

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



LONDON'S LEADING PLATFORM FOR STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

This weeks Parasha is sponsored Lirfuat Rav Yona Ben Chava Betoeh Shaar Cholei Yisrael

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS!

I was watching closely as two of my students raged in a debate. It looked as if it was starting to get personal and eventually one of them yelled out 'put your money where your mouth is!'.
Interesting I thought, what's he going to do now?

My mind raced ahead, imagining the student taking out a few pound notes and putting towards his lips.

How weird I thought. Was this another statement yelled out in debate without real meaning?

Realising I was watching on, clueless at this statement, the student turned towards me to explain his words.

Rabbi, when we say put your money where your mouth is, we are saying: "if you really believe in your words then put some money on the table and let's take a bet over this. You believe your right so place £10 on the table. If I am proven right, I get the money, otherwise you get it back!"

Wow, I thought that's a great way to earn money! Of course I explained that we do not support betting in any format, and then I suggested to him a deeper explanation to this phrase.

Let me explain, I said.

Yossi was the friendliest guy in town, loved by all around. He courted a smiley face and always had words of encouragement. He was pious and G-d fearing.

Friends new whenever they had a problem, they could discuss it with Yossi, and after a few minutes, they would come out

believing all was for the best. "Don't Worry, Hashem loves you, He will take care of the situation. Have faith!" he would state.

Yossi was also the proud owner of the one and only Kosher Superstore in the town. Everyone bought there and profits were booming.

One day as Yossi walked through town, he was stunned. On one of the old stores there were blackened windows and a big sign: "New Super Kosher Market Opening here in two weeks!"

How dare they! He thought. What a cheek. He was the only kosher supermarket in town.

Now how would you react if you were Yossi?

Find out who the owner was, give him a call and discourage him? Speak to the Bet Din? Bad mouth the competition?

It's all very well to have faith and belief in Hashem....when we are not tested. It's great to constantly say we believe in Hashem and tell others all is in Hashem's hands and will be for the best, but what happens when there is a shock to the system and we are really tested ourselves? How do we react? Our Sages tell us that "No one hurts his finger in this world if such was not ordained from above" (Chulin 7b) and "No one can touch anything that was intended for someone else" (Yuma 38b.) everything is under G-ds control.

The Chazon Ish explains that there is a difference between Emuna and Bitachon.

The former represents the belief in Hashem and Hashgacha Pratit - divine providence. Bitachon requires that we act in accordance with our Emuna.

We have Emuna (we believe) that whatever will happen to me is the will of Hashem. Whether I survive or not is up to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and I cannot possibly suffer if this is not the wish of Hashem.

Everyone believes in Hashem.

Scientists are so dumbfounded about cells, that to date there is no real estimate of how many cells there are in the human body. One thing they all agree on is that there are trillions of atoms in a cell, and trillions of cells in the human body! Our body is a miracle!

Every day we are living that miracle. ►

19TH Iyar 5779

SHABBAT BEGINS: 8:40 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 10:07 PM

> MAZAL TOV

Hannah Sasson & Simon Rosenberg
on their engagement

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THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"No matter how long you have travelled in the wrong direction, you can always turn around."

> UPCOMING EVENTS

For our upcoming events
check our website
www.torahactionlife.com

• 8th JUNE
June Shavuot Learning Program

• 16th JUNE
Football Tournament



DVAR TORAH

Put your money where your mouth is!
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

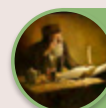
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Just take one human organ - the eye and look how it is a marvel of built-in engineering, combining reflected light, lens imaging capability, multiple lighting adjustments and information processing – all in the space of your eyeball. When working properly, the human eye converts light into impulses that are conveyed to the brain and interpreted as images. Experts estimate humans can distinguish roughly 10 million different colours!

Water is the life source of the planet. Over 70% of our Earth's surface is covered by water. Although water is seemingly abundant, the real issue is the amount of fresh water available. Roughly 97.5% of all water on Earth is salt water, leaving only 2.5% as fresh water. Nearly 70% of that fresh water is frozen in the icecaps of Antarctica and Greenland; most of the remainder is present as soil moisture, or lies in deep underground aquifers as groundwater not accessible to human use.

Less than 1% of the world's fresh water is accessible for direct human uses. This is the water found in lakes, rivers, reservoirs. Only this amount is regularly renewed by rain and snowfall, and is therefore available on a sustainable basis. Do we appreciate it? Do we realise what a miracle we are living in?

We believe in G-d! But how far does that belief translate into action?

