

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT BECHUKOTAI

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

IMAGINATION!

Blessings are great, but curses, well no one wants to hear those. This weeks Parsha sets out the blessings that will occur when we do the Will of our Creator, and Chas Ve Shalom the curses that will occur if we don't.

One of the curses although bad, could seem worse. Venastem V'ainRodef – and you shall flee when no one will pursue you (26:17). We will feel as if the enemy is chasing after us and we will flee out of fear, whilst in actual fact they won't even be chasing us. This is a curse but wouldn't it be worse were they to really be chasing after us? Surely it's not so bad if at the end of the day there is no enemy really behind us?

The Rambam was the doctor of the Sultan of Egypt.

He held a great position in the country and many of the other Sultans advisers were jealous. Eventually they came to the Sultan asking him to get rid of the Rambam, and place a better Arab Doctor in his stead.

The Sultan called the Rambam and the Arab Doctor and proposed a test to them. Each one was known to be a great physician and had knowledge in medicines and cures. He told them that he would give each one, a week to nurture up a poison that would be able to kill the other. Each one would also have at their disposal any medicines they wished. Whoever would die, would be the loser and the one who lived through the experience would stay on as the Sultans doctor.

The Arab doctor went home and started to nurture up an amazing poison, one that would be impossible to cure.

The Rambam on the other hand didn't wish to waste his time, trying to make a poison that could kill. He had much more important things to do. He kept to his daily routine of attending to the long queue of patients waiting outside his house, and concentrating on his torah teachings. The final day came and the two doctors stood in front of the king. The Arab doctor gave over the poison to the Rambam. The Rambam examined it and before swallowing it made a medicine he deemed right to cure the poison. He then consumed the poison followed by the medicine. It seemed to work, but no one could be sure, as the poison might take a few hours to ware of on him.

Now it was the Arabs turn to consume the Rambams poison. But the Rambam had no interest in killing the Arab and merely gave him a cocktail of some food he had nurtured for the occasion. Looking at it with great focus the Arab Doctor couldn't define which "poison" it was. Perhaps the Rambam had managed to make some kind of super poison, one whose cure did not yet exist. After a few minutes of examination, he too made a concoction of medicine to counter the "poison". He consumed both the food and the medicine. He saw that nothing happened to him and he was amazed. He was happy with his medicine, but he didn't underestimate the Rambam. He started to think that perhaps the Rambams poison only takes effect when a person eats meat. He decided not to eat meat. After a few hours he saw that the poison still hadn't reached its climax. He

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24TH IYAR 5784
SHABBAT BEGINS:
20:53pm
SHABBAT ENDS:
22:12 pm

Join our weekly TAL Mincha services on Friday and Shabbat Minyan.

- Mincha followed by Kabalat Shabbat: 7pm
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DVAR TORAH
Imagination!
By Rabbi Jonathan Tawil

DVAR TORAH
Parshat Bechukotai
By Rabbi David Baadani

OUR CHAHAMIM
Rav Huna

HALACHOT
By Rabbi Eli Mansour

KIDS ZONE
Quiz & Comic

This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

said perhaps its not to do with meat, perhaps it's to do with eating wheat. He decided not to eat wheat.

He stayed like this for a few days, until one day the Rambam met him in the street. The Rambam was concerned to see the Doctor looking so pale and started to ask him how he was doing and feeling. Then the Rambam asked him how he felt after he drank milk. The Arabs face turned red, and he thought that the Rambam meant that with milk the poison was supposed to take full effect. He had just drank a glass of milk, and was so concerned that due to his weak status he had a heart attack and died.

The king heard that the other doctor had died, and called for the Rambam to be brought to him. Wow, I knew you were a great physician, but I didn't realise you knew how to make poison last for so many days before working and killing the man. The Rambam answered the king and told him that he

was no killer. Rather the man had died due to his own weakness and anxiety.

Is imagination good or bad? It depends – if we use our imagination to form worlds to create our ideas and fulfil our destiny it is an awesome act. If however we use it to fool us, to convince ourselves of a false world and to place importance in the wrong direction – it could be a curse.

The Torah states that one of the worst curses is to run when no one is really chasing. To imagine people are there, and they really are not. To live in constant fear when there is no need too. Sometimes we find ourselves in a situation where our business affairs, and the outside world pretend to chase us, our imagination is let loose and we charge great importance to these.

Life is busy, we need to get to work on time, send the right emails out, check our phones, check our bills, speak to

the right people at the right times. We are living in a manic world. Yet are we setting aside time for the real things in life; -those that matter to us most. Have we sat down with our spouses and had a good chat like we did in our early days of marriage life.

Through the current financial down turn, many companies are taking extra time out to evaluate their past present and future. They are cutting down where things least matter and concentrating on the real issues at hand. Perhaps we should apply this to the really important things in life, re-evaluate our standing amongst our children, husbands and wives. Take some extra time to give them the attention they deserve.

