

# THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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**Leiluy Nishmat Rabbi Yosef Ben Rabbi Avraham Amar Z"L**

## RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

**DIRECTOR  
TAL**



### CHANUKA PRESENTS!

The delicious smell of doughnuts is in the air, and the beautiful candles across the community are alight as we delve into oil for the next eight days, sharing songs and presents with our loved ones.

The story is told of a grown up Jewish man, spoiled by his mother and still living at home.

Chanuka arrives and she gives him a beautifully wrapped present. As he opens it, he is happy to see that she has bought him two sweaters.

The next day he decides to proudly wear one of the beautiful sweaters.

As he comes down to breakfast his mother stares at him with a grumpy face.

"What's the matter?" she asks, as her eyes roll.

Startled, the man replies, "what's wrong, Mother?"

She approaches him and says, "What's the matter with the other sweatshirt I got you! Didn't you like the other one?"

Sometimes we are spoiled for choice; at other times it is difficult to please everyone, but what's behind the (not so ancient) custom to give out presents on Chanuka?

After being in jail for ten years, Yosef was finally approached with a way out.

Two of the King's officers were jailed with him, awaking with troublesome dreams.

Yosef interprets these dreams, telling the butler that in three days he would be returned to his initial post and "you will place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as was the former practice..." [Bereishit 40:13].

These words seem to be superfluous! What do they add? What do they teach us?

Rabbi Akiva Eiger sent a letter to his son, in which he suggests a novel and insightful interpretation. Yosef tells the butler that he will be returned to his position and once again be Pharaoh's butler. When the butler heard those words, what went through his mind? Was there a great sigh of relief?

He might have been slightly happy, but then once he thought about it he was worried;

"What will be if something will fly into the cup again? My hand will be shaking so much that I will never be able to pour a cup of wine for the king again! Good, I got my job back, but how will I cope?"

To address that fear, Yosef responded: "You will have your job back AND you are not going to have to worry because it is going to be K'Mishpat haRishon - exactly like it was before. Why is that? It is because the whole incident of the fly falling into the cup was not your fault - it will never happen again! The only reason the fly fell into the cup is SO THAT you should be here in the dungeon with me, SO THAT you will be able to tell Pharaoh what a great interpreter of dreams I am, and SO THAT I will be able to get out of jail because of the good words you put in for me with Pharaoh!"

Many are the thoughts in the hearts of man, and G-d's plan is what always finally emerges. (Mishlei 19:21)

From the young age of 17, Yosef was enslaved in Egypt. He had been a slave in Potiphar's house, a prisoner, and this week is brought in front of the mighty King of Egypt Pharaoh. ►

### > MAZAL TOV TO

**Ruben & Ella Babaev**  
on the birth of their daughter

**Maurice & Simcha Shira Taman**  
on the Brit of twins

**Rav Bassous & Rabbanit**  
on the Birth of their grandson in Manchester

**Felicia & Maurice Assoyag**  
on the Brit of their son Ariel Menachem

**THE WEEKLY QUOTE**  
"Let your smile change the world but never let the world change your smile!!"

### > UPCOMING EVENTS

• **LEGENDARY SKI TRIP IN SLOVAKIA**  
21ST- 25TH JAN (see more info online)

• **TU B'SHVAT COCKTAIL PARTY**  
30TH JAN (see more info online)



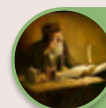
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This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

Yet one thing remains constant in all his ordeals – G-d's Name is constantly on his lips.

Rashi explains the phrase, Ki Hashem Ito (39:3), "Hashem was with him," as Shem Shomayim Shagar B'fiv, "The Name of Heaven was fluent in his mouth," to mean that he would regularly refer to Hashem in conversation.

In a land of many gods, Yosef was able to infuse everyone he saw with the knowledge of the Only One Almighty G-d.

Potiphar now knew there was an Elokim; the butler now knew there was an Elokim.

Finally after twelve years in prison, Yosef gets his break in front of the King.

Pharaoh is the god of Egypt; he is mighty and powerful.

Yet when Yosef is brought in front of him, he is not in fear or awe – rather, he recognises Pharaoh as another piece of the puzzle, bringing G-dliness to the world.

Even though Pharaoh compliments him, saying, "I have heard you know how to interpret dreams", Yosef answers, "Biladay, Elokim Yaaneh Et Shalom Pharaoh" (41:16) – "It is Hashem that controls the world and can enable interpretation of dreams."

Eventually, many years later when Yosef reveals himself and sends a message to his father, he says, "Koh Amar Bincha Yosef Samani Elokim Le'adon Lechol-Mitzrayim" – "G-d has granted me jurisdiction over the whole land of Egypt." (45:9)

Our Sages interpret this homiletically to mean that Yosef was saying – "Sam Ani" – I have put – "Elokim" – G-d Almighty – "Le'adon" – as a Master – over the whole land of Egypt.

The whole of Egypt now knows and understands that there exists such a concept of One G-d.

Through Yosef's actions and his personal conduct, the whole world could now see and learn about Hashem.

