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Tidbits

ISSUE 1543

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פרשת וישב
PARSHAT VAYEISHEV

SHABBAT CHANUKAH & MEVARCHIM



SPECIAL GUEST COLUMN

Believe in Miracles

Kalman Samuels Page 74



The Jewish Home

Dr. Ariella Agatstein

Page 68

**חנוכה
שמח!**



נס גדול היה פה

YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYEISHEV ZMANIM
CANDLES 3:59 PM • HAVDALA 5:15 PM • RABBEINU TAM 5:52 PM



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THIS WEEK'S COVER PHOTO

Photographed by Yaakov Adler,
Ramat Beit Shemesh.

A chanukia that is made out of
bullets. May this Chanukah bring
miracles and salvation to Am Yisrael.



HELPFUL REMINDERS

Rosh Chodesh Tevet is on Wednesday, December 13



ראש חודש טבת יהיה ביום רביעי
הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה

מועד חודש טבת יהיה ביום שלישי,
דקה אחת ושלושה חלקים אחרי שמונה בלילה

A SHORT VORT | BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES

Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

Why do we have one candle on the first night and an additional candle each consecutive night until eight candles are finally lit on the last night?

There is a difference of opinion between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel. We accept the custom of Beit Hillel. However, there is the opinion of Beit Shammai that says that eight candles should be lit the first night with each successive night the number of candles should be reduced by one. The Talmud (Shabbat 21b) explains that the reasons advocated by Beit Shammai is that the Chanukah candles correspond to the Musaf offerings of Sukkot which decrease from day to day. On the other hand, Beit Hillel holds the principle of "Increase in matters of holiness and don't diminish".

The Bostoner Rebbe (Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Halevi Horowitz 1921-2009) gives a deeper reason for the difference of opinions. When discussing physical strength, the passage of time results in diminishing might. Everyday we live, we find ourselves one day closer to the end. Beit Shammai highlights the futility in our physical being. The decreasing numbers of bullocks on Sukkot underlines the limits of the physical world and of the nations who embrace it.

Beit Hillel emphasizes the value of "holiness". Every new day that we deepen our connection with Torah and mitzvot, we elevate ourselves to new heights. With regards to holiness, increases are only beneficial, never causing harm. Chanukah symbolizes the need for our spiritual goals to grow and flourish. That is why he felt we follow Beit Hillel in lighting an additional candle each night.

~ Shabbat Shalom

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



	VAYEISHEV		MIKETZ	
	CANDLES	HAVDALA	CANDLES	HAVDALA
Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	3:59	5:15	4:01	5:17
Aza Area (Netivot, Sderot et al)	4:18	5:18	4:19	5:20
Beit Shemesh / RBS	4:18	5:16	4:19	5:18
Alon Shvut	4:15	5:16	4:17	5:18
Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	4:15	5:16	4:17	5:18
Modiin / Chashmonaim	4:15	5:16	4:17	5:18
Netanya	4:15	5:16	4:16	5:18
Be'er Sheva	4:18	5:18	4:19	5:20
Rehovot	4:16	5:17	4:18	5:19
Petach Tikva	3:59	5:16	4:01	5:18
Ginot Shomron	4:14	5:15	4:16	5:17
Haifa / Zichron	4:03	5:14	4:05	5:16
Gush Shiloh	4:14	5:15	4:15	5:16
Tel Aviv / Givat Shmuel	4:16	5:17	4:17	5:19
Givat Zeev	4:19	5:15	4:01	5:17
Chevron / Kiryat Arba	4:16	5:16	4:17	5:18
Ashkelon	4:18	5:18	4:19	5:20
Yad Binyamin	4:16	5:17	4:18	5:19
Tzfat / Bikat HaYarden	4:05	5:12	4:07	5:14
Golan	4:11	5:12	4:13	5:14
Nahariya/Maalot	4:12	5:14	4:13	5:15
Afula	4:12	5:14	4:14	5:15
Rabbeinu Tam (Jerusalem) - 5:52 PM • Next Week - 5:54 PM				

All Times According to MyZmanim (20 mins before Sunset in most Cities;
40 mins in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva; 30 mins in Tzfat and Haifa)

Daf Yomi: Bava Kama 37

JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat
Dec. 6 - 16 / 23 Kislev - 4 Tevet

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:30 - 5:37
Sunrise	6:25 - 6:32
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	8:57 - 9:03
Magen Avraham	8:18 - 8:24
Sof Zman Tefila	9:48 - 9:53
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	11:29 - 11:34
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	11:59 - 12:04
Plag Mincha	3:31 - 3:33
Sunset (Including Elevation)	4:39 - 4:41



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phone: (02) 560 9100 | fax: (02) 561-7432

email: office@ouisrael.org

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Headquarters: 40 Rector St. 4th floor, New York, NY 10006 • 212-563-4000 • website: www.ou.org



Editor Emeritus: Phil Chernofsky
Editor: Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider | aaron@ouisrael.org
Advertising: Ita Rochel | 02-5609125 or ttads@ouisrael.org
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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN
Executive Director, OU Israel

Several weeks ago, I wrote about the incredible OU rabbinic mission to Israel. We took rabbis and lay leaders from America and brought them to not only see what was going on here, the tragedy and the needs, but also to comfort and bring *chizuk* to those who were injured, families who lost loved ones, and soldiers during these difficult days. My OU colleagues in New York who brought the 22 rabbis and 22 lay leaders deserve much *hakarat hatov* for what they did to help *Klal Yisrael*.

