

# THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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## RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR  
TAL



### LEAVING A TRUE LEGACY!

Since the day Adam Harishon was created and then moved on to the higher worlds, a theory about life has been made. Everyday people take their lives for granted. But after they have faced mortal loss or life-threatening situations, their attitude towards life change.

They soon come to understand that the gift of life is to be appreciated and not taken for granted.

There may be no single thing that can teach us more about life - than death itself!

A person can live until 120 years of age—and die leaving no legacy, making it as if he never existed. A person can build monuments to himself, but they will only matter to the pigeons after he is long gone if what he started wasn't worth continuing. But a person can die young, G-d forbid, and is eternal by leaving something eternal behind.

"For the living know that they shall die" (Kohelet 9:5): these are the righteous who in their death are called living ... "But the dead know nothing" (Shmuel 2:23:20): these are the wicked who in their lifetime are called dead. (Berachot18a).

How can a person who is physically dead still be considered alive? Why would a person who is physically alive be considered dead?

It all comes down to what you consider to be life and what you consider to be death.

The Torah defines both:

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore choose life that you may live, you and your seed, to love G-d your G-d, to listen to His voice and to cleave to Him. For that is your life and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land which G-d swore to your fathers, to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Yaakov, to give them. (Devarim 30:19-20)

The creation of man testifies to the eternal life of the soul. The Torah says, "And the Almighty formed the man of dust from the ground, and He blew into his nostrils the SOUL of life" (Bereishit 2:7). On this verse, the Zohar states that "one who blows, blows from within himself," indicating that the soul is actually part of G-d's essence. Since G-d's essence is completely spiritual and non-physical, it is impossible that the soul should die. (The Chizkuni says this why the verse calls it "soul of LIFE.")

That's what King Solomon meant when he wrote, "The dust will return to the ground as it was, and the spirit will return to G-d who gave it." (Kohelet 12:17)

What brought death into the world in the first place? The distance created between man and G-d from the first sin back in the Garden of Eden. Separation from G-d is like pulling the plug of an electrical appliance out of an electrical socket. Won't it die?

Cleaving to G-d is life itself. But, not just the kind that keeps the body functioning, but the kind of life that allows a person to live beyond his physical limitations so that even after his body has expired his life has not. That is a person's true legacy.

The Torah informs us of Miriam's death immediately after enumerating the laws of the Para Aduma, (red heifer) whose ashes were used for purification. ►

28<sup>TH</sup> NISSAN 5779

SHABBAT BEGINS: 8:08 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 9:27 PM

> MAZAL TOV

Naomi Sassoon & Daniel Ragol Levy  
on their engagement

”

THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"A person accomplishes more  
with patience than all the  
anger in the world."

> UPCOMING EVENTS

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Student Friday Night Dinner
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DVAR TORAH

Leaving true legacy!  
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

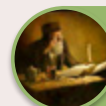
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This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

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The Gemara asks why is the death of Miriam juxtaposed to the laws of the Para Aduma?

To teach that just as the Para Aduma brings atonement, so too, the death of the righteous brings atonement. (Mo'ed Katan 28a)

In what way does the death of Tzadikim atone for the people?

The principal benefit that comes from the death of Tzadikim is the spiritual and moral awakening that takes place after they pass away. When a Tzadik is alive, his acts of kindness and generosity are not always public knowledge. True Tzadikim do not promote themselves. On the contrary, they often take great pains to conceal their virtues and charitable deeds. It is not uncommon that we become aware of their true greatness and nobility of spirit only after they are no longer with us. Only then do we hear reports of their selfless deeds and extraordinary sensitivity, and we are inspired to emulate their ways. In this way, the positive impact of the righteous as inspiring role models increases after their death.

Our sages explain that this was the case in regards to the two sons of Aharon (Nadav and Avihu) that are mentioned in this week's parsha as passing away.

The Torah presents a strange "conversation" between Moshe and Aharon (Parshat Shemini):

"Then Moshe said to Aharon, This is what G-d said: "I will be sanctified in those that come near to Me (bikrovai ekadeish), and before all the people I will be glorified (ekaveid)." And Aharon was silent." (10:3)

Moshe told Aharon that he knew something was going to happen on this auspicious day and thought that it would happen to himself or to Aharon. Only now did he realise how special Aharon's sons were, for it was them that were sanctified.

It was only after they passed away that Moshe realised how holy they really were.

This also helps explain the first Pasuk in our parsha where it says "And G-d spoke to Moshe after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they drew near before the L-rd, and they died."

Why does the Torah need to mention the fact that they died twice? If G-d spoke to Moshe after their death, surely we don't need to be told "and they died".

Our Sages explain that there is the initial time when a person is told that someone has passed away, the myriads of thoughts and memories of that person enter one's mind. But then there is a further long term effect, where after a person has internalised all, he/she will hear so many stories and amazing events that the deceased was part of.

The death of the sons of Aharon was not just a normal death, it was a death that had a long term effect and the longer time went on the more people understood what amazing personalities the Bnei Yisrael had really lost.

Always show appreciation. What's taken for granted will eventually be taken away. Then you end up missing most what you least appreciated.

