

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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This week's Parasha Sheet is sponsored LeHatslachat Raaya Bat Liora Yehudit Vechol Mishpachta. Much Nachat and happiness from all her family.

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



TO FEAR G-D.

Bertrand Russell (a British philosopher and mathematician who was a foremost proponent of atheism in the early 20th century) once was asked what he will respond if after he dies he meets G-d and He will judge him for his lack of belief.

Russell responded that he would ask G-d, why He didn't provide sufficient evidence of His existence.

Hashem might respond, why didn't you exercise your common sense and look beyond the secular surface of the world, and see the overwhelming evidence of My existence and of My Holy Torah.

How could it be possible for such an orderly world to come into existence?

The oxygen levels in the air are exact, the beautifying scenery, the flowing sea, the lush fields, mans intellect. All these are gifts from our Creator.

Belief in Hashem is one step, but the next step is to ask, what is it that Hashem desires from us?

In this week's Parasha Moshe asks this exact question.

The problem is that Moshe presents the petition as if it were a simple feat. He says, "And now

Israel, what does G-d want of you? Only that you fear G-d your Lord (Deuteronomy 10:12)."

Moshe makes it sound as though the fear of G-d is only a minor matter.

The Gemara Berachot asks: Is the fear of G-d such a small thing?

The Gemara relates how Rabbi Chanina said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai: The Holy One, blessed be He, has in His treasury nothing except a stockpile of the fear of heaven, as it says, "The fear of G-d is His treasure" (Isaiah 33: 6). Obviously if fear of G-d is so cherished by the Almighty, it must be very difficult to attain.

The Gemara answers: True! For it was Moshe who said this verse and for Moshe fear of G-d was a small thing.

Rabbi Chanina said "This is comparable to a person who is asked for a large vessel which he has; it seems to him like a small vessel. A small vessel which he doesn't have; it seems to him like a large vessel." Yirat Shamayim is, indeed, a "large vessel," and not something simple. However, since Moshe had already acquired this trait, he viewed it merely as a "small vessel," and was able to say "only."

Ok, so we know that for Moshe it was simple, but just because it was easy for Moshe, who says it is easy for us? So why does Moshe imply to the people that fear of G-d is simple. Surely he is relating the Torah to us, and for him it might be a walk over, but for us it is not!

Rabbi Yitzchak Zilber, founder of Toldot Yeshurun, an organization that re-educates estranged Russian Jews about the heritage that was snatched from them, is known as the Father of contemporary Russian Jewry. A native of Kazan, Russia, Rabbi Zilber was born just before the Russian Revolution in 1917, but was discreetly taught Torah by his revered ►

> MAZAL TOV TO

Hayley Wise and Yuval Mantzur
on their marriage

THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"The happiest people
don't have the best of everything,
they make the best of everything."

> UPCOMING EVENTS

23rd SEPTEMBER
TAL SEPHARDI UNITED SELICHOT

8th SEPTEMBER
YP FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER
(see more info online)



DVAR TORAH

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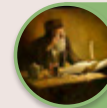
P1



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P2



OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI CHAI TAIEB LOMET

P3



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P3



Q&A AND STORY

P4

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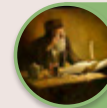
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DVAR
TORAH



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This being said, even when the Mezuzah is not affixed to a doorpost and the Mitzvah

is not being fulfilled but simply carried in one's pocket, it too provides protection. As Rabbi Yom Tov Lippman Heller (otherwise known as the famed Tosfos Yom Tov) comments on a Mishna, "It is possible, that people in Talmudic times carried with them Mezuzos....because of the protection it provides."⁴

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⁶ Unfortunately, many mezuzos are easily falsified, therefore care must be taken to only acquire a mezuzah from an expert scribe and G-d fearing Jew.

⁷ Tehillim 121:8

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI CHAI TAIEB LOMET

One of the great Tzaddikim of Tunis was Rabbi Hai Taieb, of blessed memory, who lived from 5504 to 5596 (1774 to 1836). He was a Gaon who knew both the revealed and the concealed matters of Torah, all while remaining humble, discreet, and modest about it.