It was on this mission that I came to a realization. We were standing in Sderot, outside of where the police station was. This is a *makom kadosh*, a place where so many Jewish lives were taken from us. As we stood there, we said *Tehillim* and I told over the story of the tragedy and the heroism that had happened there. Every parked car there was full of bullet holes, as well as every wall and even the pavement on the street.

In stark contrast, a year ago on Chanukah, I came to Sderot, together with my good friends Rabbi Daniel Krauss, his son, and Rabbi Morris Massel and his son, to celebrate their *bar mitzvahs* with Sderot kids in our OU Israel Youth Center there. As part of the occasion, we brought *sufganiyot* to the Sderot police station. They welcomed us in, and we danced with the policemen. They talked to us and explained what they do, and they even showed us the *Beit Knesset* inside the

police station. The police commander then brought the two *bar mitzvah* boys into his office, where he spoke to them personally and thanked these two boys from America for coming to celebrate in Israel, and in Sderot specifically.

These memories flooded back as I looked around the scenes of carnage and destruction, a little less than a year later. As Chazan Yaakov Motzen, who was with us on the rabbinic mission, began to sing the *Kel Maleh* in memory of those who gave their lives there, a police car showed up. Out of the police car came three police men and one police woman. That woman's name is Hodaya Harush. As the words of *Kel Maleh* rang out, she walked over to me, and began to tell me her story.

She told me that she had joined the police force this past July, a few short months ago, because of the encouragement of her husband. Today, she had decided that it was time to build up the courage to visit the police station where her husband had been killed on October 7th. He was

In loving memory of
our dear daughter and sister

DAPHNA ז"ל
on her 25th *yahrzeit*

She died at the tender age of 15
כסלו תשמ"ד - כ"ו כסלו תשנ"ט

*Yaacov and Dina Mintz
Avi, Shlomit and families*



the first heroic police officer to charge at the terrorists and save lives. She came, not knowing what she would see, not knowing what to expect. She said to me that to come and immediately hear *Kel Maleh* sung by these rabbis and *baalei batim* who came from America to give *chizuk* was extremely powerful. We all stood there, wanting so much to comfort her with our hearts so full of love. *Baruch Hashem* there were two women with us on our mission, and they were able to give her the biggest hugs. This was a tremendously emotional moment.

I left the meeting with Hodaya thinking that if we just had a group of women, a group of rebbetzins and women lay leaders, we could comfort her and others so much more. Only women could provide the hug, warm embrace and sensitivity that is often needed in emotional situations and would make such a big difference.

From there we went to the home of *aluf mishneh* Yoni Steinberg in Shomriya, where we met his wife Yiska. Yet again, the same feeling as before struck me. We were able to comfort and to give hugs to the men, the fathers. Yiska was standing there alone, without the ability to receive hugs from the men.

That night, I called the New York office. I said that the next mission needed to be one



of female Jewish leaders from North America. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Not only did they put together one mission, but two began to be planned. Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman organized one mission, and our OU Israel Director of Development Mimi Jankovits organized a second one.

This past week, we went all over the

**The עליה לקבר on the 2nd Yahrzeit
of our beloved Wife and Mother**

ברוריה בת שלמה וחנה ע"ה

**will take place בע"ה on
Friday 1st day of חנוכה
8th December, 10am**

**in Eretz Hachayim Cemetery,
Beit Shemesh, גוש 6 חלקה 17**

**May the learning from Torah Tidbits
that she loved so much be נשמתה**

Families Wulwick and Sheldon

country on these missions, with two buses of women community leaders who brought *chizuk* and embraced women across Israel - those injured in hospitals, those displaced from their houses, those in the IDF and so many others. On a personal note, I saw how much it meant to Jennifer Airley, a woman of incredible strength who recently lost her son Binyamin *hy"d*, who was killed in battle in Gaza.

We met Hodaya Harush at her husband's grave. Every woman on the mission was able to not only give her words of comfort, but a hug as well. I saw how much it meant to Hodaya, and her mother Esther. We stood by Yoni Steinberg's *hy"d* grave with his sister Ayelet, and I saw how incredible these women were in comforting her.


In all of this, the same refrain we heard on the rabbinic mission came through again. Those who came to give *chizuk*, received much more *chizuk* in return. All the rebbetzins and lay leaders gave testimonials at the end of the week which had the same theme - they are leaving so much stronger and more inspired than when they came.

This is a season focused on women, and how Jewish women do not sit idly by

when their people are at risk. We know from the Chanukah story how Yehudit took charge to save the Jewish people from the Greeks. We learn from this week's *Parsha, Vayeishev* how Tamar took the lead to ensure the continuity of the Jewish people with Yehuda.

