

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT KI TAVO

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

SMILE

It is every kid's worst nightmare and six-year-old Jaden Hayes (from Savannah, Georgia) has lived it -twice. First he lost his dad when he was four and then last month his mother died unexpectedly in her sleep.

What does one do if faced with such a terrible disaster? How does one cope, especially a young 6 year old child?

The world is full of trials and tribulations, and there are plenty of excuses to cause a person to be sad, but Jaden took on a different angle to his grief. A side he first made public a few weeks ago when he told his aunt, and now guardian, Barbara DiCola, that he was sick and tired of seeing everyone sad all the time. And he had a plan to fix it.

Jaden asked his aunt Barbara to buy a bunch of little toys and bring him to downtown Savannah, Georgia near where he lives, so he could give them away.

"I'm trying to make people smile," said Jaden. Jaden targeted people who weren't already smiling and turned their day around. He aimed to affect 33,000 people, but since he started his campaign has gone viral and today millions are smiling because of him.

When Yakov Avinu blessed his children before he passed away, the following blessing was received by Yehuda. "The eyes will be reddened from an abundance of wine and the teeth whitened from an abundance of milk". Our Sages look deeper into these words and teach us that there is a hidden message in this blessing. Yakov was hinting at how amazing Yehuda was and would be in encouraging others to smile. "The teeth whitened" represents that we should show people our white teeth when we greet them – a reminder to always smile at another person!

In fact, the Mishna (Pirkei Avot) teaches that one should always make the effort to be the

first to greet others when encountering them. That's right! Every encounter is a race. The next time you see someone coming towards you, be sure to greet them before they greet you! When you smile at another person you illuminate your face, which in turn illuminates theirs – and perhaps illuminates their entire day. In our day and age with all the many stresses of life, whether in the home, at the office or any place else that takes their strain on a person – a smile, an illumination can truly have an effect on others.

This week's Parasha describes the ninety-eight Kelalot (curses) that G-d threatens to bring upon Bnei Yisrael should they disobey the Torah. At one point in this section, the Torah informs us of the particular cause of these calamities: "Tachat Asher Lo Avadeta Et Hashem Elokecha Be'simcha" – "on account of the fact that you did not serve Hashem your G-d with joy" (Devarim 28:47). Surprisingly, the Torah here does not refer to a generation that simply disregarded the Mitzvot; it speaks of a generation of Jews that are indeed loyal to G-d's laws, but begrudgingly, without joy and enthusiasm. The Torah demands not only that we obey the Mitzvot, but that we rejoice and take pleasure in the performance of Mitzvot. In other words, the Torah demands that we be happy.

This requirement is expressed in other contexts, as well. King David famously wrote (Tehillim 100:2) "Ivdu et Hashem Be'simcha" – "Serve G-d with joy." He didn't instruct simply, "Serve G-d," but rather than we must do so "with joy."

The Gemara in Ta'anit presents the famous rule, "Mi'shenichnas Adar Marbim Be'simcha" – "When [the month of] Adar comes, we increase our joy." Conversely, we also read, "Mi'shenichnas Av Mema'atim Be'simcha" – "When [the month of] Av comes, we decrease our joy." These two passages work on the same basic assumption that a Jew must constantly live in a state of happiness.

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KIDS ZONE - QUIZ

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THE ORIGINAL COMMUNAL PARASHA SHEET, SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 12 YEARS!

Halacha requires increasing or decreasing the level of joy at different periods of the year, but some level of Simcha (joy) must be maintained at all times. Rabbi Shimon Schwab compared the requirement of Simcha to a pilot light on a gas range. The flame must always remain lit, and one lowers or raises the fire as needed. Similarly, a Jew must live each day of the year with a certain degree of happiness, which he increases or decreases depending on the particular season.

In Sefer Melachim I (8:66), the prophet tells that after the fourteen days of celebration for the inauguration of the Bet Ha'mikdash the Benei Yisrael returned home happy. What was the cause of their happiness? As Rabbi Avraham Pam noted, it could not have been just the delicacies and fine wine they enjoyed during the celebration. Many among Benei Yisrael lived a

distance of several days' travel from Jerusalem, and yet the prophet tells that they felt joyous upon returning home – long after the pleasure provided by the food and wine had subsided. They were happy because of the spiritual elevation they had just experienced during the inauguration of the Temple. As the Yalkut Shimoni remarks on this verse, they rejoiced "because they enjoyed the glory of the Shechina."

We live in a blessed generation. Whereas in the past, the land of Israel was desolate and barren, it is now thriving. In the past, it took weeks to travel to the Holy Land, yet now it takes hours in comfort. Water, fresh fruit and delicacies are abundant, and we generally live free of fear.

If our great grandparents would get out of their graves and see the lifestyle we live, they would ask "Why are you not smiling?" Our eagerness in performing Hashem's Will shows a great deal of the sincerity in

which we serve Hashem. When we arrive early to the synagogue and leave late, we show that we are happy with our relationship with Hashem. When we happily go out our way to help another person, fast on Yom Kippur or build a Succah, we show that we are privileged and content at being G-d's servant.

