

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT VAETCHANAN

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

SHEMA – GIVE WITNESS!

There is a famous story of a traveller who visited one of the greatest rabbis of the last generation – the Chafetz Chaim.

The traveller entered the humble abode of the Chafetz Chaim and was astonished by the meagre accommodation.

He asked the Chafetz Chaim where all his furniture was?

The Chafetz Chaim answered him by asking him where all his furniture was.

The traveller responded, "I don't have any. I'm just passing through this town. Any furniture would just get in my way."

The Chafetz Chaim smiled and said, "Quite so. I too am a mere traveller in this world, expecting to be here only a short while. This world is just a passageway before the World to Come. For a passageway, this is quite adequately furnished."

In this week's Parasha we read the famous words of Shema Yisrael.

This is the quintessential prayer of our nation, the declaration and the testimony of our belief in Hashem. "Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokainu Hashem Echad (6:4)." Accept, Yisrael, Hashem who is Elokainu (our G-d), Hashem is One.

The testimony that all that occurs in this world emanates from Hashem. Our Sages state that when saying this, we must have in mind to accept the Yoke of Heaven.

What does that mean?

When looking at a Sefer Torah we note that the last letter of the first word of Shema –the 'Ayin', and the last letter of the last word (Echad)- 'Daled', are written larger than the other letters. They stand out – why?

These two letters together spell the word 'Ed' – witness.

The Kli Yakar grants an awesome insight

and writes that this alludes to the concept that we (Am Yisrael) are the witnesses of Hashem in this world. As founders of monotheism, we, through our beliefs and the way that those beliefs act upon our lives, serve as witnesses to Hashem's intimate involvement in this world.

There is a more profound lesson to learn from this Ayin and Daled:

Many Parshiot earlier (in Parshat Ki Tisa) we learnt how, Moshe asked Hashem to show him His presence (Shemot 33:18). The Midrash explains that Moshe wanted to see the reward of the righteous in this world and the next. Hashem answered that he could see Him from behind but not from the front.

The Gemara (Brachot 7b) explains that Hashem showed Moshe the knot of His Tefilin Shel Rosh (worn on the back of the head).

The Kli Yakar explains that the Tefilin contain a special Name of Hashem known as 'shakai', spelled 'Shin', 'Daled' and then 'Yud'.

When a person wears Tefilin, the letters 'Shin' and 'Yud' are in front of him.

The 'Shin' is on the front of the Tefilin Shel Rosh and the 'Yud' is the knot of the Tefilin Shel Yad (worn on the hand).

Together the Yud and Shin spell 'Yesh' – (meaning) something or a reality.

This refers to the reward of the next world which is a true being and existence – the epitome of 'Yesh'. Such an existence could not be shown to Moshe. That no eye, even his, could see.

Instead Moshe was only able to see the back of Hashem, the knot of the Tefilin Shel Rosh. That is in the shape of the letter 'Daled'. The letter Daled is of numerical value four and symbolises the four corners of his world; a world that is limited in space.

The Daled exemplifies the reward of this

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Parshat Vaetchanan
By Rabbi David Baadani

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HALACHOT
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KIDS ZONE - QUIZ

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world. Using this important insight we can now gain a deeper understanding in the Shema. The Ayin and Daled are both placed as large letters in the Shema to teach that the eye (Ayin) in this world can only see and understand the Daled – the reward that is connected to this world. However, the reward of the next world, the 'Yesh', the 'Yud' and the 'Shin', the first letters of the words 'Shema Yisrael', that is not available to the domain of the 'Ayin', the eye, rather, that is in the domain of hearing (Shema). That existence, we can only hear about.

This world with all its pleasures is limited. The delicious food, the great

clothes, the fantastic scenery are only considered of great benefit to us in this world because we possess a physical form; the soul desires these things only because the body needs them. In a place where there is no body, all these matters become nullified. The Rambam, in the Mishna Torah, explains that there is no way we can fully anticipate the good in Olam Haba because it is so overwhelmingly great that it cannot be compared to any good in this world. Spiritual pleasures are infinitely good, while physical pleasures are temporary. David HaMelech, in Psalms (Tehillim), alludes to this concept when he writes, "How great is the good that You have hidden for those who fear You!" Because the pleasure we will receive in the World to Come has no comparison

here, even the prophets could not describe it over the course of Jewish history. Any description would have simply diminished it. Our Sages tell us, "All the prophets' only prophesized about the times of the Messiah(Mashiach). However, regarding Olam Haba, no eye has ever seen, except for You, Hashem." Over the centuries countless members of our nation have been willing to die for the sake of 'Hashem Elokainu Hashem echad' and left this world with the words Shema Yisrael on their lips. Their immense faith in Hashem was honourable and they understood the physical limitations of this world.