The women on this mission took charge. They sought to be there for their fellow Jews. We always hope that we can be there for each other on happy occasions, but one thing is for certain: when there are tragic times, we know how to be there for each other and how to do it in the most beautiful way possible. So thank you rebbetzins and lay leaders for coming and embracing, comforting, loving and supporting, both physically and emotionally. You have continued in the path of those women who built up our nation, saving us and bringing us to the kingdom of *David Hamelech* with the coming of *Mashiach* from the tribe of Yehuda, speedily and in our days.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,


Rabbi Avi Berman
Executive Director, OU Israel
aberman@ouisrael.org



**In beloved memory of
our dear mother, grandmother,
and great-grandmother**

Elisabeth Somogyi ע"ה
שרה בת יעקוב ע"ה
on her 20th yahrzeit, כב כסלו

Rochelle & Stefan Somogyi
Grandchildren & great grandchildren

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this issue of Torah Tidbits be לע"נ**

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CHANUKAH



Upholding Morality

Our environment poses a constant challenge to our morality, specifically regarding the core Jewish values of modesty and sanctity in the intimate realm. We are surrounded by what appears to be an ever-intensifying emphasis on the seductive and a continuous erosion of boundaries. This is not new for the Jewish people and was in fact a core element of the Chanukah story where many sources identify the decree of the Greeks to violate young brides, “*tiba’el l’hegemon t’chilah*” (‘Prima Nocta’), as the trigger to the revolt of the Chashmonaim.

The Torah (Vayikra 18:3) refers to such immoral behavior as *maaseh eretz Mitzrayim*, characteristic of the Egyptians. During our first encounter with Egypt, Sarah was taken to be with Pharaoh on account of her beauty. And in this week’s Parsha, Yosef faces the very same challenge from the wife of Potiphar. While Sarah was subject to force and compulsion, Yosef had to deal with seduction and temptation.

Yosef withstood the challenge, earning for himself the title *Yosef Hatzaddik*, “Yosef the Righteous”. He resisted the challenge by drawing on three distinct sources of moral strength: First, his refusal to betray the trust placed in him

by Potiphar, as he said (Bereishis 39:9): “There is no one who wields no more authority in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, since you are his wife.” Second, as he went on to note, his faithfulness to G-d’s word: “How then could I do this most wicked thing and sin before God?” And third, his commitment to the values he had seen at home, symbolized by the image of his father that appeared to him in the window and inspired him to resist temptation (Sotah 36b).

It was this kind of moral strength, drawing on faithfulness to each other, to G-d, and to our inherited values, that would set the tone for the Jewish people’s exile in Egypt and beyond, enabling us to resist the enticements of our environment and remain faithful to our values. While we are no longer in Egypt and the Greeks are long gone as a force to be reckoned with, the moral challenges they posed continue to confront us. Like Yosef and the *Chashmona’im*, we will overcome this challenge by strengthening our commitments to interpersonal trust, G-d’s word, and loyalty to tradition. ■

**Condolences to Stephen Simpson
and family on the passing of his
MOTHER A”H**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים



HOW OU STAFF SURVIVED TERRORISTS AT THEIR FRONT DOOR



Keren and her husband Ohr huddled for hours in their safe room as terrorists attacked their house and the Sderot police station across the street.

Just like the hundreds of Sderot teens that Keren works with at the OU Israel Sderot Youth Center, she survived but lives with the long term impact of shock and escaping to a refugee hotel with no idea when she can return home.

OU Israel is actively working with the teens of Sderot and the south to help them heal and recover.



Watch Keren and Ohr's story and give generously to support our teens at:

ouisrael.org/donate/ouisrael-emergency

SCAN ME

אין לנו ארץ אחרת!!!

We continue to pray for the safety and quick return of our soldiers, the injured, and the hostages being held in captivity.
עם ישראל חי!

Ma'agalei Yavne, Katamonim

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by

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Jeremiah 32:15



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PARSHAT VAYEISHEV

The sale of Yosef in Parshat Vayeishev is one of the most famous stories of the Torah. Yaakov settles, finally, in the Land of Israel. Yosef is favored. Yosef has 2 dreams. Yaakov sends Yosef to inquire of his brother's welfare. The brothers sell Yosef to merchants traveling to Egypt. Yehuda is confronted by Tamar and accepts responsibility. Yosef achieves great success as a servant to Potiphar. After being framed by Potiphar's wife, Yosef ends up in jail. His success continues in jail. He interprets the dreams of the butler and baker but remains in jail.

The story of Yosef is the longest in the Torah, spanning 4 parshiot. Its panoply of human emotions and struggles is gripping: a favored child, dreams, jealousy, isolation, sexual struggle, success. And later, tears, confrontation and brotherly responsibility. It is the story that lays bare human foibles and eventually human triumph; hence its appeal and fame.



1ST ALIYA (37:1-12)

Yaakov settles in the Land of Israel. Yosef is 17, brings negative reports of his brothers to his father. Yaakov loves Yosef. He gives him a special coat, provoking the jealousy of his brothers. Yosef has 2 dreams. The brothers are gathering sheaves of wheat; their sheaves gather around and bow to Yosef's. The sun, moon and 11 stars bow to him. The brothers feel hatred. Yaakov, while criticizing

Yosef, takes note of the dreams.

The first verse, while eminently simple, introduces this entire story. "Yaakov settled in the Land of his father's sojourning." As if to say: they were sojourners, but not me. I am going to settle here, in my own Land. Avraham was promised the Land of Israel. And that his children would be strangers in a strange land, returning wealthy to Israel. Yaakov figures, "hey, that was me. I was the stranger in a strange land. Long years with Lavan. Returned wealthy. Now on to the next stage of Jewish history: settling and ruling this Land".

The time to settle and eventually rule this Land has arrived. Building a state requires an economic change, from shepherding to farming. A state cannot be built by shepherds: agriculture roots one in the land and can sustain a nation. And rule requires power.

