

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



THE CHOICE IS OURS

The story is told about a man that didn't believe in free will. After 120 years he went up to heaven and was met with two paths in front of him. The first had a sign saying "Believers in predestination" and the second said "Believers in free will".

Needless to say, he chooses the first and goes down a long path. Finally, he arrives at a large brick wall up to the Shamayim and a small door. He knocks on the door and an angel appears asking him, 'What brings you to my door, mortal?' And the man says, 'Well, there were these two signs, and I chose the one that said predestination.' The angel says, "You chose it? You can't come in here" and slams the door. The man is heartbroken.

Finally, he trudges back to the crossroads and goes down the other road. Eventually he comes to another giant wall and a door that says 'FREE WILL.' He knocks and another angel opens the door and says, "Why did you come this way, mortal?" And the man says, "I had no choice!"

We believe that free will lies at the essence of our existence. Hashem has placed us here with the ability to decide our actions. He has created a world of reward and punishment that is governed by our free will.

In this week's Parasha, we learn a great lesson in how much we are supposed to appreciate this free will. When a person came to the Bet Hamikdash to offer up a Korban, his (together with the Kohen's) intentions had to be clear and focused on the special mitzvah. All Korbanot were the same. Nevertheless the Torah seems to go out

of its way and single out the Korban Todah (thanksgiving offering) to mention the importance of good intention when being offered up. (22:29) - it should be offered up willingly.

Every Korban had to be offered up to Hashem with good intent. Why does the Pasuk single out the Korban Todah? The Korban Todah was brought as a thanksgiving to Hashem for saving the person from one of four things. (Release from jail, getting better from serious illness, safely travelling across the sea and wilderness).

The Oneg Yom Tov explains that the word Toda - thanks comes from the word Modeh - to admit.

One can only admit something that is able to deny.

Let us take a thought for a moment.

Hashem's power is infinite and the whole world is full of His presence. How is it possible for man to sin with Hashem there at the same time? How is it possible for Hashem to be present and allow man to sin?

This is one of the greatest kindness of Hashem that in order for us to have free will, He enables us to go against His will. When something bad happens and someone survives, they have two paths in front of them. They can use their extra life to enjoy the physicalities of this world or they can focus that extra life on serving Hashem. The person that brings the Todah admits and shows his love of Hashem.

This is the meaning to our Pasuk; Lirtsonechem Tizbechu - we are acknowledging the gift of free will. We thank (Toda) Hashem for the free will that he has given us even whilst He is present.

So how should we guide our free will?

The Torah teaches that 3 types of domesticated animals were offered as Korbanot (sacrifices) in the temple - the cattle, the sheep and the goats. These 3 are mentioned in our Parasha. (22:27)

The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Emor) has a fascinating insight as to why these three animals were given the merit to be offered up and stand as a merit for Am Yisrael. ►

> MAZAL TOV TO

Eleanor Segall & Robert Mandelstam
on their engagement

Charlie & Orly Gabbay
on the engagement of their daughter Biba
to Yehudah Cope

” THE WEEKLY QUOTE
“The single greatest thing you can do to change your life right now would be to start being grateful for what you have today.”

> UPCOMING EVENTS

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11th May (More info check online)
- FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT
10th June 2018 (More info check online)



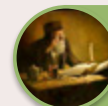
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The ox – Shor, was in the merit of Avraham. When the 3 angels arrived at his house as guests, he ran to the flock and chose a calf (young ox). The sheep - Kesev was in the merit of Yitschak. At the Akeida (binding of Isaac) Avraham was eventually told not to offer his son up.

Instead, he looked up and found the ram.

The Ez – goat was in merit of Yakov. Rivka commanded Yakov to get two goats so that she would cook for Yitschak tasty food and he would bless Yakov (thinking he was Eisav).

Rabbi Yehuda Leb Eidel (lyeh Hayam) asks we can understand why Avraham and Yitschak actions are a merit for their children, but why are Yakov's actions- which essentially were deceiving- a merit for his children? Yakov wore the goats skin as a means to deceive his father – is that a merit?

R Yehudah Leb gives a fascinating answer. When Rivka approached Yakov with the idea, he was frightened. He stated that Eisav is an Ish Sair – literally hairy, VeAnochi Ish Chalak – and I am smooth.

On a deeper level, Yakov was saying that Eisav always attributes everything to Seir – demons and idols, whereas I attribute everything to Hashem. Surely, he said to Rivka, Yitschak will realise. Rivka responded and calmed his fears and Yakov dressed in the goat's skin.

When we delve deeper, we see that Yakov had a much better option to 'deceive' his father.

When Yakov came in to his father, he was asked how come he managed to prepare the food so quick. He answered it was because Hashem had caused things to be quick. This triggered some doubt in Yitzchak's mind. If Eisav was before him, how come he mentioned G-d's Name – something he didn't usually do?