May we internalise this and through our actions, our words and our thoughts carry the banner of Hashem's existence and involvement in this world.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI

Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PARSHAT VAETCHANAN

וְאֶתְחַנֵּן אֵל ה' בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר:
I pleaded with ה' at that time, saying.

Reib Naftali Zvi Horowitz of Ropshitz (1760 - 1827) says that בְּעֵת הַהוּא means that prayer is effective at any time, any time that the Jew is in need, it doesn't matter if they are in the mood or not, in the shul or out of shul, at home or on their way. If you feel a need, pray right away.

בְּעֵת הַהוּא teaches us that any time is the right time for a prayer, any time is conducive for you to pour your heart to ה', it doesn't matter when and where.

Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov (1745 - 1807) has a different approach. He says that from this Pasuk we learn the secret of a prayer וְאֶתְחַנֵּן אֵל ה' *בְּעֵת הַהוּא* לֵאמֹר, the words בְּעֵת הַהוּא mean at that moment, for the moment. When we pray to ה' we should not dwell in the past nor worry about the future think about the now. בְּעֵת הַהוּא.

This idea is also connected to the Haftara of this Shabbat, Shabbat Nachamu. נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי יֹאמַר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. 'Comfort, oh comfort My people, Says your G-d.' Right we just concluded the period of the Three weeks of mourning the destruction of Yerushlaim, but now it is a time of Nachamu, of comfort. Don't dwell on the past, don't worry about the future just pray for this moment and know that G-d is listening to your prayers anywhere, anytime.

Shabbat Shalom.



RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM

OUR PUPILS – OUR CHILDREN

As we advance through the book of Devarim, we are learning how our greatest leader, Moshe Rabbenu, summarized the Torah. In this parashah he recalls the episode of our receiving the Ten Commandments at Sinai. Further on, he writes the first of the three paragraphs of the Shema – the epitaph of every Jew's allegiance to G-d. In it (Va'etchanan 6:7) we are instructed: "veshinantam levanecha"- "and you

shall teach your children." Our Sages tell us that this verse, in fact, refers to our pupils, i.e. that we should teach our students the mitzvot, values, ethics and the ways of our Torah. This is a "legacy of life." Our aim and goal should be to educate ourselves and the next generation, in order to ensure that our Torah is learned and upheld. Why, however, does the Torah write "you should teach your children," if it is really referring to one's pupils? Let it simply write "you shall teach your students?" We may deduce from here a key rule about teacher-student relationships. A

teacher of Torah must view his students as if they were his own children. If he does not view them as such, then he cannot act as their teacher in the true sense. In practice this means, that just as a father has mercy and cares for his child, so a teacher must have mercy and care for his pupil. When this rapport is achieved, the pupil will be able to accept from his teacher. The more the student feels that his teacher relates to him as a father would to his child, the more he will be able to accept, understand and retain the Torah that he is passing on to him. Moreover, just as a child will more

readily accept rebuke from his parent because he knows it is rooted in his love for him, so too, a pupil who feels a relationship of love will internalize his teacher's reproach. Thus, he will come to grow and climb, and become a link in the chain of our eternal inheritance, the Torah.

Additionally, just as a child remains the responsibility of his father, so too, a pupil always remains his teacher's responsibility. For these reasons the Torah chooses no other description of a student, other than "your child."

The teachers that treated me "like their child" made so much more of an impression on me than those who were

just "in the job" to pass on information. The Torah is not just information, and for one to connect to its spirituality, it must be given over with fatherly emotions.

The definition of a child is the combination of the physical, biological connection that it has to its parents, and the physical and spiritual nurturing that it receives from them. A child is a receptacle to observe their parent's example and to learn from them. For this reason, a pupil can also fit into this category. Therefore, our Sages tell us, that anybody who teaches his friend's son Torah is as though he bore him. He becomes a father, and the pupil, his

child. Just as a biological father contributes to a child's physical capabilities, so, one who teaches Torah bequeaths his student the spiritual capabilities necessary to acquire eternal life. For this reason, we are termed "the children of G-d," as we learn His Torah and emulate His ways. [Just as He is kind, merciful and generous, so we must endeavor to be.]

