

Candle Lighting

7:22

S"Z Kriat Shema

9:35

Sunset

7:40

Motzei Shabbat

8:15



Parshat HaShavuah

KI- TEITZEI

כי תצא

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י"ד אלול תשע"ב

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# Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

RABBI JOSH GRAJOWER	1	<b>TREAT YOUR NEIGHBOR LIKE YOU TREAT YOUR ANIMALS</b>
ARI CLEMENTS ('14)	2	RABBI JOSH GRAJOWER
BRACHA BRAUSER ('13)	2-3	Long before PETA began to advocate for animal rights, the Torah designed rules that protect animals from cruel and unfair treatment. In this week's Parsha (Dvarim 22;10) the Torah states that a person may not use an ox and a donkey to
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plow simultaneously. Why would Hashem care if a donkey and an ox plow at the same time? This does not appear to be harsh treatment of an animal?!

The author of the *Sefer HaChinuch* suggests that animals prefer to dwell and socialize with their own species. Therefore, forcing a donkey and an ox to plow together will cause the animals "social discomfort," despite the fact that no physical pain is felt. He expounds upon this idea and explains that if a person must take caution to properly ensure the mental well-being of animals, how much more so must one worry about human beings' psychological state in social situations.

Hashem, through His commandments, gives us guidelines so that we may create the ideal environment. If we are instructed to be sensitive to the emotional needs of different animals so that they can work and exist in comfortable settings, hopefully we will understand that we need to develop communities that are accepting of the needs of different people. We cannot afford to overlook the individual needs of all those around us, regardless of whether it is convenient.

As we begin a new year – both in school and on the Jewish calendar – we must strive to produce environments that promote warmth, care and concern for each and every individual. If we create safe environments we will all be able to grow and thrive as individuals and as a community.





## DRESS REHEARSAL ARI CLEMENTS ('14)

This week's parsha contains the most mitzvot of any parsha in the Torah, ranging from topics such as building a fence around the roof of one's house to sending away a mother bird before taking the eggs from her nest. An especially interesting mitzvah in this week's parsha is the prohibition against wearing certain clothing.

In the beginning of the parsha, we are told that we are forbidden to cross dress – for men to wear women's clothing and vice versa. Rashi states that the reason for this commandment is to prevent women from disguising themselves in men and mingling among them, which would eventually lead to promiscuity and immoral acts.

Alternatively, the Targum Yonatan interprets the verse to mean that women should not don a tallit and tefillin (even though we learn in the Gemara that Michal, Shaul's daughter, did in fact practice these two mitzvot). Whatever the true interpretation may be, this specific mitzvah has led to much debate among contemporary rabbis and you should follow the opinion of your local orthodox rabbi.

Another mitzvah regarding clothing and proper dress is sha'atnez, the prohibition of mixing wool and linen together in a single garment. Although this mitzvah is regarded as a chok, a law in the Torah for which we do not know the reason, the Rambam writes in his "Guide to the Perplexed" that the reason for this mitzvah is to separate ourselves from the ways of the sorcerers, who would mix wool and linen in their clothing. Furthermore, the priestly garments contained wool and linen, so the Chizkuni explains that we follow this mitzvah to separate the kohanim from ourselves.

Both of these mitzvot, as with many mitzvot of the Torah, do not have one certain reason behind them or one correct way to follow them. However, we must continue to study the mitzvot and strive to understand them in their fullest so that we may fulfill them in the most proper way.

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## KNOW YOUR BROTHER BRACHA BRAUSER ('13)

There are seventy-four mitzvot given in this week's parsha, more than any other parsha in the Torah. One of the most important mitzvot that we are given in this week's parsha is *hashavat aveida*, the commandment to return a lost object to its proper owner, or as the Torah phrases it, "your brother."

The Torah tells us that if "your brother" is not close by, then you do not have to travel to return to him the object, but you can wait for him to come to you. However, the wording is interesting as the Torah writes, "If your brother is not close to you and you do not know him." Why must it state he is not near you and you do not know him. Is simply stating that he is not close to you enough?

