

# THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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This weeks Parsha sheet is sponsored in honour of Elie and Zimrah Tamman on the birth of their new baby boy.

*Shetizku Legadlo Latorah Lechupa ulemassim tovim.*

## RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR  
TAL



### NOT JUST ANY STONES!

The Talmud (Sotah 42a) says that there are four groups of people that do not merit greeting the Divine presence. One of them is liars. The Ben Ish Chai (Ben Yehoyada ibid) explains that the liar's punishment is measure for measure: through lying they demonstrated that they sought to find favour in the eyes of men, and in doing so ignored the presence of the omniscient Almighty. Therefore, they do not merit being in His presence.

Parshat Matot relates the importance of speaking the truth.

"If a man makes a vow...he must not profane his word. He must do all that he expressed verbally." (30:3).

Along these lines the Talmud (Pesachim 113b) also says that there are three types of people that G-d despises and one of them is those that say one thing, while having completely different feelings in their heart.

On a very practical level it is clear that when a person accustoms himself to speaking truthfully, people come to trust him, as the verse (Mishlei 12:19) says: "A true tongue will be established forever." On the other hand, one who is a habitual liar will not be trusted, as the verse continues: "But a lying tongue,

just for a moment". I.e. his believability is short lived.

In 1994 a Japanese scientist Dr Masaru Emoto had an idea to prove that spoken words have a direct and verifiable effect upon water. He conducted tests where cups of pure water drawn from a spring were positioned in rooms. People were then placed in different rooms with the water and told to make positive or negative statements. A small volume of the water was then frozen at -25 degrees for three hours, after which the frozen water was removed and examined under an extremely powerful microscope.

The results were awesome.

Positive statements such as compliments, words of praise or affection caused the formation of crystals in a clear and beautiful way. Whilst negative statements, insults, curses or angry words made the ice crystals form in a disorderly and bad looking manner.

Dr Masaru Emoto concluded "The world it shows is truth, and there is no doubt that many messages essential to our lives are hidden in it."

How powerful are our words! They affect the whole world around us. We may not see it but deep beneath the surface something is happening each time we talk.

The Torah relates that when the Bnei Yisrael were to enter and conquer Eretz Yisrael, if they found that their house was hit with Tsarat (leprosy), then in certain circumstances the house would need to be dissembled and rebuilt.

Eventually the Canaanite-built houses that they occupied became plagued and the walls had to be dismantled. ►

## > MAZAL TOV TO

Mazal tov to Raphael and Shoshi Rotstein on the birth of a baby boy

## THE WEEKLY QUOTE

*"Don't judge me by MY PAST.  
I don't live there ANYMORE."*



### DVAR TORAH

Not Just Any Stones!  
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

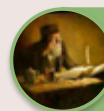
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If G-d was granting them the land as a blessing, why did they need to dismantle and rebuild so many houses?

The Zohar (3:50a) explains that when the idolaters built their houses, each stone was placed in the name and in honour of their gods.

Desiring to eradicate idolatry from the Land, G-d plagued the houses so that their deconstruction would purge the idolatrous impurity. When the Jews then rebuilt their houses, they instead dedicated them in the service of, and as an abode for, G-d.

It is for this reason that we make a Chanukat Habayit - dedication of a house; whether one has built it, bought it or is even just renting it. Regardless of who the previous inhabitants were, we inaugurate our use of the house by purging it of spiritual impurities through

expressing our thanks to G-d for giving us the resources to obtain a place to live, while simultaneously affirming our dedication to use our home as an instrument for doing His will.

We get rid of all bad influences that might have been present in the building. We eradicate the effect that bad speech by its previous owners might have had on those walls.

In this way, our dwelling truly becomes an abode for G-d.

Via the mouth, G-d has granted us a powerful tool to connect with him and influence the world around us.

The thief in Israel thought he was just stealing stones, but perhaps (just perhaps!) these stones had been affected by the people throwing them and by their surroundings.

The only time the Torah ever tells us to distance ourselves from something is in relation to falsehood. (Shemot 23:7).