Let us utilise our imagination for the good, let us not get fooled by all the false publicity and outside yearnings, let us stay focused on our real goals and use our imagination to form our great destiny.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI

Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PARSHAT BECHUKOTAI

אֱלִישָׁע בֶּן אֲבוּיָה אֹמֵר, הַלּוֹמֵד יָלֵד לְמָה הוּא דוֹמָה, לְדָוִד כְּתוּבָה עַל גִּיד חֲדָשׁ. וְהַלּוֹמֵד זָקֵן לְמָה הוּא דוֹמָה, לְדָוִד כְּתוּבָה עַל גִּיד מְחוּק.

Elisha ben Abuyah said: "He who learns when a child, to what is he compared? To ink written upon a new writing sheet. And he who learns when an old man, to what is he compared? To ink written on a rubbed writing sheet."

We need to understand what Elisha ben Abuyah came to teach us? It is clear and well known that it is easy for the little ones to accept and absorb not only what the eyes see and the ears hear, but also

to feel what is below the surface. But, Did Elisha come to discourage anyone who is not a child, by saying; 'Your study is not worthy because it is as an ink written on a rubbed writing sheet, And even if you put in a lot of effort and exertion in your study, things will never be clear enough?'

It seems to say that Elisha ben Abuyah in comparing a child and an old man did not speak of age, but of attitude, of the mindset with which one approaches his learning. Some are learning like a 'child'. Open to accept, eager to learn, to discover, understand and to become wise. Their vessels are empty and therefore available for receiving and filling themselves with wisdom and understanding. So their study is like ink

written on new writing sheet. But when a person comes in the attitude of an 'old man' (זקן - זה קנה חכמה), in an attitude of one who already knows everything, there is nothing they have not heard, no person can tell them something they don't know already, they heart is not open to accept and has already lost the enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. Their vessels are overflowing and no longer have the ability to receive, so their study is like an ink written on a rubbed writing sheet.

It all depends on attitude, on the understanding that there is always room for more wisdom, more understanding and more knowledge, in the recognition that אִיֶּהוּ חָכֵם, הַלּוֹמֵד מִכָּל אָדָם, Who is wise? He who learns from everyone.



OUR CHAHAMIM

Rav Huna

Rav Huna belonged to the second generation of Babylonian Amoraim, and he was named Rosh Yeshiva of the

academy at Sura after the death of Rav. Despite his greatness, the Talmud does not say who his parents were, and only in one place is it stated that he was related

to the family of the Exilarch. Besides his considerable wisdom, what was remarkable about Rav Huna was his great qualities, particularly his generosi-

ty. With him, riches and the greatness of Torah went together as a pair. He also possessed abilities that characterize a leader of Israel. Early on, when Rav Huna was a student of Rav, he was extremely poor, and so he began farming. He worked the ground himself, irrigated it by his own means, and allowed only the flocks to graze on it. Obviously, he felt no shame in performing all these tasks, and he allowed no one to do it for him. One day, the Gemara says, he was walking with some farm equipment on his shoulder when a Talmid Chacham by the name of Chanah bar Chanilai met him and wanted to carry his load. Rav Huna told him, "If you are accustomed to carrying this type of equipment in your town, then you can do so here if you wish. But if not, do you think that I would allow myself to embarrass you so that I could derive personal honor from it?" During this time Rav Huna's poverty was so great that once he didn't even have wine to recite Kiddush for Shabbat. He went and placed his belt as collateral in order to buy some wine, replacing his belt with a simple piece of string. When Rav noticed, he asked him, "What does this mean?" Rav Huna then explained that he was obligated to put his belt down as collateral in order to buy wine for Shabbat. Thus Rav gave him a blessing that Hashem should provide him with such wealth that he could wear clothes made of velvet!

Starting from then on, his business dealings began to prosper, to the point that he became extremely rich. Once, 400 barrels of wine that he owned became sour and turned into cheap vinegar, and he was faced with a huge financial loss. His friends, the Sages, came to him and advised that he should examine his ways, for he may have committed some sin.

"Do you suspect me of wrongdoing?" Rav Huna asked them.

"Do you suspect the Holy One, blessed be He, of making a Jew lose money for no reason?" the Sages replied.

"If such is the case, please tell me if you have heard anything concerning me that I should rectify. If so, I will immediately mend my ways," said Rav Huna in a spirit of repentance.

"We have heard," the Sages told him, "that you have not given your sharecropper his rightful portion of grapevine shoots. For the same reason as he has the right to a portion of a tree's fruits, a sharecropper has the right to a portion of its shoots and twigs."

Rav Huna was astonished. "But my sharecropper takes all the shoots, leaving me with hardly anything!" he replied. He then decided, "Perhaps starting from today I will set aside a fixed quantity of grapevine shoots for him. In this way he won't steal from me

anymore!"

Success immediately began to smile on Rav Huna once again, and the price of vinegar started to rise, to the point that he lost nothing in the whole affair. Rav Huna's incredible prosperity became well known, to the extent that it was said that whoever saw him in their dreams would experience miracles.