When Yosef dreams not of sheep but of bundles of wheat, Yaakov's ears perk up. Why a dream of wheat when we are shepherds? Is this a new world dawning?

And then a dream of power, of the sun, moon and stars. Is this a Divine message, through dreams, that the promise of the land is about to happen, with agriculture and power facilitating the building of our nation? Yaakov takes note of these dreams.



2ND ALIYA (37:13-22)

Yaakov sends Yosef to inquire of the welfare of his brothers. A man directs him to Dotan. The brothers plot to kill Yosef and put an end to his dreams.

Reuven objects to spilling his blood, suggesting to merely throw him into a pit. He saves Yosef, hoping to return him to his father.

The single best known aliya in the Torah (ok, because of Broadway – such is our world). Brothers wanting to kill their brother? This is unprecedented. Well, except for the first brothers in the Torah, Cain and Abel. Rivalry, competition, jealousy is an inescapable part of life. Brothers struggle (as the Midrash says re Cain and Abel) over inheritance money, religion, marriage or here, parental love and jealousy. Had the Torah avoided this sibling rivalry, it would have lacked the reality of life. But what is of much greater import is the response to rivalry. The response of sibling loyalty, brotherhood and responsibility (and lack of it) is the story of the Torah. Now, it does take quite a while until that loyalty prevails, but so be it. Human failures will happen – how to respond is the concern of our Torah.



3RD ALIYA (37:23-36)

Yosef is stripped of his coat, thrown in an empty cistern. Merchants appear. Yehuda objects to killing their brother, convincing the others to sell Yosef to these merchants. Yosef is sold to the merchants and brought to Egypt. Reuven finds the cistern empty and rends his garments. Yosef's coat is dipped in blood, brought to Yaakov. Yaakov rips his clothes and is inconsolable. Yosef ends up in the home of Potiphar.

Yosef dreamed of the sun, moon and stars – as high as you can get – and ended up in the pit, as low as you can get. Yaakov, who dreamt of a ladder ascending to the heavens, now says he will “sink to the netherworld in mourning”. Yaakov deceived Yitzchak with goatskin on his arms; Yaakov was deceived by Yosef's coat dipped in goat's blood.

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4TH ALIYA (38:1-30)

Yehuda descends. He has 3 sons. One son marries Tamar and dies, as does the second. He delays the 3rd son from marrying her. Tamar disguises herself. She becomes pregnant from Yehuda. Yehuda orders her to be put to death. She sends his identifying possessions. Yehuda admits. She has twins, Peretz and Zerach.

Yehuda descends. But ends up with Zerach – shine. Yehuda withheld his 3rd son from Tamar, as he withheld Yosef from returning to Yaakov by selling Yosef. But here he took full responsibility whereas there he didn't. When the brothers wanted to kill Yosef, Reuven told them to throw him in a pit. Ok, don't kill him with a knife; kill him passively, of starvation. Yehuda stood up; let's not kill him, let's sell him. That certainly was better

than killing him. But he really should have objected more vociferously and said: “I will not let you harm Yosef. I will return him to Abba.” Here he takes full responsibility. This is a harbinger of the full acceptance of responsibility he will demonstrate later in guaranteeing Binyamin’s return to Yaakov.



5TH ALIYA (39:1-6)

Yosef descends to Egypt. G-d is with Yosef and he is successful. Yosef’s owner sees that G-d is with him and that all he does G-d makes successful. G-d blesses the master’s home because of Yosef; all that is his in his home and field, G-d blesses. He gives Yosef total control of all that is his.

A little wee aliya of 6 verses. And G-d’s name appears 6 times. G-d’s name did not appear in the 66 verses until here in the parsha (save for the death of the 2 sons of Yehuda: “they did bad in the eyes of G-d”). This is very similar to the absence of G-d in the beginning of Sefer Shemot until He finally sees their affliction.

Man does just fine spiraling down all by himself – Yosef at the hands of his brothers, Yehuda with his mishandling of Tamar, the Jews in Egypt at the hands of Paro. When he hits bottom, G-d appears.



6TH ALIYA (39:7-23)

Potiphar’s wife propositions Yosef. Yosef resists, for as much as he has complete authority in the home, this would be a sin to G-d. With no one around, she grabs him. He flees, leaving her holding his garment. She frames Yosef as having approached her. Yosef is thrown in jail. G-d is kind to him and the jail keeper puts Yosef in charge. All that he does, G-d makes successful.

Note the parallels: The brothers take

Yosef’s coat from him; Mrs. Potiphar is holding Yosef’s garment. The brothers deceive their father with the coat; Mrs. Potiphar deceives her husband with the coat. Yosef is sold as a slave; Yosef ends up in jail.

From dreaming of the sun, moon and stars, and brothers bowing to him, Yosef has gone down to Egypt, down in status to a slave, and now down yet again to jail.

Yosef earns the title of Yosef HaTzaddik from his resistance to Mrs. Potiphar. He is alone, in a foreign land, no one around, being propositioned; yet, his thoughts are sinning to G-d.



7TH ALIYA (40:1-23)

The butler and baker of Paro are jailed. Yosef takes care of them. They dream. Yosef asks: tell me the dreams for their explanations are to G-d. The butler saw a fruitful vine, squeezing the grapes into the cup of Paro. Yosef says: you will be restored as butler. And, Yosef adds, remember me when things are good again and tell Paro, for I don’t deserve to be here. The baker describes dreaming of bread on his head. Yosef says: you will be hung. The butler is restored. The baker is hung. The butler forgets Yosef.

