



TAL

NOACH 5775

THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

The Lazy Son!

Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



How are you feeling this week?
Exhausted!?!
Why?

Well, where do I start? After a month of waking up early for Selichot, two deep days in prayer at Rosh Hashanah, ten days of repenting followed by a beautiful fast on Yom Kippur, a further few days building a Succah and searching for that perfect Lulav and Etrog, followed by seven days spent outdoors living in a Succah, and two final days dancing with all our energy for Simchat Torah!

Wow! What a manic two months! So, what's next?? Shall we shut our eyes? Where are we heading to now?

It's interesting to note that the next month Cheshvan is void of any festivals.

After such commotion, we seem to be left with a void. How are we to proceed after such a successful run?

In life, we are faced with many challenges. Sometimes, these challenges start small. We garner the courage and outweigh these. We can do it!

Yet at other times, we are faced by a barrage of challenges one after the other, slowly hitting us and eroding away at our faith.

deep into our heap of faith, be strong and face these challenges with a strong hand.

Our Parasha relates how the whole world was flooded; only Noach, his immediate family and the animals in the Ark survived.

It must have been tough, but Noach exits from the Ark and aims to rebuild.

The Midrash Tanchuma explains that Noach began and planted a grapevine. On a single day it grew,



he harvested it, crushed the grapes, drank from it, got drunk and his embarrassment was publicised.

The Torah relates that whilst his son Cham took advantage of his father's situation, his other brothers Shem and Yefet came to his father's aid and covered his nakedness.

Eventually, when Noach sobered up, Cham was cursed whilst Shem and Yefet were blessed.

Interestingly, Shem received a bigger blessing than Yefet.

Rashi, commenting on this narrative (9:23), notes that the Torah describes Shem and Yefet's

response with the singular form "Vayikach (not Vayikchu) Shem VaYefet Et Hasimla", indicating that **one** of the two brothers played the primary role in this Mitsva.

Citing the Midrash (Tanchuma 15, Bereishit Rabba 36:6), Rashi explains that "Shem exerted himself in the Mitsva more than Yefet." Shem's greater role in this incident, Rashi adds, is reflected in the eternal reward granted to his descendants, Am Yisrael. We are given the Mitsva of tzitzit – corresponding to the garment used by Shem to cover his father. The reward for Yefet, by contrast, was the burial that the

nation of Magog – who descend from Yefet (10:2) – will receive in the future (Yechezkel 39:11). Shem's

descendants received a greater reward because Shem played a greater role in dressing Noach.

Although Shem and Yefet seemed to act similarly, yet at the end due to their exertion of the action they both received different rewards.

Sometimes, we perform Mitzvot with lacklustre. We don't understand that the extra effort that we put in could be the jackpot – it could end up making all the difference.

There is a fascinating story of a lazy young man who grew up at home with everything being prepared for him. He never worked, always rising from his bed at 2pm. His mother

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prepared him brunch daily, catered and pampered him. Yet as he grew older, his father was starting to worry. "What is going to be with you? How are you going to settle down, get married? You need to go out into the real world and work!"

The son, of course, took no notice until one day, the father put his foot down.

"Son, if by tomorrow night you don't go out to work and come back with at least £20, I am throwing you out of this house. No roof over your head and no food!"

The son knew that the father was serious and that night went to sleep worried.

He arose the next day at 2pm as usual. Time was against him. He waded down to the kitchen and begged his mother to give him £20!

"Please mum! If you don't, dad will kick me out. Give me £20! You don't have to tell him, and I will pretend I worked".

The mum had mercy on her child and handed over £20.

That night, when the dad came back from work, his son happily rushed to him with £20.

The father looked at the money and tore it up.

The son was startled, but didn't say anything.

The father looked to his son and said, "Tomorrow I want at least £20 or you are out!"

The next day, the son found himself in the same situation. He arose at 2pm, ran to the kitchen, begged his mother and received £20. That night, he handed it to this father who again tore it up.

The third day, the son arose and ran to the kitchen. "Mum! Did you tell dad that you paid me £20?" asked the son.

The mother answered with an emphatic "No".

So why does he keep tearing it up, he thought. Nevertheless he continued to ask his mother for £20.

This time, however, the mother said that she had run out of cash, and wouldn't be able to help till next week.

He was in hysterics. Not knowing what to do, he ran to his local food store and begged for the chance to perform some cheap deliveries for

them. They agreed and that night he returned tired with £20.

He then handed it over to his father, who proceeded to tear it up.

"DAD, DON'T DO THAT!" screamed the son.

The father now turned to his child and said, "AHAH! Finally, **NOW** I know you worked!"