It was only then that Yitschak asked him to draw near so that he could feel him to check it was really Eisav.

Surely Yakov could have initially responded by attributing his swiftness to the idols (seirim). If that would have been the case, perhaps Yitschak would have never had any doubt and wouldn't have needed to feel him.

Why didn't Yakov chose this path? R Yehudah Leb explains that Yakov was a man of truth. Lying was not his nature. He had to attribute all to Hashem. He would rather dress in goat's skin and be put in a predicament than to miss out mentioning Hashem's Divine providence. This, explains R Yehudah, is the reason that goats were offered up and stood as a merit and reminder to Yakov's testimony of Hashem's Divine providence in all.

When we guide our free will in the right direction, the effect is eternal. ■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI YITZCHAK HACHOEN TAWIL - MIR KOLEL, JERUSALEM

DVAR
TORAH



PARASHA INSIGHTS

"Tell the Kohanim descendants of Aharon, and you shall say to them, he may not defile himself in contact with a deceased amongst his people" (21:1).

Our Parsha opens up with the laws that apply exclusively to the Kohen, due to his special spiritual class. The Torah prohibits a Kohen to defile himself with the dead. Apart from prohibiting direct physical contact with the dead there are also many detailed Torah laws that govern the conduction of impurity from the deceased.

A most common example is "Tumat Ohel" [the defilement of the tent or house], that if a roof [or tree] overhangs part of the dead corpse, the impurity spreads out to the entire area under the roof. Kohanim must therefore beware of entering a house in which there is a deceased Jewish corpse, and are forbidden

to enter a graveyard. Similarly they must keep away from any trees that branch over a grave or corpse. These laws are exclusive to Kohanim, and do not apply to other sectors of the Jewish community.

Rashi notes the double expression with which the Torah informs Kohanim not to defile themselves with the dead: "tell the Kohanim... and you shall say to them". He quotes to us the Talmud Yevamoth [114a] that quite apart from commanding the Kohanim to keep themselves pure, the Torah is also instructing the Kohanim to say over and warn their young children to keep away from the graveyard and from any contact with the deceased.

Although a child is not responsible for his actions until he becomes Bar or Bat Mitzvah, it is the duty of every father to educate his child and regulate him with Torah Study and Mitzvot.

Furthermore the Talmud learns from a combination of verses that we are forbidden to feed or directly propose any Torah prohibition to a Jewish child. The Tur explains that the extra warning and care that is explicitly required by our verse implies that even if we see a little Kohen child innocently heading of his own accord towards having contact with something

that may defile him, we are commanded to take the effort and perform our utmost to go and separate him from defilement!

The necessity for the Torah to increase warning and command concerning maintaining the purity of the Kohen stems both from the high spiritual class of the Kohen, and also from the fact that these laws are exclusive to the Kohen. When the Kohen child sees his religious Jewish friends running and playing behind the graveyard and there are overhanging trees, without even thinking he innocently runs and plays together with them - he needs to be specially taught and trained that he is different from them in regards to this issue. The most effective education is by example, and concerning our Mitzvah the training needs to be strong enough to counteract the fact that the Kohen's very own close friends justly act in a different and permissive manner regarding these laws! It is much harder to discipline against the current and the Torah needs to add a special command to strengthen this education! ■

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI SHIMON BAR YOCHAI

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was one of the most remarkable men to have ever lived. Very few in number are those individuals whom his contemporaries, as well as his posterity, have held in such high esteem. In the era in which he lived, people would oftentimes say, "Happy are the days in which a man like Shimon bar Yochai can be found." And today there are still tens of thousands of Jews that journey to his tomb on the anniversary of his passing (Iyar 18, Lag BaOmer) to pray there.

Through his own efforts, this great man raised himself out of a position of the greatest hardship. In Jerusalem, it is said that Rabbi Akiva refused to admit Rabbi Shimon as one of his students, and that he only did so after making him take an exam. His father Yochai had been on the Roman side during the terrible time in which Emperor Hadrian had ordered the Jews persecuted (Pesachim 112a). This is probably the reason why Rabbi Akiva refused to take in the young Rabbi Shimon among his students. Yet, all the same, Rabbi Shimon managed to stand out among all the students and thus become (along with his companions Rabbi Jose, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehudah, and Rabbi Nechemia) one of the pillars of Torah.

