

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

ARE YOU THIRSTY?

Cognitive dissonance is a kind of armour that we build up to ward off information that we don't want to hear. According to cognitive dissonance theory, we seek consistency among our beliefs. When there is dissonance between belief and behaviour, we change something to eliminate the dissonance. We could change our behaviour to accord with our beliefs, but usually, we change our attitude to accommodate our behaviour. It's much less work!

For example: You buy an expensive car and take it for a drive to Manchester. Even though the car looked great in the showroom and handled well in town, you discover that on long drives, it's about as comfortable as a wooden bench.

Dissonance exists between your beliefs that you have a) bought a good car, and b) that a good car should be comfortable. Dissonance could be eliminated by deciding that it doesn't matter since the car is mainly used for short trips (reducing the importance of the dissonant belief) or focusing on the car's strengths such as safety, appearance, handling (thereby adding more consonant beliefs). The dissonance could also be eliminated by getting rid of the car -- but that's a lot harder than changing our beliefs.

Changing beliefs, working on ourselves, changing our character for the best all require a great deal of effort. The question is, are we ready to work on ourselves? Do we see this as important, or are we going to continue our robotic path in life.

The story is told of Morris, who goes to the Rabbi and says, "I committed a sin and I want to know what I can do to repent."

"What was the sin?" the Rabbi asked.

"It happened just once," Morris assures him. "I

didn't wash my hands and recite the blessing before eating bread."

"Nu, if it really only happened once," the Rabbi said, "that's not so terrible. Nonetheless, why did you neglect to wash your hands and recite the blessing?"

"I felt awkward Rabbi," said Morris. "You see, I was in a non-kosher restaurant."

The Rabbi's eyebrows arch. "And why were you eating in a non-kosher restaurant?"

"I had no choice," Morris said. "All the kosher restaurants were closed."

"And why were all the kosher restaurants closed?" the Rabbi asked.

Morris replied, "It was Yom Kippur."

Sometimes we are not very truthful with ourselves, we start with one small request, perhaps a small lust to do a sin, and we convince ourselves that such a small sin won't hurt anyone. Then slowly, slowly one thing leads to another and before we know it we find ourselves performing a major sin. What happened?

In this week's Parsha the Torah states that anyone who thinks that all the curses mentioned in the Torah will not apply to him, is mistaken. "And it will be that when he hears the words of this curse, he will bless himself in his heart, saying, 'Peace will be with me...to compound the moist with the thirsty'" (29:18) Hashem emphatically states that no one is immune from punishment. There are no excuses. If a person knows the rules, he has learnt the Torah and nevertheless thinks that Shalom Yihyeh Li – I will be ok, this doesn't apply to me, it applies to everyone else – then he is mistaken. We have to stop looking at the bad in others and also realise that there exists some bad in us. The way forward is to inspect ourselves. But there is a more important lesson to be learned from the above mentioned Pasuk. Let us take a deeper look. The Ramban asks what is meant by the words "in order to compound the moist (Rava) with the thirsty (Tseme'ah)", what is it telling us?

This week's Parsha Sheet is kindly sponsored Lirfuat
Liora Yehudit Bat Mazal Tov
Betch Shaar Cholei Yisrael

Do you enjoy the popular weekly Torah Insights?
To Sponsor or dedicate the popular Parsha sheet, contact us today:
☎ 07792 460986
✉ info@torahactionlife.com

26TH ELUL 5785
SHABBAT BEGINS:
18:52pm
SHABBAT ENDS:
19:51pm

To receive weekly emails from TAL with all our programs and exciting updates please subscribe to our email:
<https://torahactionlife.com/subscribe/>

DVAR TORAH
Are you Thirsty? | Write YOUR Book!
By Rabbi Jonathan Tawil

DVAR TORAH
Parshat Nitzavim
By Rabbi Danny Fisher

HALACHOT
By Rabbi Eli Mansour

KIDS ZONE
Quiz & Comic

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

The soul of man is pure. We are created with a content soul, but due to our body being physical our desires are physical. There is a constant battle between our soul which seeks closeness to Hashem and our body which seeks physicality's. A content soul is called Rava. Its desires are satiated. A lustful person however, is called Tseme'ah –thirsty – they desire more and more. The Ramban explains that in the beginning a sin can seem far away, a persons lust can be controlled,

but then a person opens the door – just once. He gives in to temptation. From then on its an upward battle because once he has tasted the lust he desires more, and the urge gets greater. The Torah teaches us that a person shouldn't think Shalom Yihyeh li – all we be fine, its ok I will only do the sin once and then I will be good, because the Torah understand the psyche of man, and once you start the lust grows until eventually there is a massive thirst.

