbi is going finish his study at any moment and begin his explanation, and I don't want to miss it". "Ok my son, go

back to your studies" said the mother, "forgive me for asking you to interrupt your study, but you understand that I am alone and sometimes I need your help"...

With her words ringing in his ears, he left the house towards the Beit Midrash. At first, he walked briskly, fearing he will miss his Rabbi's teaching, but suddenly he slowed down, until he stood still in a panic.

"What am I learning?!" he asked himself a poignant question, "for what purpose am I rushing to the Beit Midrash? Is it so I can learn more and more? What good will I achieve by adding more and more knowledge? Indeed, the whole purpose of learning is in order to practice what we learn!! And now, I didn't fulfill my widowed mother's request. I learned the law of 'Honour your father and mother', and I know all the laws by heart, when it came to practice them, what did I do? I left my mother's house alone and did not do her request"!

He quickly turned around and went back home to help his mother. "Mother, here is the wood you requested, forgive me for not doing it when you asked". A smile of satisfaction spread on her face, and she joyfully said: "Thank you my son, now go back to your studies, with the hope that you didn't miss a word of your Rabbi's teaching".

With a light and happy heart, he made his way back to the Beit Midrash. "Please, Hashem, let me have the merit to hear the Rabbi's explanation of the issue" he said in a silent prayer, "Help me not to be late".

With trembling hands, he opened the door to the Beit Midrash, silence was in the room.

The Rabbi was still engrossed in his learning. Behold, as soon as the door opened the Rabbi lifted his holy eyes from the book, and with a smile on his face, looked at the student

standing in the doorway. "Do you know who is accompanying you now?" Asked the Rabbi. The orphaned young man lowered his eyes on confusion. His fellow students looked at their friend but saw no one at his side.

"Tell me," said the Rabbi "what important mitzvah did you just perform, that you merited such an important escort?" The young man remained embarrassingly silent. "When you walked in, I saw the great Amora (Talmudic sage) Abayey accompanying you.

As soon as he entered, he opened my eyes to answer the question I was deliberating for such a long time.

So please tell me what important mitzvah did you just perform?"

Then, the young man answered in a low voice and told everything they had transpired in the past hour. "I understood that I made a mistake, and so I returned to my mother to fulfill her request" he concluded his story.

"Now it is clear as day why you merited the escort of Abayey, because Abayey was orphaned from both his mother and father and his name was an acronym of

"אשר-בך ירחם יתום" - In you alone, shall the orphans find mercy" (14.4 וירשע). He, did not merit to perform the mitzvah of "Honouring his father and mother", that is why after his passing, he has a custom to accompany those who merit to perform this mitzvah properly, for he has a strong yearning to join them and take part in this important mitzvah"!! ▶

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"Honour your father and your mother so you will live long". Rabbeinu b'Chaya writes, "we clearly see that those who honour their parents live long, and/ or have success and serenity in all areas".

Chazal tell us (קידושין 39ב);

שֶׁכֶּר מִצְוָה בְּהַאי עֲלֵמָא לִיכָא – "There is no reward in this world for the mitzvot". The reward for the mitzvot is given on Olam Haba, because the world is too small to contain the immense rewards for keeping the mitzvot. But, there are some mitzvot for which we reap their fruits in this world. Honouring ones parents is one of them.

The Sefer Meshech Chochmah tells us that the Beit Hamikdash was built on the tribe of Binyamin property because he was the only brother who didn't cause Yaakov Avinu distress, for he wasn't present when Yossef was sold.

The Gemara in Masechet Kiddushin 30b tells us: "Our sages taught, the Torah states: כְּבֹד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ - "Honour your father and mother", and it also states, (משלי 3.9) כְּבֹד אֶת־ה' מִהוֹנֶה - "Honour Hashem with your wealth". The Torah equates honouring ones parent's to honouring Hashem. The Torah further states; (ויקרא 19.3) – אִישׁ יִרְאֶה אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ – "Each shall revere his mother and father", and it also states, (דברים 6.13) – אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ תִירָא – "You shall fear Hashem your God".

This means that Hashem treats honouring one's parents so stringently that He actually associated the honour and reverence showed to parents to his own honour and reverence.

There is a very intrinsic link between a person's appreciation of his parents and his appreciation of Hashem. If a person's human parents are deserving of honour for bringing him physically into this world and caring for his needs throughout his childhood and adult years, how much more must we honour Hashem for giving him life and providing all of his earthly and spiritual requirements throughout his life. Furthermore, Hashem's beneficence extends beyond the physical, our neshama gives us the ability to live an eternal life of value through Torah and mitzvot, is given by only by Hashem.

The word for כְּבֹד / honour, has the same numerical value of the name of Hashem which is 26.

Rabbi Eliezer was asked, "To what extent must one honour one's parents?" He answered, "Take a look at what a certain non- Jew from Ashkelon by the name of Dama ben Netina did. Once, the sages requested a certain stone for the apron (worn by the Cohen Gadol) from him for the sum of 600,000 golden dinars. The key for the safe where the stone were placed lay under the pillow of his sleeping father. In order not to disturb his father, he did not awaken him. The next year, Hashem rewarded him by making a red heifer to be born in his flock, which he proceeded to sell to the sages for the same amount that he lost for his father's honour.

