

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT SHEMINI

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

IT'S KOSHER!

We live in a privileged generation. Whereas our grandparents found it hard to keep a kosher home, we are spoiled for choice. Kosher outlets and restaurants are opening across the country, food is being produced with flavours that were unheard of, and we have even merited drinking tea with "Parev" milk together with a meaty meal!

In this week's Parsha we are taught about the laws of Kashrut. We must abide by those laws and are told that this is what distinguishes us from the nations of the world, and allows us to gain and implement a high level of holiness.

What seems strange however, is the seemingly strong use of language written in the torah when it refers to non kosher animals. Back in Parshat Noach, Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi derived that the Torah goes out of its way to teach us the importance of clean speech. The Torah tells us that "Noach took sets of seven males and females of each the Tahor (kosher) animal species, and one set of two Non-Tahor (non-kosher) animal species" (Bereishit 7:8-9).

Rabbi Yehoshua asks why the Torah did not just use one simple word to describe the non-kosher animals – "Tamei", why did it say "Non Tahor"? He explains that this is to teach us the importance of clean speech. The Torah

goes out of its way, even though it is lengthier in explanation, to use cleaner speech. It prefers to avoid calling creatures, even non-kosher ones, Tamei (impure). Rather it labels them as animals that are not classified as Tahor.

So it is always good to go out of our way and say things in a cleaner way rather than using less appropriate language, even when talking about non kosher animals.

Yet in our Parsha, it seems that the Torah does not go to these lengths, rather it clearly calls non kosher animals – Tamei. It does not label them as animals that are not Tahor. It calls them Treif! Why the change? What happened to the gentle etiquette so beautifully professed by Rabbi Yehoshua?

The governor of a group of small villages decided to make an official visit to one of the more backward farm communities of his province. The mayor of the village, a simple farmer who had no idea of social graces nor etiquette, received him. The farmer's wife made tea, the water of which was scooped from a muddy stream and set to boil. Upon sipping the first bit of the dirt-filled libation, the governor immediately spit it out and shouted, "What did you serve me? This is terrible!" The governor proceeded to show the mayor and his wife exactly how to strain water through cheese-cloth in order to make a proper glass of tea. Amazed, both husband and wife accepted the advice gratefully.

A few weeks later, there was a fire in the village. Reports to the governor said that

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Quiz

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though there had been ample water, manpower, and time to contain the blaze, for some reason the fire had managed to destroy most of the town. The governor arrived at the home of the mayor to inquire what, exactly, went wrong. "You see, dear governor," beamed the hapless mayor, "the men were going to use the muddy brook-water to extinguish the blaze, but I stopped them! I showed them how to filter the water, and remove the small rocks and dirt. Since your visit, we never used filthy water again!"

"You fool!" shouted the governor. "You filter for tea, not a fire! When a fire is raging you must put it out immediately - even with dirty water!" The story of Noach is a narrative. The Torah can well afford to classify the non-kosher animals in a positive light. After all, for the sake of the story it does not make a difference if the animals are referred to as Tamei or not Tahor. The Torah chose the

gentler way. However when telling us the Halacha to avoid eating animals which are not kosher, the Torah does not offer circuitous etiquette, it declares boldly - "they are Treif!"

There is a time and place for every expression. When etiquette will work, it must be used; but when a fire is burning and the situation demands powerful exhortation, any water, even if it is a little muddy, must be used.

The Seforno asks why the laws of Kashrut are placed after the inauguration of the Mishkan, what is the connection? He answers by saying that the purpose of the Mishkan was to enable Hashem's Shechina to rest within the people - Veshachanti Betochem. Not just among them, but actually within each and every one of us. Similarly the Torah is teaching us (by placing the laws of Kashrut together with the Mishkan) that a prerequisite of the Shechina resting within us is to guard what we let within

us; ensure that our food is Kosher. Our Rabbis (Sotah 12b) explain that when Batya, the daughter of Pharaoh found Moshe in the waters, she first tried to have him nursed by Egyptian women. Baby Moshe refused to cooperate because years later he would be a prophet and speak to Hashem. His body could not consume anything impure, for he was destined to speak to Hashem.

In the time of Mashiach, Hashem will infuse His spirit into all the people, "Venibu Beneichem Uvenoteichem" - "and your sons and daughters shall prophesy" (Yoel 3:1).