The best way forward is not to keep that excitement inside, but rather share it with others. Let everyone see how happy you are that you are alive and able to connect with the King of Kings through performing Mitzvot. Let your inner content shine through and your "teeth whiten"!

Smiles are contagious, they light up the world. Like a candle, a smile can light many lights without itself being diminished. If you smile at 5 people, and they pass the smile on to 5 people and they pass it on to 5 more... then by the 15th passing on, you will have smiled at the whole world.

What are you waiting for? Let's start now!



RABBI DAVID BAADANI

Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PARSHAT KI TAVO

In the beginning of our Parashah we found the Mitzvah of בניורים, to bring the first fruit to בית המקדש to the Cohen. ואמרת אליו, AND SAY UNTO HIM, says Rashi; שְׂאֵינְךָ כְּפִי טוֹבָה, that you are not ungrateful.

One must wonder why don't we accentuate the positive? Why don't we say to the Cohen - the message for הקב"ה is that we ARE grateful? Why do we say it

in a negative way?

I heard a very powerful explanation.

Can one really say I'm grateful for everything? Can we fathom the magnitude of how much there is to thank הקב"ה for? The things we are aware of and the things we are unaware of. It is not humanly possible for us to say we ARE grateful, as if we're including everything, as if we are aware of all what is to be grateful.

The best thing we can say is. I'm not ungrateful. With that expression we try to convey that we don't realise the tremendous kindness that Hashem is

doing with us in every moment, so the best we can do is to try not to be ungrateful.

Even if our mouths were as full of song as the sea, and our tongue with jubilation as its myriad waves, if our lips were full of praise like the spacious heavens, and our eyes shone like the sun and moon, if our hands were outstretched like eagles of the sky, and our feet as swift as hinds. Still, we could not thank You enough, our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, or bless Your name for even one of the thousand thousands and myriad myriads of favours You did for our ancestors and for us.



JACOB BOYDEN

TAL Schools Educator

ROSH HASHANAH

The Tur explains that each of the Shalosh Regalim- Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot correlate to Avraham, Yitzchok and Yakov. Furthermore Avraham, Yitzchok and Yakov correlate to different expressions of how G-D runs the world - his Midot. Avraham represents Chesed (kindness), Yitzchok is Gevurah (strength of judgment) and Yakov is Tiferes

(Tiferes is seen as the harmonious blending of different forces, particularly Chesed and Gevurah). How they represent these Midot is a different Shiur in itself, however it is known that G-Ds Midot are expressed as different parts of the body. Therefore, if different holidays represent our Avot, G-Ds Middot and the human body, what body part does Rosh Hashanah represent? Rosh Hashanah represents the Rosh- the head. The rest of the human body has limitations. The arms can only reach so high, the feet can

only walk up so many steps to reach a certain destination. All of the body is limited by power and range, but the head knows no limit. The ears can hear the crush of thunder up to 15 km away and the moon is approximately 384,400 km (238,855 miles) from Earth, yet it is easily visible. The greatest facet of the head is the brain. G-D created a brain that can come to a level of understanding of G-D almighty. The Gemara in Chaggiga (13a) says that there are seven heavens, and between each of these heavens, there is

a vast distance. Each heaven contains its own unique elements and spiritual entities. The Gemara states: Rav Yehuda says in the name of Rav that the distance between the earth and the first heaven is a journey of 500 years. The same applies to the distance between each successive heaven, as well as the thickness of each heaven. Above the highest heaven is the Throne of Glory (Kisei HaKavod), and

between the Throne of Glory and the heavens is an additional distance of 500 years. These distances are not intended to be understood literally, but metaphorically, as part of the Jewish mystical tradition, emphasizing the vastness and majesty of the spiritual realms. However one prayer can reach directly to the heavenly throne as the Psalms say (Psalms 145:18): "The Lord is near to all

who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth." If Rosh Hashanah represents the head and the head has an incredible ability to connect to G-D, then on this day man has a unique opportunity to come closer to G-D more than any other day. We should ensure that we take advantage of this precious opportunity given to us.



RABBI BENJI STONE, TAL Chavruta Program

אֲשֶׁרֵי הָאִישׁ - Chapter 1 - Tehillim for Our Times

FOREVER YOUNG

אֲשֶׁרֵי הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִלָּךְ בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים וּבְדַרְךְ חַטָּאִים לֹא עָמַד וּבְמוֹשָׁב לְצִים לֹא יָשָׁב: כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת ד' חָפְצוֹ וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְלַיְלָה: וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שֶׁתּוֹל עַל-פְּלִיגְיָמָיִם אֲשֶׁר פֵּרְיוֹ יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעֵלְהוֹ לֹא יִבּוֹל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ:

Praiseworthy is the man who does not

follow the advice of wicked people...who does not sit with scorners... Rather, his desire is for Hashem's Torah and in his Torah he toils day and night. He is like a tree planted beside streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, whose foliage never fades, and whatever he does sees success (Tehillim 1; 1-3). King David chooses to begin his monumental work with a declaration of how he considers a Jew should live. What piece of advice does he offer?

