

TAL TorahActionLife

COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

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Leiluy Nishmat David ben Masuda z"l



LECH LECHA
11th Cheshvan 5776
Shabbat begins: 17:36
Shabbat ends: 18:37



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
Shabbat 'UK' Shalom!

A couple came in for counselling. The husband was a football 'fanatic'. The wife spoke of how every night he would rush to the TV and ensure to watch the game. The therapist assured her it was actually quite the norm amongst men.

He turned towards the husband and asked him to explain what his issues were with his wife.

"She is so materialistic, all she wants to watch are the evening sitcoms and serials!" came the reply.

The therapist now took the lead. "I see that your interests in televised entertainment are quite polarized. But I think there is a simple solution."

"I understand that you are an affluent couple, why not buy an additional TV set, and each of you watches your desires in different rooms!"

This was bad news for the couple and together they shrieked. "DIFFERENT ROOMS??"

"How can we watch in different rooms? That's the time we spend *together!*"

We live in a generation that is consumed within itself. People have become so busy that it is difficult if not impossible to spend quality time together without being

interrupted by bleeps, texts, phone calls, emails etc.
Spending time is tough but it is the key to a quality relationship.

The Midrash commenting on Noach's generation says, "Had Iyov only come to explain the incident of the Flood that would have been sufficient."

According to our Sages there are many verses in the book of Job that refer to the sins of the generation of the Flood.

For example, the verse in Iyov [24:18] says, "He is light upon the face of the water, their portion in the earth is cursed, he does not turn by way of the vineyards." The Midrash relates this verse to the sin of the generation of the flood: They were cursed that they should perish in water. Why? The Midrash tells us that they were cursed because they lived with their wives not for procreation or for their wives' sake, but only for their own pleasure.

The Midrash in fact already alludes to this in Bereishit. "The custom of that generation was

to take two wives, one for having children and one for pleasure. The one taken for having children would sit ugly and

neglected like a living widow; the one taken for pleasure would be sterilized and would sit by him, made up with cosmetics like a harlot." One of the reasons Hashem sent the Mabul was because of the lack of morality and respect even towards 'spouses' in that generation.

Looking to Avraham and Sarah we see a different picture altogether.

Avraham lived over three thousand eight hundred years ago. Imagine what kind of society existed then. One would have expected a male dominated society, without much respect to their spouses.

Avraham was told to go to the land of Canaan. "Hashem told Avram to go to the Land of Canaan. Avram travelled to the Land of Canaan, and pitched his tent. The Torah narrates: "From there he relocated to the east of Beth-el and pitched his tent (*spelt Ohelah – meaning her tent*), with Beth-el on the west and Ai on the east; and he built there an altar to Hashem and invoked Hashem by Name" [Bereishit 12:8].



1. What letter was added to both Avraham's and Sara's name and why particularly this letter?

2. Why is the great miracle of Avraham's surviving beng thrown into the furnace not recorded in the Torah?

3. Why does it bring the battle between the four and five kings in the Torah?

4. After the battles the pasuk mentions about the King of S'dom coming to Avraham and then interrupts it with the meeting with Makli Tzedek (14:18). Why?

5. Why is it called Brit Ben Habesarim?

Answers on Page 3

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What would you have anticipated 3800 years ago from a man and women travelling? Perhaps he would have commanded her to set up base while he rested?

Rashi comments that in fact with Avraham the opposite was true. The special spelling of the word (pronounced Aholo but written Ohela with a 'heh' at the end) hints that Avraham was particular to pitch his wife's tent first!

Why did he do that? According to some commentators, Avraham was simply fulfilling the sages' directive, "Respect your wife more than yourself." Since women are more sensitive to privacy, he made sure to set up her living space before his own.

According to others (Levush) Avraham first pitched Sarah's tent to help her fulfil "Kol K'vudah Bat Melech P'nimah" - "The honour of a princess is within." She needed her tent in order to be Tzanua - modest.

What is respect?

Respecting other people involves respecting their needs, regardless of whether one can

relate to those needs or not. Respecting your wife more than yourself means putting her needs before your own.

Is buying flowers on Friday afternoon a sign of respect? How about buying expensive jewellery? They might be. But what if stopping to buy flowers means the husband won't be home in time to help bathe the kids, which the wife would prefer? And what if she would appreciate his company far more than new jewellery?

What the first explanation may be teaching us is that Avraham Avinu prioritized his wife's needs above his own. If it meant pitching her tent, he did it, just because it was what was important to her right then, even if it didn't give him as much satisfaction as buying her a new bracelet (or camel?).

The second explanation may be teaching us the importance of a husband's support and involvement in his wife's servitude of G-d and modesty. Avraham understood this. He realized Sarah needed his help to fulfil "Kol K'vudah Bat Melech P'nimah" and he made sure to be there for her.

This may also explain why the Torah uses only one word to describe both her tent and his. Even in her domain, she needed his

support. So when he built her 'tent,' he was actually building his own as well.