The smell of Rosh Hashanah is in the air, the cooking has started and the buying new cloths and preparation for the big day is in full swing. That is the physical side. How is our spiritual preparation, are we focusing on ourselves and are we building fences around those sins that we are prone too?

Wishing you all a Gemar VeChatima Tova, may we all be written in the book of Life health and happiness with the coming of Mashiach speedily in our days Amen.

WRITE YOUR BOOK!

A recent survey by the National Centre for Social Research found that for the first time, more than half of people in the UK (53%) described themselves as having "no religion".

Among those aged between 18 and 25, the proportion was higher at 71%.

This greatly contrasted with 75% of people aged 75 and over who said they were religious.

Wow, the trend is harsh...the youth seem to be offloading religion whilst the elders are hanging on.

Is that really the case?

Rosh Hashanah (the new Jewish Year) is upon us. A time for change, awakening, inspiration and rebuilding our relationship with G-d.

What's interesting to note is the way we relate to this day. Rosh Hashanah is literally translated as the head of the year. Why do we not call this exceptional day Shana Chadasha (New Year)? What's special about the head?

The Shulchan Aruch (583:2) writes that on Rosh Hashanah we eat the head of a lamb to symbolise that "we should be as a head and not as a tail, and to remember the ram at the Akedat (binding of) Yitzchak."

The Chayei Adam mentions the custom to use fish in its stead and to say that "we should multiply like fish and that no evil eye be upon us".

What is interesting is the double language used. Wouldn't it have been enough to say we wish to be at the head? Why do we need to add the words and not the tail?

Furthermore in Parshat Ki Tavo (28:13) the Torah relates that G-d will place us at the head, and not at the tail.

Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz Ztz"l explains with the famous words in Pirkei Avot 4:15 which state that we should strive to be the tail of a lion and not the head of a fox.

R Eibeshitz explains that here too we are asking G-d that He make us the head. But not the head of foxes or even lions, the head of heads!

What do I mean by the head of heads?

Let me explain with a fascinating story.

As a young man Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky Ztz"l found himself in an ever changing world through the rise in power of

communism and the Nazis, leading to the Second World War. Times were tough and many of the Yeshivot escaped Poland and headed for Vilna, Lithuania. They thought they could seek refuge there, but were soon traumatised as the Russian tanks rolled through the towns. They were chased and eventually "caught" (for no reason) and sent off to Siberia to a harsh labour camp.

As they arrived they were greeted by one of the commanders who stood them up in the freezing cold and informed them that they were there to stay. In fact he told them they would be there for 25 years!

Amongst the group of Jews, Poles and Lithuanians was the previous Minister of Education of Lithuania- an elderly eighty year old man who had been through much to get to where he was; now broke down crying.

Understanding their situation Rabbi Galinsky made a quick calculation as to how old he would be when they left twenty five years later. But alas his calculation soon broke down as he was shouted at by the commander. "You see those gates, no one leaves there alive!" said the commander.

I once heard Rabbi Galinsky personally relate his predicament.

"What could I do? How should I pray to G-d to save me?

Almighty G-d, I implore you to let me have the strength to survive and if that's too much, please at least let me have a Jewish burial.

If someone would have approached me and told me at that time not to worry, calming my fears by saying

"One day you will leave this place and go to Israel where you will set up a Torah Academy, including a Yeshiva and range of Kolelim.

You will be blessed with a large family and merit to see your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren in health, living a rich Jewish life.

And that when you will be invited to travel outside of Israel it would be hard for your to arrange as you will be attending so many family engagements, weddings, Bar Mitzvah's" I would have said Rachok Miyeshuati Divrei Shaagati – literally meaning man asks for a lot and receives a little.

I learned with my own flesh that the explanation is the exact opposite.

All I asked for was the simple strength to survive and if that was too much then at

least a Jewish burial. And G-d in turn blessed me with the abundance that I have experienced!"

Therefore my friends when it comes to Rosh Hashanah we ask G-d please let us be the head.

But the head of what?

Not the peak of what our understanding is. What we think is the head, is really just the tail. Therefore we beseech the Almighty to bless us to be the head in His understanding, rather than what we perceive to be the head, yet is really the tail.

A message to generation Z.

It's not all as it seems. There is much more depth to what you think is the peak.

This is the easy come easy go generation where what are thought of as Super Computers – the heads of the computer world - are a few years later already considered obsolete. Where fun and action are quick to arrive, yet don't seem to leave a lasting impression.