This weeks Parsha, begins with the Mitzvah of Shemita. "Shesh Shanin Tizrah Sadecha"- six years you will plant your field... and on the seventh year, a sabbatical will be for the land, a sabbatical for Hashem (25:3-4).

The Kli Yakar brings numerous opinions explaining the reason of this mitzvah. Many explain that it allows the earth to rebuild itself in terms of its ability to provide the necessary nutrition for proper growth. However, he asks, if this mitzvah is simply an ecological consideration, why would the punishment for lack of observance be exile (see Behalotecha)?! Surely it should be the natural consequence of his actions- a depleted field producing a poor harvest? Furthermore, how could this year be termed a "Shabbat laHashem"- a sabbatical for Hashem- is it not a sabbatical for the earth?!

The Kli Yakar explains that the fundamental purpose for the Mitzvah of Shemita is to instil in the Jewish people a deep and profound belief – Emuna AND Bitachon in G-d.

Upon leaving Egypt the Bnei Yisrael were sustained miraculously via the Manna for 40 years. When you are sustained miraculously it's easy to believe in G-d.

But upon entering the land of Israel, all would change. There they would farm the land, and depend on 'nature'. In this there lay a danger that the farmer's belief in G-d as provider would be diminished. He would focus his belief on his hard earned efforts and nature.

Thus Hashem commanded us with the Mitsva of Shemita – this would act as a constant reminder that the success of the land is indeed dependant solely on G-d and to recreate the feeling that we had in the desert that even if we leave the land alone completely, (if this is what Hashem wants), it will produce on the same level and even more that it did when we worked it.

This was the farmer's way of showing his Emuna AND Bitachon. He leaves himself completely at the mercy of Hashem realising everything emanates from the Almighty.

The world and society we grew up in provides us constantly with tests to our Emuna and Bitachon.

The person with Bitachon not only believes Hashem is running the world, but acts in conformance with that belief.

So, I turned to the student and finished saying, "do you put your money where your mouth is?"

■ Shabbat Shalom

RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM - SHALOM LAAM DIASPORA



DON'T ABUSE

This week's perashah discusses a prohibition common to business and speech: "When you sell an item to your friend, or you buy from your friend, do not exploit (overcharge or underpay) one another" (Behar 25:14). The Torah commands both the seller and the buyer to be straight with each other. The seller should not pretend that the price is more inflated than it really is. If he does so and the purchaser finds out, the sale in certain circumstances may be retracted. The same holds true for the buyer, if he finds a "great bargain" because the owner does not know it's real worth, he should not play on the innocence of the seller, claiming that he must know its real value.

When running a business, one is commanded not to deceive one's customers. Although he is not stealing money directly, as officially both

sides agreed to the terms of sale, he nevertheless has tricked the other person into it. When this person finds out, he will not be forgiving for having been exploited. Our Torah does not want us to gain through false or crooked ways. (Even in the event of unintentionally overcharging someone, one is still required to reimburse them.) A person must "make ends meet" by using his naturally-given talents with truth and integrity. As no-one wants to be tricked concerning a purchase; one should never do this to anyone else.

Three verses later, the Torah states that not only must one not exploit someone else financially, but also, not be abusive to them with one's comments. One may not say words which are hurtful or cause misery to one's friend. For example, one may not remind a repentant person about his bad ways of the past. If one's friend is looking for a certain product, do not mislead him by sending him to the wrong address. One may not go into a shop and ask the price of an object that one has no intention of buying

(unless he informs the shopkeeper of this).

The Torah's way is to live harmoniously with others, and not to abuse them financially or verbally. In fact, verbal abuse has greater ramifications than financial, and thus requires more care to avoid it, as people may become hurt even by the nuances of what we say.

In conclusion, let us not push ourselves forward at the expense of someone else. The way to build a mountain is not by digging a hole. The running of a business or any other endeavour must be done within the accepted norm. There is plenty of bounty available for G-d to shower upon a person without having to use wrong methods. When it comes to our finances and even to our speech, let us remember: yes, we need to gain, yes, we need to live, but let him also gain and live; that's only fair. By adopting such an approach, we will be building our mountain without encroaching on our friend's.

■ Shabbat shalom

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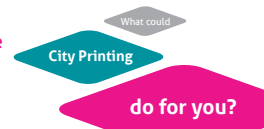
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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI SHLOMO ELIEZER ALFANDRI

Rabbi Shlomo Eliezer was one of the great sages of Sephardic Judaism. All the greats of the land came to see him – Ashkenaz Rabbis and Rebbees, as well as Sephardic Chachamim – in search of Torah.