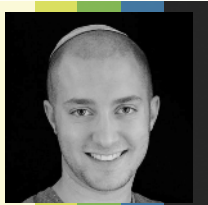
Rashi (24:67) states that as long as Sarah was alive, a candle burned in her tent from one Shabbat eve to the next, her dough was blessed and a cloud hung over her tent. Sarah was essentially the Mother of the Jewish people. She invested her life in teaching and inspiring others, but her focus was on her husband and son Yitschak. She was blessed with a special blessing – Shabbat!

Shabbat is the Mekor Haberacha – the epicentre of blessing. It is a time when we re-connect with Hashem and recognise Him as Creator of the world.

The seeds of the blessing of Shabbat to our people were already sewn through Avraham's respect for Sarah, and her enthusiasm and tireless efforts in building a Jewish future; it is then that we see for the first time a clear blessing of Shabbat through the candles, dough and cloud of honour.

Fast forward 3800 years and here we are in an every busy society. Let's not lose those values, respect our spouses, build the future, reconnect to Hashem on a weekly basis and together celebrate Shabbat!

Shabbat UK Shalom!



RABBI SAM MILLUNCHICK
Head of Informal Education,
Immanuel College

Your Only Son,
The One You Love.

At the end of this week's Torah reading, we are confronted with what we are told is Avraham's final test, the binding of Isaac. In what must be counted as one of the bible's most harrowing commandments, God tells Avraham to take "your son, your only son, the one you love" and offer him as a sacrifice. Avraham was an elderly man already at this point, having waited practically his entire life for progeny, finally being blessed with a son after ninety-nine years. Imagine the pain then, the gut wrenching, heart-ripping pain, that Avraham must have felt at such a request. How could it be that God commanded this of him – of all things?!

There's another oddity about this story. The words, "Lekh Lekha" – go for yourself – appear here, as they do only one other place in the Bible, by Avraham's first commandment to leave his homeland. There, Rashi – the ubiquitous medieval biblical commentator – comments that it was "for

your good and your pleasure." If the exact same words are used here in the same formulation, they surely must have a similar connotation!

Thankfully, we all know how the story ends. Isaac is not killed, and a ram is instead offered in his place. We are told that God says to Avraham: "for now I know that you are a God fearing man, and you did not withhold your son, your only one, from Me" (Gen 22:12). As strange as that phrase is – surely God knows everything! – I want to focus on a slightly different aspect of the binding.

What was in this test for Avraham, for Isaac, that they had to go through it in this manner? Where was the "for you" part of the "go for you"?

Why did God command this? Was it just to prove how God fearing Avraham was? Surely God and Avraham knew this already? What was in this test for Avraham,

for Isaac, that they had to go through it in this manner? Where was the "for you" part of the "go for you"?

Up until this point, man's existence is a given. We were promised in Parashat Noah that God will never again destroy the world because of sin, and Avraham relates to the world as if his continued physical existence were a fact. Connection to God, in Avraham's eyes, guaranteed his well-being. With this command, God teaches Avraham and Isaac a critical lesson.

You are not guaranteed. Life is not a guarantee.

At any moment, a car may come hurtling down the road at high speed and end your life for no other reason than that you are a Jew. Ironically, the more connected you are to God the more likely you are to be targeted! At any moment, it may be your very closeness to God which jeopardises your life.

Avraham's response to this crisis, however, teaches a very important lesson. Rather than shy away from this responsibility, rather than shirk his duties and reject his God for acting in a way that he may have felt was inappropriate, he hastened to do God's bidding. As he walked for three days, we can be sure that this was a deliberate act, not one done out of fervent rapture. Avraham thought about what he was going to do, and he



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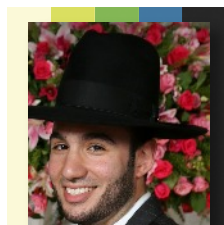
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was prepared to do it if it was God's will. Avraham was responding to an external reality, responding to God, the source of existence. Avraham learnt about the frailty of the human condition, the immediacy with which that which we cherish most can be snuffed out. We can learn that the best vindication of a

life is a life well-lived. Why are we here? Why does it matter to us how long we live? What are we here for? What Avraham teaches us is that all of that *does* matter, as long as it is connected to Existence Itself. When we stray from that Existence, in an attempt to preserve our petty local lives, we disconnect from the

Objective Reality that is God, and without that, there can be no true "for you". Ultimately, God's will will manifest. Where will you be? "Many are the thoughts in a man's heart, but it is the will of God which will ultimately emerge" (Proverbs 19:21).