Chanuka is a time when the Greeks wished to cut us off from our past and to infuse us with their understanding of the world – no One G-d, no real spirituality in the world. We fought back.

But to fight back, you need to realise where it all emanates from, search out the source.

A present isn't just created. There is an idea; there is action of buying and sending. When you receive a present, you start to think "how kind!", and you search back to find who was the giver, in order to thank them.

Light enables us to see; it shows the way.

At the darkest time in the year, we shine the lights of the Menorah.

Chanuka is that time when we search back and reconnect to our G-d, recognising all that goodness He has bestowed upon us.

Chanuka Sameach! ■

## AHARON GABBAY - KOLLEL ZICHRON CHANA VERACHEL - JERUSALEM

DVAR  
TORAH



### MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

We continue with the famous story where Yaacov's sons head down to Egypt to collect food, leaving their youngest brother, Binyamin behind with Yaacov. They reveal to the viceroy (who little do they know is their very own brother, Yosef) that their youngest brother is with their father. The viceroy accuses them of being spies and takes one brother, Shimon, captive and demands that they bring their last remaining brother. They return to their father and tell him of all the happenings. Yaacov exclaims "Yosef is gone, Shimon is gone and you want to take Binyamin...why have you done this bad thing to me, by telling the man that you have another brother". It would seem that Yaacov has a very reasonable claim.

Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz ztz"l explains that all living things in this world follow the same rule. They begin with a seed where all potential is contained, followed by the production of that potential. The common example of this is an apple seed that contains every leaf, branch and fruit it will ever produce. There is nothing present in the tree which is not contained in the seed. This same process continues essentially for eternity. Rabbi Yerucham continues: if such a phenomena can be understood, we can then bring ourselves to a conclusion that all things work in steps where one thing leads to another in an endless cycle. Because it is just part of a large picture, there is no possible way that you could judge if a situation is good or bad, without the ability to see the full picture.

Rabbi Yerucham brings a Medrash: Yaacov says to his sons "why have you done this bad thing to me, by telling the man that you have another brother". Hakadosh Baruch Hu says "I am bringing his (Yaacov's) son to royalty and he says "why have you done this bad thing to me!"". Rabbi Yerucham explains that Yaacov cannot possibly know what a bad thing is to claim that this is a bad event.

On the contrary, Yosef has taken a very high position in one of the greatest kingdoms ever.

We can illustrate the same idea with a common daily occurrence. If one were to examine a foetus while in its mother's womb, it's features are astonishing: the heart is plastered with holes, the lungs are scrunched like wastepaper, and the entire body is immersed in water. All of these are vital for its survival in the womb however and if any of them were to reverse it would have disastrous consequences. When it comes to the birth, the child is about to be exposed to a world which should kill him instantly. Anyone observing from the inside would be mourning for a tragedy waiting to happen. But by the wonders of Hashem, as the baby is born the heart seals itself, the lungs inflate and the second the air hits the nose of the newborn, he is functioning like a normal human being.

There are countless times in our day to day lives where we encounter challenges which test our faith, may we use these lessons to strengthen ourselves in Emunah and connection with Hashem. ■

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## OUR CHACHAMIM

### RABBI HAIM MESSAS

The Messas family was one of the most important in all of Morocco. It gave rise to great sages who served in rabbinic courts and produced many disciples. In our time, those who are best known are Rabbi Yossef Messas Zatzal, the Chief Rabbi of Haifa, and our teacher Rabbi Shalom Messas Zatzal, the Rav of Jerusalem.

Rabbi Haim Messas, the father of Rabbi Yossef, was born in Meknes in Elul 5603 (1843), and from his youth a pure fear of G-d burned in him. He behaved with the utmost holiness, and his prayers were heard. He had many disciples, among them being Rabbi Raphael Baruch Toledano, his son Rabbi Yossef Messas, and many others who became dayanim and taught Torah in Morocco and Eretz Israel.

He left behind the book Nishmat Haim on Torah and Tanach, as well as important Halachic books. His work was published in 1949 by his son Rabbi Yossef, and later republished by the Bnei Issachar foundation thanks to his son Rav Eiyahu.

Rabbi Haim Messas Zatzal passed away in 5664 (1904). His disciple Rabbi Raphael Baruch Toledano recounts the following story about him:

