

TAL TorahActionLife

COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

This weeks parsha sheet is sponsored by the Feigins to honour and thank their parents: Farideh, Yakdhan, Sally and Izzy. Lehatslachat of Natalie, Daniel and Chloe Feigin, may the strength and merit of Torah stand for them. Wishing them a great year ahead.

VAYEISHEV

23th Kislev 5776

Shabbat begins: 15:38

Shabbat ends: 16:46



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
DIRECTOR, TAL

Just Say No!

Imagine one of those typical days in London. The clouds are heavy, the wind is strong and the rain doesn't stop falling. You come into work after having fought with the wind, your umbrella broken and your coat drenched. Just then the door opens and a colleague of yours walks in. "What an awesome day it is today, the weather is great don't you think?"

What is your response? Two quick replies strike my mind.

The calm approach; "Interesting, I kind of thought it was raining and quite murky out there".

Alternatively you offer a more definitive response - "No!" you exclaim. "It's not great weather!" Then you begin to explain yourself. "Have you seen the weather? It's raining and cloudy and I was drenched this morning! How can you call this good weather?"

Which would you chose?

Let us take a look into the Parasha for some clues as to what you might be correct in answering. Yosef was sold as a slave to Potiphar - a great and mighty minister in Pharaoh's regime. Potiphar was married to a beautiful wife, but as soon as she set eyes on Yosef, she desired him. She approached Yosef constantly and tried to

coerce him. Each time Yosef would resist. One day Potiphar and all the people in the house were out; the only two people left were Yosef and Potiphar's wife. She took the opportunity to make her move.

Yosef, a single young lad sold into slavery, was being severely tested. He passed with flying colours. He first refused, and then went on to explain how he could never do such a thing to his trusted master. Finally after she moved in on him, he ran away.

When reading this episode from the Torah one comes across an unusual cantillation over the word *Vayema'en* - he refused (Bereishit 39:8). This cantillation is called a Shalshelet and appears only three times in



the book of Bereishit. Why is this cantillation used here? Furthermore there is a line representing a stop after the word *Vayema'en*, implying a pause. Why is this necessary?

Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz zts'l explains that Yosef was in no doubt that succumbing to her desires would be immoral. He was being severely tested, it was difficult, but his response to such a test was an emphatic NO!

The statement, "*Vayema'en*" (with a Shalshelet and a Psik) implies that Yosef needed no process of logical deduction or calculation in reaching his decision.



1. How could the brothers even think about killing their own brother, Yosef?
2. Who took Yosef out of the pit (37:28)?
3. Why does it bring the episode of Yehuda and Tomor next to that of the Yosef and the wife of Potiphar?
4. How are we meant to approach the seemingly lowly episode of Yehuda and Tomor?
5. The only incriminating evidence against Yosef was the garment he left behind. Why did he not simply wait a little longer and grab away his garment leaving behind no evidence?
6. Whose is the only birthday mentioned in the Torah and what happened then?
7. Why were Paro's ministers called "sorisim"?

Answers On Page 3

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The separation indicates that for himself, Yosef needed no explanation. Only in his response to Potiphars wife did he feel the need to explain. For Yosef, the very fact that a given action is forbidden was sufficient reason to abstain.

The way of the Yetser Harah is to try and convince us to sway to his side of thought. He uses manipulation, conviction and coercion to try and make us sin. Our answer, explains Rabbi Yerucham must be an emphatic NO!

If possible, in our war against our Yetser we should not try to get into a debate, we should be quick and certain to refuse at first. For once we open the door to doubt and debate with the Yetser, then we are playing on his ground and will find it harder to make a stand.

We find a similar idea when it came to burying Yaakov. The body of Yaakov was brought up from Egypt by all his sons. They came to the cave of Machpela to bury him and they were met by Eisav. He contested the fact that Yaakov should be buried there. The Tribes opened conversation trying to

convince him that it was rightfully theirs. In the end they decided to send Naphtali (who was fast) to Egypt to bring the document that showed it belonged to Yaakov.

Chushim the son of Dan was also present at the time. He was deaf and couldn't follow the conversation. He asked what all the fuss was about; why were they not burying Yaakov? They explained to him the situation. He was very zealous for his grandfather Yaakov and couldn't bear to see his body lie without burial for so long. He took action into his own hands and simply went and killed Eisav.

Rabbi Chaim Shmulevits zts'l asks didn't the others feel for Yaakov? Why was it only Chushim that acted? He explains that once they entered into a debate with Eisav, then they were opening themselves up to manipulation. Eisav was able to buy time and try and conceive another way to cheat Yaakov out of being buried. Chushim on the other hand was deaf. He didn't hear the whole conversation. He still had that initial conviction and acted on it straight away. It was due to his conviction that Yaakov merited a quick and honourable burial.

