



TAL

VAYEIRA 5775

THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

Alarm Bells Ringing!

Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



The alarm rings. It's six thirty in the morning and your head is spinning. You wonder to yourself what day is it? After a few seconds you realise it's Thursday and that Shul awaits you. You convince yourself, just another a few minutes in bed, it's warm and cosy; after all it only takes you a few minutes to get ready. A few minutes pass, and if you are still conscious, you convince yourself that a further few minutes can only do good. Surely you need extra strength for the day ahead; a few more minutes in bed will help your day so much more!

Before you know it, you awaken to a thump, your ears hearken to your father's yell, and you realise - yet again you are late for Shul.

For most of us, this has happened more than once in our lifetime. Waking up is not easy. In this generation of overworked and strained energy, everyone is tired. Yet when it comes to Torah and Mitzvot, the great sage Yehuda ben Tema said: "Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion to carry out the will of your Father in Heaven." (Pirkei Avot 5:23)

We must make that extra effort.

Our body might feel tired, yet our intellect is constantly battling to have us up and on the move in search of life's beauty.

Some of us are conscious and take on the laziness, yet others prefer to lay back and give in. Shlomo Hamelech (in Mishlei) states: "A lazy person considers himself wiser than seven sages."

Shabbat Begins 16:08 Shabbat Ends 17:11

The lazy person finds it hard to get out of his routine.

He is in the right; everyone else is in the wrong. It is difficult for him to take any criticism and thus improve.

On the other hand, those that possess the opposite character to laziness (that of Zerizut – zeal and energy) race to fulfil G-d's commandments.

We are told that the angels were blessed with Zerizut.

Concerning them it says: "Mighty in power, they do His word, to listen to the voice of His word." Our Sages explain from this Pasuk that they do His word "even before hearing His word." True, man is no angel, and it is therefore impossible for him to ever attain the sort of strength that an angel possesses. However, we must certainly strive to come as close as possible to reaching this level.

When King David wished to anoint his son Solomon as his successor, he told Benayahu the son of Yehoyada to take Solomon down to the Gihon River and anoint him there as king over Israel. Benayahu answered, saying: "Amen, let G-d say so." The Sages seem to find Benayahu's comment problematic. What kind of prayer was this? Surely, David had already designated Solomon as the future King, so why say let G-d say so?

Our Sages explain "Many a prosecutor will appear between here and the Gihon."

If an act is not carried out immediately, who knows what sort of disturbances will appear and prevent it being carried out at all? It is for this reason that Benayahu prayed that David's will be fulfilled.

Acting on a good thought and putting it to immediate practice can be crucial.

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Yet there are times when Zerizut and acting fast can be detrimental.

The Torah states that for every sacrifice that was offered, the Chelev (certain animal fat) and Dam (blood) are not to be eaten. Instead they must be offered up on the altar.

Our Sages explain that the blood represents the zeal of man; it is constantly flowing and gives life to the animal's body. The Chelev represents heaviness; that which slows man down. The Torah's message is to use both of these to the best ability in the service of Hashem. There will be times when acting slow is good, perhaps someone makes a sly comment at you, and you chose to ignore it, not reacting immediately. Alternatively, it could be that someone offers you the chance to do an enticing Avera and you are slow to act. In these cases, it is as if you have sacrificed the Chelev. You are acting slow in face of wrong doing.

Then there are cases in which one must act fast; getting out of bed to go and serve our Creator, running to fulfil the needs of our parents. These times are represented by sacrificing the blood on the altar.

The story is told of a tailor who decided that he would go every morning and study in

the Bet Hamidrash and work in the afternoons. He specifically told his wife not to accept anyone in the morning. One morning, a rich merchant came to his house looking to do a large deal. The wife told the merchant that the husband was not



available. The merchant decided to go elsewhere. When the husband returned that afternoon and heard what happened he yelled at his wife asking her why she hadn't sent the merchant to the Bet Hamidrash. A few months later, the tax man turned up at this man's house in the morning, asking to see him. The wife told the man he was not at home but he

could find him in the Bet Hamidrash. Needless to say when the man got home, he was furious with his wife. 'When we could have earned money you turned the merchant away and when we are going to lose money you send me the tax man!?!'

Hashem has granted us so many great qualities, but we must make sure that we focus them in the right direction – zeal to fulfil Mitzvot and laziness in the face of Avera.

In this week's Parsha Avraham is tested to the full. He is told to sacrifice his designated child Yitzchak. He could have many questions arising in fulfilling this command, yet we see his reaction is immediate; he will do whatever it takes to fulfil the command of Hashem. Not only did he perform this hard task, but Vayashkem – he arose early in the morning, he was Zariz Lidvar Hashem.

It is for this reason that Avraham was the father of us all; he had the power in him to constantly fulfil Hashem's will with such eagerness that the repercussions of his positive actions are still felt today.

Next time we hear the alarm clock ringing, let us try and make that extra effort, fight off the laziness and rise and shine for a fulfilling day.

This week's Torah reading relates that Abraham established an inn for guests, and there he "called upon the name of the eternal G-d." Our Rabbis interpret this phrase, explaining that the intent is not that only Abraham himself called to G-d, but that he motivated others to proclaim G-dliness as well.

What did he do? He established his tent at a crossroads in the desert and generously provided food and drink to wayfarers. After they completed their meal, he asked them to bless "the One who provided you with food and drink."

