

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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This week's Parasha Sheet is sponsored by David Y. Joseph & Family in the memory of his father Reuben ben Salem Yossef- May his Neshama ascend higher and higher.

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



SHEMA YISRAEL!

Twenty two long years have passed and finally Yosef meets his father: "He [Yosef] fell on his [father's] neck, and wept exceedingly" (46:29). Yosef poured out his heart in a sea of tears at the emotional release of seeing his father after so many years. Yaakov's reaction, however, is not mentioned at all. In fact, at that very moment, the Mefarshim state that Yaakov was reciting the Shema.

On the surface, this seems strange. We know that there are certain times that we have to say the Shema - namely, in the morning Shacharit prayer and at night in the Arvit prayer. Perhaps this was the time to recite the Shema?

But, if it was the time to recite the Shema, then how come Yosef didn't do so? If, on the other hand, it was not the time for Shema, why did Yaakov recite it? R' Moshe Shick z"l ("Maharam Shick"; 1805-1879) answers that it was not the time for reciting the Shema, and Yaakov recited it for a different reason. He explains: One of the basic lessons of the verse Shema Yisrael is that "Hashem is Elokeinu." By saying Shema, we acknowledge that there is only One G-d, despite the fact that we see various manifestations of Him. For example, Hashem is sometimes merciful and sometimes strict. (The Name "Hashem" represents G-d's Attribute of

Mercy, while the Name "Elokim" represents G-d's Attribute of Justice.) Although we rarely understand how this is so, what we perceive as G-d's strictness is ultimately for our own good; in the long-run, it is merciful.

For twenty-two years, Yosef was missing, and Yaakov saw only the strict side of G-d's actions. But when he saw Yosef's royal entourage, he understood that Yosef's disappearance was part of Hashem's plan for saving Yaakov and his family from famine. Ultimately, everything that had happened was for the best: "Hashem is Elokeinu."

Realizing this, Yaakov recited the Shema. Yosef, however, had already learned this lesson when he was freed from jail and appointed viceroy. He had no reason to recite the Shema at this moment. R' Asher Zelig Schwartz z"l offers another answer to the above question: In verse 28, immediately preceding Yaakov's reunion with Yosef, we read: "[Yaakov] sent Yehuda ahead of him to Yosef, to prepare the way ahead of him in Goshen." Rashi explains that Yaakov sent Yehuda to establish a yeshiva for the arriving immigrants. In verse 30, immediately following Yaakov's reunion with Yosef, we read: "Then Yisrael said to Yosef, 'Now I can die, after my having seen your face.'" What is the connection between verses 28 (establishing a yeshiva), 29 (reciting the Shema), and 30 (being willing to die)?

Gemara (Brachot 5a) R. Levi b. Chama said in the name of R. Shimon b. Lakish: "A person should always try and stir his yetzer tov against his yetzer hara, as it says: 'Tremble and sin not.'" (Tehillim 4:5) If he defeats it - good, and if not, he should study Torah, as it says: "Reflect in your hearts." (ibid.) If he defeats it - good, and if not, he should recite Shema, as it says: "While on your beds." (ibid.) ►

> MAZAL TOV TO

Sacha Louisa Murray & Amir Ben Shabbat on their engagement



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today."

> UPCOMING EVENTS

• LEGENDARY SKI TRIP IN SLOVAKIA
21ST- 25TH JAN (see more info online)

• TU B'SHVAT COCKTAIL PARTY
30TH JAN (see more info online)



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Shema Yisrael!

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If he defeats it – good, and if not, he should remind himself of the day of his death, as it says: “Be utterly silent, selah.” (ibid.)

Says R’ Schwartz: Yaakov was afraid that seeing Yosef in all his glory as Prime Minister would make him (Yaakov) feel pride, or would bring out some other improper feeling. Yaakov, therefore, took all of the steps suggested by the Gemara: he established a bet Midrash, he recited the Shema, and he imagined the day of death.

R’ Schwartz adds: If imagining the day of death is an effective means of conquering the yetzer hara, why is it only the fall-back strategy? Why does the Gemara suggest first learning Torah and reciting Shema? The answer is that we are expected to serve Hashem with joy, something to which the third strategy does not lend itself.