While the Yosef story moves quickly for us the reader, years have passed. 2 years will pass from the butler being restored until Yosef interprets Paro’s dream next week. He was 17 when the brothers sold him. Now he is 28. He will be 30 when he interprets Paro’s dreams.



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on the birth of their son **Menachem**

And if Yosef is such a good interpreter of dreams – well, he himself had 2 dreams. What does he make of *his* dreams? He dreamt of the brother's bundles of wheat bowing to him. And of power, all bowing to him. Does he mull over his dreams every once in a while? Every week? Every day? He tells Paro that having 2 dreams implies that they will happen soon. He had 2 dreams. His dreams didn't happen soon. Does he think they will still happen? After all, how soon is soon? A few days? Or 25 years?

SHABBAT CHANUKAH HAFTORAH: ZECHARIA 2:14-4:7

The special haftorah for Chanukah contains the glorious vision of the golden Temple Menorah.

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Hashem, in Zecharia's prophecy, proceeds to articulate the great reward awaiting Yehoshua, the first Kohen Gadol to serve in the second Beit Hamikdash, if he and his descendants follow the ways of the Torah. The reward will be: "Behold! I will bring My Servant, the Shoot." This is an allusion to the Mashiach, the 'shoot', the descendant of David.

Zecharia then powerfully witnesses in his mind's eye a golden seven-branched Menorah. An angel offers an explanation of the vision: "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubavel - 'Not by force and not by physical



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might, by my spirit," says the Lord of Hosts."

With these words the Navi conveys a message of hope and the promise that the redemption will surely arrive. The light of the Menorah is a symbol of God's *shechina*, His holy presence, that will soon be manifest in the land of Israel and will ultimately be visible for all humanity to behold. May that day come soon! ■



STATS

9th of 54 sedras; 9th of 12 in Bereshit.
Written on 190 lines, ranks 28th.
4 Parshiyot; 3 open, 1 closed.
112 pesukim - ranks 24th.
1558 words - ranks 24th.



MITZVOT

No mitzvot are counted from Vayeishev.



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THE PERSON IN THE PARSHA

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB
OU EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, EMERITUS

Thinking and Dreaming

When I recall the great teachers I was blessed with over the course of my lifetime, I realize that one thing comes to mind: they were a diverse group. This eclectic group included the gentle man who introduced me to the study of *Chumash*, Bible, when I was in fourth grade; the seventh-grade teacher who inspired me to read great literature and to try my hand at writing; the Talmudic scholar who turned me on to rabbinic study when I was about 18 years old; and the devout Roman Catholic psychiatrist who was my mentor when I trained to become a psychotherapist.

What did they all have in common? They all were thinkers and intellectuals, each in his own distinct field. And they were all imaginative. They combined *sechel* with *regesh*, intelligence with emotion, information with creativity.

My fourth-grade teacher used pictorial materials, which he had personally designed using his own substantial artistic skills, to illustrate the Biblical stories we studied.

My seventh-grade teacher read to us as a reward at the end of a long day, made longer by the strain of a double curriculum. He read with great drama, moving us sometimes to tears and at other times to fits of laughter.

The rabbi who made Talmud study so exciting did so using stories of great Talmudists over the ages, employing vivid imagery to convey the meaning of the most abstract texts.

And my mentor taught us how to understand people. He especially taught us the importance of the dream. But he was not interested in the dreams of our patients. He was interested in our own dreams, and he insisted that we pay attention to our dreams as one way to know ourselves better, something which he considered an absolute requirement for an effective psychotherapist. “The way to cultivate the imagination necessary to know another person,” he would insist, “is to be aware of your own dreams and what they might mean.”

In this week’s Torah portion, *Parshat Vayeishev* (*Genesis* 37:1-40:23) we meet Joseph, the dreamer. He was not the first person in the Bible to dream. His great-grandfather Abraham dreamt and his father Jacob dreamt several times. But Joseph not only dreamt himself. He paid attention to the dreams of others: the chief baker and chief cupbearer in this week’s *parsha*, and King Pharaoh in next week’s *parsha*.

Joseph, though, was the first person in the Bible to attempt to interpret dreams. In modern terms, he was the first to use intellect in order to analyze the quintessential product of the imagination, the dream. It is no wonder, then, that Joseph was the first

person in the Bible who is referred to as a *chacham*, a wise man.

Jewish tradition has always revered the intellect. The paramount *mitzvah* in our religion is *Talmud Torah*, Torah study—an intellectual pursuit if there ever was one. We are proud of the towering geniuses in our history: Rabbi Akiva, who could “uproot mountains and grind them together” with the power of his intellect; Maimonides, who composed his commentary on the *Mishnah* while still in his teens and went on to write his magisterial code and his awesome philosophical treatise; the Gaon of Vilna, whose genius encompassed every aspect of Torah and extended into the fields of mathematics and astronomy.

But what about the imagination? What place does that have in our tradition? Is it suspect because it is not bound by reason? Is it acceptable but clearly secondary to rational thought? Is it in some way superior to the intellect?

The answer to these questions lies buried in the vast and daunting writings of two of our greatest philosophers: Maimonides, in his *Guide to the Perplexed*, and Rabbi Yehuda Halevi in his fascinating work, *The Kuzari*.