As opposed to his father, Rabbi Shimon was pursued by the Romans and condemned to death. The situation was so serious that he, along with his son Rabbi Eliezer, had to hide in a cave for 13 years where together they studied Torah

incessantly. After the death of Emperor Hadrian, he was sent to Rome by his fellow Jews. There he succeeded in curing an imperial princess from a serious illness, at which time Emperor Antoninus suspended Hadrian's decrees.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai also attained importance in a domain other than the study of Talmud. He achieved a profound understanding of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism), of which he became the main guide. When we say that he was the author of the holy Zohar, one should nevertheless not take this to mean that he himself wrote it, but rather that it was the Sages after him who did so. His son and his students received their understanding from him, so well in fact that the Zohar carries the imprint of his spirit. One day, one of his students went abroad to devote himself to business. Returning some time later with great wealth, his former fellow students saw him and were seized with a desire to become wealthy, and so they also wanted to give up on their studies and go off in search of riches. When Rabbi Shimon learned of this, he brought his students to a vast plane. There he prayed to G-d that He cover the entire area with gold, and it was so. "The one whose heart clings to gold," said their teacher, "should take what he wants. But know that the one who now takes of this gold loses his share in eternal life." No hands reached out to take the gold, and his students abandoned the idea of exchanging the precious good of the Torah for gold (Midrash Rabba Pekudei). ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

ANSWERING KADISH AND AMEN DURING PESUKEH D'ZIMRA

The following Halachot were taught by Rav Gideon Ben Moshe regarding interrupting Tefila during Pesukeh D'zimra, from after Baruch She'amar until the end of Az Yashir. It is permitted to answer Barchu and at least the first five Amens of a Kadish, until "Da'amiran B'alma." It is also permitted to answer Amen to someone's Berachot, such as the Beracha on Talit or Tefilin, or the Hazan's Beracha at the end of Baruch She'amar.

The Halacha becomes more complex regarding answering while in the middle of Baruch She'amar. During the first half, there is no problem whatsoever, as it is merely verse of praise without a Beracha. There, one can answer anything- even the last Amens of Kadish, or "Baruch Hu U'varuch Shemo," which cannot be answered during the rest of Pesukeh D'zimra. However, during the second half of Baruch She'amar, which is actually one long Beracha, the Halacha is strict and prohibits interrupting to answer Amen to Berachot. For example, if the Hazan reaches the end before one completes the Beracha, he should not answer Amen to the Hazan's Beracha. One can only answer Devarim She'bikdusha-such as Barchu and Kedusha, which require a Minyan to recite. These Halachot are commonly known and are recorded in the charts at the back of the Siddurim.

However, Rav Gideon Ben Moshe added that the conventional understanding regarding interrupting during Yishtabach is flawed. Yishtabach is not an independent Beracha; it is a "Beracha Semucha L'haverta"-adjoined to Baruch She'amar. Therefore, the entire Yishtabach is one long Beracha from beginning to end, and it has the status of the second half of Baruch She'amar, and Amen may not be answered. According to Rav Ben Moshe, some Siddurim and the Halacha Berura, mistakenly understood that one can answer Amen during Yishtabach, based on a misreading of the Ben Ish Hai who compared Yishtabach to Baruch She'amar. ■

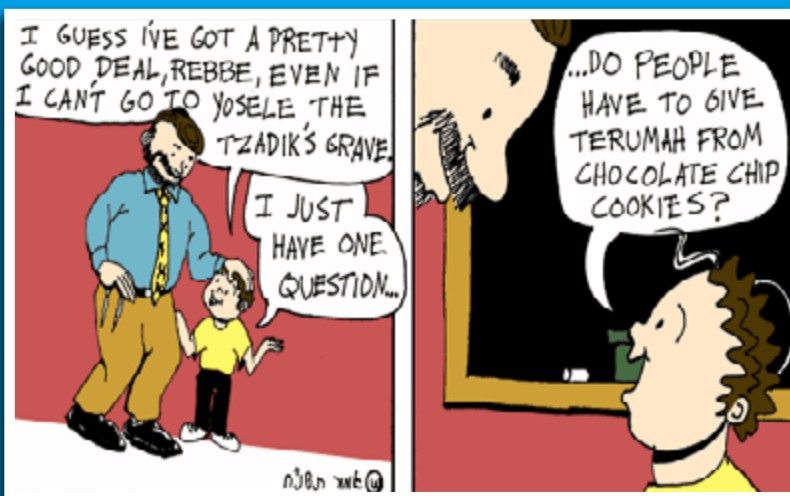


TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- Which male descendants of Aharon are exempt from the prohibition against contacting a dead body?
- Does a kohen have an option regarding becoming ritually defiled when his unmarried sister passes away?
- How does one honor a kohen?
- How does the Torah restrict the kohen gadol with regard to mourning?
- The Torah states in verse 22:3 that one who "approaches holy objects" while in a state of tumah (impurity) is penalized with excision. What does the Torah mean by "approaches"?

Answer

- 22:3 - Eats
- 22:3 - Eats
- 21:10-12 - He may not allow his hair to grow long.
- 21:3 - No, he is required to do so.
- 21:8 - He is first in a relationship forbidden to a kohen.
- 21:1 - Challah - those disqualified from the priesthood because they are descended from



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