

# THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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

## RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR  
TAL



### SHEMA – GIVE WITNESS!

There is a famous story of a traveller who visited one of the greatest rabbis of the last generation - the Chafetz Chaim.

The traveller entered the humble abode of the Chafetz Chaim and was astonished by the meagre accommodation.

He asked the Chafetz Chaim where all his furniture was?

The Chafetz Chaim answered him by asking him where all his furniture was.

The traveller responded, "I don't have any. I'm just passing through this town. Any furniture would just get in my way."

The Chafetz Chaim smiled and said, "Quite so. I too am a mere traveller in this world, expecting to be here only a short while. This world is just a passageway before the World to Come. For a passageway, this is quite adequately furnished."

In this weeks Parasha we read the famous words of Shema Yisrael.

This is the quintessential prayer of our nation, the declaration and the testimony of our belief in Hashem. "Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokainu Hashem Echad (6:4)." Accept, Yisrael, Hashem who is Elokainu (our G-d), Hashem is One.

The testimony that all that occurs in this world emanates from Hashem. Our Sages state that when saying this, we must have in mind to accept the Yoke of Heaven.

What does that mean?

When looking at a Sefer Torah we note that the last letter of the first word of Shema -the 'Ayin', and the last letter of the last word (Echad)- 'Daled', are written larger than the other letters. They stand out - why?

These two letters together spell the word 'Ed' - witness.

The Kli Yakar grants an awesome insight and writes that this alludes to the concept that we (Am Yisrael) are the witnesses of Hashem in this world. As founders of monotheism, we, through our beliefs and the way that those beliefs act upon our lives, serve as witnesses to Hashem's intimate involvement in this world.

There is a more profound lesson to learn from this Ayin and Daled:

Many Parshiot earlier (in Parshat Ki Tisa) we learnt how, Moshe asked Hashem to show him His presence (Shemot 33:18). The Midrash explains that Moshe wanted to see the reward of the righteous in this world and the next. Hashem answered that he could see Him from behind but not from the front.

The Gemara (Brachot 7b) explains that Hashem showed Moshe the knot of His Tefilin Shel Rosh (worn on the back of the head).

The Kli Yakar explains that the Tefilin contain a special Name of Hashem known as 'shakai', spelled 'Shin', 'Daled' and then 'Yud'.

When a person wears Tefilin, the letters 'Shin' and 'Yud' are in front of him.

The 'Shin' is on the front of the Tefilin Shel Rosh and the 'Yud' is the knot of the Tefilin Shel Yad (worn on the hand). ▶

15<sup>th</sup> AV 5779

SHABBAT BEGINS: 8:05 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 9:16 PM



### THE WEEKLY QUOTE

*"Life is like riding a bicycle.  
To keep your balance  
you must keep moving."*

### > UPCOMING EVENTS

For our upcoming events  
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#### DVAR TORAH

Shema - Give Witness!  
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

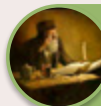
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This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

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Together the Yud and Shin spell 'Yesh' - (meaning) something or a reality.

This refers to the reward of the next world which is a true being and existence - the epitome of 'Yesh'. Such an existence could not be shown to Moshe. That no eye, even his, could see.

Instead Moshe was only able to see the back of Hashem, the knot of the Tefilin Shel Rosh. That is in the shape of the letter 'Daled'. The letter Daled is of numerical value four and symbolises the four corners of his world; a world that is limited in space.

The Daled exemplifies the reward of this world.

Using this important insight we can now gain a deeper understanding in the Shema.

The Ayin and Daled are both placed as large letters in the Shema to teach that the eye (Ayin) in this world can only see and understand the Daled - the reward that is connected to this world.

However, the reward of the next world, the 'Yesh', the 'Yud' and the 'Shin', the first letters of the words

'Shema Yisrael', that is not available to the domain of the 'Ayin', the eye, rather, that is in the domain of hearing (Shema).

That existence, we can only hear about.

This world with all its pleasures is limited. The delicious food, the great clothes, the fantastic scenery are only considered of great benefit to us in this world because we possess a physical form; the soul desires these things only because the body needs them. In a place where there is no body, all these matters become nullified.

