

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



DO YOU HEAR THE SILENCE?

When was the last time you experienced pure, absolute silence? No planes or passing cars, just the sound of life doing its thing all around you—the trickle of the stream, the songs of the birds, the wind passing through the trees. These moments of natural silence are immensely rare, and it's impacting our health. But there are people working to save them from extinction!

How would you define silence?

Have you heard of Gordon Hempton? He is known as the Sound Tracker and has come up with the following impressive definition - "Silence isn't the absence of something, but the presence of everything".

How very true! The above quote is the definition of silence from a man who has been traveling around the world recording the vanishing natural sound landscapes for over 37 years.

Sometimes there is so much noise that we are not able to appreciate the silence. At other times we hear the noise but are not prepared to listen to the noise. And I will explain;

Our Parasha is full of sounds.

The Parasha begins with the words Vayishma Yitro - and Yitro heard. As we progress through the Parasha, we again find sounds - this time the sounds of the Shofar and voice of G-d at Har Sinai.

The first Rashi in this week's Parasha explains why Yitro joined the Jewish people. The Torah says "Vayishma Yitro" and Yitro heard about the miracles of Kriyat Yam Suf and the defeat of Amalek. The Ba'alei Mussar explains that the

true translation of Vayishma isn't "and he heard," rather it is "and he understood." Yitro wasn't the only one to hear about Hashem's great miracles. Our Sages say that when the waters of the Yam Suf split, all the waters in the world did so as well. Yet Yitro was the only one to understand that these miracles were more than a world-wide message; they were personal as well.

Yitro heard and that made him contemplate;

"If there is a great Creator performing these awesome miracles then I, Yitro, must serve Him and devote my life to that service." This is what made Yitro so special. When something was clear, he didn't ignore it, he obligated himself to follow that truth.

We have to listen for the truth, be receptive to it and be able to change who we are based on the messages that G-d is sending us. The art of listening is about shifting our positions and seeing the world from a completely different perspective. Yitro exemplified this ability.

It is in this week's Parasha that we have the Ten Commandments and how befitting is it that the Parasha is called Yitro. This is to teach us that the starting point to receiving G-d's Torah is to be a good listener. In fact, often when the Talmud wants to bring a proof of something in the discussion concerning a particular Halachah, it says Ta shma, "come and listen."

The story is told of a big banker who used to do all the lending in town. He would charge 12% a year. 1% per month. All his customers would use Heter Iska and he had the monopoly over the entire region.

One day he decided to increase by 0.5% a month to 18% a year.

When challenged he told everyone that surely 18 is a great number - it represents Chai - life!

All the merchants were furious.

"Our whole profit margin is 30%."

"This is really going to eat away at our hard work. We work from 8am-8pm in tough terrain, and you are just sitting down in your office making the money easy. You are killing us. At least keep the interest as it is!" Their words fell on deaf ears, nothing seemed to help. ▶

SHEVAT 19th 5780

SHABBAT BEGINS: 4:58 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 6:03 PM

”

THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"The secret of happiness is freedom, the secret of freedom is courage."

> MAZAL TOV

Mazal Tov to Eddie and Tamar Kilzi
on the birth of a baby girl

> UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ 28th February Friday Night Dinner
- ▶ 25th March Busy in Brooklyn

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DVAR TORAH

Do you hear the silence?
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

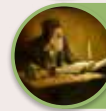
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A group of merchants decided to go to the great Rabbi of the area and plead with him to knock in some common sense to the lender.

The Rabbi replied that unfortunately he didn't have much influence on this individual, but he would try and come up with something.

The months past and Yossi, one of the richest people in the area passed away. The Rabbi attended the funeral and gave words of Hespel (eulogy).

As he began to speak he noticed that the lender was in the front row. He thought to himself that now was the moment he was waiting for to influence the lender to back down and ease of with the interest.

After words of consolation to Yossi's widow and orphaned children, he turned to the congregation and said; "Yossi was a kind person, someone who gave to everyone. Whoever came into his house starving, left full and satiated."

The Rabbi noticed the lender shake his head in agreement. And now the Rabbi pounced on his chance.

"Nothing accompanies a person from this world to the next. Not gold, silver, diamonds, they all stay here. Only good deeds and Torah are the currency in the next world."

Again the Rabbi noticed the lender nodding and agreeing.

He continued "Yossi gave Tsedaka every day – millions of good angels were created with his kindness. When a person is born their hands are tight fisted, they want to conquer the world, they think it's all theirs. Yet when they leave the world, the hands are open, symbolising nothing is taken to the next world, not even a penny. My friends remember this and take this to heart. Why focus so much on wealth in this world, we need to focus on what's really important."