The Gemara (קידושין 31א) recounts that once, Dama ben Netina was once adorned with the golden vestments usually worn by Rome's highest officials and was sitting among respected dignitaries when his mother arrived, tore his clothing, whacked him on the head and spat at him, yet, he did not humiliate her in return. The Gemara mentions another incident with Rabbi Tarfon that whenever his mother would need to get onto or off of her bed, Rabbi Tarfon would kneel in order for her to step on his back (he would act like a "stool").

Maran Rabbeinu Yosef Karo in his shulchan Aruch (סימן 240 יורה דעה –) introduces the laws of honouring one's parents by saying, "for this is indeed a precious mitzvah and one can easily fail in its performance."

Thus, one must be extremely careful to fulfill this mitzvah to the best of one's capabilities.

לעילוי נשמת ראובן בן סאלם יוסף זצ"ל

■ Shabbat shalom



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

DOES ONE RECITE A BERACHA ON ICE CREAM WHICH IS SERVED DURING A MEAL?

Generally, one who eats ice cream recites before eating the Beracha of "She'ha'kol Niheya Bi'dbaro." This is assuming one eats standard ice cream, without pieces of cookies or other "Mezonot" items in the ice cream. After eating, however, no Beracha Aharona is recited, because, practically speaking, it is not possible to eat the amount of ice cream requiring a Beracha Aharona within the time frame that is necessary for a Beracha Aharona to be required. Since ice cream is very cold, is it eaten very slowly, and it is therefore all but impossible to consume ice cream within the period that would be needed to require a Beracha Aharona. This is particularly so according to the opinion of Hacham Ovadia Yosef that ice cream has the status of a beverage, and one who drinks a beverage does not recite a Beracha Aharona unless he drinks a "Rebi'it" in the normal amount of time within which this amount of beverage is drunk.

There is some question concerning Hacham Ovadia's view regarding the recitation of a Beracha over ice cream that is eaten as part of a meal. The Beracha of "Ha'mosi" recited over bread covers all foods and beverages that are served as part of the meal, and thus in Yalkut Yosef, Hacham Ovadia is said to have ruled that one who eats ice cream as part of a meal that include bread does not recite a Beracha. However, Hacham David Yosef, in Halacha Berura (Siman 177, p. 195; listen to audio recording for precise citation), testifies that his father did, in fact, recite a Beracha over ice cream eaten during a meal, because the ice cream is eaten as a sweet dessert, and not as an actual part of the meal. The exception was when Kiddush was recited at the beginning of the meal, in which case Hacham Ovadia would intend for the Beracha over the wine to cover all beverages consumed during the meal - including ice cream - and so he would not then recite a Beracha over ice cream.

Hacham David cites Hacham Shalom Cohen, Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef, as concurring, and maintaining that one must recite "She'ha'kol" over ice cream even if it is eaten during a meal, as it is not covered by the Beracha of "Ha'mosi."

(Incidentally, it should be noted that Hacham Bension Abba Shaul distinguished between ice cream made from milk and other forms of ice cream, asserting that dairy ice cream has the status of a food, whereas other ice creams would be considered a beverage. Hacham Ovadia, however, did not accept this distinction.)

In practice, Rav Yisrael Bitan (contemporary), in the English edition of Yalkut Yosef, advises avoiding this question by reciting Birkat Ha'mazon before eating ice cream, such that one would certainly need to recite a Beracha over the ice cream according to all opinions. But if ice cream is eaten as part of a meal that includes bread, one recites a Beracha. The only exception, as mentioned, is when one introduced the meal with the Beracha of "Gefen" over wine (or with the Beracha of "She'ha'kol" over a different beverage).

Summary: If ice cream is eaten during a meal in which "Ha'mosi" is recited, it is preferable to recite Birkat Ha'mazon before eating the ice cream, so that a Beracha can be recited over the ice cream according to all opinions. But if one eats ice cream before Birkat Ha'mazon, then he recites a Beracha over the ice cream, unless the meal was introduced with the Beracha of "Gefen" over wine, which covers all beverages drunk during the meal, including ice cream (which is considered a beverage with respect to Halacha). ■

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TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ "I will bring you up" from Egypt. To what did this allude?
- ❷ What happened to the property that Yaakov acquired in Padan Aram?
- ❸ Who was the mother of Shaul ben HaCanaanit?
- ❹ When listing Yaakov's children, the verse refers to Rachel as "Rachel, wife of Yaakov." Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah are not referred to as Yaakov's wives. Why?
- ❺ Yosef harnessed his own chariot instead of letting a servant do it. Why?

❶ 46:4 - That Yaakov would be buried in Eretz Canaan.
 ❷ 46:6 - He traded it for Esav's portion in the Cave of Machpelah.
 ❸ 46:10 - Dina bat Yaakov.
 ❹ 46:19 - Rachel was regarded as the mainstay of the family.
 ❺ 46:29 - Yosef wanted to hasten to honor his father.

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