When the guests began to bless him, Abraham told them: "Was it I who provided you with food? Bless He who spoke and brought the world into being." By providing people with their physical needs, he made them conscious of the spiritual reality.

The Hebrew term translated as "the eternal G-d" - *kail olam* - has also attracted the attention of the commentaries. *Kail olam* literally means "G-d of the world" i.e. there is a G-d and there is a world, and even the world recognizes that G-d is Almighty and in control.

"Every person whom we meet gives us an opportunity to advance in our knowledge of G-d and our connection to Him"

But *kail olam* also represents a different and deeper insight. There is no difference between G-d and the

world; everything is an expression of G-dliness. This is the intent of the phrase "G-d is one" that we recite in the Shema prayer: not only is there only one G-d, but everything in the world is at one with Him.

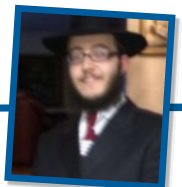
This is not only an abstract concept. It affects a person's fundamental approach to his life. When he sees G-d as "G-d of the world," he understands that he has obligations to Him. After all, if G-d is the Ruler of the world, a person has to pay his dues.

But that, he thinks, is all he is obligated to do. In the rest of his affairs, his life is his own. It's like paying taxes. You have

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to give the government a percentage of your income, but afterwards you can spend the remainder of your money however you like. Similarly, in a spiritual sense, such a person recognizes that he owes something to G-d, but his life is primarily his own; he can do with it whatever he wants.

When we appreciate the world as one with G-d, by contrast, our entire relationship with Him changes. Religion is

not merely going to the synagogue or carrying out a certain body of laws, but an all-encompassing experience, affecting every element of our lives.

Every situation in which we are found, every person whom we meet gives us an opportunity to advance in our knowledge of G-d and our connection to Him.

This is the heritage that Abraham gave to his descendants - to spread the

awareness that we are living in His world, that our lives are not intended merely to provide ourselves with a little bit of enjoyment and satisfaction, but are instead mediums to make His presence known to others.

May we all merit that in the year 5775 we do not merely count our days but instead make every day count!!

There was a woman who believed in Tsadikim but her husband didn't. She came to the Rebbe because the landlord was threatening to throw them out of their inn and into jail if they wouldn't give in the rent soon. Also at the Rebbe's was a woman who didn't believe in a Rebbe but her sick husband did. The Rebbe sent a message for the woman with the sick husband to put on leeches and for the poor couple he said he would daven for them. However, the Shamesh accidentally mixed up the messages. The woman with a sick husband didn't

mind hearing the Rebbe would daven for him. However, the woman whose husband ridiculed the idea of going to the Rebbe, especially for something as far out of the Rebbe's realm as rent, now had to convince her husband to listen to (what she thought was) the Rebbe's advice and put on the leeches. With her Emunat Chachamim (and womanly wisdom) she convinced her husband to put them on. When the

messenger came to collect the rent they still didn't have he saw the man lying there, screaming in pain, with blood and leeches all over him! He ran back to the castle and the landowner's mother yelled at her son for being so heartless to demand money from someone so sick. Not only did she drop the debt for the month but she gave them the inn free for the next three years!

Our Chachamim



"And behold three men [angels] were standing over him." (18:2)

QUESTION: Avraham was sick and Hashem came to visit him. One of the three men was the angel Raphael, who came to heal Avraham (Rashi). Why didn't Hashem, who is the healer of all flesh, dismiss Raphael and take over?

ANSWER: Often, when people visit the sick, they have a tendency to discuss the ailment and offer uncalled-for advice. Hashem is teaching us an important lesson in *bikur cholim*: When visiting a sick person, do not become his doctor. Let the attending physician use his expertise to heal the patient. Although Hashem is the true

healer and every doctor is His emissary, He permitted the assigned doctor, Raphael, to complete his mission and cure Avraham.



Halachot Of Shemita

Rabbi Dov Levy



Sefichim

There is a Rabbinical prohibition to eat any land produce, including vegetables and herbs, which grew during Shemita, which are easily and normally grown in a garden or allotment. These plants are referred to a Sefichim. The reason for this prohibition is to deter people from planting crops in pri-

vate during Shemita. Therefore any vegetables which have been grown in Israel during Shemita must not be eaten. They must, however be treated with the holiness of Shemita as outlined last week.

What if it grew in the 6th year but was harvested in the Shemita year?

Such plants are not subject to the prohibition of Sefichim but should still be treated with the holiness of Shemita. However a Rabbi should be consulted

before eating any produce which may have been cut in the Shemita year.

Exactly which Shemita produce is one forbidden to eat due to Sefichim?

We have given only a general definition, since which vegetables, herbs, spices, flowers fall into the category of Sefichim is beyond the scope of this article. One should be aware of the prohibition and consult a Rabbi to define exactly which produce must not be eaten.

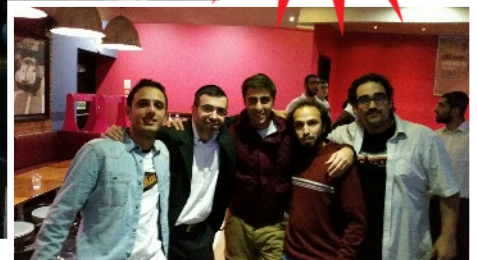
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