HALACHA
RABBI ADAM MATHER
Mi K'Amcho

Toys & Games On Shabbat (Series)

Card Games

It is permissible for children to play card games on Shabbat, provided that when the game is over the cards are not separated and organised in order to put them away doing so creates an issue of borer (Shemirat Shabbat KeHilchata 16:34). There is a further issue of borer with regard to playing cards that comes up in games where you drop cards. Borer is only permitted in a situation where one is removing desired pieces from the undesirable pieces, by hand (i.e. without a utensil designated for separating), and for immediate use. When playing Rummy, one takes cards from his hand in order to make a set, which is clearly permissible as it fulfils all three conditions. However, when dropping cards, it seems to be removing the undesired pieces from the desired elements which should be prohibited. Rav Asher Weiss (Minchat Asher on Masechet Shabbat p. 327) deals with this issue by stating that not only are two cards of different number/suit considered one kind and that dropping them from one's hand provides immediate satisfaction in that one's hand is lighter and he's closer to winning, but also that there isn't even any melachah involved, since melachot by definition lead up to a greater purpose, which is not true when dropping cards.

Lego and Building Blocks

There is no issue with playing with regular, non-interlocking building blocks on Shabbat; interlocking ones, such as Lego, are subject to a machloket amongst the poskim.

Rav Bentzion Abba Shaul, Rav Ovadia Yosef, Rav Eliezer Waldenberg, amongst others rule that interlocking blocks are permissible since one usually intends to take them apart within a short period of time and because they are put together for fun and not in order to build. Rav Ovadia Yosef also adds that although he initially prohibited Lego, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach retracted his ruling due to the sheer variety of objects that one can build with the same pieces. Those who prohibit playing with Lego include Shemirat Shabbat KeHilchata and Rav Elyashiv; Rav Moshe Feinstein held that the Halacha in this matter was not clear and therefore one should be stringent in the first instance.

Magnets

Magnets are not considered muktzeh and one may play with them on Shabbat as there is no melachah involved. In the publication "Halachically Speaking", Rav Moshe Dovid Lebovits mentions a machloket regarding whether or not one may use magnets to attach two items together, such as a synagogue timetable to a fridge. He quotes Rav Yisrael Belsky as permitting it and Rav Elyashiv as prohibiting it saying that it falls within the parameters of tofer.

Paper-folding (Origami)

One is not permitted to make a toy or Origami figures such as a boat, aeroplane or hat on Shabbat by folding pieces of paper (Shemirat Shabbat KeHilchata). The Revivot Ephraim (Rav Ephraim Greenblatt) points out that there is no problem with folding serviettes to dress the Shabbat table.

Photographs

One is allowed to place a photograph into an album on Shabbat provided that the photographs do not adhere to the page or are stuck into the album in anyway (Shemirat Shabbat KeHilchata 16:12). When one is looking through a pile of

photographs, one should not remove the top one that you have seen and place it on the bottom as there is an issue of borer; instead one should take the photograph on the bottom of the pile and place it on top of the pile to look at, thereby circumventing the issue.



1. The letter Hei. Perhaps this letter was chosen is because they were looking for a new beginning in order to have children. This world was created with the letter Hei and therefore it represents a new start.
2. The Maharal says that it is in order that we should know that Hashem picked Avraham and the Jewish Nation not based on any action or reason.
3. The Radak says that it comes to teach us how Avraham was not scared against these most powerful armies since he placed his reliance on Hashem.
4. The Chizkuni explains that Avraham was then given provisions so that when he spoke with the King of S'dom he would not need to hold anything back. The Tzror Hamor answers that it was for the benefit of the King of S'dom when he saw how generous Avraham was to Malki Tzedek he felt he could then ask for all the captives back.
5. Brit means a covenant and Ben means between and Besarim means flesh. This brit was formed by cutting animals into two parts and going between them.

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Dear Rabbi,

The Talmud says that someone who earns their salary from gambling is invalid as a witness in a Jewish court because the person who lost doesn't really pay with a full heart. Therefore, the money that he wins is considered theft. If so, what about the stock market? People literally gamble as to the price of a particular commodity or stock, and the person who has a holding of this particular item certainly does not want the price to deteriorate. So is someone who gambles on the stock market invalid as a witness?

Stocks are a legitimate investment. Buying stocks is essentially no different than buying diamonds, land, or wheat. True, the stock market has an element of risk, but don't confuse 'lost wages' with 'Las Vegas.' Do you know of any business which involves no element of risk? If so, do you know their phone number?

Gambling, on the other hand, is a game where each person hopes to guess the right number on the dice, or pick the right horse. Gamblers are invalid as witnesses in a Jewish court.

The Sages of the Talmud differ as to why gamblers are invalid. According to one opinion, someone who wins a bet is like a thief, because he collects prize money that he didn't 'earn' and to which he has no true legal claim.

According to another opinion, only a professional gamester -- who has no other source of income -- is invalid as a witness. His integrity is suspect, because he spends his day in pursuits which contribute nothing to society. According to this opinion, someone who gambles only part-time can be a valid witness, provided he's involved in some productive activity.



TAL is pleased to announce that we are adding a second Chazanut and Kriah class on Sundays due to popular demand. Please email us at shabbaton@live.com for more information

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