I can only briefly summarize the differing positions these two sages took on the subject of the *koach hadimyon*, the power of the imagination. I trust that the reader will understand that I am simplifying very complex ideas.

For Maimonides, reason is the essential quality of man. Intellect is all-powerful and all-important. Philosophical expertise is a prerequisite for spiritual achievement. The imagination, according to Maimonides,

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is clearly secondary. It is limited to the sensory world and cannot transcend it. It is inadequate when thought is required. Even the prophet, whom one would think exemplifies the imaginative person, is basically a philosopher blessed with an additional skill: imagination.

Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, on the other hand, sees the imagination in very positive terms. For him, it is an alternate way of perceiving the world and, in some ways, is a superior method of perception. The intellect can perceive the world of physical reality, whereas the imagination has access to spiritual reality, to the *inyan eloki*, the “God factor.” The prophet, according to Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, is essentially a mystic, not a philosopher.

At this point, the reader might be wondering about the relevance of these philosophic

discussions to our everyday lives. It is here that I resort to yet a fifth great “teacher” that I was blessed to have. This teacher is the product of the decades I have amassed working with people in the fields of education, psychology, and the pulpit rabbinate. After all, isn’t experience the best teacher?

Experience has taught me that our imaginations help us achieve some very important interpersonal goals. First of all, our imaginations enable us to put ourselves in the shoes of another person, to sense what he or she is going through. This is the skill of empathy, which is so essential if we are to get along with others. To be able to feel what another person is feeling requires an active imagination. Too often, we are limited in our ability to empathize with another because we only know our own feelings and reactions and fail to comprehend that the other has different feelings and different reactions, even to the very same circumstances.

Imagination is not only important if we are to get along with others. It is also necessary if we are to succeed in life, for success requires the ability to envision new possibilities and creatively discover the options that are available in challenging circumstances. Problem-solving cannot be done with intellect alone. Flexibility and creativity and an imaginative vision are absolutely essential counterparts.

What made Joseph great? He was, as we will read next week, a *chacham* and a *navon*, a wise and discerning man. But he was also, as we read this week, a dreamer who could inquire empathically after the wellbeing of his fellow prisoners and ask them, “Why are you so downcast today?”

It was his imaginative capacity that allowed him to develop new options and to plan to avert the famine which threatened to annihilate the entire then-known world.

Joseph’s role in the history of our nation is as a model of the exquisite blending of intellect with imagination. This balance is required of all of us if we are to understand each other, if we are going to succeed in life, and if we are to personally experience personal growth.

Joseph’s example is one that we are challenged to emulate and which we are assuredly capable of following in our own lives. ■

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CHANUKAH



L'shana Hazot

A message emerges from two words in the Talmud's discussion of the Chanukah Festival- that is too important to ignore...

After briefly describing the Chashmonean victory over the Syrian Greeks and the miracle of the sole remaining cruse of oil, the Talmud states:

"L'shana acheret, to another year, [the rabbis] established and rendered [these eight days] permanent festival days with praise and thanksgiving."

The Talmudic record is clear. Chanukah was not established immediately as a festival, but only in conjunction with "another year."

Faced with this assertion, many commentaries interpret the phrase *l'shana acheret* as referring to "the next year." Chanukah was established as an ongoing festival, these scholars maintain, only one full year after the Chashmonean victory and the rededication of the Temple; once the rabbinic authorities recognized the full significance of the events that transpired under their watch.

If this is the case, however, why doesn't the Talmud use the specific language *l'shana ha'ba'a*, literally, "in the coming year?" Even if Chanukah is established only a year later, what might the rabbis be teaching us through their use of the broader phrase *l'shana acheret*?

A potential answer can be gleaned from the powerful observations of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik (the Rav) concerning Judaism's approach to time. This great scholar identifies three dimensions of "time awareness" as essential to the life of each Jew: **retrospection, anticipation and appreciation**:

Retrospection refers to man's ability to re-experience the past in the present. What for others is only a memory, the Rav maintains, must become for the Jew a "creative living experience." To lead meaningful Jewish lives, our personal journeys must be actively shaped by the events, and populated by the personalities of our peoples' past.

Anticipation, according to the Rav, speaks of man's projection of visions and aspirations into the future. Within this dimension, the Jew enters the realm of foresight and expectation. He recognizes the need to act now, in order to propel his dreams, and his people's dreams, forward.

The third and final dimension of time-awareness, **appreciation**, is the most crucial of all. Here, the challenge is to recognize the unique nature of the here and now.

So central is the dimension of **appreciation**, according to the Rav, that it lends meaning to the other two dimensions. "**Retrospection and anticipation** are significant only insofar as they transform the present." *The past and future are valueless to the Jew, the Rav maintains, unless they affect the way he/she acts now.*

Appreciation is also the most difficult

of the three dimensions to enter. To fully “appreciate” our times, we must learn to view our lives through the lens of history. We must judge ourselves as we will be judged in the future; but we must render that judgment now.

Lessons from the past are easily accessed through hindsight...

Visions of a glorious future are readily imagined...

A true **appreciation** of the present moment’s significance, however, can remain elusive.

Centuries ago, the Hasmoneans saved Judaism, only to ultimately fall victim to their own excesses and lost perspective.

Could the Talmud be hinting at one of the reasons?