Every day we say in our prayers *En Kelokenu En Kadonenu* – there is no one like our G-d, no one like our Master. We

continue and say *Mi Kelokenu Mi Kadonenu* – Who is like our G-d, who is like our Master? Our sages ask why the prayer is in this order. Surely we should first state who is like G-d and then state there is none like G-d. Why do we say it the other way round?

Our Sages explain that a Jew has to build him/herself up so strong that their first reaction in life is *En Kelokenu* – there is none like Hashem. He is our Father, He is our Leader and He is the Creator of the Universe. There is none like Him. It is only once we have this understanding that we can then go on and ask who is like Him.

So when your friend walks in the room and says what a nice day it is outside, and it clearly isn't, then by choosing to answer with a clear no, might not be such a bad response. It shows your sincere belief in what you are stating.

Our first point in life is to build up our belief in Hashem. Our response when faced with tough tests must be swift and clear. We must state emphatically – "Everything is *Min Hashamayim*". It is the strength and clarity in our belief that will lead us through all of life's tests.



**RABBI YITZCHAK
HAKOHEN TAWIL**

Jerusalem Live!

"He mourned for his son for many days (22 yrs!)....and he refused to be comforted" (37:34) Rashi explains that G-d placed into nature that the bitterness of the passing away of a dear one gradually decreases until the departure gets relatively forgotten about. This is a great kindness that G-d imposed - we would all go crazy if we would constantly vividly remember and visualise all our misfortunes!! This instinct however, is only apparent when mourning for somebody who is truly dead.

Yaakov however was falsely made to believe that his son Yosef had been ripped apart by a wild animal. As in truth Yosef was still alive, Yaakov refused to accept true comfort for all these sorrowful years.

Armed with this phenomena, that only for a truly deceased does nature eventually allow full comfort, R.Chaim of Volozn the famous pupil of the Vilna Gaon, Explains a comment in the Talmud.

We are not yet comforted!! Yerushalayim is still alive, waiting for us!! This sad day, we are promised, will be turned in future to a National Day of Joy!!

The Talmud in Bava Bathra (60b) informs us that "He who mourns for the loss of Yerushalayim (of old, i.e. during it's peak, when we had the Bet HaMikdash, a city which was the centre of Torah study and spirituality, filled with G-d fearing people

enthusiastically serving G-d – which we lost due to our sins and until this day we are in exile from) He shall merit and see it in it's happiness (the final redemption, when we will have the Third Temple, and Yerushalayim will return to be the great spiritual centre that it once was).

He explains as follows: By our constant mourning the loss of Yerushalayim of Old, we express and confirm that, despite almost 2000 years of exile, we still have full belief that Temple times is not a thing of the past – on the contrary Yerushalayim is still alive, waiting to reveal itself should we merit. Throughout the exile, year after year we all mourn the loss of Yerushalayim, refusing comfort. We even have a National day of mourning, Tisha B'Av when we all actively live the customs of a mourner, the whole community worldwide, sitting on the floor, fasting and mourning, moaning Lamentations with tears, as well as many Halachot (Laws and customs) restricting enjoyment throughout the year. We are not yet comforted!! Yerushalayim is still alive, waiting for us!! This sad day, we are promised, will be turned in future to a National Day of Joy!!

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Tevilat Keillim

Tevilat Kelim/Immersing New Vessels

As discussed last week, vessels and utensils purchased from a Non-Jew must be immersed in a Mikveh before use. The Gemara limits this obligation to 'Klei Seudah' - utensils used with ready to eat food.

Which types of utensils need to be immersed?

Only vessels and utensils used with food which is ready to eat. Utensils used with food which still needs further processing to be served do not need tevilla.

Do I need to immerse my dough hook?

No, a dough hook only comes into contact with dough. Since it

does not come into contact with bread it does not require immersion. Some are stringent to require tevilla without a beracha.

I have metal shape cutters which I sometimes use with dough to make biscuits and sometimes with marzipan, which is ready to eat. Do they need tevilla?

Here we look at the majority usage of the utensil. If you mostly use them for marzipan, they require tevilla. If, however, you mostly use them for dough, they do not require tevilla. However, even when mostly used for dough, it is still recommended to immerse them, either without a beracha or at the same time as other utensils which require a beracha.

What about an item which does not touch food but is used for food?

The obligation to immerse vessels only applies to utensils and vessels which come into direct contact with food. Therefore one does not need to immerse a pot stand. A pot lid is considered to be in contact with food and therefore must be immersed.

How about a tin opener?

A tin opener does not need to be immersed. Even though it inevitably comes into contact with food on every use, its function is focused on the tin not the food.



