



# TorahActionLife

## COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

### DEVARIM

8<sup>th</sup> Av 5776

Shabbat begins: 20:15

Shabbat ends: 21:20

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Leiluy Nishmat David ben Mesuda.  
Tihyeh Nishmato Betsurat Hachaim.



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL  
DIRECTOR, TAL

Blessings..

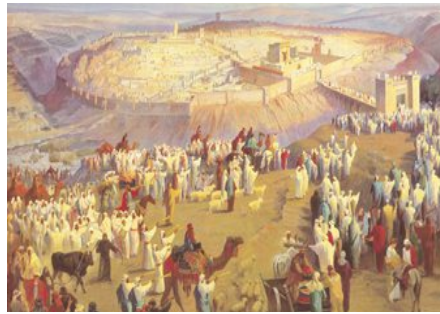
...on thousands Times! Attending big events can be exceptional. It doesn't happen very often, but when it does, you want to make sure that the whole world shares in your enthusiasm and feelings.

How can you express sentiment to them? If only they too would have been there to see it. Words do not do justice to the event.

On the first of Shevat of the year 2488 from creation Moshe (before his passing away) convened the Jewish people and began the 37-day "review of the Torah" contained in the Book of Devarim. The

Bnei Yisrael were on the outskirts of Israel all the generation that left Egypt had perished and a new generation was eager to enter the promised land. We can imagine Moshe Rabenu's feeling at the time.

Whilst speaking to them he blessed them;



"May Hashem, the G-d of your forefathers, add to you a thousand times yourselves, and bless you as He has spoken of you." (1:11)

Rashi informs us that the Bnei Yisrael were not very happy with the blessing Moshe gave them.

They said to him: Moshe, you gave a *limit* to our blessing!

You are blessing us a thousand fold, but Hashem has already promised Avraham that we should be blessed to be 'like the dust of the earth that is too numerous to count.'" (Bereishit 32:13)?!

He said to them: This [blessing] is from me, however, He [Hashem] will 'bless you as He has spoken of you'.

How did Moshe's response mollify them? Even if Hashem did indeed promise them an unlimited blessing, Moshe's bracha was still limited! Also, Moshe could have said 'May Hashem... add to you a thousand times', why was it necessary to add the word 'kachem' – 'yourselves'?

The Siftai Chachamim further explains that Hashem's Bracha is conditional - only if the Jews keep the Mitzvot will they multiply to that extent. But Moshe's Bracha was an unconditional Bracha. No matter what level the Bnei Yisrael are at, they will receive the Bracha of, "Hashem should multiply you 1000 times."

There is a further way of understanding this blessing.

It is related that the Ibn Ezra once travelled



### Living with Mitzvos

1. You might notice something strange when hearing the reading of the Torah on Shabbos. The reader (in some communities) instead of stopping by the place written in the Chumash as Sheini, stops one possuk before it. Why?
2. Which possuk is said in a sad tune (in some communities) in the parsha and why?
3. There were four levels of judges: people over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. What was the difference between their roles?
4. Rashi (1:22) brings that the people asked the spies to come and tell them which language the inhabitants of Eretz Yisroel spoke. Why did they want to know this as what difference did it make to them?
5. After the meraglim, Moshe warned the Jews not to attempt to enter Eretz Yisroel. A group of Jews refused to listen and were chased away. In Parshas Shelach (12:45) it brings that the pursuing nation were Amolek and Canaan while in Parshas Devorim (1:44) it brings it was the nation of Emoiri. Which one was it?
6. The possuk (1:44) compares the way the enemy nation attacking the group of Jews who insisted on entering Eretz Yisroel to bees. Why compare them to this more than anything else?
7. When did the sun stop in Parshas Devorim and for how long? How many other times did such a thing happen?

Answers On Page 3

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through Persia. He was a simple traveller and on his journeys he was wrongly accused of stealing by an anti-Semitic officer. He was brought in front of the Persian ruler. The ruler was a fond expert in chess and as he arrived he saw that the ruler was playing a game. After giving his defence and showing his innocence he was acquitted. He asked that due to his inconvenience and false claim he be given the following from the claimant.

"There are 64 squares on the chess board. I would be satisfied if he would put a grain of wheat in the first square and double in the next, and so forth." The king laughed about this meagre request, and ordered that the claim pursue this course of action immediately. The officer too seemed happy and eagerly accepted before the ruler changed his mind.