He lived a long time, more than 100 years, and from his youth he corresponded with the greatest Gaonim of Israel, Rabbi Akiva Eiger and his son-in-law Rabbi Moshe Sofer.

Rabbi Shlomo was born in Constantinople (Istanbul), the capital of Turkey, into a renowned family. According to tradition, his family descended from Betzalel of the tribe of Judah, from which Sages and Rabbis of Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Izmir emerged. His father Rabbi Yaakov was known as a great G-d fearing scholar, yet he did not live a long time. At his death, Rabbi Shlomo was but a small boy.

The exact year of his birth is unknown, with some saying that he was born in 5586 (1826) and others saying in 5575 (1815).

He was first brought up by his mother, Hannah, a wise woman who was well-versed in the Torah. She had probably inherited this trait from her mother (Rabbi Shlomo's grandmother). She was very learned and filled with the knowledge of the Talmud and Poskim.

In his youth, Rabbi Shlomo Eliezer loved to isolate himself and study Torah without being disturbed. He would study all day long, late into the night, and he had no social life.

Still a young man, people predicted that he would one day become a Gaon. He possessed an extraordinary memory, a "cistern that does not lose a drop" of everything that he saw and heard. He witnessed many things in his life, for his diligence knew no limit. From time to time he would go to the Chachamim of Constantinople to hear their words of Torah, but the majority of his wisdom was due to his dedication to study. His name quickly became famous, and everyone knew that a new light shined in Constantinople.

At the age of 17 he married, and he had one son that died after a short time. For the rest of his life, he and his wife had no more children.

At the same time a wealthy resident of Constantinople built a special yeshiva for him, and great Talmidei Chachamim studied there, men who would become known, over the course of time, as great Torah scholars in Israel. Rabbi Haim Hizkiyahu Medini, the author of Sdei Hemed, was among them.

At about the age of 30, Rabbi Shlomo enjoyed great renown, and many people addressed him with questions of Halachah. His replies were short, concise, and categorical.

Even though he held firm opinions and possessed great courage and fervor for Torah and Judaism, he conducted himself with extreme humility. He wore neither a silk hat (as did the Chachamim), nor the customary apparel of the Rabbanim, but rather took care that his garments were clean and simple, like those of ordinary individuals.

He fought for education that was in conformity with the demands of the Torah. When some wanted to establish new schools in which secular subjects were to be taught instead of the Talmud, Chacham Alfandri (as he was known) went out to war against this idea. He published an open proclamation in which he stated: "If the Jewish people exist, it is precisely because of the Oral Law.

Without it, there would remain no trace of Israel, whereas thanks to the devoted study of the Oral Law, no people will be able to subjugate us." These words had a profound effect on all.

When the position of Rabbi in Damascus became vacant in 5659 (1899), the leaders of the community called upon Chacham Alfandri and asked him to become their Chief Rabbi. Despite his age, he accepted.

In 5664 (1904), Rabbi Shlomo Eliezer left for Eretz Israel and settled in Haifa. From there, the Chachamim and Rabbanim of Sefat invited him to become their Rav and Av Beit Din. He accepted this appointment and went to settle in Sefat.

A new period in his life began there. The aged lion surprised everyone who saw him by his vigor and sharp mind. All the great men of Torah came to him in order to hear his Torah and wisdom, and all who came into contact with him sensed that they were dealing with a holy man.

Legends of miracles and wonders began to circulate about him. The elders of Sefat recounted that during Nissan 1914, after having recited Birkat HaLevanah and his eyes were still turned upwards, Chacham Alfandri struck his hands together and he let out a deep sigh as tears flowed from his eyes. When he was asked the reason for this, he replied, "I see that a terrible world war will soon break out." At the end of that summer, the First World War began.

Chacham Alfandri spent his last years in Jerusalem, surrounded by a multitude of admirers and disciples. He was already more than 100 years old at that time, yet his mind was lucid and his vision clear. He didn't even need glasses.

In 5690 (1930) Rabbi Chaim Elazar Shapira (the Rebbe of Munkacz) came to meet him face to face. He even spoke with him using Sephardic Hebrew in order to better communicate with him. The Rebbe told him that he had learned from great Tzaddikim that the closeness of the Final Redemption depended primarily on the Tzaddik of the generation – if he would decree by the power of his Torah that Mashiach should arrive. This is why the Rebbe implored him to make such a decree. However Rabbi Shlomo Eliezer, in his humility, immediately replied: "I am not a Tzaddik." Upon hearing this, the Rebbe burst into tears.

