

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



LONDON'S LEADING PLATFORM FOR STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Parsha sheet is sponsored Leiluy Nishmat Rav Yona Ben Chava

RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



CONFUSING OUR MINDS!

Our Parsha begins on a sad note. Sarah the wife of Avraham and the Mother of the Jewish people passes away.

Rashi explains the reason for the juxtaposition of the death of Sarah to the Akeidat Yitzchak (sacrificing of Yitzchak) at the end of last weeks Parsha, as, when Sarah heard the news that her only son Yitzchak had nearly been Shechted (slaughtered), her soul flew out and she died.

This is very difficult to understand. We read in Kohelet (8) Shomer Mitsvot Loh Yedah Davar Rah – someone who guards and performs the commandments of Hashem is protected from all evil. So how come, the cause of Sarah's death was the Akeidat Yitzchak?

Furthermore we know that Sarah was an even greater prophetess than Avraham, so how is it possible that upon receiving this news her soul could not cope and she seemingly died of shock?

Every day we pray to Hashem to get rid of the Yetzer Hara (evil inclination), Milfanenu UmeAcharenu – from before us

and from after us. What is the meaning of this?

The Yetzer Hara tries to prevent and delay us from carrying out any Mitzvot. Thus before we do a Mitzvah the Yetzer Hara is already at work to try and prevent our good deed. In addition, not only does he try before the deed, but even after the deed has been done, and we think that we are safe and home, the Yetzer Hara works hard to try and make us regret it, for if we regret a Mitzvah then it can be counted Chas Ve Shalom, as if we never really did it. Thus we pray to Hashem to protect us from this Yetzer Hara both before we perform His Mitzvot and after.

The Satan, knew that the days of Sarah in this world were coming to the end. He knew the exact time of her death; he therefore came to Sarah immediately before her death and reported the act of Akeidat Yitzchak to her. Her soul then departed and she died. The Satan's aim was to make people think, by what they could see that Sarah died because she heard about the Akeida. However, in reality this was not the case, she did not die because she heard the news, rather she died naturally, because that was her destined time to die. It is for this reason that the Torah emphasises in length at the beginning of the Parsha, the days of her life (she lived one hundred years and twenty years and seven years etc) to teach us that on that day her life was ended completely.

When Avraham came to eulogise Sarah the verse states VelivKota – (spelt with a small Chaf). The Ba'al Haturim explains that when Avraham cried over the death of his wife, it was a halfhearted cry. ►

26th Cheshvan

SHABBAT BEGINS: 3:59 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 5:03 PM



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

*"Be careful with your words.
Once they are said, they can
only be forgiven, not forgotten."*

> UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▶ 16th NOV MONDAY NIGHTS WITH RABBI TAWIL
- ▶ 19th NOV COOKING WITH TAL FB LIVE
- ▶ 23rd NOV BAT MITSVAH PROGRAM

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DVAR TORAH

Confusing Our Minds!
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

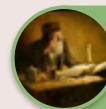
P1



DVAR TORAH

AJEX Shabbat 2020
RABBI REUBEN LIVINGSTONE

P2



OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI TZVI YECHEZKEL MICHELSON

P3



HALACHOT

Can A Man or Woman Eat or Drink Prior
To Kiddush...? RABBI ELI MANSOUR

P3



Q&A & CARTOON

P4

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The reason is that although he missed her sincerely, nevertheless he realised that she had died in good (old) age.

Avraham realised that the only reason she died, was that her time was up. He realised that the Satan was trying to attack and convince him, that the Akeida was a mistake, and it was the Akeida that caused Sarah's death. But he stood fast, and Hashem helped guard him from this Yetzer Harah that appeared even after the Mitzvah Akeida.

The Torah teaches us that in life, there are two stages to performing a Mitzvah. We might think it is difficult enough to persuade ourselves to perform the mitzvah, and once we have performed the Mitzvah, we have done our part. But we learn from this episode that the Yetzer

Harah never gives up, and even once we think we have succeeded in conquering him, and perfected ourselves in that Mitzvah, he comes again to revisit us, and try and dilute our strength, tries to convince us that the Mitzvah we did was a mistake. We have to stand fast, be strong, and pray to Hashem to constantly guard us from this Yetzer Harah. Just the other day I was sitting at a bus stop in Jerusalem, next to me was learned man, who took out a Chumash to read. Fifteen minutes past and every so often he would lift up his eyes to see if the bus had come. When the bus did finally come he was so engrossed in his leaning that he missed the bus. Imagine what a Yetzer Harah that man must have had, now he was going to have to wait at least another twenty minutes for the next bus. It is in these kind of cases that the Yetzer Harah flourishes.

