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THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

Fit For The Job!

Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



In a world populated by more than 7 billion inhabitants, we are constantly in contact with people around us. Every day we interact with others. Imagine the following: You are walking with the kids in a theme park or supermarket. Someone comes in the other direction, clearly not looking where he/she is going. Their face is towards the floor, as they by mistake step on your child's foot pushing them to the ground. How do you react? Scream out at them "Watch where they are going!"

Or move away, concentrating on the crying child without saying anything to the passer by?

Let me share with you a fascinating story I heard recently that might help us understand what kind of perspective we should have in these scenarios.

The Golden Age of Spain produced some magnificent Jewish scholars. One of these was the great sage, Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1167).

The Ibn Ezra lived a tough life and was poverty stricken. He was known to travel the world (even visiting England!). Once on his travels, he came across a synagogue that was looking for a Rabbi. The pay was extremely high at twenty gold coins a month and the Ibn Ezra thought it was a blessing sent from heaven. Happy to share his knowledge, he immediately applied for the job.

As he came in for the interview, the people looked at the poorly dressed sage and, without even listening to a word he had to say, immediately told him that he was in the wrong place.

Perhaps there was a shop in the market that was looking for someone of his calibre, but they were searching for a respectable Rabbi, well dressed and well presented.

The Ibn Ezra decided that he would teach this community an important lesson.



He left and went to the other side of town to the market. There he frequented a local simple Jewish grocer - Shimon.

Although simple, Shimon was a smart, well-presented figure. He came across commanding and his radiant beard caught the Ibn Ezra's eyes from afar.

The Ibn Ezra approached Shimon and asked if he would like to earn ten gold coins a month.

"Wow, are you sure that's possible" replied Shimon. "I only get 2 a month from all my hard work."

The Ibn Ezra assured him it was possible and told him the deal.

"All you have to do is become the Rabbi of the community on the other side of town."

Shimon was startled. "I barely know how to read Hebrew! That's impossible." He replied.

"Don't worry, leave it to me, you will be the Rabbi and I will be your spokesman. We will split the monthly wage in two. All you have to do is enter the synagogue make a motion with your hands and nod. Then when they ask you a question, I will pretend to ask you and will reply on your behalf".

Shimon understood and happily agreed.

They entered the synagogue and the Ibn Ezra introduced this man as a special Rabbi, well-presented, filled with knowledge and understanding, capable of leading the community.

People all rose in front of Shimon and eventually once seated, they asked him some questions.

Each time the Ibn Ezra would pretend to listen to Shimon for the answer and give over what he had heard to the crowd. Of course, all the time it was really the Ibn Ezra himself who was answering all their questions.

Impressed, they immediately accepted this new Rabbi to lead them.

Every day, the 'Rabbi would walk in accompanied by his 'disciple' who would listen to the Rabbi's words and tell them over to the community.

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The community started to get word of the man's greatness and knowledge and the synagogue was soon packed.

After a few months, the community leader approached the Ibn Ezra.

"The community is deeply grateful to have found such a wonderful Rabbi, but the time has come for us to hear from him directly. Please ask him to start to speak to us in person!"

The Ibn Ezra agreed and told him that the Rabbi would start to speak to the community at a big gathering next week.

That night, the Ibn Ezra went back to Shimon and said, "Next week you are going to speak to the entire community. You need to know what to say. Let me help you."

"If someone asks you 'My Tefilin has fallen, what should I do?' then you answer 'Kiss the Tefilin and fast or give some money to Tsedaka.'"

Shimon found this hard. He was not used to the wording but after a day of practice managed to learn the words off by heart.

The next day, the Ibn Ezra said to him a few more potential questions. "If someone asks you 'I forgot to count the Sefirat Haomer for a whole day, what should I do?' then answer 'Count the Sefira without a Beracha'" Shimon learnt the answers and the day finally came to speak in front of the community.

A large crowd gathered to hear the words of the famous Rabbi. The Ibn Ezra was nowhere to be seen.

The first person asked the Rabbi about the Sefirat Haomer.

Shimon, not understanding, remembered the first answer the Ibn Ezra taught him and replied, "Kiss the Tefilin and fast or give some money to Tsedaka".

Everyone was bewildered. What's Tefilin got to do with the Sefira?!

They continued to ask him questions;

"It is our duty not to act with immediate judgement. Rather we must evaluate every situation carefully entertaining all possibilities and only then come to a good call."

it didn't take them long to realise that this man was an imposter and the real 'Rabbi' was the Ibn Ezra himself.

The Ibn Ezra had taught them one of the most important lessons in life – don't judge a book by its cover.

"Rabbi Meir said, 'Do not look at the flask but what is in it. There are new flasks filled with old wine and old flasks which do not even contain new wine.'" (Pirkei Avot 4:27)

Appearances can be deceiving, but it's up to us to always entertain every scenario. It is our duty not to act with immediate judgement. Rather we must evaluate every situation carefully entertaining all

possibilities and only then come to a good call.

Imagine if in the case mentioned at the beginning of the article above, the person who had hit your child had just lost a close relative.

Imagine that you were informed of this just before he stepped on your child's foot.

Now everything changes. We wouldn't jump out and shout at the other person; rather we would reflect and act accordingly.

Perhaps they were clumsy and should have looked where they were going, but perhaps they weren't clumsy and just had a tough day, or suffer from blindness. Before we react, we should try and entertain situations.

In this week's Parsha, Aharon suffers the loss of two of his four sons.

They were trying to serve G-d, yet never came out of the newly sanctified Mishkan alive.

How sad and upset must he have felt. Yet Aharon teaches us to first think before reacting. Vayidom Aharon. He is silent. He accepts G-d's judgement.