The Rambam, in the Mishna Torah, explains that there is no way we can fully anticipate the good in Olam Haba because it is so overwhelmingly great that it cannot be compared to any good in this world.

Spiritual pleasures are infinitely good, while physical pleasures are temporary.

David HaMelech, in Psalms (Tehillim), alludes to this concept when he writes, "How great is the good that You have hidden for those who fear You!"

Because the pleasure we will receive in the World to Come has no comparison here, even the prophets could not describe it over the course of Jewish history. Any description would have simply diminished it. Our Sages tell us, "All the prophets' only prophesized about the times of the Messiah (Mashiach). However, regarding Olam Haba, no eye has ever seen, except for You, Hashem."

Over the centuries countless members of our nation have been willing to die for the sake of 'Hashem Elokainu Hashem echad' and left this world with the words Shema Yisrael on their lips. Their immense faith in Hashem was honourable and they understood the physical limitations of this world.

May we internalise this and through our actions, our words and our thoughts carry the banner of Hashem's existence and involvement in this world.

### ■ Shabbat Shalom

## RABBI ALEX CHAPPER - BOREHAMWOOD & ELSTREE SYNAGOGUE



### MOSHE RABBEINU'S WORDS OF COMFORT

In what must have been an extremely emotional address, Moshe has to tell the people that he is about to leave them and they will no longer have his guidance as they continue on their journey to take possession of the Land of Israel.

He speaks, at one and the same time, as a leader, as a parent and as a prophet. As a leader he reminds us of everything that we've experienced, the miracles we witnessed and the covenant we entered with G-d. As a parent he tells us to take care,

וְשָׁמַר נַפְשְׁךָ מֵאֵר - to look after ourselves, not just physically, but spiritually as well, not to forget what we have been taught. And as a prophet he foresees that the longer we live in the Land the greater the danger of corruption as our original enthusiasm, engendered by the awareness that we are G-d's chosen people, will turn to complacency when we take our possession of the Promised Land for granted

וְעֵשִׂיתֶם הָרַע בְּעֵינֵינוּ - אֵלֶיךָ לְהִכְעִיבוֹ - and we will do what is evil in G-d's eyes to anger Him.

Moshe warns us that the consequence of that is we will eventually be exiled from the Land, scattered amongst other nations and left few in number. But Moshe is not a prophet of doom because he also leaves us with an inspiring message of hope.

וּבְקִשְׁתֶּם מִשְׁמַעַתִּיהָ אֵלַיִךְ וּמִצָּאתָ - from there you will seek G-d, your G-d, and you will find Him, כִּי תִדְרֹשֻׁנּוּ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ - for you will seek Him with all your heart and all your soul.

All is not lost. Despite being in exile, we will still be motivated to search for G-d and we will be able to find Him. As the Seforno explains: even though we will not have a Temple once we are exiled, nevertheless G-d will not be totally hidden from us.

And the reason why we will be able to find our way to G-d is that our conditions in exile will be so tough that we will turn to G-d sincerely with all our heart and all our soul.

Does that not sound counter-intuitive? Why would the harshness of exile prompt us to turn to G-d?

The Darashos HaRan explains that in days of tranquillity we do not discriminate things correctly because of the imagination implanted within us, which preys upon us and always places before our eyes this world and its desires. But when things are bitter for us, we cannot be enticed in this manner.

As a result, we have a clear perception of the truth, and we seek G-d, not just to escape affliction, but with our whole heart and soul. For the intellect, in the absence of a deterrent, follows its natural inclination, and that inclination causes us to cleave to its object and confers upon us the joy of basking in the Divine radiance.

Similarly, the Ohr HaChaim explains that there are two paths of teshuvah - two ways back to G-d. One is motivated by pain, on account of the suffering inflicted on us by our enemies. The other way is when we are self-motivated to return because we recognise our obligations and subdue our inclinations. According to the Ohr HaChaim, this what Moshe is referring to here. Our hearts will inspire us to seek G-d and we will find Him even though we have not yet committed to a fully observant life, our return is sufficient. Why? Because we did it with all our heart and soul. We put everything we have into it.

That is why Chazal tell us: 'G-d desires the heart' - our future may be in our hands but it certainly depends upon our hearts.