STORIES OF OUR
CHACHAMIM

Rav Ovadia
Yosef zt'l

Through Gunfire

One evening when he was about thirteen years old, there was heavy Arab shelling and Yerushalayim responded with a total blackout. The young Rabbi Ovadia had gone up earlier to Bet Yaakov, a synagogue above the Bet Yisrael *shatieblach*, holding a candle to light up the holy words. A few youths passing on the street below saw the light of the candle and worried that thieves were taking advantage of the darkness. The boys quickly alarmed the community rabbi, Rabbi Shimshon Aharon Polansky, known as the "Tepliker Gaon." Rabbi Polansky hurried up to the synagogue and was stopped by an image of G-d. He saw a youth bent over his books, immersed obliviously in his learning. The rabbi approached him gently so he wouldn't startle, touched his shoulder and said, "It's a dangerous time now because of

the gunfire. It is not time to learn." He led him by hand to his parents' home. His father and brothers were running through the streets searching worriedly for their missing brother. When they saw Rabbi Polansky with Ovadia, his father was angered and wanted to rebuke him to his face right then and there. Rabbi Polansky stopped the angry father and said, "Don't touch him and don't be angry at him, because he is going to be a giant in Israel."



1. They viewed him as a Rodef, someone who was coming to get them in danger. The halacha is that when faced with someone who wants to kill you, then you should kill him first.

2. Rashi explains that it was the Shevotim who took Yosef out of the pit. However, when reading the possuk the implication is that the Midyonim took him out (see Chizkuni). Rashi (Matos, 31:6) brings that this is why Pinchos, a descendent of Yosef, went to fight the Midyonim and avenge them for their part in the selling of Yosef.

3. In short, this is the close connection (found in many places) between Yosef and Yehuda from whom come the two Moshiach's – Moshiach Ben Yosef and Moshiach Ben Dovid.

4. In short, this is the idea of Shalsholes Hamoshiach, the chain of people involved in bringing Moshiach.

Since the yetzer hora comes to stop Moshiach, therefore the people involved in bringing Moshiach do things that look from the outside as "lowly". This is part of the essential disguises needed to ensure Moshiach survives.

5. R' Chaim Shmuelewitz zt'l explains that Yosef recognised the power of his yetzer hora. Had he delayed a moment longer he might have succumbed and therefore did not risk staying any longer despite the dangers of leaving behind incriminating evidence.

6. It was Paro at the end of the parsha (40:20). It is perceived as a special day and was celebrated by a feast where prisoners were reviewed and some were granted pardons. In this case it was the butler who was freed from prison.

7. "Sorim" means castrated. Because Mitzrayim was a place full of adultery, to prevent this happening in the royal household, the staff had to be castrated!

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The Lost Manuscript

In the course of preparing one of the volumes of Rabenu's responsa, *Yehaveh Da'at*, for publication, Rabbi Menashe Bakshi, who was in charge of overseeing the publication of all of Rabenu's books, received a phone call from the printer, who informed him that the last page of the book had been lost, and he could not complete the job. Rabbi Bakshi suggested calling Rabenu to see what could be done about it. The printer, however, was too embarrassed to tell Rabenu that he had lost part of the manuscript on which he had worked so hard.

Rabbi Menashe called Rabenu and told him what had happened. Rabenu said, "No problem. Just tell me the last words on the previous page." He told him that the last words they had were "*misham be'er*." Rabenu said, "Okay. Tell the printer that I will stop by this evening to rewrite the missing page."

That evening, Rabenu officiated at a wedding at the Apyron Hall, and then traveled from there to the printer, where he

sat and rewrote the last page from memory. The printer asked forgiveness from Rabenu, and Rabenu left. Two days later the printer called Rabbi Menashe Bakshi. "I found the missing page of the manuscript. Out of curiosity I compared the two versions. They were completely identical, word for word."

A similar thing happened with his work, *Taharat Habayit*. One of the pages of the manuscript was lost. They looked for it and could not find it. When they told Rabenu what happened, Rabenu traveled to the printers, found a side room, and requested privacy. On the spot, he rewrote the missing page, including all of the references in it, by heart, from the memory born of a lifetime of diligence.

Do You Know What Two Minutes Are?

Rabbi Yitzhak Dayan, a prominent *rosh kollel* in Holon who was very close with Rabenu, once (Tishrei, 2008) spent Shabbat in the Har Nof neighborhood, and before the afternoon prayer on Shabbat, went to Rabenu's house to watch him study. After a few minutes, Rabenu's son,

Rabbi Moshe, called, "Father, Minhah!" Rabenu, as usual, did not hear him, as he was immersed in his studies, so his son shook his father's arm to notify him that it was time for prayers. Rabenu immediately stood, dressed, and began to go down to the synagogue.

Rabenu's attendant told him, "Rabbi, there are two more minutes until the service." Rabenu said, "There are two more minutes?!" He immediately turned around and again buried himself in his books.

At that point, one of the members of the household said to him, "It's just two minutes. By the time the rabbi goes down, two minutes will pass."

Rabenu said to him, "Never say that again. Do you know what two minutes are? Never do that again. The time for studying is for studying, and the time for prayer is for prayer."

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