One day a fire broke out in Rav Huna's town, yet the flames didn't touch anything in the district where he lived. The residents of the town believed that they had been saved by his merit. However they were shown in a dream that this was insignificant compared to the greatness of Rav Huna, and that the district had been saved by the merit of a woman who each week lit her stove and allowed all her neighbors to benefit from its use. We can learn from this the power of generosity.

Rav Huna's yeshiva became ever larger. It had about permanent 800 students, and he paid for everything out of his own pocket. Moreover, thousands of students who studied independently during the whole year came to his yeshiva for two months out of the year (Yarchei Kallah in Adar and Elul). They came to listen to the Rosh Yeshiva's lectures, as well as to those of his colleagues, after which they would go back home and attend to their affairs. At that time Rav Huna had 13 assistants. He died at an advanced age.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Shabbat – Cutting a Cake with Letters; Putting Letters Together in Scrabble

If some wax fell on written text, it is forbidden on Shabbat to remove the wax to reveal the text – even just one letter – as this constitutes "writing." (If some wax covers some text of the Sefer Torah, and the wax is thick, Hacham Ovadia ruled that if the covered text is in the Parasha that is to be read that day, then the Sefer Torah is invalid; if, however, the concealed text is in a different Parasha, then the Sefer Torah may be used.)

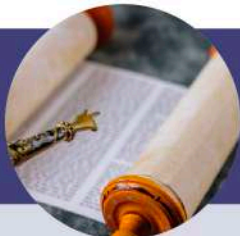
The Rama (Rav Moshe Isserles of Cracow, 1530-1572) rules (Orah Haim 340) that if a cake has lettering on it – such as with sugar or cream – it is forbidden to cut through the lettering, as this constitutes "erasing." However, Hacham Ovadia Yosef and Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (1924-1998) ruled that for Sefaradim, this is permissible. This type of "erasure," which is not done for the purpose of writing in place of the erased text, is forbidden only Mi'de'rab-

banan (by Rabbinic enactment), and it is permissible to perform an action on Shabbat that unintentionally results in an action that is normally forbidden Mi'de'rabbanan. Since the person has no intention to "erase" the lettering on the cake, and has no interest in doing so, and this "erasure" is forbidden only Mi'de'rabbanan, this is allowed. Nevertheless, Hacham Ovadia writes (in Yabia Omer) that one who is stringent in this regard is worthy of blessing ("Tabo Alav Beracha").

Rabbi Moshe Ha'levi (1961-2000), in Menuhat Ahaba (3:22; listen to audio recording for precise citation), addresses the case of bringing together letters which were written already before Shabbat in order to produce words, such as when playing Scrabble. He writes that this is entirely permissible, since the prohibition of writing on Shabbat applies to creating letters, and does not include bringing together letters that had already been produced before Shabbat. Therefore, he writes, children may be

allowed to play such games on Shabbat. Rabbi Moshe Halevi notes that this applies as well to pictures; one may bring together two pieces with partial pictures on them to form a complete picture. However, he adds, it would be forbidden to attach letters together to form words, such as games in which letters are clipped to a frame or snapped together. Although it is permissible to bring letters near one another, one may not attach the letters together. But if the letters are already in a frame, and one moves the letters around to form words (or in the case of numbers, as in the "15 Puzzle" game), then this is permissible on Shabbat.

Summary: It is permissible to slice through the lettering on a cake on Shabbat, though those who wish may be stringent in this regard. Children may be allowed to play scrabble on Shabbat, bringing letters near one another to form words, but it is forbidden to attach letter pieces together to form words.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Bechukotai

The Torah promises prosperity for the Jewish People if they follow G-d's commandments. However, if they fail to live up to the responsibility of being the Chosen People, then chilling punishments will result. The Torah details the harsh historical process

that will fall upon them when Divine protection is removed. These punishments, whose purpose is to bring the Jewish People to repent, will be in seven stages, each more severe than the last. Sefer Vayikra, the book of Leviticus, concludes with the details of erachin – the process

by which someone vows to give the Beit Hamikdash the equivalent monetary value of a person, an animal or a property.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com



1 How much is "revava"?

26:4 - Ten thousand.

2 Which "progression" of seven transgressions are taught in Chapter 26, and why in that particular order?

26:14,15 - Not studying Torah, not observing mitzvot, rejecting those who observe mitzvot, hating Sages, preventing others from observing mitzvot, denying that Hashem gave the mitzvot, denying the existence of Hashem. They are listed in this order because each transgression leads to the next.

3 What is one benefit which the Jewish People derive from the Land of Israel's state of ruin?

26:32 - No enemy nation will be able to settle in the Land of Israel.

4 What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?

26:35 - 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 shemita and yovel years.

5 The northern tribes were exiled after how many years of transgressing the Torah in the Land of Israel?

26:35 - 390 years.

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