For implicit in declaring that “G-d is One” is acknowledging that “His watchful concern and His ability extend over all and everything” (Sefer HaChinuch) – that His Providence governs what happens in this world. And when we serve Hashem with this knowledge, then we do so out of joy.

The Gur Aryeh answers further and states that a tzaddik harnesses every opportunity and emotion in the service of Hashem. When Yaakov felt a supreme surge of joy and love at the sight of his beloved son, his first wish was to suppress his own personal joy and channel his emotions into a sublime expression of his love for his Creator. Thus, he recited the Shema, the ultimate acceptance of Hashem’s sovereignty: “And you shall love Hashem, your G-d with all your heart...” At a moment of supreme and almost unimaginably great joy

in Yaakov’s life, he makes sure to connect it back to the One Who gave it, to acknowledge that everything has come, and comes, from Him Alone. “Ma’aseh Avot Siman LeBanim”, the Shema has been a symbol of our existence facing against the odds of time, Jews throughout history have held this slogan high. Whether on their death beds, or in prayer, in the morning and the evening, in their Tefilin and in their Mezuzot, this statement has been exclaimed loud and clear. The next time we say the Shema, may we all try to do the same; to strive to reach the level of Yaakov, who, in all moments of life, “clung to the Source of Life. Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokenu Hashem Echad! ■

RABBI BENJAMIN STONE - MAGGID SHIUR - MI K'AMCHO

DVAR
TORAH



TO INFLUENCE OR BE INFLUENCED?

We find that Yaakov issued only one instruction in connection with his family’s sudden departure to Egypt – that Yehuda should travel ahead of the party to set up a bet midrash (Rashi 46:28). Yaakov’s decision to give this instruction needs explanation. Pharaoh had already promised Yaakov and his family “the goodness of Egypt” (25:18) whilst Yosef had promised ownership of land in Goshen; it would seem that establishing a bet midrash would be a fairly simple matter. Why therefore was it necessary to send Yehuda to make arrangements in advance?

Another question: We find that Yosef considered very carefully how to let Pharaoh

know that his brothers were shepherds by trade. This is because in Egypt shepherds were considered an abomination (46:34). It is most surprising that Yosef chose to disclose this information to Pharaoh only once his brothers had arrived in the country. Surely he should have given Pharaoh the chance to decide for himself whether he wanted to admit them at all in the first place?

R’ Moshe Mordechai Epstein zts”l (Levush Mordechai) answers that initially Yosef had no intention of settling his brothers in Goshen. He believed that they should do away with a trade that would win them no friends and that they should seek to live in the city in the hope of integrating into Egyptian society. They would then be able to live the ideal, as Yosef had – climbing the “greasy pole” of high society whilst at the same time staying true to their yiddishkeit. They might also be able to influence Egyptian society for the good, as Yosef had done.

In contrast, Yaakov’s intention in sending Yehuda ahead of the party was for him to tell

Yosef that there was no way that his family was going to base itself in the main cities of Egypt where they would be at risk of being influenced. Instead they would settle in the pastures of Goshen where they would be able to serve Hashem without distraction. Yosef’s experience of withstanding temptation and actually exerting a positive influence on his environment was not to be taken as the norm.

In light of the above it is clear that Yosef did not in fact know that his brothers would be continuing with their old way of life - living in the countryside as shepherds - until Yehuda informed him of Yaakov’s wish that they do so. When the brothers arrived shortly thereafter, Yosef was forced, with extreme discomfort, to let Pharaoh know that his family in fact represented, in great numbers, the profession which Egypt most despised. ■

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DVAR TORAH

DAVID Y. JOSEPH

THE ZOHAR

The Zohar (פרשת ויקהל) tells us that whoever reads the portion of the ketoret (incense offered in the Beit Hamikdash - in the Korbanot section of most siddurim) with devotion every day will be saved from all kinds of harm, bad decrees, witchcraft, and eliminates bad illnesses. It adds that the sitra ahara (Satan) has no power over him. Rebi Shimon Bar Yochai states further that if people knew how precious the service of the ketoret is to Hashem, they would take every word of it and make crowns of the words for their heads. One who recites it daily will merit to receive a portion in his world and the world to come. The Gaon R' Chaim Palagi elaborates on the importance and value of reciting the ketoret. He writes that this recitation has the power to endure one's prayer, will ascend directly to Hashem unharmed by any mekatragim (prosecuting angels), and is a segulah for wealth (livelihood). Furthermore the Zohar writes that when one recites the ketoret he is actually tying the trait of judgement to the trait of mercy.