Perhaps the rabbis are teaching us that: had our ancestors **appreciated** the true significance of the Chanukah victories immediately-and not only in **retrospect**, *l’shana acheret* -they would have successfully retained their footing in a turbulent world.

The message for our day could not be clearer...

We can’t wait for a shana acheret...

The wrenching events of these past weeks have created turning points in the history of the Jewish State, in the story of World Jewry and in the global fight against evil. These are clearly historic moments; moments when our nation’s past, present, and future instantly collide.

The decisions made, and the actions taken, in the days and weeks ahead will shape the course of events for years to come. The immediate call to action- from the battlefield, to the halls of government, to the volunteer home front- rings loud and clear.

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Speech Therapy

From Vayeishev to the end of the book of Bereishit we read the story of Joseph and his brothers. From the very beginning we are plunged into a drama of sibling rivalry that seems destined to end in tragedy.

All the elements are there, and it begins with ominous parental favouritism. Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons. The Torah says this was because “he had been born to him in his old age.” But we also know it was because Joseph was the first son of his beloved Rachel, who had been infertile for many years.

Jacob gave this favouritism a visible symbol, the richly ornamented robe or coat of many colours that he commissioned for him. The mere sight of this coat served as constant provocation to the brothers. In addition there were the bad reports Joseph brought to his father about his half-brothers, the children of the handmaids. And by the fourth verse of the parsha we read the following:

When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated

him, *velo yachlu dabro le-shalom. Gen. 37:4*

What is the meaning of this last phrase? Here are some of the standard translations:

They could not speak a kind word to him.
They could not speak peacefully to him.
They could not speak to him on friendly terms.

Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschutz, however, recognised that the Hebrew construction is strange. Literally it means, “they could not speak him to peace.” What might this mean? Rabbi Eybeschutz refers us to the command in Vayikra 19:17:

You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely reprimand your neighbour and not bear sin because of him. *Lev. 19:17*

This is how Maimonides interprets this command as it relates to interpersonal relations:

When a person sins against another, the injured party should not hate the offender and keep silent . . . it is his duty to inform the offender and say to him, why did you do this to me? Why did you sin against me in this matter? . . . If the offender repents and pleads for forgiveness, he should be forgiven. *Hilchot Deot 6:6*

Rabbi Eybeschutz's point is simple. Had the brothers been able to speak to Joseph

they might have told him of their anger at his talebearing, and of their distress at seeing the many-coloured coat. They might have spoken frankly about their sense of humiliation at the way their father favoured Rachel over their mother Leah, a favouritism that was now being carried through into a second generation. Joseph might have come to understand their feelings. It might have made him more modest or at least more thoughtful. But *lo yachlu dabro le-shalom*. They simply couldn't bring themselves to speak. As Nachmanides writes, on the command: You shall not hate your brother in your heart":

"Those who hate tend to hide their hate in their heart."

We have here an instance of one of the Torah's great insights, that conversation is a form of conflict resolution, whereas the breakdown of speech is often a prelude to violent revenge.

The classic case is that of Absalom and Amnon, two half-brothers who were sons of king David. In a shocking episode, Amnon rapes Absalom's sister Tamar:

Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornate tunic that she wore; she put her hand to her head and went off, weeping as she went.

And Absalom, her brother, said to her, "Has your brother Amnon been with you? For now, my sister, be silent; he is your brother. Do not take this affair to heart."

And Tamar remained, forlorn, in the house of her brother Absalom. When King David heard all about this affair, he was absolutely livid. And Absalom would not speak a word to Amnon, neither good nor bad, for Absalom despised Amnon for having violated Tamar, his sister. 2 Samuel 13:19-22



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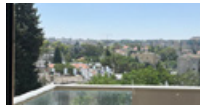
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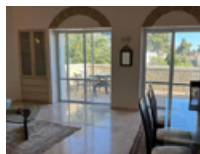
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Absalom maintained his silence for two years. Then he invited all of David's sons for a feast at the time of sheep-shearing, and ordered his servants to wait until Amnon was drunk and then kill him, which they did.

Hate grows in silence. It did with Absalom. It did with Joseph's brothers. Before the chapter ends, we see them plot to kill Joseph, then throw him into a pit, and then sell him into slavery. It is a terrible story and led directly to the Israelites' exile and slavery in Egypt.

The Talmud (Brachot 26b) uses the phrase, *ein sichah ela tefillah*, which literally means, "Conversation is a form of prayer," because in opening ourselves up to the human other, we prepare ourselves for the act of opening ourselves up with the Divine Other, which is what prayer is: a conversation with God.

Conversation does not, in and of itself, resolve conflict. Two people who are open with one another may still have clashing desires or competing claims. They may simply not like one another. There is no law of predetermined harmony in the human domain. But conversation means that we recognise one another's humanity. At its best it allows us to engage in role reversal, seeing the world from the other's

point of view. Think of how many real and intractable conflicts, whether in the personal or political domain, might be transformed if we could do that.

In the end Joseph and his brothers had to live through real trauma before they were able to recognise one another's humanity, and much of the rest of their story – the longest single narrative in the Torah – is about just that.

Judaism is about the God who cannot be seen, who can only be heard; about the God who created the universe with words and whose first act of kindness to the first human being was to teach him how to use words. Jews, even highly secular Jews, have often been preoccupied with language. Wittgenstein understood that philosophy is about language.