In life, we are often confronted with opportunities to teach. Let us understand that our pupils are also our children and do our utmost to constantly give them what they need, whatever the situation.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Folding Bedding on Shabbat

The Gemara applies several restrictions on folding clothes on Shabbat. The Poskim discuss whether these restrictions also apply to folding bedding, such as quilts or sheets. The Magen Abraham (Rav Abraham Gombiner, Poland, 1637-1682) permits making beds on Shabbat, if doing so creates an orderly and clean Shabbat environment. Based on this, the new

volume of Mekhereh Eres (Vol. 6) permits folding a quilt on the crease, to keep the house neat and orderly. He adds that preferably this should be done before late afternoon, so as not to give the impression that one is preparing for after Shabbat. However, it is permitted to make the beds in an upstairs bedroom, even if the people in the house are downstairs.

Moreover, it is quite possible that the

prohibition of folding applied only to clothing. This is evident from Rashi's interpretation to the Gemara's (Shabbat 113) use of the word "Kelim" to mean clothing.

Summary:

It is permitted to fold bedding on Shabbat, in order to create a neat and orderly environment in the home. Preferably, this should be done before late afternoon.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Vaetchanan

Although Moshe is content that Yehoshua will lead the nation, Moshe nevertheless prays to enter the Land of Israel in order to fulfil its special Mitzvot. Hashem refuses. Moshe reminds the Jewish People of the gathering at Mount Sinai when they received the Torah, that they saw no visual representation of the Divine, but only the sound of words. Moshe impresses on the Jewish People that the Mount Sinai revelation took place before an entire nation, not to a select elite, and that only the Jewish People will ever claim that Hashem spoke to their entire nation. Moshe

specifically enjoins the Bnei Yisrael to "pass over" the Mount Sinai event to their children throughout all generations.

Moshe predicts, accurately, that when the Jewish People dwell in Eretz Yisrael, they will sin and be scattered among all the nations. They will stay few Although Moshe is content that Yehoshua will lead the nation, Moshe nevertheless prays to enter the Land of Israel in order to fulfil its special mitzvahs. Hashem refuses. Moshe reminds the Jewish People of the gathering at Mount Sinai when they received the Torah, that they saw no visual representation of the Divine, but

only the sound of words. Moshe impresses on the Jewish People that the Mount Sinai revelation took place before an entire nation, not to a select elite, and that only the Jewish People will ever claim that Hashem spoke to their entire nation. Moshe specifically enjoins the Bnei Yisrael to "pass over" the Mount Sinai event to their children throughout all generations.

Moshe predicts, accurately, that when the Jewish People dwell in Eretz Yisrael, they will sin and be scattered among all the nations. They will stay few in number – but will eventually return to Hashem.

Moshe designates three "refuge cities"

to which an inadvertent killer may flee. Moshe repeats the Ten Commandments and then teaches the Shema, the central credo of Judaism, that there is only One G-d. Moshe warns the people not to succumb to materialism, forgetting their purpose as a spiritual nation. The Torah portion concludes with Moshe exhorting Bnei Yisrael not to intermarry when they enter Eretz Yisrael, as they cannot be a treasured

and holy nation if they intermarry, and that in doing so they would become indistinguishable from the other nations. – but will eventually return to Hashem. Moshe designates three "refuge cities" to which an inadvertent killer may flee. Moshe repeats the Ten Commandments and then teaches the Shema, the central credo of Judaism, that there is only One G-d. Moshe warns the

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Rabbi Sinclair, *Seasonsofthemoon.com*



- Q**
1. "And I prayed to Hashem at that time." Why "at that time"?
 2. What characteristic trait is represented by Hashem's "strong hand"?
 3. What is ha'levanon?
 4. What did Hashem tell Yehoshua after the battle of Ai?
 5. What will happen if the Jewish People fail to keep the mitzvot properly?



1. *Defeating Sichon and Og, whose lands were part of Eretz Canaan, Moshe thought perhaps Hashem had annulled the vow against his entering the Land.*
2. *His willingness to forgive.*
3. *Ha'levanon means the Beit Hamikdash, which makes "white" (lavan), i.e., atones for the Jewish People.*
4. *Yehoshua must lead the army into battle.*
5. *The non-Jewish world will regard them as foolish.*



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