Once, in the middle of winter, it no longer rained and so a draught ensued. The ground had cracked open with gaping fissures, and desolate fields appeared all fractured and split. The empty wells that had always quenched everyone's thirst remained dry. Each morning, people would raise their eyes to Heaven with great hope as they awaited a rain cloud rising in the western sky. It would bring water – life. The rabbis of the community remained praying, fervently reciting psalms. They concluded by proclaiming a fast in order to arouse Heavenly mercy.

In the home of Rabbi Hai Taieb, life was taking its normal course as he rose at dawn to serve his Creator. He was always quietly pondering Torah, and when the rabbis announced the fast, he was deep in his books, far removed from everything. His devoted wife also awoke at dawn, ready to serve him.

Rabbi Hai finished his ardent prayers to his Creator.

"Please prepare me a cup of coffee," he said to his wife.

Her eyes opened wide in astonishment and responded by telling her husband, "Didn't you hear the decision of the Rabbis? They proclaimed a fast so that it may rain."

"Really? I didn't know. All right then, prepare me a cup of coffee all the same. I'll be right back."

Rabbi Hai Taieb left his home, raises his eyes to Heaven and, as if he were a son addressing his father, he said to Him who holds the keys, "Master of the universe, Your children are in need of rain. I beg You, don't prevent rain from falling!"

At that moment, his non-Jewish neighbor found himself not far from Rabbi Hai Taieb's home when he suddenly heard him speaking to G-d!

He was still feeling surprised when suddenly the sky darkened and a torrential rain began to fall.

Frightened by the commotion caused by the rain and the thunder, the Rebbetzin said to her husband, "The world is liable to get destroyed by such a deluge!" ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

MAY A KOHEN VISIT THE GRAVESITE OF A TSADIK?

Is it permissible for a Kohen to visit the gravesite of a Tsadik? Do the remains of Sadikim emit Tum'a just like the remains of ordinary people, or is there no Tum'a because of their special stature of holiness?

There are numerous indications that even the remains of a Tsadik generate the status of Tum'at Met. In Masechet Pesachim, for example, the Gemara discusses the story related in the Torah (Bamidbar 9) of a group of people who were unable to bring the Korban Pesach because they had contracted Tum'at Met. (They were eventually told to offer the Korban Pesach a month after Pesach, on Pesach Sheni.) The Gemara cites one view that these people were those who transported the coffin of Yosef, and they were therefore Tameh. Yosef, of course, was a great Tsadik (and is in fact referred to as "Yosef Ha'sadik"), and yet the Gemara clearly assumes that his remains generated Tum'at Met. Similarly, the Gemara in Masechet Berachot relates that as the great Sage Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakai lay on his deathbed, he instructed that all the utensils be removed from the home so they would not become Tameh when his soul departs. Rabbi Yohanan was certainly a Sadik, and yet his remains would have rendered the utensils in the home Tameh.

Indeed, the Shulhan Aruch, in discussing the laws of Tum'at Kohanim, makes no mention of an exception for the gravesites of Tsadikim, implying that Kohanim may not visit even the graves of Tsadikim.

By contrast, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai comments in the Zohar that the Tsadikim die "Mitat Neshika" (death through the "kiss" of the Almighty, as it were), and as a result their remains are free from the clutches of Satan and are not susceptible to Tum'a. The Zohar writes explicitly that the gravesites of the righteous do not emit Tum'at Met. It should be noted, however, that different versions of the text of this passage exist, and it is therefore uncertain whether this is what the Zohar actually says. In any event, there are those who allow Kohanim to at least visit the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai at Meron, since according to his view, his grave does not generate Tum'a. The accepted Halacha, however, does not follow this opinion, and Kohanim may not visit any gravesite, including the gravesites of Tsadikim such as Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai, Rahel Imenu, and so on.