*Continued page 3*





*Brauser continued*

The Torah is trying to tell us that the reason your brother is not close to you is because you do not know him. If only you would spend time with him and get to know him better, you would be close to him.

This is often the case with family and friends. We think that we cannot be close to the person, but the reason is only because we do not know that person yet. Once you take the time to get to know the person, his or her good qualities will shine.

It is the beginning of the school year and that means new classes, new teachers, sometimes new friends, but mostly the same kids you knew last year.

Often, we may write certain people off claiming that there is no way we can be friends. It is important to remember that maybe the reason we are not close with someone is simply because we do not know them yet. It is so important to give ourselves the chance to get to know those around us, to discover each person's unique abilities and to realize how close we can become with the people around us.

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## CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

### SAIGE ROSENBERG ('13)

In this week's Torah portion, Ki Teitzei, the Torah states that when one reaches for a bird's nest, "You should send the mother bird away and take the young for yourself — in order that it will be good for you and that you will have a long life" (Devarim 22:7).

The Torah rewards one with a long life for one other mitzvah: that of honoring one's parents. A natural question arises. Why do these two mitzvot share the same reward? The Vilna Gaon explains that one has become a tzaddik and has performed his requisite service to Hashem only after he has served Him with two opposing traits (such as compassion and harshness).

If one serves Hashem with only one trait, one would not gain control over his emotions in this manner. Using opposite traits to serve Hashem exemplifies the mastery over one's emotions for Hashem — and that is an action that is worthy of the reward of a long life.

Fulfilling the mitzvah of honoring one's parents, when they become old and need more care, requires one to use his compassionate trait, while sending away a bird from her nest before taking the babies requires a trait of harshness.

The Vilna Gaon comments that a long life symbolizes completeness, which is an appropriate reward for these two mitzvot — since together they represent a complete way to serve Hashem. *Shiluach hakan*, sending away the mother bird, is a harsh and cruel commandment— but Hashem commands us to do so to teach us that our actions should all be focused on Hashem and not necessarily how our instincts would compel us to act.

In striving to overcome our natural traits, exceed the boundaries, and serve Hashem through all different emotions, we become complete individuals deserving of a great reward.



## BIRDS AND BABIES

### ZEVI LITWIN ('13)

In this week's parsha we learn about the mitzvah of *shiluach hakan*, the commandment to send away a mother bird before taking eggs from her nest. After quoting this passage, the Midrash (Dvarim Rabbah) continues to discuss an unrelated topic. The Mishnah explains that this mitzvah teaches that even if a baby boy is born circumcised, the child is still required to have a brit milah. The Ksav Sofer is troubled by the juxtaposition of these two mitzvot – what is the connection between these seemingly unrelated commandments?

The Mishnah and Gemara in Brachot tell us that one who prays saying: "May Hashem have mercy on me as He has on the mother bird," is publicly silenced. This, says the Ramban, is because the real reason behind the mitzvah of *shiluach hakan* is not to show the mercy that Hashem has on this animal, but rather to engender in each of us a sense of mercy and to distance ourselves from cruelty.

There is an interesting Gemara (Pesachim 113) that states, "Someone who is overly merciful does not have a fulfilled life." The Ksav Sofer explains that such a person is always pained due to his friend's sufferings, and is therefore never able to fully enjoy his own life. Hashem commands us to send away the mother bird in order that we learn to be merciful, but at the same time commands us to strengthen our hearts and circumcise a newborn infant on the eighth day. So which one is it – should we be merciful or not?

This is perhaps the reason for the juxtaposition of the mitzvah of *shiluach hakan* to that of brit milah. Hashem is teaching us that there are times to be merciful, such as when we send away the mother bird, but there are other times when we must part from our merciful ways, in this case to give a brit milah to a weak, newborn baby. While we must strive to mirror Hashem's merciful ways, we must not let this interfere with our fulfilling of Hashem's commandments.

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