The Rabbi finished speaking and the burial was complete.

A few minutes later after everyone had gone to wash their hands, the lender approached the Rabbi and said, "Rabbi I have known you for 30 years. I have never heard you speak with such inspiration and meaning. There was not one heart that your words didn't pierce. Your talk will make a revolution in town. It won't be the same!"

The Rabbi excited and impressed, wanting to see how the lender will change his ways, replied.

"Thank you, what kind of revolution will my words make?"

The lender replied, "a few months ago I increased the interest payable to 1.5% a month and everyone knocked on my door complaining of hard times. All the merchants over there called me a murderer, selfish person. I am so happy that everyone was here today and heard what you had to say. I mean what do they care if I increased the

interest by 0,5% a month, no one will be leaving this world with money in their hand anyway!"

The Rabbi sighed. The lender heard, but he didn't listen!

How many times do we hear the voice of Hashem yet not listen to the voice of G-d.

Some people have selective hearing. Shamu Amim -The nations of the world heard what happened to the Jews, yet only Yitro heard and acted.

Perhaps the most famous verse in the entire Torah is Shema Yisrael, "Listen Israel". We should know and understand that Hashem created and takes an active part in this world. He is constantly sending us messages, whether it's through the noise and commotion of this world, or even through the silence and beauty of His creations.

So as you sit down to rest next time contemplate - with a ratio of 2 to 1 of our hearing apparatus (ears) to our talking gear (mouth), it suggests we should listen twice as much as we speak.

By listening to actions that we don't have control of, we're dropping into the world and out of ourselves for a moment. And this does a person good.

Let's listen and act!

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI MEIR MARKOVIC - ROSH KOLLEL NER AVROHOM



PARASHA INSIGHTS

Vayikach Yisro .. es Ziporah .. Veis shnei vonehu asher shem hoechad Gershom .. Veshem hoechad Eliezer. Jethro the father in law of Moses took Ziporah and her two sons of whom the name of one was Gershom , and the name of one was Eliezer. (Shemot c 18 v 2- 4) Why does the Torah use that terminology for Eliezer ' the name of one' shouldn't it have said 'the name of the second one?' We find by the sacrifice of the daily Tomid offering, the Torah says you shall offer one sheep in the morning and the second sheep in the afternoon. (Shemot c 29 v 39, Bamidbar c 28 v 4) So why doesn't the Torah use the word "second" when it mentions Eliezer as he was the second son ? (See Ibn Ezra , Rabeinu Bachaya, Or Hachaim and Hamek Dovor)

The Medrash (Shemot Raboh 2,2) says that the reason why Moshe Rabeinu became the leader of the nation was because of the incident when Moses was tending to his father in laws Jethro flock. One of the sheep ran away to find some water to drink, when Moses found the sheep he was filled with compassion and said 'I didn't know you were thirsty'

and he carried the sheep back on his shoulders. Said HKBH judging by the amount of compassion you have on a sheep, you are fitting to pasture my sheep- Israel.

We can learn from here how much obligation each leader, teacher or Rebbe has, to look after each individual in his flock or classroom. They must ensure that each person fulfils his potential and not be satisfied with the majority, every single person should be doing well on their level.

The Brisker Rav ztl said if you were to ask a cheder rebbe 'which of your students do you have in your mind' he will most likely tell you about the best one. Conversely if you would ask a parent which child is the most on their mind they will tell you about the one struggling in school or the child who has some other problems , because parents focus on the individual needs of each child. This explains why when the Torah addresses teachers it says 'Veshinantom Levonecho (Devarim 6,7)' the teacher has a duty to be mehanach each child as if they were his own and concentrate on their individual needs.

Rabbiner Hirsch explains that this is the lesson the Torah is teaching us by Eliezer " the name of one was Eliezer." Parents have the duty to look at each child uniquely and treat and care for them as if they were an only child. The same amount of effort a person would invest if he would only have one child is the duty to input into each one of our children.

Furthermore every child is different and requires their own individual approach to chinuch as it says in Mishlei (22,6) " Train the youth according to his way, so that when he is old he will not leave it ". In the Passover Haggadah we learn about the four sons, Arba bonim dibroh Torah echad Chacham,echad Rosho,echad Tam,vechad Sheino yodai lishoel. The word "echad" is mentioned four times to remind us to look at each child as if they are our only child and each child requires their own approach to chinuch.