It is our duty to know our Yetzer Harah, he is devious, crafty and knowledgeable. The Gemarah gives advice that when one feels the Yetzer Harah is dominating he should go and learn Torah. Torah is the source of life, it helps a person's merit, and can defend a person at a time of need. Our forefather Avraham Avinu showed us the way. He taught us how to conquer the Yetzer, perform the Commandment of G-d at the highest level, and never to regret a good deed. May Hashem bless us all Ushemor Tzezeno UvoEnu, Viysalek Hasatan Milfanenu UmeAcharenu – and guard us from this evil inclination, so that we may perform His Commandments with Levav Shalem – a pure heart Amen.

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI (MAJOR) REUBEN LIVINGSTONE - SENIOR JEWISH CHAPLAIN TO HM ARMED FORCES AND AJEX REFLECTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF REMEMBERING



AJEX SHABBAT 2020

Memory has sustained us as Jews over thousands of years through a most challenging history. Our faith and our people are founded on the collective memory of 'Matan Torah' - the revelation at Sinai - and our shared experience over millennia from diaspora to diaspora. The Torah repeatedly exhorts us to 'Remember' (e.g. Exodus 20:8/11, Deuteronomy 5:15 and 25:17). Indeed, we are commanded always to 'Remember the past days; understand the years of every generation...' (Deuteronomy 32:7).

Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov taught his Chasidim that, spiritually, "Forgetfulness leads to a state of (permanent) exile while Remembrance is the secret of redemption...collective and individual".

Much of life is typified by its pace of change which invariably takes us by surprise. Past memory is vital in providing us with guidance, context, and the wisdom of experience. This year, with the sudden advent of Covid-19, we are faced profoundly with the realisation that life can be fleeting and outside our ultimate control. Many of the certainties and comforts we have lived with for so many years and taken for granted are suddenly no longer pertinent.

This extends to many aspects of our lives. It includes important communal fixtures like the annual AJEX Cenotaph Parade, to recognise and honour Jewish military service to the Crown. This flagship Remembrance event - now in its 86th year - has had to adapt and will

this year be shown as an online ceremony on Sunday 15th November at 2.30pm. It is noteworthy that this parade is not just about Remembrance itself, but also about appreciating and understanding the experience and sacrifice of previous generations.

When engaging with Soldiers suffering from PTSD in the aftermath of war, I have seen how vital it is not to gloss over past experience - however painful. It is fundamental to support people to remember even the most traumatic of life-events and then build rituals of memory in order to lay toxic demons and nightmares to rest. In this way, memory profoundly honours and supports both the living and the dead.

Certainly, people in professions that encounter death and loss every day - including caregivers, clergy, and medical practitioners, have long understood the importance of channelled and ritualised Remembrance - both collective and personal. It is an established therapeutic principle that is vital for healing (and learning) which enables us to reflect and Remember and not ignore or suppress. By this we can go on living our lives in meaningful ways that honour those who have gone before us and learn precious lessons from their accrued wisdom, deep experience and sacrifice. Moreover, it is indeed a truism that 'Those who do not learn the lessons of history are destined to repeat them...'

In light of all of the above, we must remind ourselves that memory is precious, and Remembrance is not only a duty but a great privilege. When we do that, our gain is to reinforce the faith that no challenge is insurmountable or hopeless - whether crisis, war or even pandemic. For, over our long history, our predecessors and patriarchs faced all of the above (and more) yet survived and even flourished. So too, with Hashem's help, will we.

Chanukah, which we will soon celebrate, is also profoundly an act of memory, commemorating the triumph of the Jewish Maccabees over Greek rulers (164 BCE). This is not just about the physical victory against mighty Greece but also the unlikely spiritual triumph of Jewish faith and values against Hellenism. Its sanctity derives from miraculous survival against all odds and predictions - and this is encapsulated in the miracle of the flask of oil. This is alluded to in an earlier biblical episode where Moses wonders; 'If the bush is burning, why is it not consumed?' (Exodus 3:2-3).

Remembering remarkable Jewish survival and the sacrifice of Servicemen and Women, can inspire us against the challenges we are faced with at this time. AJEX is built upon this foundational principle and is widely recognised both inside and outside our community as the voice of Jewish Veterans' Remembrance. The current Armed Forces Jewish Community (AFJC), is the counterpart organisation - guarding the flame of continuing Jewish service. Together these two strands form a formidable association for the Remembrance of Jewish military and civic service in the UK.

I invite you on this AJEX Shabbat (14th November, 2020) to join us in saying our prayer of Remembrance. In light of what is continuing to unfold around the world, it is more important than ever to ensure we come together in Tefilah. The first AJEX parade took place to combat antisemitism and we can draw strength from the resilience of past generations and remember the courage and sacrifice of all who served.

May we always cherish memory - even as we recognise that it is only by looking back that we can, biSiyata deShmaya, truly see ourselves forward.

■ **Shabbat Shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI TZVI YECHEZKEL MICHELSON

The Rabbinic Council of Warsaw counted about 20 rabbis in its ranks, all of them Torah greats. Among them was one rabbi who was known for being a very active scholar, one that the Jews of Warsaw called the "Rav of Plonsk". However outside of Warsaw people knew him by his actual name, Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel Michelson.

Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel was born on Shevat 9, 5623 (1863) in Bilgorei, in the province of Lublin. His father was Rabbi Avraham Chaim (from a family that included many rabbis and Torah greats), and his mother was Chana Beila.

His parents hired the best personal tutor for him, and they also purchased valuable books for the boy. The young Tzvi Yechezkel began to assemble a nice library for himself, studying Torah "as I poured out my soul with great effort" (which he recounts in the introduction to his book Pinot HaBayit). By the age of 12, he already knew several tractates along with Tosaphot and portions of the Shulchan Aruch by heart. It was also at that time that he began to write Torah commentaries and entered into correspondence with the greats of the generation. When he grew up, he was sent to study in the Biala yeshiva. There he became close friends with the Rosh Yeshiva and Rav, the Rebbe Zev Nachum, who after a certain time addressed him in his letters as "the one whom I cherish as the apple of my eye."

He organized a national assembly on the problems concerning Shabbat observance. The assembly's invitation was signed by such figures as the

Chafetz Chaim and Rabbi Menachem Zemba. Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel also established an organization devoted to the purity of Jewish women, and he worked for the construction of mikvaot and public bathhouses that were modern and hygienic. Even though he was extremely occupied with the needs of the community, he found time to study Torah and publish a number of books. Nevertheless, many of his writings remained in manuscript form and were lost during the Holocaust.

Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel worked intensely for settlements in Eretz Israel, and he generated great interest for etrogim of the Holy Land.

The story of his long and active life ended in great tragedy. He spent his last days in the Warsaw ghetto under Nazi servitude.

When the time came for the Rav to be sent to Auschwitz, he enveloped himself in his Tallit and Tefillin, then went to his room to study Gemara. When a Nazi came into his apartment to check if he was there, he drew back upon seeing the noble face of the Rav, then 80 years old, and exclaimed before leaving, "It's Moses himself!" The Rav then went outside into the square and joined the ranks of his Jewish brothers. He wanted to be with his fellow Jews at that terrible time, a time in which they were going to sanctify G-d's Name in holiness and purity. The elderly Rav stood straight and was immersed in thought. He perished in August 1943, along with the glorious Judaism of Warsaw. May G-d avenge his blood. Amen. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

CAN A MAN OR WOMAN EAT OR DRINK PRIOR TO KIDDUSH ON SHABBAT MORNING?

The obligation to recite Kiddush on Shabbat morning takes effect only after the recitation of Shacharit. Therefore, before one prays on Shabbat morning, he is permitted to drink tea, coffee and water – those beverages that are allowed to be drunk before the morning prayers. Since the Kiddush obligation descends upon a person only after Shacharit, the prohibition against eating or drinking before Kiddush does not apply before he prays; hence, he is allowed to drink whatever is permissible to be drunk before one prays in the morning generally.

The question arises as to whether or not this Halacha applies to women, as well. According to the Ben Ish Chai (Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), women become obligated to recite Kiddush immediately when they awaken Shabbat morning, and therefore they may not eat or drink anything until they recite Kiddush. Others, however, including the Kaf Ha'chayim (Rabbi Chayim Palachi, rabbi of Izmir, Turkey, 19th century) and Chacham Bentzion Abba Shaul (Israel, 1924-1998), distinguish between women who normally pray Shacharit in the morning, and those who do not. If a woman normally prays Shacharit, then her status is no different from that of a man with regard to this Halacha, and her obligation to recite Kiddush does not take effect until after she prays Shacharit. But if a woman does not normally recite Shacharit, and she recites only the morning blessings and the like, then her Kiddush obligation takes effect immediately when she arises in the morning, and therefore she may not eat or drink anything until she first recites Kiddush. In such a case, when a woman must recite Kiddush in the morning, if she finds it difficult to recite the entire text of Kiddush she may recite from "Ve'shamru," or even from "Al Ken" or just the Beracha itself.

Summary: On Shabbat morning, a man may drink water, tea or coffee before the morning prayers, since the Kiddush obligation has yet to take effect. This applies as well to women who are generally accustomed to reciting Shacharit every morning. Women who normally do not recite Shacharit, however, must recite Kiddush before they eat or drink anything on Shabbat morning, and in such a case they need not recite the entire text of Kiddush. ■



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Name the four couples buried in Kiryat Arba.
- ❷ Who did Eliezer want Yitzchak to marry?
- ❸ Why did Lavan run to greet Eliezer?
- ❹ For how many years did Yaakov attend the Yeshiva of Ever?
- ❺ Where was Avraham born?

Answer

❶ 23:2 - Adam and Chava, Avraham and Sara, Yitzchak and Rivka, Yaakov and Leah. ❷ 24:39 - His own daughter. ❸ 24:29 - Lavan coveted his money. ❹ 25:17 - 14 years. ❺ 24:7 - Ur Kasdim.



COOKING FROM HOME WITH TAL AND ANAELLE ALEZRA

19 NOVEMBER
8PM