We are living in the times of Mashiach, the world changes around us. With Hashem's help, eating kosher has been made easier; let us respond to this kindness and ensure our bodies are kept spiritually healthy. And may we all merit very soon, the ability to hear Hashem.

Shabbat Shalom



RABBI DAVID BAADANI

Director - TAL Chazanut Program

ספירת העומר - THINK GOOD, SPEAK GOOD, DO GOOD

It is a well-known psychological and spiritual truth that one cannot simply remove a thought from the mind by desiring not to think it. This phenomenon is famously illustrated by the phrase: "Don't think about elephants." The moment it is said, the image of an elephant inevitably appears in the mind. This demonstrates a powerful principle: the human mind does not erase thoughts by force of will alone.

The Torah provides a subtle but profound hint to the solution in the phrase "עֹמֶר לְגִלְגֵּלֶת" - "an omer per head" (Exodus 16:16). The word omer refers to a specific measure, while gulgoleth refers to the skull, or

metaphorically, the brain. This teaches us that the mind has a limited capacity - it can only hold one full "measure" of thought at a time. Therefore, the way to displace an undesirable or impure thought is not to fight it directly, but to replace it with a positive, pure thought. By consciously choosing what to focus on, we naturally push out the negative.

This idea connects to a deeper pattern of how the world operates: thought, speech, and action. Every deed begins with a thought. If one verbalizes that thought, it is already closer to becoming an action. That is why great care must be taken not to speak negative or harmful thoughts - because words bring thoughts closer to reality.

King David expressed this principle in Psalms when he said:

"אֲנִי שָׁמַרְתִּי אֶרְחוֹת פְּרִיץ זַמְתִּי בֶל יַעֲבֹר פִּי" - "I kept myself from the ways of the violent by guarding my mouth from expressing wrongful thoughts." (Psalm 17: 3, 4,)

This teaches us that by restraining speech, one can prevent a harmful thought from evolving into a harmful act. Conversely, in a positive sense, the more one verbalizes good, holy, and peaceful thoughts, the more those words give birth to good actions.

Therefore, if we wish to purify our thoughts and improve our behavior, we must be mindful of what we say and intentionally fill our minds with positive content. By doing so, we align our thoughts, speech, and actions toward goodness, truth, and service to our Creator.



RABBI DANNY FISHER

Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

As we count the sefira, preparing ourselves for the giving of the Torah on Shavuos, let's delve into an idea from this week's Sedra.

The Pasuk says:

וְאֵתָן שְׁעִיר הַחֲטָאת דָּרַשׁ דָּרַשׁ מִשֶּׁה

"And Moshe diligently inquired about the goat of the sin-offering..." (ט"ז)

The phrase דָּרַשׁ דָּרַשׁ is famously known as the exact halfway point of the Torah when counted by letters—דָּרַשׁ marking the end of the first half, and דָּרַשׁ starting the second.

Reb Shamai Zahn shares a beautiful insight:

• A person who has reached the halfway mark in Torah learning might feel a sense of accomplishment, thinking, "I've

done enough." To this we say: דָּרַשׁ – you must still search, seek, and learn more. There is always more to strive for.

• On the other hand, someone who begins the second half may feel the first half is secure, as if stored safely in a box, no longer needing review. To this, we say: דָּרַשׁ - go back and review! Chazarah is essential; Torah must be revisited constantly to remain fresh and internalized.

We can add another dimension from the Gemara in Eruvin נד.

תַּנְא: תַּלְמִיד אֶחָד הָיָה לְרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר שֶׁהָיָה שׁוֹנֵה בְּלַחֵשׁ, לְאַחַר שְׁלוֹשׁ שָׁנִים שָׁבַח תַּלְמוּדוֹ "There was a student of Rabbi Eliezer who learned quietly, and after three years, he forgot his learning."

From here we learn not only to constantly review, but also how to learn—out loud. The Torah itself says: דָּרַשׁ דָּרַשׁ מִשֶּׁה—Moshe didn't just think, he demanded, inquired out loud, with intensity and clarity. Torah learning is meant to be vibrant, vocal, and alive. As we count the sefira and prepare for Shavuos, let us take these messages to heart:

1. Never stop growing in Torah. Even halfway through, there is always more.
2. Always review. Chazarah keeps our learning part of us.
3. Learn out loud. Torah is meant to be spoken, discussed, and lived.