The word ketoret is related to a concept of קשר / intertwined to Hashem, to make an intimate bond with the Almighty. Additionally the Me'am Lo'ez says that the first letters of קטרת stand for קדושה / holy, טהרה / purity, תקוה / hope, רחמנות / mercy.

The Mishkan/Tabernacle had two altars: a larger one called מנחת הכהנים / copper altar used outside the mishkan for animal sacrifices and a smaller one מנחת הזהב / golden altar also known as הקטרת מנחה / the incense altar, which was situated in the inner enclosed section of the mishkan.

The great Rebi Chayim Hachohen writes that the real sacrifice is the yetzer hara/evil inclination. The altar is the place where we slaughter all the external disturbances separating us from our Creator. The outer altar refers to lower parts of man, the animalistic part within us, the lowness, the pleasures and desires that attracts human beings to materialism; hence the physical animal offering was sacrificed on behalf of our sins.

However the inner altar was on a different plane. The הקטרת מנחה was situated in between the shulchan/table in the north and the menorah in the south. These three furnishings represent three characteristics of Hashem. The shulchan personified דין / judgement, since a person realizes his deficiencies for his livelihood and is constantly relying on Hashem to provide his needs, consequently brings one to fear Hashem.

The menorah represented חסד / kindness, reference to the notion that light dispels darkness, everlasting light from Hashem manifested in the light of the Torah. The incense altar facilitated as a קשר / connector between judgement and kindness, resulting a by-product of תפארת / beauty: a balance in compassion.

In reference to the passuk in Tehillim 2:11

”עבדו את ה' ביראה וגילו ברעדה

Serve Hashem with fear and rejoice with trembling”, since serving Hashem has a combination of אהבת ה' / love of Hashem and יראת ה' / fear of Hashem.

The preferred time of the ketoret was at Mincha time close to sunset, since the ketoret was offered twice a day, in the morning and afternoon. Hazal stipulate the main time דינים / judgement came to the world was at mincha time, thus the ketoret acted as a “הדין מתוק” - sweetening of judgement”.

The Arizal says that Hashem has names of mercy and judgement. The name of mercy is Havaya and the name of judgement is Elokim, Havaya numerically is 26 and Elokim adds to 86 combining the two names we get 112. There's a holy name called יבב which numerically corresponds 112, the depth of this holy name has the power to sweeten judgement between the two names of Havaya and Elokim.

The name יבב is the acronym of “ יעננו ביום קראנו ” - “that Hashem answers us the day we call him” (Tehillim 20:10) since once judgement is sweetened we are ready to get answered.

We have a hint in the Torah on this matter in Devarim 33:10 “ ישימו קטורה באפך ” -

You shall place the ketoret in your nostrils” - the acronyms of these words are in the holy name of יבב. Moving further with this concept, the Arizal writes that one of the names of Hashem is Eh-yh that stems from judgement, opposing this name is רחמים / mercy; by fusing these two words we get a sweetening of judgement. Numerically these two names add to 319 (21+298), in accordance with the קטורה / ketoret also matches 319.

An interesting thought to connect these ideas can be found in the sin of Adam and Chava. When they sinned most of the senses were involved: the eyes, ears (evil talk from the snake), mouth, except for the ... nose (referring to the ketoret smell).

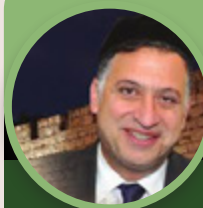
Hazal teaches us that all these organs are placed horizontally except for the nose which is vertical, alluding to the fact that the ketoret has the ability to raise our souls upwards through smell.

A fascinating novel interpretation of one of the key ingredients of the ketoret which was called חלבנה - a foul smelling spice, breaks the word into: חטא - sin and לבנה / to whiten (purify). Implying the person goes in with sin but comes out cleansed.

In these present times we can apply this thought to Chanukah that every Jew has a spark that can never be extinguished.