### ■ Shabbat shalom

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## OUR CHACHAMIM

### RABBI YAAKOV SASPORTAS

Rabbi Yaakov was born in 5370 (1610) in Oran, Algeria. Born into an illustrious family that had been expelled from Spain, he was one of the descendants of Rabbi Moshe Ben Nachman, the Ramban.

From his earliest years, Rabbi Yaakov surprised those around him by his thorough knowledge in all domains of Torah. At the age of 12, he completed the study of all the tractates of the Talmud, and already by that time had a perfect understanding of the Tur. In 5388 (1628), he became famous and recognized as one of the great rabbis of his generation, yet he was only 18 years old. He was made Dayan of the rabbinical court of the city of Tlemcen in Algeria.

Rabbi Yaakov sat on the court of Tlemcen for about eight years. At that very time, the Shabbetai Tzvi movement had spread all the way to Morocco, and many were those that believed that the false Messiah Shabbetai Tzvi had really been sent by G-d to deliver Israel from exile.

Shabbetai Tzvi had been born in 5386 (1626) in the city of Izmir, and from his earliest youth he amazed everyone by his rapid comprehension and his ingenious mind. At the age of 20, he had been initiated in all aspects of the Torah, the revealed Torah and the study of Kabbalah. He assembled around himself numerous disciples to whom he taught Kabbalah. One day, convinced that he was the Messiah sent by Heaven, he revealed his secret to those close to him, and these began to spread the news that the Messiah would not delay in revealing himself and that soon the people of Israel would be delivered. A belief in the imminent revelation of the Messiah began to profoundly take hold of the people, and everyone impatiently awaited the day of deliverance.

Finally, Shabbetai Tzvi appeared publicly in the presence of a mass of believers to ask them to prepare themselves for the great day that would no longer be delayed. He told the people that it was no longer necessary to fast on the ninth of Av, for the hour of deliverance had arrived.

One of Shabbetai Tzvi's faithful, Nathan Ashkenazi, who had proclaimed his messianism, was better known as Nathan of Gaza. His father, Rabbi Elisha Ashkenazi, was himself also an enthusiastic believer in Shabbetai Tzvi. From Germany, he ascended to the Holy Land, then traveled to Morocco accompanied by another Torah scholar from the Holy Land, Rabbi Chiya Dayan. These two rabbis spread the Shabbetai Tzvi movement in Morocco.

Rabbi Yaakov Sasportas vehemently opposed them and denounced the blind faith that claimed to make Shabbetai Tzvi the Messiah. Rabbi Aaron Hasabeoni of Fez and Rabbi Daniel Toledano of Meknes fought alongside Rabbi Yaakov

against this messianic movement, and in fact the fears of these Gaonim proved true. The numerous Jews that had been swept up by the Shabbetai Tzvi movement abstained from fasting on the ninth of Av, which caused in its wake a decline in the performance of mitzvot in general.

Rabbi Yaakov was imprisoned in 5406 (1646) by the governor of Tlemcen on a false accusation that his adversaries had brought against him. He was only released after his family paid a large ransom. He thereafter left Tlemcen and settled in Sale, Morocco.

For two years, Rabbi Yaakov sat on the rabbinate in the city of Sale. However, a famine struck the entire country, forcing Rabbi Yaakov to leave. Accompanied by his family, he traveled to Amsterdam, where he was welcomed with great honor by the Jews of the community. There he was named director of the great Etz Chaim Yeshiva. Rabbi Yaakov continued to lead an intensive fight against the Shabbetai Tzvi movement that had by this time spread throughout Europe. During this fight, he stayed in contact through correspondence with the great Rabbis of Morocco, whom he conferred with in order to find a way of stopping the spiritual epidemic that was ravaging the Jewish people.

The fight against the false messianic movement was not that easy, for the chief rabbis of the day had let themselves be entrapped and fascinated by Shabbetai Tzvi. They considered him to be the Messiah. At the cost of great effort, Rabbi Yaakov Sasportas, the head of those fighting against Shabbetai Tzvi, managed to remove the mask of the false messiah and prove to everyone that he was nothing but a charlatan and a crook.