There is a story told of Rav Haim of Sanz (1793-1876) who once asked a student why he wasn't going to the grave of a certain Tsadik on that Tsadik's Yahrtzeit. The student pointed out that he was a Kohen, and the Rabbi noted that according to tradition, the soul of a Tsadik is found throughout the city of his burial site. Therefore, there is value even to visiting the city of the gravesite on the day of the Yahrtzeit. Hence, even though Kohanim may not visit the gravesite of a Tsadik, it is certainly permissible and worthwhile to visit the area around the gravesite of Tsadik.

Summary: It is forbidden for Kohanim to visit graves, even the gravesite of a Tsadik. ■

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KIDS STORY

- ① When a group performs a mitzvah, whose name is attached to the mitzvah?
- ② How did the Jewish People do their laundry in the midbar?
- ③ How did the Jewish People obtain clothing for their growing children in the midbar?
- ④ How many days did Moshe spend on Mt. Sinai altogether?
- ⑤ On what day did Moshe come down from Mt. Sinai having received complete forgiveness for the Jewish People?

Answer

① 8:1 - The person who finishes it. ② 8:4 - The ananei kavod (clouds of glory) cleaned and bleached their clothes. ③ 8:4 - As their children grew, their clothing grew with them. ④ 9:18 - 120 days. ⑤ 9:18 - 10:1 - The tenth of Tishrei, Yom Kippur.

How are you Avi?

I'm feeling swamped Chaim.

Really? Why?

I have so much to do. I don't know how I will ever manage.

Come, Avi. Let me help you. Let's make a list and tackle your projects one by one.

List? List? I already have a list. It hasn't helped me.

Let me see your list, Avi. Maybe I can help you.

Look in the Torah and you will see my list Chaim.

What are you talking about Avi?

My list is the list of Mitsvot in the Torah. 613 Mitsvot. So many Mitsvot. So much to do. How will I ever manage to do them all?

You are feeling overwhelmed by the sheer number of Mitsvot in the Torah, Avi.

That's right, Chaim.

Hmmm. Let me think about this a minute. I think there is a verse in this week's Torah portion that will be very encouraging to you.

Please tell me. What is it?

Chapter eight, verse one. "All the mitzvah which I command you (singular) today, guard it in order to perform it . . ."

Aren't you making a mistake in grammar, Chaim? The verse should read, "All the Mitsvot which I command to you (plural) . . ."

Very perceptive of you, Avi. Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Ben Ahron, one of the classical Bible commentators, who is known to us as the "Keli Yakar", asks the same question. Why does the

verse use the word mitzvah in the singular instead of the plural form? Why does the verse also use the word "you" in the singular instead of the plural form? After all, Moses was speaking to the entire Jewish nation.

Wow. I feel better already, Chaim. I asked the same question that the "Keli Yakar" asked. That means that I have my thinking cap on.

His answer will make you feel even better, Avi. He explains that the word "you" is written in the singular to teach us that one person can change the entire world.

How?

If he is making mistakes in his mitzvah observance, he need only correct those mistakes. That will exert a powerful enough influence to change the whole world.

Wow. What about the other part of the verse.

The word "mitzvah" is written in the singular to teach us that if a person does just one mitzvah properly, he will merit eternal life.

I never realized that Chaim.

You are right, Avi. There are many Mitsvot to perform. Sometimes it can seem like an impossible task. We have to take them one at a time. However, just think about the words of the "Keli Yakar". One person can change the whole world. One mitzvah can change your whole life. It only takes one.

Chaim, thank you so much. I don't feel overwhelmed anymore. I just have to keep repeating it to myself.

Repeating what, Avi?

It only takes one.

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CHAired AND TRANSLATED BY RABBI **Jonathan Tawil** DIRECTOR OF TAL

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⁴ See Tosfos YomTov Maseches Keilim 17:16. This point is further emphasised in Talmud Yerushalmi (Pe'ah 1:1) which tells of Rabbi Yehudah Hanassi sending a mezuzah to a non-Jew saying that it will serve as a protection for him.

⁵ See Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh de'ah 291:1) - according to the strict letter of the law, mezuzos need to be checked twice every seven years. See also Mateh Efraim 581:10; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:3 which states that those who are scrupulous in mitzvah observance have their tefillin and mezuzos checked once every year during the month of Elul.