In telling the truth we emulate our Creator regarding whom it says: "The seal of G-d is truth" (Shabbat 55a).

The Sefer Chassidim (Sefer Chassidim s. 47) writes that one who speaks only truth can actually change destiny by decreeing something to happen—and it will.

Remember words are free; it's how you use them that may cost you!

As we end the book of Bamidbar and enter the book of Devarim (words) let us think before we speak, enhance the words that come out into the open and enrich our surroundings and the world we live in. ■

## RABBI AHARON GABBAY - KOLLEL ZICHRON CHANA RACHEL - JERUSALEM

DVAR  
TORAH



### WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND

we are introduced to a new concept of Galut (exile) regarding one who kills unintentionally; they must flee to a city of refuge where they will be safe and must remain there for a certain amount of time. This will act as an atonement for their deeds.

Based on this, the Gemara in Makkot (10b) shows how Hashem conducts our world. The Gemara brings a parable: In two separate events, Reuven murders deliberately which is punishable by death and Shimon murders accidentally which is punishable by exile. There were however no witnesses to the murders therefore neither can be punished by a court of law. Hashem 'invites' both murderers into a hotel. Reuven, who killed on purpose, sits under a ladder and Shimon, who

killed by accident, falls off the ladder killing Reuven accidentally; this time in full view of witnesses. Both Reuven, who deserved to be killed and Shimon, who deserved to go to exile now receive their rightful punishment.

The Gemara continues, that when a person chooses a path in this world, Hashem will lead him that way regardless of the consequences. The Gemara even brings an example from one of the most wicked people in Jewish history, Bilam. He wanted to curse the whole Jewish nation bringing sorrow amongst the children of Israel. When Bilam was addressed by Hashem, he was told "get up and go" implying that if that is the path you want to take, so be it.

Rabbi Shmuel Eidels, better known as the Maharshah, goes deeper into this concept. He explains that every thought, speech and action in this world, whether it is good or bad, will create you an angel for yourself in respect to that deed you have done. This angel will in turn aid you further with the very same deed he was created with and lead you to do more of that deed. Subsequently, you will be creating a, so to speak, army of angels corresponding to all your deeds in this world.

This opens up a new understanding to the Mishnah in Avot (4:2) which states: "Ben Azai says, one should run to pursue a minor mitzvah, and flee from an avera (transgression). For a mitzvah brings another mitzvah, and an avera brings another avera". When you bring yourself to do a mitzvah, each component, the thought, the speech and the action will create an angel. These angels will work together for the sole purpose that they were created for and ensure that you do many more mitzvot. However, the aforementioned is also true with averot, even with averot these angels will carry out their task and see to it that you continue sinning.

When you make certain decisions and lead a certain path in your life, it can make a phenomenal impact on your spiritual growth. Each and every deed has a vital contribution and throughout your journey in this world you will build and destroy bridges which can have an endless effect. This will build you as a person and define who you really are. May Hashem bless us only to make the right decisions and choose good in this world. ■

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## OUR CHACHAMIM

### RABBI ISHMAEL BEN ELISHA

Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha, the fellow student of Rabbi Akiva, was for most of the time his opponent in Halachic discussions. He descended from a princely family, and his grandfather, who like him was named Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha, was one of the last High Priests, dying a martyr's death with Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel the prince.

As a boy, Rabbi Ishmael was brought to Rome in captivity. Later on when Rabbi Joshua ben Hanania came to Rome, he was told that there was a Jewish boy in prison of great ability and wondrous beauty. Rabbi Joshua managed to get to the prison and cried out, "Who delivered Jacob to plunder and Israel to looters?" (Isaiah 42:24). Then the boy responded with the rest of verse: "Was it not the L-RD, He against Whom we have sinned? They did not wish to go in His ways and did not listen to His Torah." When Rabbi Joshua heard that, he said, "This child will surely become a great teacher in Israel. I will not stop before redeeming him, whatever the ransom demanded for his release." And that's exactly what he did. He took the boy away with him into his country, and before long Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha became one of the greatest teachers of Israel (Gittin 58a). He was 13 years old when Rabbi Nechunya ben Hakanah became his teacher. Later on, he was among the great scholars that assembled at Yavneh around Rabban Gamliel the prince.