Finally, Shabbetai Tzvi was imprisoned by the government and forced to choose between death and renouncing his religion. Shabbetai Tzvi, it comes as no great surprise, chose the second option: He converted to Islam.

Rabbi Yaakov was in contact with one of the great scholars of that era, Rabbi Menashe Ben Israel. In 5425 (1665), they embarked together for England with the goal of requesting the English King for permission to allow Jews to live in his country.

The trip was crowned with success, and numerous Jews left Holland to live in England. Rabbi Yaakov was named Rabbi of the Jewish community of London.

Rabbi Yaakov thought at that time that he could finally live in peace, but again he was forced to take up the baton of the wandering Jew. A terrible epidemic erupted in England and claimed many victims. As a result, Rabbi Yaakov left England for Hamburg, Germany, where he served as Rabbi. ■



## HALACHOT

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR

#### UNTIL WHEN CAN ONE RECITE "ASHER NATAN SHABBATOT LI'MNUHA" IN LIEU OF "RESEH" IN BIRKAT HA'MAZON?

If one forgot to add the paragraph of "Reseh" before "U'bneh Yerushalayim" in Birkat Ha'mazon on Shabbat, and he realizes his mistake immediately upon concluding the Beracha of "Boneh Yerushalayim," he can recite right there and then a special Beracha, "Baruch Ata...Asher Natan Shabbatot Li'mnuha..." This Beracha appears in some Siddurim, and may be recited in this case in lieu of "Reseh." In the parallel case on Yom Tob, where one forgot to add "Ya'aleh Ve'yabo" and realizes his mistake right after "Boneh Yerushalayim," he recites the Beracha, "Baruch Ata...Asher Natan Yamim Tobim Le'Yisrael..."

The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), in Parashat Hukat, ruled that the Beracha of "Asher Natan" may be recited in lieu of "Reseh" or "Ya'aleh Veyabo" only if one had not yet recited the word "Baruch" of the next Beracha. Once the person began the next Beracha – even if he just recited the word "Baruch" – he can no longer recite "Asher Natan," and must therefore return to the beginning of Birkat Ha'mazon. This is also the position taken by Rabbi Moshe Levi (Israel, 1961-2000), in his work Birkat Hashem.

However, Hacham Ovadia Yosef, as well as Hacham Benzion Abba Shaul (Israel, 1924-1998) in his work Or Le'sion (vol. 2, 13:8), disagreed. In their view, one may recite "Asher Natan" as long as he has yet to reach the word "La'ad" in the next Beracha of Birkat Ha'mazon. After all, the first words of the next Beracha – "Baruch Ata Hashem Elokenu Melech Ha'olam" – are the same words that begin the Beracha of "Asher Natan." The first word that is not shared by the Beracha of "Asher Natan" is "La'ad." And therefore, according to these Poskim, if one recited "Baruch Ata Hashem Elokenu Melech Ha'olam" and then realized that he had forgotten "Reseh" or "Ya'aleh Ve'yabo," he can simply continue by reciting "Asher Natan" instead of "La'ad." He then begins the next Beracha of Birkat Ha'mazon anew after completing the Beracha of "Asher Natan."

Summary: If one realized after completing the Beracha of "Boneh Yerushalayim" in Birkat Ha'mazon on Shabbat that he had forgotten to recite "Reseh" (or "Ya'aleh Ve'yabo" on Yom Tob), then he recites in lieu of "Reseh" (or "Ya'aleh Ve'yabo") the special Beracha of "Asher Natan" which is printed in some editions of the Siddur. He can recite this Beracha even if he began the next Beracha, as long as he had yet to reach the word "La'ad." ■



# Kids Time



## TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

❶ Why is east called mizrach?

❷ "Keep the Shabbat day as I have commanded you." When did Hashem command us to keep Shabbat?

❸ Where did the Jewish People first receive the command to honor parents?

❹ What is meant by "Hashem, our G-d, Hashem is One"?

❺ What are two meanings of loving Hashem "with all your might?"