What a powerful way to ready ourselves for kabbalas haTorah!

Good Shabbos!



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Sefirat Ha'omer – If One is Unsure Whether or Not He Counted the Omer

If a person is unsure whether or not he counted a day of the Omer, and cannot determine conclusively if he had counted or if he had missed that day, he continues counting the Omer each night with a Beracha. This is the explicit ruling of the Shulhan Aruch. However, this Halacha applies only in cases of general uncertainty whether or not a day of counting was missed. But if a person knows for certain that he did not count one night, and is

unsure whether or not he counted during the next day, then he continues counting without a Beracha. This is the ruling of the Erech Ha'shulhan (Rabbi Yishak Taib, Tunisia, 1786-1828). Since he knows with certainty that he had not counted at night, he may not count with a Beracha unless he knows for certain that he counted during the next day.

If a person knows for certain that he counted, but is unsure whether he counted the correct number, as he

suspects that he might have counted incorrectly, he may continue counting with a Beracha. This is the ruling of Hacham Ovadia Yosef in Hazon Ovadia – Hilchot Yom Tob (p. 238).

If one did not count the Omer until the end of the night, and he is unsure whether he counted while it was still nighttime or whether it was already the beginning of the next day, he continues counting with a Beracha. This is the ruling of the Maharash Engel (5:48).



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Shemini

On the eighth day of the dedication of the Mishkan, Aharon, his sons,

and the entire nation bring various korbanot (offerings) as commanded by Moshe. Aharon and Moshe

bless the nation. Hashem allows the Jewish People to sense His Presence after they complete the

Mishkan. Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, innovate an offering not commanded by Hashem. A fire comes from before Hashem, consuming them and stressing the need to perform the commandments only as Moshe directs. Moshe consoles Aharon, who grieves in silence. Moshe directs the kohanim regarding their behavior during the mourning period, and warns them that they

must not drink intoxicating beverages before serving in the Mishkan. The Torah lists the two characteristics of a kosher animal: It has split hooves, and it chews, regurgitates, and re-chews its food. The Torah specifies by name those non-kosher animals which have only one of these two signs. A kosher fish has fins and easily removable scales. All birds not included in the list of forbidden

families are permitted. The Torah forbids all types of insects except for four species of locusts. Details are given of the purification process after coming in contact with ritually impure species. The Jewish People are commanded to be separate and holy — like Hashem.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com

Q

1. What date was "yom hashemini"?
2. Which of Aharon's korbanot atoned for the Golden Calf?
3. What korbanot did Aharon offer for the Jewish People?
4. What was unique about the chatat offered during the induction of the Mishkan?
5. When did Aharon bless the people with the birkat kohanim?
6. Why did Moshe go into the Ohel Mo'ed with Aharon?
7. Why did Nadav and Avihu die?
8. Aharon quietly accepted his sons' death. What reward did he receive for this?
9. What prohibitions apply to a person who is intoxicated?
10. Name the three chatat goat offerings that were sacrificed on the day of the inauguration of the Mishkan.

A

1. 9:1 - First of Nissan.
2. 9:2 - The calf offered as a korban chatat.
3. 9:3-4 - A he-goat as a chatat, a calf and a lamb for an olah, an ox and a ram for shelamim, and a mincha.
4. 9:11 - It's the only example of a chatat offered on the courtyard mizbeach that was burned.
5. 9:22 - When he finished offering the korbanot, before descending from the mizbeach.
6. 9:23 - For one of two reasons: Either to teach Aharon about the service of the incense, or to pray for the Shechina to dwell with Israel.
7. 10:2 - Rashi offers two reasons: Either because they gave a halachic ruling in Moshe's presence, or because they entered the Mishkan after drinking intoxicating wine.
8. 10:3 - A portion of the Torah was given solely through Aharon.
9. 10:9-11 - He may not give a halachic ruling. Also, a kohen is forbidden to enter the Ohel Mo'ed, approach the mizbeach, or perform the avoda.
10. 10:16 - The goat offerings of the inauguration ceremony, of Rosh Chodesh, and of Nachshon ben Aminadav.

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