It is to Rabbi Ishmael that we owe the "Thirteen Rules of Interpretation" that we recite in our daily prayers. Rabbi Akiva and he are called "the fathers of the world." Both of them were very experienced in medicine. They traveled together often across the country and healed sicknesses. Rabbi Ishmael's charity is greatly praised, as he provided poor girls with clothes and finery so that they could more easily get married. When he died, all the girls of Israel wept for him. He fed women whose husbands had to go off to war, and everywhere that he saw Talmudic scholars in need, he provided them with everything they required. His mother venerated him to such a point that she wanted to drink the water that he had washed his feet in, but he did not allow her to do so. We have already mentioned above that he possessed great beauty, yet his wisdom exceeded even his physical splendor. ■



## HALACHOT

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR

#### MAY A KOHEN WORK FOR HATZALAH, OR INSPECT A BODY TO PREVENT AN AUTOPSY?

It is forbidden for Kohanim to contract Tum'at Met – the status of impurity that results from contact with a human corpse. The Halachic authorities addressed the question of whether it would be permissible for a Kohen to volunteer for an emergency medical corps, such as Hatzalah. A person working as an emergency medical responder is likely to come in contact with a human corpse, Heaven forbid. In light of this likelihood, is it forbidden for a Kohen to volunteer for such services?

The Shebet Halevi (Rav Shemuel Vosner, contemporary) rules that a Kohen may volunteer for Hatzalah, as long as he exercises caution and tries to avoid contact with a human corpse. If he tries to avoid Tum'at Met, then it is permissible to join emergency ambulance services, and it would in fact be considered a Misva for him to do so. Of course, in situations where a Kohen's involvement could save a life, then he is certainly allowed and required to intervene, even if this poses the risk of becoming Tameh. Just as one may violate Shabbat and eat and Yom Kippur when this is necessary for Piku'ah Nefesh (saving a life), similarly, a Kohen may come in contact with Tum'at Met for the purpose of saving a life.

The Hatam Sofer (Rabbi Moshe Sofer of Pressburg, 1762-1839) addressed the situation of a Jew who had passed away, and the coroner insisted on determining the precise cause of death. If the cause of death could not be definitively determined through an external inspection, then the coroner would order an autopsy. As it turned out, the only available physician who was capable of determining the cause of death was a Kohen. The Hatam Sofer ruled that the Kohen was allowed to – and in fact should – inspect the body in order to prevent the autopsy. This situation, the Hatam Sofer explained, was no different than that of a "Met Misva," where a Kohen is the only person available to bury a body, in which case he is allowed, and even required, to perform the burial. Here, too, the Kohen is needed to ensure the body's immediate burial and avoid disgrace, and therefore he should inspect the body, even though he would then become Tameh.

These Halachot should remind us of the need for Kohanim to consult with Rabbis on all matters involving situations of possible contact with a corpse, to determine when it is forbidden, permissible, or even obligatory to come in contact with a corpse.

**Summary:** It is permissible – and even a Misva – for a Kohen to serve on an emergency ambulance corps, provided that he exercise care to try and avoid contact with human corpses. If a body needs to be inspected to determine cause of death and thereby avoid an autopsy, and the only available doctor to perform the inspection is a Kohen, he is allowed and even urged to inspect the body, even though he would thus become Tameh. ■

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- ❶ What holy vessels accompanied the Jewish People into battle?
- ❷ Besides removing traces of forbidden food, what else is needed to make metal vessels obtained from a non-Jew fit for a Jewish owner?
- ❸ During the conquest of the Land, where did Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven position themselves?
- ❹ What length was the camp in the midbar?
- ❺ Why is the kohen gadol blamed for accidental deaths?

**Answer**

❶ 31:6 - The aron and the tiztz. ❷ 31:23 - Immersion in a mikveh. ❸ 32:17 - At the head of the troops. ❹ 33:49 - Twelve mil. ❺ 35:25 - He should have prayed that such things not occur.

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