After a short while he soon realized that he would not have enough wheat in the whole vicinity to fill the request. In the second square there would be two grains, in the third square there would be four. In the tenth square there would be 512, in the twenty-first there would be

over a million, and in the thirty-first there would be over a billion!

Rabbi Akiva Eiger answers that even the 'limit' that Moshe put on the blessing that he bestowed on the Jews, was not diminishing of the Bnei Yisrael at all.

How so? Initially, Moshe blessed 'May Hashem... add to you a thousand times yourselves', meaning, double yourselves. If today you stand at six hundred thousand strong, double that figure, and you will equal 1.2 million. Now, go back and double that figure - 2.4 million. Again, 4.8 million. Now do that one thousand times!

It turns out that Moshe's blessing was not that they should increase in number one thousand-fold, rather, that they should double their population one-thousand times. That figure is truly a massive number, far too great to even calculate. That is what Moshe meant when he said, 'May Hashem... add to you a thousand times yourselves'- to double yourselves 1000 times!

time he was here was five years ago. He had a busy schedule and from erev Shabbat until Tuesday morning, the Rabbi visited and inspired as many communities as possible. At the end the rabbi mentioned how impressed he was with the growth of the community – it had multiplied exponentially and Bezrat Hashem should achieve 1000 times!

Taking a snapshot of a community isn't easy. But when a great rabbi visits the community after five years he is able to see from the outside the inherent growth. We all understand the great challenges ahead, and the difficulties within the community, but let us take pride in the great accomplishments we have achieved over the years.

The schools are flourishing, the shuls are being frequented, the sound of torah is strongly being sound and the youth are reconnecting to their roots.

Sometimes it takes an outsider to help us understand where we are holding.

Let us be proud of our accomplishments and continue to build a vibrant community serving Hashem with vigour and praying for the rebuilding of our Bet Hamikdash Bimhera Beyamenu Amen.

The last

800 men named Moshe showed up, all looking for love and forgiveness from their father.

How many people in life are walking around looking for love and forgiveness from their Father in Heaven?

If you are like the rest of us, you have probably messed up once or twice in your life. We all make mistakes! As it say in Kohelet (7:20) *Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins*."

However, there is also a danger in thinking that you are only a sinner. Every time we fall, there is the risk that we will be too discouraged to get back up again. The next step after sin is repentance; yet sometimes, we find it hard to move on.

In Tehillim 130 King David exclaims, *"Out of the depths I call out to you..."* The Sages explain that the "depths" King David is referring to, is the depths of sin. Sometimes when we sin, we feel so low and so far from G-d. We feel like we are deep in the gutters of life. How can we possibly climb out? How can we

face our G-d again? We feel distant, unlovable, and unworthy.

The Sages caution us, "Do not consider yourself wicked in your self-estimation!" If we give in to those feelings of unworthiness, we will never be restored to our true selves. In Tehillim 130 King David reminds us that G-d is forgiving. He implores us to *"put your hope in the LORD, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with Him is full redemption."* (v.7) G-d is waiting for us, loving us, and anticipating our return so that He can forgive us. We just need to return to Him.

Imagine that you open the newspaper today and you see an ad with your name on it: Dear \_\_\_\_\_. Meet me in Synagogue on Shabbat. All is forgiven. I love you. Your Father." Believe it----- G-d is sending us this message every day! We just need to turn to G-d in repentance, and He will do the rest.

Shabbat Shalom and may there will be peace to Am Israel and our soldiers. Amen



RABBI DOV LABI

Mimaamakim

Keraticha Hashem

Mimaamakim Keraticha Hashem. *"Out of the depths I cry to you, Hashem" ....* Psalm 130:1

There is a story about a father and son who had become estranged. The son ran away from home, and his father set out to find him. The father searched for months, but to no avail. As a last effort, the father took out a full page ad in a newspaper. The ad read: "Dear Moshe, meet me in front of the Synagogue at noon on Shabbat. All is forgiven. I love you. Your father". The next Shabbat,

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Rabbi Ezra Attiya was born in Aleppo in 1884 (5645) and died in Jerusalem in 1969 (5730).

Sephardic Jews, who in every generation have given Torah giants and luminaries to the Jewish people, have seen their spiritual stature dry up and their influence decline following the evil decrees and persecutions that have descended upon the

world. Rabbi Ezra Attiya, a Sephardic Gaon of his generation, is the one who opened a new era and inaugurated a spiritual revolution among his brothers in Sephardic communities. His ideal was to boost the prestige of Sephardic sages, and during the 88 years of his life he encouraged generations of Talmidei Chachamim – rabbis and poskim, shochatim and chazzanim, teachers of young and old – who became leaders of Sephardic communities around the world. Sephardic Jews crowned him with the title of Rav Rabbanan (“the Rav of Rabbis”), and in fact Sephardic Jewry considers him as being the greatest of his generation.