Rebbetzen Adler from LA recounted a story from her youth. 'My friends once convinced me to join them on an outing to the theatre, so I asked my grandfather Reb Shlomke of Zvhil for some money. My grandfather handed over the money and I was thrilled, but as I was about to leave the room he called me back and said, "You asked me for some money for the theatre which I gave you, however if you go it will break my heart." I immediately told my grandfather that I wouldn't be going.'

Every child has his own approach to chinuch , just like Reb Shlomke found the key to his granddaughter's heart, so too must we find the right approach to each individual child.

May we merit seeing nachas from our children.

■ **Shabbat shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI RAPHAEL PINTO

Imbued with great piety, Rabbi Raphael Pinto was a man fervently and unequivocally connected to the service of G-d and the performance of mitzvot. Many were those who had the immense merit to know and draw close to him. He was the son of Rabbi Haim Pinto of Casablanca (who himself was the grandson of Rabbi Haim Pinto of Mogador).

As much Jews as Arabs, all came to him for much-needed comforting and blessing. It would never take long for these to go into effect, and the people who came there to pray or light candles – those who had fallen prey to great difficulties – felt themselves comforted by Rabbi Raphael, who would normally give them a glass of Mahia. He took advantage of this respite to recount stories of the Tzaddikim and the miracles they performed.

Rabbi Raphael would tell the pilgrims that it was forbidden to display one's sadness in the home of Rabbi Haim Pinto because, he made it clear, faith is increased through joy. And in this way the pilgrims left his home, profoundly convinced that their troubles had disappeared. These same people, who were not at all ungracious, came back to offer a Seuda as a way of saying thank you.

As noted above, Arabs came to ask for blessings as well, and these were always granted to them. Rav Eliyahu Dahan heard with his own ears the story of an Arab who had a serious problem with a member of his family. They had entered into the cattle business together, and they trusted each other so much that no contract had been made between them, right up until the day that one of them tried to cut the other out of the business. Given the fact that there were never any documents that had been drawn up and signed, our man's feeling of being in the right didn't necessarily make him so.

Now the person that Rav Eliyahu Dahan had been listening to (our man in question) had a Jewish neighbor. She advised the man to visit Rabbi Raphael Pinto. It must be said that the man didn't have much faith, but in desperation went to his home. Rabbi Raphael Pinto warmly welcomed him, and the man lit a candle and began with the following innocent and sincere words: "Rabbi Pinto, I don't know you, but I want to believe in you. I want neither cattle nor money, but if I'm to lose everything, may my business partner, the person who so dishonestly tricked me, not profit either."

Rabbi Raphael Pinto consoled him as best as possible and promised that the miracle of the Tzaddik wouldn't delay in happening. At the end of the same week, the mother of our man, having come

from the village, announced that all the cattle were dying. The stable they were in had caught on fire and they had been seriously injured by the intoxicating smoke that was created by the blaze.

It was from the time of that story that our man regularly visited with the Tzaddik to thank, in his manner of prayer, both Rabbi Raphael and Rabbi Meir Pinto.

The home of Rabbi Raphael was insignificant in appearances but incredibly grand by virtue of the teachings that came out of it. In walking inside, independent of the joy and faith that filled the home, one could discern one great feature at the Tzaddik's, a feature that was probably the most important of all: Modesty.

It is said that a few days before his passing, Rabbi Haim Pinto of Casablanca gathered his sons together in order to bless them. When it came the turn of Rabbi Raphael, Rabbi Haim Pinto began to cry. When he was asked the reason for the tears rolling down his face, he declared that his son would die a horrible death.

And unfortunately, we know that his prophecy came true one day in 1980, 43 years after his death. In fact, an Arab in the neighborhood and two other individuals broke into Rabbi Raphael's home in the middle of the night and savagely beat him with an iron bar, then stole everything he had.

After a week of unbearable suffering, Rabbi Raphael rendered his soul to G-d. The Tzaddik's maid remembers that a few days before his passing, he said, "On the day that I die, a great darkness will ensue."

And so it was that on the night following his death, Casablanca found itself completely in the dark, an electrical failure having plunged the inhabitants of the city into a total blackout.

Finally, not long after the death of the Tzaddik, an Arab neighbor entered his home and, finding Rabbi David Shlita there, said, "May the Tzaddik himself disclose the identity of his murderer." That same night, around midnight, the police arrested the murderer in question. One can say that the Arab's request had been granted because the murderer quickly admitted to his horrendous crime.

The day of the burial, the entire city of Casablanca was in mourning. One month later another tragedy struck, and this time Rabbi Meir also left this world.