"Friday morning, Nissan 6, 5663 (1903) began a day of mourning for Israel, for all our wicked enemies surrounding us attacked like wild beasts, trying to exterminate and pillage the whole community. They were armed with axes and all sorts of lethal weapons, and they came like woodcutters to tear down the city walls. At the time Morocco had no king, which prompted this terrible crises. On that morning, everyone was assembled in the streets of the town, young and old alike. I too was there during those terrible times. Our holy teacher was among this multitude when he fell to the ground. His long beard, as white as snow, lay in the dust as he let out great cries for repentance and awakened hearts with his enflamed voice. He said, 'My children, return to G-d with all your heart! Perhaps He will be favorable with us and we will not perish.' He recited Shema Israel aloud, and the entire community repeated it after him several times. [Note: See Targum Yonatan on the verse that states, "Behold! A man of the Children of Israel..." (Numbers 25:6), which he translates as, "They cried and recited Shema Israel"]. We all wept amidst the lightening and thunder of the enemy. With lead bullets flying over our heads, we screamed and cried. Then G-d saved us from this terrible danger, for the watchmen from every rampart announced that a great dread had descended upon our enemies, and that they had all fled and were dispersing in every direction. Blessed be He Who answers His people Israel in times of trouble; blessed be G-d Who saves. We know very well that it was the merit of our holy teacher that protected us. A few days later he fell ill, and he remained bedridden until rendering his holy soul to his Creator on Tammuz 8, 5664 (1904), for he had atoned for the generation. May the merit of his beautiful soul protect and defend us, we and all Israel, Amen."

His son Rabbi Yossef Messas Zatzal, the former Chief Rabbi of Haifa, recounted the following stories: "One Friday after the morning service, while he was still in synagogue, some people came to see him and accused the grandson of the great and venerated Tzaddik, Rabbi Shemuel ben Vaish, of having stolen a Kiddush cup and a candlestick from them in the synagogue. My father saw the accused man, dressed in patched-up clothes, barefoot, and looking half asleep. He then sent the man's accusers away immediately and asked him if he had recited the morning prayers, or if he had a Tallit and Tefillin. The man replied that he did not. At that my father became very angry and began to strike him. He then made him sit down and gave him his own Tallit and Tefillin and a prayer book. While he was praying, my father began to cry, moan, and ask for mercy on the man. When he was finished, he had the man read the parasha of the week with him, twice in Hebrew and once in Aramaic, while telling him to look at the Tetragrammaton printed in the book in order to become filled with holiness. Once finished, he began to question the man about the theft. My father concluded that he had stolen the objects and resold them to another Jew because of his great poverty. He then had the buyer summoned and spoke to him harshly, accusing him of supporting sinners and issuing him a fine equal to half of what he paid for the stolen objects, the other half coming out of his own pocket. He gave the owners back what had been stolen from them, and he bought the thief a new pair of Tefillin and gave him a Tallit Katan. My father also gave him a prayer book, some shoes, a hat, smock, and pants, all the clothes being made from beautiful fabrics that were very ware-resistant and practically new. He also gave him some money to purchase what he needed for Shabbat. After having given him all this, which my father paid for out of his own pocket, he began to console the man. He brought him to his home and fed him breakfast before sending him off. On Shabbat, he again had him come over in order to eat with him, and all day long he had him listen to words of Mussar." ■



## HALACHOT

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR

#### MUST ONE STOP HIS LEARNING TO HELP COMPLETE A MINYAN

Hacham Ovadia, in the recently published volume of Yabia Omer, relates an interesting Halacha based on an incident that occurred to him. He was sitting and learning when someone asked him to go to another place to complete a Minyan. He analyzed whether he was obligated to stop his Torah study in order to complete a Minyan. His conclusion was that he does not need to stop learning. Even though the Gemara records that Rabbi Eliezer freed his slave in order to complete a Minyan, thereby violating the Torah's prohibition against doing so, that is not a proof. In that case, the Minyan was assembled in the same place as the slave, but one is not obligated to leave his place to complete a Minyan.

Furthermore, the Sefer Kerach Shel Romi discusses whether one may violate the Rabbinic prohibition of riding a horse on Shabbat in order to attend a Minyan. There, the author presents the importance of attending Minyan, but clearly states that one may not violate Halacha in order to attend. Hacham Ovadia reasons that since Torah learning is the highest Misva, one does not need to stop in order to complete a Minyan for somebody else.

He also discusses an incident in which he was sitting alone eating Seudat Shlishit, and there was also a group of people eating together. He asks whether he was obligated to join their meal in order to partake of Birkat Hamazon with a Zimun, or was he permitted to remain alone in order to finish faster and resume his learning. He concluded that as long as one did not already sit down with them, he is not obligated to go out of his way to put himself in an obligation of Zimun. He cites the Sefer Hasidim who brings that case of someone who does not want to join a group meal out of fear that the meal would carry on too long with idle chatter and rules that one is not obligated to join.

#### SUMMARY

One is not obligated to interrupt his learning to go to another place and complete a Minyan. Likewise, one may eat alone and avoid joining a Zimun, in order to resume his Torah study. ■

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## TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- What was significant about the fact that Pharaoh dreamed repeatedly?
- What does "Tsafnat Panayach" mean?
- What happened to the Egyptians' grain that was stored in anticipation of the famine?
- What did Yosef require the Egyptians to do before he would sell them grain?
- Did Yaakov and his family still have food when he sent his sons to Egypt? If yes, why did he send them?

### Answer

1 - It showed that the seven good years would start immediately. 2 - 41:45 - He who explains things that are hidden and obscure. 3 - 41:55 - It rotted. 4 - 41:55 - Become circumcised. 5 - Yes, but he sent them because he did not want to cause envy in the eyes of those who did not have food.



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