As we enter the third week of the Sefirat Haomer, let's concentrate on unity, judging others favourably and entertaining all options before coming to decisions.

Shabbat Shalom.

"And it was [Vayehi] on the eighth day" (9:1).

Our Sages often comment that when the Torah uses the expression "Vayehi" it hints to an element of pain, Vay! Elisheva the wife of Aharon merited witnessing her husband Aharon HaKohen

appointed as Kohen Gadol [high-priest], her brother in law Moshe Rabbenu was the pious leader of our people, her sons acted as vice Kohen Gadol, and her brother

Nachshon was honoured to be first to offer up his sacrifice in the Tabernacle.

In this world nobody is totally in perfect happiness and on this eighth

Parasha Insights

Rabbi Yitzchak Hakohen Tawil



REFUAH SHELEMA Yona bat Esther - David Raphael ben Masouda - Shira Ilana bat Susan Shoshana Farha - Tova bat Sara Blima - Mordechai Ben Musha Yeta - Aharon ben Malka - Aharon ben Leah - Pinchas ben Tamar

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day two of her great sons passed away, Nadav and Avihu.

There are many factors of blessing which help increase man's physical and spiritual happiness in life. We must always remember that this world of action is a mere corridor in which we prepare ourselves for the infinite World to Come. In this world, we have to maximise the quality and quantity of our Torah Study and Mitzvot, the true ongoing assets that give infinite yield beyond our limited stay in this world.

The physical world presents us with many distractions to our spiritual growth, stealing from us precious time and attention. The body is tempted to run after physical pleasures and lusts, which cloud man away from keeping aware and control of his spiritual stance.

One of the greatest distractions is man's physical craving to accumulate wealth.

Many people cannot stop running after money! The more money they have, the hungrier they get to attain more!

True, money helps obtain many pleasures and satisfaction, and can even be used productively for Mitzvot, but it is mistaken to make money the primary aim of our life. People often comment "time is money", we must remember that even more so "money is time" and if we waste all our time running after money, we will be left empty from knowledge of Torah!

For a committed Jew, Torah Study and Mitzvot is the aim and center around which everything else must circulate. The Mishna in Avot teaches us "Make your Torah fixed, and your business of secondary importance" which means that the Torah is the fixed point around which everything else must rotate and focus upon.

**"Many people cannot stop running after money!
The more money they have, the hungrier they get to attain more!"**

We also firmly acknowledge and declare that money is not the answer to everything. Nobody in the world is entirely happy. For every individual there is a certain amount of suffering that he must go through, Divinely ordained for the good of each individual according to his stance. There is no end to the forms of suffering that can suddenly crop up, often in the most unexpected of times. Some people suffer poverty, some are smitten with illness, others are childless; some are wealthy but their lives are full of jealousy and contempt.

Many couples sadly suffer family hardship, often because they do not know how to understand and respect one another. Many parents sadly witness their very own children turning their backs against them; many suffer from enemies and foes.

Even for somebody who does have a relatively easy life, he evidently also meets his set of hardships, be it a water leak, a burglary, a broken washing machine! Hence, with a bit of contemplation we perceive how, even in our material world, money is not the solution to everything!

Also, everybody eventually meets the day when he must depart from this world, leaving all his material wealth behind! The only funds that can accompany man beyond this physical world are those well-invested funds that he prudently exchanged for Mitzvot whilst still alive!

The Ibn Ezra who was one of the most distinguished of Torah Sages, poetically expressed: Man cares over the loss of his money, but doesn't pay attention to the loss of his days – his money [ultimately] doesn't help, his days [that he has squandered] never return!

What is expected of us is to go through life with pure faith in G-d and to place our true aim and purpose of life at the forefront of our minds! We wish to improve ourselves in the best possible way, constantly increasing our Torah knowledge and commitment.

We use the physical worldly benefits carefully as a means to help us be more productive in our service before G-d, not as an aim of its own.

Our Chachamim



A hungry visitor once came to speak to Baba Sali. As they were speaking, Baba Sali told his shamash to serve the fish in the refrigerator to this man. The family member went to the kitchen and searched the refrigerator but could not find any fish, and returned to Baba Sali, saying;

"there is no fish in the refrigerator". Baba Sali replied: "check again." The shamash checked again but could not find any fish, and returned empty handed. Baba Sali said, "please, there is. Check again".

The Shamash checked once again, and found it wrapped in an aluminium foil.

Baba Sali turned to his friend and said jokingly, "I can see it from here, but he can't see it from there."

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1. What date was "yom hashemini"?
9:1 - First of Nissan.
2. Which of Aharon's *korbanot* atoned for the Golden Calf?
9:2 - The calf offered as a *korban chatat*.
3. What *korbanot* did Aharon offer for the Jewish People?
9:3,4 - A he-goat as a *chatat*, a calf and a lamb for an *olah*, an ox and a ram for *shelamim*, and a *mincha*.
4. What was unique about the *chatat* offered during the induction of the *Mishkan*?
9:11 - It's the only example of a *chatat* offered on the courtyard *mizbe'ach* that was burned.
5. When did Aharon bless the people with the *birkat kohanim*?
9:22 - When he finished offering the *korbanot*, before descending from the *mizbe'ach*.



6. Why did Moshe go into the *Ohel Mo'ed* with Aharon?
9:23 - For one of two reasons: Either to teach Aharon about the service of the incense, or to pray for the *Shechina* to dwell with Israel.
7. Why did Nadav and Avihu die?
10:2 - Rashi offers two reasons: Either because they gave a halachic ruling in Moshe's presence, or because they entered the *Mishkan* after drinking intoxicating wine.
8. Aharon quietly accepted his sons' death. What reward did he receive for this?
10:3 - A portion of the Torah was given solely through Aharon.

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