What are your desires for the next year? Rosh Hashanah is the first page in a blank book of hundreds of pages. Write a good one!

What shall we ask for? Better gaming powers, technological advances that will enable us to text, video call, drive unmanned vehicles, get to the moon and back?

What we think is the head – the top of our list of asks, could actually be the tail.

So we ask G-d – You realise what is at the top – please put us there!

Judaism has so much to offer, boasting a rich legacy of dialogue and thought provoking debate to cultivate both wisdom and compassion. There is a reason why so many people in the previous generations died for their belief!

Religion is dying? Not with us. We have been crushed in the past, yet we have now risen and cultivated barren land, returning to the promised land of our forefathers – Israel. We have rebuilt the Torah learning centres that were destroyed by the evil Nazis. And we will continue to learn from the book of a Living G-d that Was, Is and always Will Be.

Judaism is alive and well, thriving, offering life, teaching love, kindness, free will and true happiness. Judaism has an enormous wealth of wisdom and experience to offer this troubled world, and we as Jews ought to be proud to speak about it with enthusiasm and dignity.

As the New Year arrives remember the book is called opportunity and Rosh Hashanah is the first chapter in the book. Grab it, embrace it and create your Jewish future.



RABBI DANNY FISHER

Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

PARSHAT NITZAVIM

In the beginning of this weeks sedra Rashi asks, why does Parshas Nitzavim come after Parshas Ki Sovo?

Rashi answers that after the 100 klolos in parshas Ki Sovo, Klal Yisraels faces dropped, they were extremely disheartened. They questioned how they would be able to survive all these klolos, it seems impossible. Moshe Rabbeinu appeased them, by saying "atem nitzavim hayom", "You are standing here today". You have managed to withstand the klolos all these 40 years, with the

many times that Klal Yisrael have angered Hashem and you are still here.

Rav Moshe Sternbuch asks how it could be that Moshe Rabbeinu seemingly downplays the severity of the tochochah by telling Klal Yisrael that if they are here today, they will always be here. Surely, it is good for them to feel the severity and strictness of the klolos.

He answers that although the tochochos are extremely strict and just, they are written in Loshon Yochid, in the singular. Each person as an individual must be careful and warned about the punishments that may come their way if they act wrongly. However, "atem nitzavim" is in the plural teaching us that Klal Yisrael

as a whole, as a nation will always be here, no matter how far we stray. And that was a source of comfort for Klal Yisrael to hear.

Many years ago, I was seated on a bus when a stranger struck up a conversation with myself. I quickly realized that I was speaking to a missionary and wishing to end the conversation before it even began I turned to him and said " but after all these thousands of years the Jewish people are still here", to which there was no reply.

The covenant between Klal Yisrael and HKBH is eternal, the bris is nitzchi and that must be a source of comfort and empowerment for us all.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

May Someone Learn Torah if He Cannot Recite Birkot Ha'Torah?

Halacha requires one to recite Birkot Ha'Torah each day before learning Torah. One who wishes to learn Torah upon waking in the morning may not do so until he first recites Birkot Ha'Torah.

The question arises whether a person may learn Torah if he is unable to recite Birkot Ha'Torah, such as if he cannot read Hebrew, or if he does not have access to the text of the blessings, and he does not know them by heart. If an individual in this situation wishes to fulfill the precious Misva of Torah study, may he do so, or is he barred from learning as long as he cannot recite the required Berachot?

Rav Haim of Volozhin (1749-1821), and the Netziv (Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, 1816-1893), maintained that one is not permitted to learn Torah even in such a case, where a person has no practical ability to recite Birkot Ha'Torah. By contrast, the Be'sel Ha'hochma (Rav Betzalel Stern, 1911-1988) maintained that Halacha does not actually forbid learning Torah before reciting the Berachot. Rather, there is a Misva to recite Birkot Ha'Torah before learning. Therefore, the inability to perform the Misva of Birkot Ha'Torah does not affect the ability to learn Torah. Hence, one who is unable to recite Birkot Ha'Torah is nevertheless allowed to study Torah.

Likewise, Hacham Ovadia Yosef approv-

ingly cites the ruling of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Jerusalem,1910 -1995) as allowing a person to recite Birkot Ha'Torah in such a case. Rav Shlomo Zalman noted that there are numerous other Misvot which we introduce with a Beracha, and yet, if a person, for whatever reason, cannot recite the Beracha over a Misva, he nevertheless performs the Misva. For example, if a person forgot the text of the Beracha over Tefillin, and he does not have access to a Siddur, he puts on Tefillin without the Beracha. The Gemara states that eating or drinking without reciting a Beracha is forbidden, as it constitutes a type of "theft" – deriving benefit from the world without first acknowledging G-d – but this was never said about Misvot. Even when we are required to recite a Beracha before performing a Misva, the inability to do so does not prevent us from fulfilling the Misva. Hence, when it comes to Torah learning, too, one may fulfill the Misva of learning even if he cannot recite the Beracha.