On that day, the Chevra Kadisha came to pray and was forced to wait close to five hours as the Tzaddik agonizingly passed away, yet with a smile on his lips. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

DOES THE BERACHA OF "GEFEN" COVER OTHER BEVERAGES IF ONE DOES NOT INTEND TO DRINK MORE WINE?

When one recites the Beracha of "Boreh Peri Ha'gefen" over wine, this Beracha covers all beverages that he intended to drink at that point. Thus, for example, when a person attends a Kiddush, the Beracha he recites over the Kiddush wine covers all the juice, water, beer, scotch and other beverages that he drinks at the Kiddush. Even if a person hears Kiddush and drinks only a small sip of wine, the Beracha over wine that he heard covers all beverages that he had in mind to drink at the Kiddush.

However, Rabbi Moshe Halevi (Israel, 1961-2001), in his work Birkat Hashem (vol. 3, 10:85), imposes a very significant limitation on this Halacha. In his view, the Beracha recited over wine covers the other beverages only so long as a person still intends to drink wine. Since he plans to drink more wine, the Beracha that he recited is still relevant and thus has the capacity to cover all other beverages. Once, however, a person decides not to drink more wine, he must then recite Berachot over the other beverages he drinks. This occurs very commonly at a Kiddush. Many people take only a small sip of wine to fulfill the requirement of Kiddush, and have no intention of drinking any more wine. According to Rabbi Moshe Halevi, they would be required to recite the Beracha over the juice, water or other beverage that they drink at the Kiddush.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef, however, and his son, Hacham David, disagree with this ruling. As Hacham David writes in his Oserot Yosef (vol. 9, Siman 1; listen to audio recording for precise citation), the Beracha over wine covers all beverages that one intended to drink even after he has decided not to drink more wine. He explains that when a person recites the Beracha of "Boreh Peri Ha'gefen" over wine, he is considered as having recited the Beracha over all beverages he intended to drink at that point. Accordingly, he is not required to recite a Beracha over other beverages regardless of whether he plans on drinking more wine. For all intents and purposes, he has already recited the Beracha over other beverages, and he therefore has no reason to recite another Beracha, even after he has decided not to drink more wine. Hacham David notes that this is also the position taken by some earlier authorities, including the Kaf Ha'haim and Mishna Berura.

Summary: The Beracha recited over wine covers all beverages that a person planned to drink at the time he recited the Beracha. This applies even if he drank only a small sip of wine, and even if he does not plan on drinking any more wine after his initial sip. ■

KidsTime



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Yitro had 7 names. Why was one of his names Yeter?
- ❷ News of which two events motivated Yitro to come join the Jewish People?
- ❸ What name of Yitro indicates his love for Torah?
- ❹ Why was Tzipora with her father, Yitro, and not with Moshe when Bnei Yisrael left Egypt?
- ❺ Why does verse 18:5 say that Yitro came to the desert - don't we already know that the Bnei Yisrael were in the desert?

Answer ❶ Because he caused a Parsha to be added to the Torah. Yeter means addition. ❷ The splitting of the sea and the war against Amalek. ❸ Chovav. ❹ When Aharon met Moshe with his family on their way down to Egypt. Aharon said to Moshe: "We're pained over the Jews already in Egypt, and you're bringing more Jews to Egypt?" Moshe, hearing this, sent his wife and children back to Midian. ❺ To show Yitro's greatness. He was living in a luxurious place, yet he went to the desert in order to study the Torah.

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YOSHI & Co.

Comic Strip:

Panel 1: Thunder and lightning. Sound effects: KKKK, BOOM.

Panel 2: Yossi is in bed, looking scared. Speech bubble: "YOSSI? I'M S-S-SCARED DAD C-C-CANT S-SLEEP."

Panel 3: Father is in bed, looking calm. Speech bubble: "WHY DON'T YOU IMAGINE YOU'RE STANDING BY MOUNT SINAI..."

Panel 4: Yossi is in bed, looking thoughtful. Speech bubble: "IT MUST HAVE BEEN VERY EXCITING TO HEAR THE THUNDER WHEN HASHEM GAVE US THE TORAH!"

Panel 5: Father is in bed, looking thoughtful. Speech bubble: "I'LL PRETEND IM HEARING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS STRAIGHT THAT'S FROM HASHEM'S MOUTH! GOOD NIGHT."

Panel 6: Yossi is in bed, looking thoughtful. Speech bubble: "W-WELL DAD I GOT UP TO NUMBER FIVE, BEING NICE TO YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER..."

Panel 7: Father is in bed, looking thoughtful. Speech bubble: "... SO I THOUGHT I'D GET YOU A GLASS OF WATER"