"Live a Torah life and be careful who you mix with!" He compares the Torah Jew to a tree which is rooted on the bank of a river. This tree receives constant nourishment from the river and always produces its fruit on time. It leaves will never wither. So too the Torah Jew is linked to his life source which is a conduit for constant beracha in all areas of life. This is a crucial piece of guidance for the reader to lead a healthy and fruitful life.



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

The Structure of the Selihot Service; Health as a Reward for Charity

It is customary to conclude the Selihot service with "Kaddish Titkabal," the Kaddish which is normally recited after the repetition of the Amida. This Kaddish includes the phrase, "Titkabal Selot'hon U'ba'ut'hon De'chol Bet Yisrael," in which we ask the Almighty to accept the prayers we had just recited. It is therefore normally reserved for after the Hazzan's repetition of the Amida, and the question arises as to why we recite it following the Selihot service.

The Lebush (Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe, 1530-1612) suggests that "Kaddish Titkabal" is indeed an appropriate conclusion to the Selihot service because this service is structured in a manner resembling the normal prayer service. We introduce Selihot with "Ashreh," and some communities add other chapters from Tehilim, as well. This introductory section of Selihot thus parallels "Pesukeh De'zimra," the series of chapters from Tehilim which we recite as the first stage of our daily prayer service. The main body of the Selihot service is the recitation of

the "Yag Midot," or thirteen attributes of divine compassion, which, according to the Lebush, parallels the Amida prayer. Thereafter, we recite "Le'David," just as we do following the Amida prayer. Thus, since the Selihot service was structured in this manner, it is only fitting to conclude Selihot with "Kaddish Titkabal," just as we conclude the regular prayer service with this Kaddish.

Divergent customs exist concerning the recitation of "Va'ya'abor" and the thirteen attributes of divine mercy in the Selihot service. The practice in the Bet-El Yeshiva in Israel, based on the teachings of Kabbala, is to recite this section four times during the Selihot service, corresponding with the four letters in the Divine Name of "Havaya." We, however, follow the custom to recite this section five times, corresponding with the five books of the Humash.

We recite during the Selihot service, "Re'eh Be'oni Amecha Yisrael, Refa Kol Holeh Amecha Yisrael" – "Behold the destitution of Your nation Israel; heal all the ill of Your nation Israel." What connection is there between these two clauses – "the destitution of Your nation

Israel," and the request that God "heal all the ill of Your nation Israel"? Rabbi Haim Palachi (Turkey, 1788-1869) explained the connection based on a comment in Masechet Derech Eretz that if one does not give money to charity, then he will ultimately be forced to give money to a physician. The money that a person failed to give to charity, the Sages teach, will be given to cover extra medical costs, Heaven forbid. Accordingly, we cry to the Almighty to "behold the destitution of Your nation Israel," to look upon the charitable donations that we have made. In that merit, we beseech Him to "heal all the ill of Your nation Israel," as the great merit of Sedaka has the power to save us from illness.

Summary: It is customary to recite "Kaddish Titkabal" at the conclusion of the Selihot service, since Selihot is structured just like the daily prayer service, in which "Kadidsh Titkabal" is recited after the Amida. The custom in our community is to recite the section of "Va'ya'abor" and the thirteen attributes of mercy five times over the course of the Selihot service.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Ki Tavo

When the Jewish People dwell in the Land of Israel, its first fruits are to be taken to the Temple and given to the kohen. This is done in a ceremony that expresses recognition that it is G-d who guides the history of the Jewish People throughout all ages. This passage forms one of the central parts of the Pesach Haggadah that we read at the Seder. On the last day of Pesach of the fourth and seventh years of the seven-year shemitta cycle, a person must recite a disclosure stating that he has indeed distributed the tithes to the appropriate people in the prescribed manner. With

this mitzvah Moshe concludes the commandments that Hashem has told him to give to the Jewish People. Moshe exhorts them to walk in Hashem's ways because they are set aside as a treasured people to Him. When the Jewish People cross the Jordan River they are to make a new commitment to the Torah. Huge stones are to be erected and the Torah is to be written on them in the world's seventy primary languages, after which they are to be covered over with a thin layer of plaster. Half the tribes are to stand on Mount Gerizim, and half on Mount Eval, and the levi'im will stand in

a valley between the two mountains. The levi'im will recite twelve commandments, and all the people will answer "amen" to the blessings and the curses. Moshe then details the blessings that will be bestowed upon the Jewish People, blessings that are both physical and spiritual. However, if the Jewish People do not keep the Torah, Moshe details a chilling picture of destruction, resulting in exile and wandering among the nations.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com



Q

1. When did the obligation to bring bikkurim begin?
2. Bikkurim are from which crops?
3. How does one designate bikkurim?
4. Who shakes the basket containing the bikkurim?
5. What does "v'anita v'amarta" mean?

A

1. 26:1 - After the Land was conquered and divided.
2. 26:2 - The seven species for which Eretz Yisrael is praised.
3. 26:2 - When he sees the first fruit ripen on a tree, he binds a piece of straw around it to mark it as bikkurim.
4. 26:4 - The kohen places his hands under the hands of the one bringing it, and they wave the basket together.
5. 26:5 - Speak loudly.

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