### ■ Shabbat Shalom

## RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM - SHALOM LAAM DIASPORA



### GIVING OR TAKING?

The Torah teaches us a lot about the commandment, incumbent upon a man, of getting married. Due to its importance, the mitzvah "to be fruitful and multiply" is the first commandment to be mentioned in the Torah. Getting married, building a relationship with our spouse, and establishing the next generation is our main agenda. Nevertheless, in this week's perashah we find many restrictions as to whom a person may marry. Many relationships, especially those of close family are prohibited.

This is a very interesting scenario. Unlike other positive commandments or prohibitions, where an action is either permitted or forbidden, here we find that the Torah advocates marital relationships, yet it qualifies which ones are suitable and which ones not.

The Seforno (Acharei Mot 18:6) explains that in fact it would be advantageous to choose a marriage partner from close family. Being that they are "closer to home" in mentality, nuances, ideas, ways of doing things etc., one would be more naturally attracted to them. Nevertheless, the Torah forbade many of these relationships as it does not want people to build relationships based on lust and desire. Such a relationship, where the spouses are only thinking about what they can take from their marriage would not produce good results. It comes out that the difference between a relationship being permitted or forbidden depends upon the thoughts and intentions with which it will probably be made. If lust and desire are the main drive in one's marriage, the relationship will be one of "self-centred" kindness – being "kind" to oneself by feeding one's desires. Such a relationship will never provide any meaning or satisfaction. They have "missed the boat" understanding what marriage is about – an emotional relationship. This being so, the only way that a relationship will provide true emotional and physical nourishment, is when both partners enter it in order to do genuine kindness, i.e. for the other one. Then, when each one gives, there will be

a receiver, thereby giving a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction to the giver.

Although we say that our relationships should be built on giving and not on taking for ourselves, nevertheless, the receiver of any kindness should graciously accept it. If instead, one just allows it to be given, or, refuses to receive it altogether, the giver's sensation of fulfilment will be dampened, which is the opposite of giving. I will never forget, as a guest, that I once spent time and energy selecting some delicious chocolates to give my hosts. When I presented them with the chocolates as thanks for their hospitality, their reaction was: "Oh, you really didn't need to, it wasn't necessary". What a "let-down" I felt!

Let us try and discern if our relationships are truly ones of giving, or if we are just granting ourselves our desires, lusts and satisfactions under the guise of an altruistic relationship.

### ■ Shabbat shalom

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## OUR CHACHAMIM

### RABBI NAHUMKE OF HORODNO

Many previously unfamiliar cities are famous today because of the Rabbis, Gaonim, and Tzaddikim that lived in them, yet Horodno (Grodno) is the only city to have become famous because of a Gabbai. This Gabbai was Rabbi Menachem Nahum, or as he was affectionately known, Rabbi Nahumke of Horodno.

Rabbi Nahumke was one of the greatest Tzaddikim of his generation, as well as one of the most generous. Not wanting to draw any profit from his studies, he was content with being the Gabbai of Horodno.

In all of Russia, there was no such thing as a Jewish child who had not heard of Rabbi Nahumke. With respect and veneration, children told one another marvelous stories about this Gabbai who was a Tzaddik. People spoke of his birth, his childhood, his youth, as well as his greatness in Torah, his integrity, and his humility. Stories abounded concerning his extraordinary qualities, his goodness, and his heart filled with compassion for all.

We will describe this exceptional man, who in a semi-miraculous way and with unrivaled persistence reached the greatest spiritual heights.

Nahum was a beautiful, charming, and healthy child like all the other children in the village, but more intellectually developed than those of his age. When he grew older and needed to be taught Torah, no tutor could be found for him in the village. Hence his father Uziel brought him to the distillery, and with each spare moment he taught him how to read the prayer book. The child learned the prayers and the beginning of the Chumash very quickly, but his father could not teach him more because that was all the Torah he knew.

However the child's yearning for Torah study knew no bounds. Having no other choice, Nahum left the village and traveled nearby to the tiny city of Beissigola, and there he entered the Beit Midrash in the hopes of finding a Jew who wanted to teach him Torah. That same day a famous Chazan, accompanied by a choir, arrived in town. Since Nahum had a nice voice that was pleasing to the Chazan, he brought the boy with him. It was in this way that he left the region of his birthplace and traveled throughout the country. With the Chazan, he passed by different towns until one day he arrived in the city of Mir. There, he left the Chazan and his choir and ran to the great yeshiva. He opened the door slightly and saw hundreds of young people studying Torah with a pleasing melody. He was filled with jealousy for not being able to enter and learn, swearing at that point to someday return and study Torah there.

One day, a wealthy Jew from the city of Nischwitz arrived in Mir, and he chose Rabbi Nahum to marry his daughter. When he arrived at his father-in-law's place, a special room was reserved for him where he could devote himself to Torah as much as he wanted without disruption. Rabbi Nahum devoted the greater part of his time to Torah study, and for several hours each day he occupied himself with charitable causes. He used to say, "Whoever spends their time solely in study, without paying attention to the suffering of those around him, will not succeed in his study. It is only when a person devotes himself both to Torah study and good deeds that he will develop a taste for Torah, which is a Torah of life and a Torah of man."