⁶ Unfortunately, many mezuzos are easily falsified, therefore care must be taken to only acquire a mezuzah from an expert scribe and G-d fearing Jew.

⁷ Tehillim 121:8

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI CHAI TAIEB LOMET

One of the great Tzaddikim of Tunis was Rabbi Hai Taieb, of blessed memory, who lived from 5504 to 5596 (1774 to 1836). He was a Gaon who knew both the revealed and the concealed matters of Torah, all while remaining humble, discreet, and modest about it.

Once, in the middle of winter, it no longer rained and so a draught ensued. The ground had cracked open with gaping fissures, and desolate fields appeared all fractured and split. The empty wells that had always quenched everyone's thirst remained dry. Each morning, people would raise their eyes to Heaven with great hope as they awaited a rain cloud rising in the western sky. It would bring water – life. The rabbis of the community remained praying, fervently reciting psalms. They concluded by proclaiming a fast in order to arouse Heavenly mercy.

In the home of Rabbi Hai Taieb, life was taking its normal course as he rose at dawn to serve his Creator. He was always quietly pondering Torah, and when the rabbis announced the fast, he was deep in his books, far removed from everything. His devoted wife also awoke at dawn, ready to serve him.

Rabbi Hai finished his ardent prayers to his Creator.

"Please prepare me a cup of coffee," he said to his wife.

Her eyes opened wide in astonishment and responded by telling her husband, "Didn't you hear the decision of the Rabbis? They proclaimed a fast so that it may rain."

"Really? I didn't know. All right then, prepare me a cup of coffee all the same. I'll be right back."

Rabbi Hai Taieb left his home, raises his eyes to Heaven and, as if he were a son addressing his father, he said to Him who holds the keys, "Master of the universe, Your children are in need of rain. I beg You, don't prevent rain from falling!"

At that moment, his non-Jewish neighbor found himself not far from Rabbi Hai Taieb's home when he suddenly heard him speaking to G-d!

He was still feeling surprised when suddenly the sky darkened and a torrential rain began to fall.

Frightened by the commotion caused by the rain and the thunder, the Rebbetzin said to her husband, "The world is liable to get destroyed by such a deluge!" ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

MAY A KOHEN VISIT THE GRAVESITE OF A TSADIK?

Is it permissible for a Kohen to visit the gravesite of a Tsadik? Do the remains of Sadikim emit Tum'a just like the remains of ordinary people, or is there no Tum'a because of their special stature of holiness?

There are numerous indications that even the remains of a Tsadik generate the status of Tum'at Met. In Masechet Pesachim, for example, the Gemara discusses the story related in the Torah (Bamidbar 9) of a group of people who were unable to bring the Korban Pesach because they had contracted Tum'at Met. (They were eventually told to offer the Korban Pesach a month after Pesach, on Pesach Sheni.) The Gemara cites one view that these people were those who transported the coffin of Yosef, and they were therefore Tameh. Yosef, of course, was a great Tsadik (and is in fact referred to as "Yosef Ha'sadik"), and yet the Gemara clearly assumes that his remains generated Tum'at Met. Similarly, the Gemara in Masechet Berachot relates that as the great Sage Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakai lay on his deathbed, he instructed that all the utensils be removed from the home so they would not become Tameh when his soul departs. Rabbi Yohanan was certainly a Sadik, and yet his remains would have rendered the utensils in the home Tameh.

Indeed, the Shulhan Aruch, in discussing the laws of Tum'at Kohanim, makes no mention of an exception for the gravesites of Tsadikim, implying that Kohanim may not visit even the graves of Tsadikim.