Rabbi Ezra was born on Shevat 15, 5641 (1881) in Aram Tzova, i.e., Aleppo, Syria. His father Rabbi Yitzchak and his mother Leah were upright, G-d fearing people.

In 5651 (1891), his father and his family went and settled in the holy city of Jerusalem, but soon afterwards his father died suddenly. His mother, who was left a widow and without any resources, worked

as a cleaning lady for a wealthy family in order to provide her son with food. The tiny Ezra studied Torah in poverty, content with some dry bread that he dipped in salt, and sleeping on benches in the Beit Midrash. Sometimes when his mother brought an egg to her beloved Ezra, he would slice it in two and give half to her. Even though he was often hungry, he never ceased studying Torah, and Torah was on his lips both day and night. He isolated himself in the tiny Shoshanim LeDavid Beit Midrash in Jerusalem, when he studied wholeheartedly and with all his soul. With time, he covered numerous tractates along with their commentators.

At that time the Ohel Moed yeshiva for poor children opened in Jerusalem, with the young Ezra Attiya being among its first students. The yeshiva was headed by Rabbi Avraham Ades, one of the great Kabbalists of the time and a well-known figure in the holy city. Ezra became the main disciple of the Rav, who infused him with his Torah and wisdom. In the yeshiva he set himself apart from all the other

## Living with Mitzvos

1. Where Sheini starts is with the possuk that begins with the word “Eicha” and is about a complaint. Therefore in order to not start with something bad there is a stop of Sheini made one possuk before it.
2. The possuk of (1:12). It uses the word “Eicha” and discusses Moshe’s frustrations at the people constantly arguing and bickering. It is said in the same tune used for Megillas Eicha. Parshas Devorim is always the week before we read Megillas Eicha.
3. The Vilna Gaon (Aderes Eliyohu) brings that those appointed over one thousand were directors of battles; those over hundreds were the real judges of court cases; those over fifty were those who taught Torah to the masses (known as “the Zekeinim”) and those over ten were the policemen, shoitrim.
4. Each nation has its own characteristics that are reflected in their language. Therefore knowing their language would tell them a lot about the people. (Gur Aryeh) The Jews had been commanded to kill the seven nations of Eretz Yisroel. However, these people could trick them and dress up as other nations. How then would they know whom to kill? They would know this by knowing what language they spoke. (Sifsei Chachomim)
5. Malbim (Shelach) says that both are true. Amolek and Canaan came down to fight from on top of the mountain while the Emoiri came from the side of the mountain. Hamek Dovor adds that the main nation was the Emoiri as mentioned in Parshas Devorim but they were assisted by Amolek and Canaan. Another answer is that the Emoiri chased the Jews down the mountain. The Jews fled for assistance to Amolek and Canann but instead of helping them they also chased them away.
6. Rashi brings that like when a bee stings it dies, so too happened to these nations after they attacked the Jews. It is also expressing that this was not a normal battle. Really these nations were weak and it was only due to the sin of the Jews that they were victorious. Another angle about this is like with bees they came in swarms and follow the lead of one so too the bees came out in swarms. (Tosfas) Like bees don’t wait for you to come to them but they come to you so too with these nations (Yohel Oir) Like bees only sting and injure a person so too the Jews were not killed but only injured. A proof to this is that their deaths are not mentioned in the possuk. (Rosh)
7. The Gemora (Avoda Zora 25a) brings that the sun stopping happened three times. For Moshe, as mentioned in Parshas Devorim, by the battle with the giant Oig; by Yehoshua when he went to defend the Givoinim from attacking forces; by Nakdimon ben Gurion when he went to pay back the pits of water on the last day it was owed to save him from paying an astronomical amount of money.

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students by a method of study that was truly his own. He did not follow the paths of his rabbis or friends (for whom the primary thing was the scope of one's knowledge) but rather created a special method of study for himself that was based on contemplation and logic. After dozens of years, when Rabbi Ezra encountered the Chazon Ish and they began discussing Torah, the Chazon Ish said of him: "His way of thinking is like that of the Rishonim." When yeshiva students discussed Torah with him, they marveled at the straightforwardness and clarity of his logic. The directors of the Ohel Moed yeshiva believed that he had a great influence over students, and they named him as its Rosh Yeshiva.