## HALACHOT

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR

### RESPECTING ONE'S STEPPARENTS; RESPECTING SIBLINGS

Just as the Torah requires respecting one's parents, so must one show respect to his parent's spouse, even if the spouse is not his biological parent, as long as the parent is alive. The Gemara in Masechet Ketubot (103) infers this Halacha from the verse, "Kaved Et Abicha Ve'et Imecha" ("Respect your father and your mother"), as the word "Et" in the phrase "Et Abicha" alludes to one's father's spouse, and the word "Et" in the phrase "Et Imecha" alludes to one's mother's spouse.

After the parent passes on, one is not strictly required to continue respecting the parent's spouse, but it is certainly proper to do so.

Furthermore, one is obligated to show respect to all his older siblings – both brothers and sisters. This applies even to older siblings with whom one shares only the same father or only the same mother. Even if a younger brother is a Torah scholar, he must show respect to his older siblings. According to some opinions, this obligation continues even after the parents are deceased.

Of course, the respect that is required for one's older siblings is less than the respect that is required for one's parent. Thus, for example, Hacham Ovadia Yosef writes in Halichot Olam (p. 163; listen to audio recording for precise citation) that one may call his older siblings by their first name, as opposed to parents, whom one may not call by their name. If an older brother is a Rabbi, the younger siblings should call him "Rabbi," but may use his first name. An example of the type of respect required for an older brother is standing when an older brother is called for an Aliya to the Torah in the synagogue.

The Kesef Mishneh (commentary to the Rambam's Mishneh Torah by Maran Rav Yosef Karo, author of the Shulhan Aruch), commenting to the Rambam's discussion in Hilchot Mamrim (end of chapter 6), writes that the requirement to respect older siblings was enacted by the Sages, and does not constitute a Torah obligation. This is as opposed to the requirement to respect stepparents, which is included in the Torah obligation of respecting parents. On this basis, Hacham Ovadia Yosef writes that if a conflict arises between these obligations, the respect owed to a stepparent supersedes the respect owed to an older sibling, as Torah obligations override those enacted by Hazal. And thus if one must choose between respecting one's stepparent and respecting an older sibling – such as if they have conflicting wishes, and one must choose one over the other – he should respect the stepparent.

**Summary:** The Torah obligation of respecting parents includes respecting a stepparent – one's parent's spouse who is not one's biological parent. There is also a requirement enacted by the Sages to respect one's older siblings, including both brothers and sisters, and including half-brothers and half-sisters. Nevertheless, one may call an older sibling by their name. Even a younger brother who is a Torah scholar must show respect to his older siblings. ■

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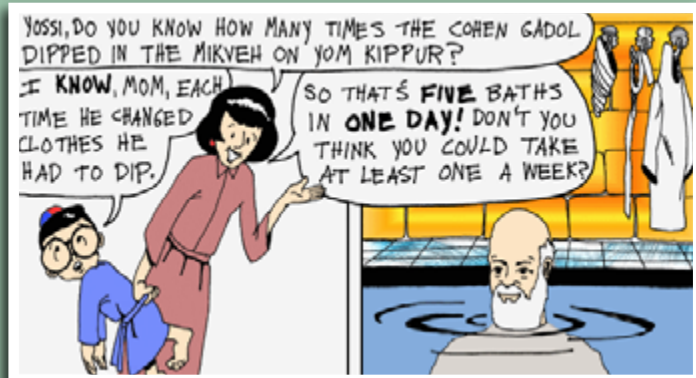
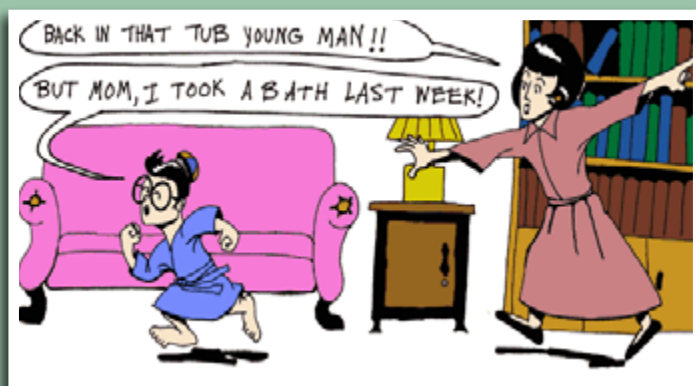
## TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 Where were the fats of the chatat burned?
- 2 Who is solely responsible for attaining atonement for the Jewish People on Yom Kippur?
- 3 From one point in history, installation of the kohen gadol through anointing was no longer used but was conducted by donning the special garments of that office. From when and why?
- 4 What is the penalty of karet?
- 5 Which categories of animals must have their blood covered when they are slaughtered?

Answer

1 16:25 - On the outer mizbe'ach. 2 16:32 - The kohen gadol. 3 16:32 - Anointing ceased during the kingship of Yoshihu. At that time, the oil of anointing was hidden away. 4 17:9 -- One's offspring die and one's own life is shortened. 5 17:13 - Non-domesticated kosher animals and all species of kosher birds.

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