Rav Shlomo Zalman also advanced a second argument, suggesting a comparison to the situation of an Onen – somebody who, Heaven forbid, lost an immediate family member who was not yet buried. During this period between a family member's passing and burial, one does not perform any Misvot, and does

not recite Berachot. Nevertheless, he is permitted to eat, without a Beracha, because circumstances prevent him from reciting a Beracha. Therefore, even if one would argue that learning Torah is forbidden before reciting Birkot Ha'Torah, this would be allowed when a person is unable to recite the blessing due to circumstances beyond his control.

Hacham Ovadia accepts Rav Shlomo Zalman's reasoning, and this is, indeed, the Halacha.

It must be emphasized, however, that this applies only to somebody who does not have the ability to recite Birkot Ha'Torah. If someone is able to recite Birkot Ha'Torah, then he is required to do so, even if this entails great difficulty. Thus, for example, if a person wakes up in the middle of the night and wishes to learn for a little while before going back to sleep, he must recite Birkot Ha'Torah, even though this is inconvenient.

Summary: One is obligated to recite Birkot Ha'Torah before learning Torah each day, and thus, upon waking in the morning, one may not learn Torah before first reciting Birkot Ha'Torah. However, if, for whatever reason, one cannot recite Birkot Ha'Torah – such as if he does not have access to a Siddur and does not know the text of the blessings by heart – then he may learn Torah without reciting the Berachot.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Nitzavim

On the last day of his life, Moshe gathers all the people, young and old, lowly and exalted, men and women, in a final initiation. The covenant includes not only those who are present, but even those generations yet unborn. Moshe admonishes the people again to be extremely vigilant against idol worship, because despite having witnessed the abominations of Egypt, there will always be the temptation to experiment with foreign philosophies as a pretext for immorality.

Moshe describes the desolation of the Land of Israel that will result from failure to heed Hashem's mitzvahs. Both their descendants and foreigners alike will remark on the singular desolation of the Land and its apparent inability to be sown or to produce crops. The conclusion will be apparent to all – that the Jewish People have forsaken the One Who protects them, in favor of powerless idols. Moshe promises, however, that the people will eventually repent after both the blessings and the curses have been fulfilled. And,

however assimilated they will have become among the nations, Hashem will eventually bring them back to the Land of Israel. Moshe tells the people to remember that the Torah is not a remote impossibility, but rather that its fulfillment is within the grasp of every Jew. This Torah portion concludes with a dramatic choice between life and death, with Moshe exhorting the people to choose life.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com

Q

1. What is the connection between the verse "atem nitzavim" and the curses in the previous parsha?
2. Who were the wood-choppers and water-carriers?
3. Why can Hashem never "swap" the Jewish People for another nation?
4. One who ignores the Torah's warnings "adds drunkenness to thirst." What does this mean?
5. What two cities were destroyed along with S'dom and Amorah?

A

1. 29:12 - The Jewish People asked, "Who can survive such curses?" Moshe responded, "You've done a lot to anger Hashem, and yet 'atem nitzavim' — you are still standing before Him;"
2. 29:10 - Canaanites who joined the Jewish People under false pretenses.
3. 29:12 - Because Hashem swore to their ancestors that He would never do so.
4. 29:18 - He causes Hashem to reckon his unintentional sins alongside his intentional ones, punishing him for all.
5. 29:22 - Admah and Tzevayim.

Heichal Moshe Synagogue @TAL

Monday 22nd September 2025
 Mincha Followed Arbit of Yom Tov 6:35pm
 Candle Lighting 6:43pm

Tuesday 23rd September 2025
 Shacharit 8:45am
 Tekl'at Shofar (approx.) 11:00am
 Mincha followed by Tashlich 6:00pm
 Arbit 7:30pm
 Candle Lighting not before 7:47pm

Wednesday 24th September 2025
 Shacharit 8:45am
 Tekl'a Sofar (approx.) 11:00am
 Mincha 6:30pm
 Arbit and End of Chag 7:43pm

Shabbat Shuva 27th September 2025
 Friday Mincha 6:20pm
 Saturday Shacharit 9:00am
 Shabbat Ends 7:35pm

שנה טובה ומתוקה