לדורותינו קטרת תמיד לפני ה' A perpetual incense before Hashem throughout your generations.
Shemot 30:8

לעילוי נשמת ראובן בן שלם יוסף וצ"ל



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

WARMING FOOD ON A BLECH OR HOTPLATE ON SHABBAT

Halacha forbids placing any kind of food on an open flame on Shabbat. Even though the food has been fully cooked, and one simply wants to reheat it, he may not place the food on an open flame. Thus, for example, it is forbidden to place a pot of rice over an open flame on the stove on Shabbat to reheat it, even though it had been cooked before Shabbat.

Warming food on Shabbat is permissible only if one uses a “Blech,” a metal sheet covering the stove, or a hotplate, which has a metal surface covering the heating element. Once the fire is covered, and not exposed, it is permissible to place certain foods on the covering on Shabbat. Namely, one may, according to our custom, place solid food that has been fully cooked on a Blech or hotplate on Shabbat. For example, it is permissible on Shabbat morning to place a pot of rice on a Blech or hotplate to be reheated. Even though the pot has been in the refrigerator all night and the food is cold, one may place the pot on the Blech or hotplate, since the fire is covered.

One may not, however, place cold liquid on a Blech or hotplate on Shabbat, even though it has been fully cooked before Shabbat. Halacha follows the view that “Yesh Bishul Ahar Bishul Be'lah,” which means that once a liquid has been cooled, reheating it constitutes “Bishul” (“cooking”) with respect to the Shabbat laws. As such, it is forbidden to reheat liquid on Shabbat regardless of whether the flame is exposed or covered. Thus, for example, one may not place cold Kibe Hamda (soup with meatballs) on a Blech or hotplate on Shabbat. Similarly, if one has roast in gravy, he must pour out the gravy before warming up the roast on the Blech or hotplate.

One who has cold liquid food, such as Kibe Hamda, which he wishes to eat hot on Shabbat, may ask a gentile – such as a non-Jewish housekeeper – to place it on a Blech or hotplate. Generally, Halacha forbids asking or instructing a gentile to perform on Shabbat an action which is forbidden for Jews to perform. However, in the case of reheating cold liquid food on a covered flame, the Hida (Rav Haim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1806) rules that it is permissible to ask a gentile. The reason for his ruling is that issue of reheating cold liquids on a covered flame on Shabbat is subject to a debate among the Halachic authorities. Although we follow the stringent position, which forbids reheating such foods, we may rely on the lenient view with respect to “Amira Le'nochi” – asking a gentile. Therefore, despite the fact that one may not personally reheat cold liquid on a Blech or hotplate on Shabbat, it is permissible to ask one's non-Jewish housekeeper to do so. This ruling is cited as Halacha by Hacham Yishak Yosef in his She'erot Yosef (vol. 3, p. 405; listen to audio recording for precise citation). See also Yabia Omer, vol. 7, p. 131.

It must be emphasized, however, that this Halacha is limited to the particular issue of reheating cold liquids. One should not extrapolate from this ruling that one may ask his housekeeper to also perform other forms of cooking and reheating. As discussed, the case of reheating cold liquids is exceptional, due to the fact that some Medieval authorities deemed it permissible even for Jews.

Summary: One may not place any food – even fully cooked food – on an open flame on Shabbat. One may, however, place solid food on a Blech or hotplate on Shabbat, provided that it had been cooked before Shabbat. One may also ask a gentile to reheat liquid food (that had already been cooked) on a Blech or hotplate on Shabbat. ■

TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Why was Yehuda the one to plead for Binyamin?
- ❷ What do we learn from Yosef telling his brothers "Go up to my father"?
- ❸ What two things did the brothers see that helped prove that he was really Yosef?
- ❹ Why did Binyamin weep on Yosef's neck?
- ❺ Why did Yosef send old wine to Yaakov?

Answer

❶ 44:32 - He was the one who took "soul" responsibility for him. ❷ 45:9 - We learn that Eretz Yisrael is higher than all other lands. ❸ 45:12 - He was circumcised like they were, and he spoke Lashon Hakodesh. ❹ 45:14 - Binyamin wept for the destruction of Mishkan Shilo built in Yosef's territory. ❺ 45:23 - Elderly people appreciate old wine.



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