On the first two occasions, the son never worked for the money and didn't really react when the father tore up the £20. Only on the third occasion did he really react, because it was only on that time that he actually worked hard to gain the money.

Shem went out of his way, put in that extra effort and was eternally rewarded.

We don't realise the reward for every small action; were we to realise, our efforts would change for ever.

This is the lesson that we can take as a bridge from the busy Chagim we have experienced to the seemingly empty month of Cheshvan.

Over the past months, we have experienced real energy. Now it's up to us to take that energy and input it into our daily lives.

"In the year six hundred of Noach's life...the fountains of the great deep erupted and the windows of Heaven opened" (Bereishis 7:11). The Kotzker Rebbe cites the Zohar which says that this verse alludes to the six hundredth year of the sixth millennium (5600), which is 1840. Just like during the flood, the physical windows of Heaven opened, so too in 1840 there was a great increase in human knowledge and scientific discoveries. The industrial revolution began changing people's lives forever. In particular, the steam engine was invented which would change the world, opening it up to trade and travel. These events were thus already alluded to in the Torah thousands of years ago.

At the end of the Parashah, during the story of the Tower of Babel, the Torah describes members of that

generation's conversation: "Come, let us make bricks and burn them in fire. And the brick served them as stone and the lime served them as mortar" (Bereishis 11:3). Rashi tells us that since it was a valley and there were no stones, they made bricks instead. The next verse continues, "Come, let us build a city, and a tower...and let us make a name for ourselves."

What is the significance of this sequence of events in that we are specifically told that first they made bricks and then a tower with which to challenge God? Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld explains that the generation was obsessed with innovation

and technology. Not having stone to build with didn't stop them. Instead, someone invented bricks. The natural response to such discoveries is to think precisely as the Torah predicts: "My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth" (Devarim 8:17). Then one can go so far as to challenge Hashem. That is the lesson of this episode. The generation became so engrossed in their own technology that they forget their reliance on God. So too, we live in the most technologically advanced age; there is no end to the new discoveries and theories of science. Yet, every so often events

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The Tower of Babel and Technology

Rabbi Jonathan Shooter



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occur that remind us of our limitations. The lesson from the Parashah is that perhaps we are not as advanced as we would like to think.

King Solomon said 'There is nothing new under the sun'. This means that even though it appears that the world seems to develop, nevertheless the principles involved in inventions are not necessarily new ones. It also means that history repeats itself, especially when one doesn't learn from it. New conflicts are really old ones. New tyrants and world events have all been done before. We currently see a plethora of gadgets

that seemingly have improved people's lives. At the touch of a button, one can access all sorts of information that would have taken hours or otherwise days to collate.

Virtually everything in the world can be used for the good, yet inevitably the best things fall into the wrong hands. Whilst we now depend on technology for many things, is the world a better place for it? Does convenience come with a cost? Does social media build true friendships or lead to more jealousy and misery? Have we become well connected to our devices, but feel less connected to Hashem? This Shab-

bos there is an initiative for all Jews to connect to and keep Shabbos. Besides everything else, it's an opportunity to put aside the technology that plays such a large role in our lives, and focus on the spiritual. To focus on building personal and genuine relationships. The mistake of the generation of the Tower of Bavel- their drive for technology and innovation- took them away from Hashem. Shabbos is our weekly opportunity to reconnect and focus on the things that really matter.

On Erev Shabbat, day seven of "Operation Cast Lead", the telephone rang in Rav Steinman's home, very close to Shabbat. On the line was a representative of the army who asked to speak urgently to the Rav. When the gabbe explained that all messages must go through him, the caller explained that the army was poised to launch the ground offensive tomorrow- on Shabbat – and they were calling for the Rav's beracha. When the Rav questioned the reason for going in on Shabbat, he was told that for strategic reasons – most of them highly confidential – they could not wait till Motzaei Shabbat. The Rav did not accept this, and declined to give his blessing. The gabbe suggest-

ed to the Rav that since they would be going ahead to follow their military directives regardless, perhaps he should give them a beracha anyhow. The Rav replied "Shabbat is Mekor Habrocho – how can I give a beracha for chilul Shabbat?!" Minutes after Shabbat the following night, the telephone rang – it was the army again, to say "Tell the Rav that we listened to his psak, and we deferred the operation. We are going in right now and we need his beracha!" The Rav responded very warmly with a generous heartfelt beracha.

Twenty four hours later, the Rav received a call from Gabi Ashkenazi, the Commander-in chief of the ground forces. He wanted to thank the Rav for his beracha – the army had achieved all its objectives in the first 24 hours. Furthermore, they had anticipated that the cost of the first day's operation would be in the region of 50 fatalities (r'l) among the Israeli troops. In the event they suffered only 1 (Hyd). They are convinced that the Rav's beracha played a crucial role in the supernatural success.