❶ 4:41 - It's the direction from which the sun shines (mizrach means shining).  
❷ 5:13 - Before the giving of the Torah, at Marah. (Shmot 15:25) ❸ 5:16 - At Marah. (Shmot 15:25) ❹ 6:4 - Hashem, who is now our G-d, but not [accepted as] G-d of the other nations, will eventually be [accepted as] the One and only G-d. ❺ 6:5 - 1) With everything you own. 2) Whether Hashem treats you with kindness or harshness.

Answer

## STORY

### IS MORE REALLY BETTER?

How did you do on the test, Avi?

I got an 80, Chaim.

That's good.

What did you get Chaim?

85. That's better than 80.

That's right, more is better.

A short time later . . .

Come, Steve, let's trade baseball cards. I have over 100 cards in my collection.

One hundred cards. That's nothing! I have 250 cards.

Wow, Steve. Your collection is better than mine. You have more cards.

That's right! More is better!

A short time later . . .

What flavor ice cream did you get Freddie?

Chocolate. What did you get Max?

I got two dips. Mocha and vanilla.

Two dips! You got more ice cream than I did. Your cone is better than mine.

That's right, more is better.

A short time later Avi is walking along thinking to himself . . .

More is better. More is better. More is better. I have been hearing that expression quite a bit. The more you have of something, the better off you are. Hmmm. I have an idea.

Avi arrives home. Dad! I'm home!

Avi! Great to see you! How was your day?

Great, Dad! I really learned a lot today.

What did you learn Avi?

One of the things I learned is that "more is better". The more you have of something, the better off you are. I have a brainstorm.

Great! Let's hear it!

How many tzitzis (corner fringes) are on your tallis?

Four.

Let's add a fifth one. After all, more is better.

Hmmm.

I have another idea Dad.

Yes, Avi.

Next Succos, instead of waving four types of plants - esrog (citron), lulav (palm), hadassim (myrtle), and arovos (willow), let's add a fifth type. After all, more is better.

Hmmm.

Avi, what you are saying is not exactly true.

What do you mean Dad?

It may be true that more is better when it comes to test scores and baseball card collections, but mitzvos are different. The Torah gives us precise instructions how to perform a mitzvah; exactly how much of each component to use.

How do you know that Dad?

It is in this week's parsha, Avi.

Moshe Rabbeinu, our teacher

Moses is speaking to the

Jewish people just before they

are about to enter the Land

of Israel after their forty years

in the desert. He tells them

(Devarim 4:2), "You shall not

add to the word that I command

you, nor shall you subtract from

it . . ." Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki,

who is known to us as Rashi

explains that we are cautioned

against doing exactly what

you suggested, Avi, having five

tzitzis instead of four, or adding

a fifth plant to the lulav group.

So you see, when it comes to

mitzvos, more is not necessarily

better. Mitzvos are a precise

science. The instructions must

be followed very carefully.

It's like driving a car, Dad. You

can't drive too fast or too slow.

Exactly, Avi.

Or like eating dinner. If you eat to little, you won't have enough energy. And if you eat too much, you will be sick.

You've really got the hang of it.

I'm learning exactly how to understand the exactness of a mitzvah.

Exactly!

## FIND THESE WORDS!

מ	נ	ש	ו	א	ת	ח	נ	ן	ג	ג	ז
ש	נ	ב	ש	ה	ב	ד	ט	מ	נ	ק	ה
ה	ל	ע	נ	ק	ג	ש	ו	ק	מ	י	א
ל	ד	ה	נ	מ	נ	ה	ב	ל	ק	ר	ל
ג	א	ו	ת	ל	ו	א	ד	ך	ד	ג	ג
ה	ת	צ	ם	צ	פ	א	ב	ו	ר	ן	ה
ס	י	ח	ן	ח	ל	י	ח	ר	ב	ו	נ
ק	ה	נ	א	מ	ן	ה	מ	ד	ו	א	ק
צ	ו	ת	ל	ד	ל	ב	ר	ז	ם	ף	מ
מ	ש	ח	ל	ב	ב	ש	ן	ט	ו	א	ה
י	ע	ג	ע	ש	ל	מ	ה	ב	ד	ז	מ
כ	ה	צ	ח	נ	ד	ע	י	ע	כ	צ	ה
מזוזה	שמע	הנאמן	משה								
מאדך	אחד	דבש	חלב								
חרב	ירדן	טובאב	יהושע								