This conversation took place about eight days before his death. On Tuesday morning, the 22nd of Iyar 5690 (1930), he asked his disciples to envelope him with his Tallit and to put his two pairs of Tefillin upon him, on his arm and head (according to the custom of the Sephardic Chachamim). He immediately recited Shema, and when he came to the word emet [truth], he signaled his disciples to remove his Tefillin. He then said, "Enough, enough. The main thing is emet. I can no longer continue..." and his soul departed in holiness and purity. By one estimate, he was 115 years old at the time.

Multitudes attended his funeral, and shops closed down as the rabbinical courts of Jerusalem decreed a stop to the workday. There were no eulogies given at his funeral, but multitudes from the Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities followed his coffin in tears.

His disciples carried his coffin on their shoulders all the way from his home in the Ruhama district to the summit of the Mount of Olives. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

WRITING ON SHABBAT – FINGERPRINTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, WRITING ON WINDOWS OR IN THE AIR, PENS WITH TEMPORARY INK

Hacham Ovadia Yosef ruled that taking fingerprints is forbidden on Shabbat, as it falls under the prohibition of writing. By the same token, taking a photograph would also violate this prohibition.

The Torah prohibition of writing on Shabbat is violated by writing two or more letters, though writing even just one letter is forbidden Mi'de'rabbanan – by Rabbinic enactment. Hacham Ovadia notes that if one writes on Shabbat one letter and there is carbon paper underneath such that the letter appears on two different pieces of paper, one has transgressed the Torah prohibition, since he produced two letters.

It is forbidden on Shabbat to write with one's finger in the condensation of windows, though making a line, without forming letters, is permissible.

Hacham Ovadia ruled that if one smokes a cigarette on Yom Tob, and as the fire burns the cigarette it erases the name of the company printed on the cigarette, this does not violate the prohibition of erasing on Yom Tob. This kind of erasing would, in principle, be forbidden only Mi'de'rabbanan, and one may perform an act on Shabbat or Yom Tob that would inadvertently result in an unintended violation of a Rabbinic prohibition. Therefore, erasing letters on a cigarette by smoking does not violate the prohibition of erasing on Yom Tob, as the erasure is unintended. (It goes without saying that one should in any event refrain from smoking because of the damage it causes to one's health.)

Writing on Shabbat with one's weaker hand – the left hand, if one is right-handed – does not violate the Torah prohibition of writing, but is nevertheless forbidden Mi'de'rabbanan. Hacham Ovadia ruled that if one types with a typewriter on Shabbat, then he violates the Torah prohibition of writing regardless of which hand he uses, as long as he types in the normal manner of typing.

One should not make letters on Shabbat in a liquid that spilled, even though the shape of the letters will last for only a very brief moment.

It is entirely permissible on Shabbat to make the motion of writing letters in the air, since this does not create any form of the letters, even temporarily.

Writing on Shabbat with ink that disappears after a period of time is forbidden Mi'de'rabbanan, and does not violate the Torah prohibition of writing. Therefore, Hacham Ovadia advised that doctors who need to write prescriptions or other important medical information on Shabbat for a seriously ill patient should use the "Shabbat pens" with temporary ink, in order to avoid the Torah prohibition of writing on Shabbat.

Summary: Taking fingerprints or photographs on Shabbat is considered writing and thus forbidden. It is forbidden on Shabbat to write in the condensation that forms on windows, or in liquid, even though the letters remain for only a brief moment. It is permissible to make the motion of writing in the air. Doctors who need to write prescriptions for seriously ill patients on Shabbat should, if possible, use the special "Shabbat pens" that have temporary ink. ■

MONDAY NIGHT SERIES

I always feel welcome in Rabbi Tawil's house. The Monday night series and shiurs are so interesting and I meet new people every time. It is an amazing experience to listen with lovely talks and meet new people.

By Sarah Massias

KidsTime



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 If a home in a walled city is sold, when can it be redeemed?
- 2 What does the word "days" mean in this week's Parsha?
- 3 What is considered a walled city?
- 4 What is the definition of a "ger toshav"?
- 5 To what is one who leaves Eretz Yisrael compared?

Answers:
 1 25:29 - Only within the first year after the sale. Afterwards, even in yovel, it does not return. 2 25:29 - The days of an entire year. 3 25:29 - A city that has been surrounded by a wall since the time of Yehoshua. 4 25:35 - A non-Jew who lives in Eretz Yisrael and accepts upon himself not to worship idols. 5 25:38 - To one who worships idols.

Answer

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