Our Chachamim

Rav Steinman's Beracha



"All flesh has corrupted his way on the earth." (6:12)

QUESTION: The words "et darko" – "his way" – seem to be extra?

ANSWER: A story is told about a city in Europe where there lived a man named Chaim. Unfortunately, he derived his livelihood as the "city thief." Chaim's son was becoming Bar-Mitzvah and he invited the city residents to the celebration. The resi-

dents were in a dilemma: If they didn't attend, Chaim would get even with them by robbing their homes, and if they attended, how would they be assured that the food is strictly kosher? They confronted the Rabbi with their problem, and he told them that he would get back to them within a few days.

The Rabbi invited Chaim to his study and entered into a conversation. "Chaim, how do you support your family?" Chaim answered, "Every-

one knows that when I need something, I go out and steal it." "Tell me, Chaim, if the door is locked, do you also steal?" "Why not," Chaim responded, "I break open the lock and enter." "Should anyone stand in your way, what would you do?" "I would beat him up and remove him." "And what if you find food, would you steal it?" "Of course, I would," was his reply. The Rabbi then became very serious and asked, "Chaim, if you break into a home and find a piece of non-kosher meat, would you take

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it?" Chaim looked into the Rabbi's eyes and in all sincerity exclaimed, "Rabbi! Do you think I'm not a Yid?!" It appears that even Chaim had

limitations as to how far he would go with his wrongdoings.

In the days of Noach things had deteriorated terribly. Even all those who had a self-made definition of

right and wrong destroyed his own way and erased all lines of demarcation. They committed indiscriminately every crime in the book.

Halachot Of Shemita

Rabbi Dov Levy



Shemita Year

The seventh year of a seven year cycle is a Shemita Year, a year of rest for the Land of Israel (A year of Shabbat for the Land). This year, 5775, is a Shemita Year, which has important Halachic implications. During this year the land of Israel may not be ploughed, sown or worked in any way. Land owners must treat the land as if ownerless. Furthermore, of more practical significance to us in the diaspora, any produce which did grow is holy and has many special laws

Shemita affects produce from Israel and the laws surrounding such produce.

What restrictions are there on produce of the Shemita year?

Fruit, veg and other land produce (e.g. flowers, spices etc.) can be eaten but must not be wasted in any way. They must not be sold for profit or in measured units as is usual for trade. It is forbidden to give Shemita produce to a Non-Jew and also forbidden to remove it from Israel. In addition there is a

because of its holiness. For the next few weeks we will focus on how

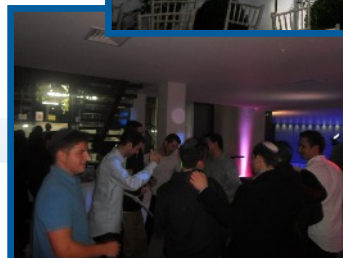
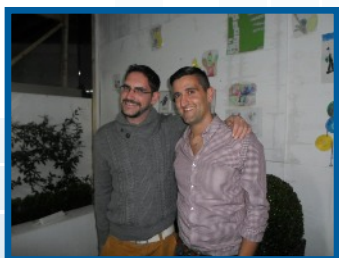
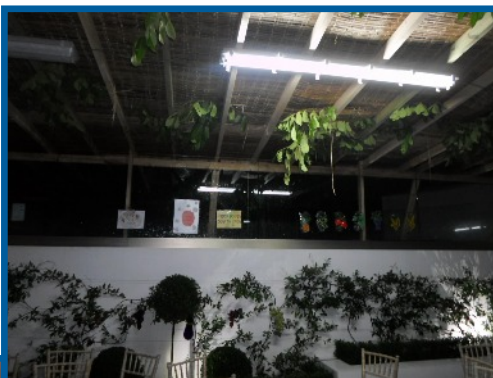
time in the year when produce must be removed from your house (zeman haBiur). Furthermore any money received in return for Shemita produce attains holiness like the Shemita produce itself.

What I do with that money?

You must buy food with it and treat that bought food as Shemita produce.

We hope to explain the above restrictions in more detail, but as a general rule produce of the Land of Israel is best avoided this year unless carrying a suitable Shemita Kashrut certification.

TAL'S 5TH YEAR SIMCHAT BET HASHOEVA



MAZAL TOV TO - Deborah & David Blackston on the brit milah of their son Avishai Yaakov
- Daniel & Zippy Kizilirmak on their wedding
- Rabbi Yitschak & Rivka Tawil on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Aharon



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