In the meantime, Rabbi Ezra reached the age of marriage and wedded the daughter of Rabbi Avraham Shalem. Throughout his life, his wife helped Rabbi Ezra by enabling him to study Torah in tranquility.

When the First World War erupted, there was a danger that Rabbi Ezra could be drafted into the Turkish army. Thus he fled to Egypt, and there he saw that the spiritual situation of Jews in Cairo was deplorable. He therefore devoted all his energies to teaching Torah to the young, and in fact managed to bring the light of the Torah to the darkened alleys of Cairo. To Rabbi Ezra, the Jews of Egypt applied the verse: "For all the Children of Israel, there was light in their dwellings" (Exodus 10:23).

The First World War ended in 5679 (1919), and the gates of Jerusalem were once again open to those who had exiled themselves, among them being Rabbi Attiya. He began to teach Torah once again in the Ohel Moed yeshiva.

Four years later in 5683 (1923), the great Porat Yossef yeshiva opened in the old city of Jerusalem. Rabbi Ezra, who had become famous as a great Gaon and a superb Rosh Yeshiva, was called upon in 5685 (1925) to be its Rosh Yeshiva. Thus began a new period in his life, and he devoted all the love of his heart and soul to this new task, using various ways to attract youngsters from Sephardic communities to the benches of Torah study. How marvelous it was that in little time many new students came and swelled the ranks of the yeshiva. All the yeshiva students in Porat Yossef loved their Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Ezra. He would calmly give his courses with careful explanations until all

his listeners completely understood what he wanted to convey to them, and every Thursday he was in the habit of speaking of faith and the fear of Heaven, of chesed, humility, and love for all created beings.

Rabbi Ezra was not content with speaking eloquently; he also put his own principles into practice. He loved his students like a father loved his children. When one of his students would come to see him, he would rise to greet him and speak with paternal tenderness: "Sit down, my son, sit down."

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One day an extremely gifted young man entered Porat Yossef, a youngster whose outside appearance testified to his poverty. After a short conversation with Rabbi Ezra, the youngster vouched that the material welfare of his elderly parents depended on him, and that he needed financial support. Rabbi Ezra immediately recommended that he be accepted in the yeshiva and that he be granted a large scholarship. The directors of the yeshiva, however, told Rabbi Ezra that they could not accept him because of budgetary constraints. Right away Rabbi Ezra went to them and said, "I beg you to lower my monthly salary and support this student." This young man went on to become a great Talmid Chacham and a very famous Rav.

The students of Porat Yossef attached themselves to Rabbi Ezra with their entire soul. Even later on, when they went out into the vast world – some of them to far off countries – when they would return to Eretz Israel they would hurry, before doing almost anything else, to go and visit their beloved Rav. His student Rabbi Yehuda Tzadka said, "After having gone to the Kotel, they would go and visit him. They had the feeling that he himself was a type of Kotel."

Rabbi Ezra was very modest in his way of life, finding the good side to everyone and speaking well of all Israel. He also gave much to the poor, particularly in secret. His son, the Dayan Rabbi David, recounts the following story:

"During the last year of my father's life, while he was held firmly in bed because of illness, his grocer came to me and said, 'Your father's account with me has accumulated an enormous debt that he has not yet paid.' I was very surprised upon hearing this, for I knew that in our home we owed nothing to the grocer. However he explained to me that my father had directed him to provide food to the family of a Talmid Chacham, as much as they wanted, and that my father would pay for it. I mentioned this to my father, and he greatly regretted that the matter had become known. He asked me to speak of this to no one, and he told me where there was money hidden in the house for me to pay the grocer."

At the end of his life, Rabbi Ezra experienced great satisfaction. He was surrounded by thousands of students and administrators who showed him great respect. He saw his students at the head of great communities around the world, and his numerous students established yeshivot throughout Eretz Israel, teaching Torah to youngsters in various Sephardic communities. With his own eyes, he saw that the Torah was returning to its home, to its ancient abode among Sephardic Jews, whose leaders were all Torah scholars and great men.

On Monday the 19th of Iyar 5730 (1970), Rabbi Ezra was called to the Celestial Academy. His last request was that his faithful ones "guard themselves from the sin of baseless hatred, which risks provoking catastrophes in the world, and on the contrary to increase brotherhood and friendship among themselves."

Mazal tov to Edward & Guila Howard for the birth of their girl!

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