By contrast, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai comments in the Zohar that the Tsadikim die "Mitat Neshika" (death through the "kiss" of the Almighty, as it were), and as a result their remains are free from the clutches of Satan and are not susceptible to Tum'a. The Zohar writes explicitly that the gravesites of the righteous do not emit Tum'at Met. It should be noted, however, that different versions of the text of this passage exist, and it is therefore uncertain whether this is what the Zohar actually says. In any event, there are those who allow Kohanim to at least visit the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai at Meron, since according to his view, his grave does not generate Tum'a. The accepted Halacha, however, does not follow this opinion, and Kohanim may not visit any gravesite, including the gravesites of Tsadikim such as Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai, Rahel Imenu, and so on.

There is a story told of Rav Haim of Sanz (1793-1876) who once asked a student why he wasn't going to the grave of a certain Tsadik on that Tsadik's Yahrtzeit. The student pointed out that he was a Kohen, and the Rabbi noted that according to tradition, the soul of a Tsadik is found throughout the city of his burial site. Therefore, there is value even to visiting the city of the gravesite on the day of the Yahrtzeit. Hence, even though Kohanim may not visit the gravesite of a Tsadik, it is certainly permissible and worthwhile to visit the area around the gravesite of Tsadik.

Summary: It is forbidden for Kohanim to visit graves, even the gravesite of a Tsadik. ■

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KIDS STORY

- ① When a group performs a mitzvah, whose name is attached to the mitzvah?
- ② How did the Jewish People do their laundry in the midbar?
- ③ How did the Jewish People obtain clothing for their growing children in the midbar?
- ④ How many days did Moshe spend on Mt. Sinai altogether?
- ⑤ On what day did Moshe come down from Mt. Sinai having received complete forgiveness for the Jewish People?

Answer

① 8:1 - The person who finishes it. ② 8:4 - The ananei kavod (clouds of glory) cleaned and bleached their clothes. ③ 8:4 - As their children grew, their clothing grew with them. ④ 9:18 - 120 days. ⑤ 9:18 - The tenth of Tishrei, Yom Kippur.

How are you Avi?

I'm feeling swamped Chaim.

Really? Why?

I have so much to do. I don't know how I will ever manage.

Come, Avi. Let me help you. Let's make a list and tackle your projects one by one.

List? List? I already have a list. It hasn't helped me.

Let me see your list, Avi. Maybe I can help you.

Look in the Torah and you will see my list Chaim.

What are you talking about Avi?

My list is the list of Mitsvot in the Torah. 613 Mitsvot. So many Mitsvot. So much to do. How will I ever manage to do them all?

You are feeling overwhelmed by the sheer number of Mitsvot in the Torah, Avi.

That's right, Chaim.

Hmmm. Let me think about this a minute. I think there is a verse in this week's Torah portion that will be very encouraging to you.

Please tell me. What is it?

Chapter eight, verse one. "All the mitzvah which I command you (singular) today, guard it in order to perform it . . ."

Aren't you making a mistake in grammar, Chaim? The verse should read, "All the Mitsvot which I command to you (plural) . . ."

Very perceptive of you, Avi. Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim Ben Ahron, one of the classical Bible commentators, who is known to us as the "Keli Yakar", asks the same question. Why does the

verse use the word mitzvah in the singular instead of the plural form? Why does the verse also use the word "you" in the singular instead of the plural form? After all, Moses was speaking to the entire Jewish nation.

Wow. I feel better already, Chaim. I asked the same question that the "Keli Yakar" asked. That means that I have my thinking cap on.

His answer will make you feel even better, Avi. He explains that the word "you" is written in the singular to teach us that one person can change the entire world.

How?

If he is making mistakes in his mitzvah observance, he need only correct those mistakes. That will exert a powerful enough influence to change the whole world.

Wow. What about the other part of the verse.

The word "mitzvah" is written in the singular to teach us that if a person does just one mitzvah properly, he will merit eternal life.

I never realized that Chaim.

You are right, Avi. There are many Mitsvot to perform. Sometimes it can seem like an impossible task. We have to take them one at a time. However, just think about the words of the "Keli Yakar". One person can change the whole world. One mitzvah can change your whole life. It only takes one.

Chaim, thank you so much. I don't feel overwhelmed anymore. I just have to keep repeating it to myself.

Repeating what, Avi?

It only takes one.

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