Levi Strauss saw cultures as forms of language. Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker pioneered study of the language instinct. George Steiner has written about translation and the limits of language.

The Sages were eloquent in speaking about the dangers of *lashon hara*, "evil speech," the power of language to fracture relationships and destroy trust and goodwill. But there is evil silence as well as evil speech. It is no accident that at the very beginning of the most fateful tale of sibling rivalry in Bereishit, the role – specifically the failure – of language is alluded to, in a way missed by virtually all translations. Joseph's brothers might have "spoken him to peace" had they been open, candid and willing to communicate. Speech broke down at the very point where it was needed most.

Words create; words reveal; words command; words redeem. Judaism is a religion

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of holy words. For words are the narrow bridge across the abyss between soul and soul, between two human beings, and between humanity and God.

Language is the redemption of solitude, and the mender of broken relationships. However painful it is to speak about our hurt, it is more dangerous not to do so. Joseph and his brothers might have been reconciled early on in their lives, and thus spared themselves, their father, and their descendants, much grief. Revealing pain is the first step to healing pain.

Speech is a path to peace. ■

These weekly teachings from **Rabbi Sacks zt"l** are part of his 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah teaching. With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org for more.

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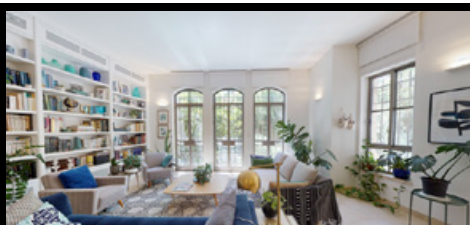
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CHANUKAH



This year, the only Shabbat that coincides with Chanukah is Shabbat Parashat Vayeishev - not Parashat Miketz. This confluence is rather rare as it occurs but once in ten years, on the average. Nonetheless, this unique occurrence does not impact the choice of the haftarah, as the selection remains the same as on every Shabbat Chanukah, i.e. a reading from Sefer Zecharya, prakim 2-4, which is also read on Shabbat Parashat B'ha'alot'cha.

The exultant opening of the haftarah in which Zecharya promises G-d's return to Israel, reflects the reality that faced Zecharya's generation, Jews who were returning from the Babylonian exile, and were struggling to rebuild the Beit HaMikdash. The prophet's promise that Hashem would, once again, "dwell in your midst", i.e. through the "new" Beit HaMikdash, was certainly a welcomed one to the nation and, in fact, echoed the exact promise made by Chaggai – a contemporary of Zecharya – who also urged the returnees to build Bayit Sheni and promised that Hashem "v'ertzeh bo v'ikavda" – would be pleased with the Mikdash and be honored (through it). Chazal saw the rededication of the purified Beit HaMikdash by the Chashmona'im as form of "reconstruction" of Bayit Sheni by the returning exiles of Chaggai's time. Our Tanna'im (early rabbinic scholars) regarded both events to be the fulfillment of the promised return of

Hashem's presence to Yerushalayim.

The second vision of the navi, the image of the Menorah and its lights, creates the obvious connection to Shabbat Chanukah and is therefore the most familiar reason given as to why the haftarah was chosen to be read on Chanukah.

These two visions are certainly convincing links to Chanukah, but we would be remiss in our study were we to ignore the introductory section Zecharya's nevu'ah that, at first glance, does not seem to be connected to the holiday at all. The prophet describes a scene in which the Sahtahn stands to the right of Yehoshua, the Kohen Gadol, in order to condemn him and prevent him from fulfilling his mission of returning the sacrificial rite to the Temple. It appears that Chazal saw this as a parallel to the many obstacles that faced the Chashmona'im that would "prevent" or hinder their efforts to rededicate the defiled Mikdash. G-d Himself responds by defending Yehoshua and reprimanding the Sahtahn for daring to attack one who had "survived a conflagration" ("ud mutzal ne'eish").

I would submit that Hashem's message was directed not to the Kohen Gadol alone but to his entire generation. Throughout his sefer, Zecharya speaks points to the shortcomings of this generation in an effort to have them repair their ways – criticism that could easily have the people believe that their efforts to rebuild Jewish

life once more was doomed to failure. For that reason, G-d teaches Yehoshua and His entire nation that the promised redemption would arrive - despite their sins - as Hashem understands fully the great suffering Israel had endured.

G-d's message should echo in our ears for His condemnation of the Sahtahn applies to all those who fail to stand behind Hashem's nation when they struggle to return and rebuild. He denounces those who criticize the "ud mutzal me'esh", the generation of survivors, those who rebuild their own lives in their homeland and who thirst to return to G-d and His Torah by reestablishing yeshivot and batei Knesset!

Who, after all, would dare to censure those who marched from Holocaust to Independence, from the ghettos of Europe to the Army of Israel? Could there be

ANYONE so insensitive or so selfish to find reason to chastise the generation who, like that of Chaggai, struggles against enemies who endeavor to chase them out of their land - a mere 75-80 years after their near destruction? Or would there be anyone with the chutzpa to join in the despicable effort of defending the slaughter of innocents, babies and elderly, of the very descendants of that "ud mutzal me'esh"?

Who could ever do such a thing?

YES!

A Sahtahn!

The message for Chanukah is a message for all time. So when we see these followers of Sahtahn criticizing and condemning, we can be confident that "yig'ar b'cha Hashem"- G-d will denounce them and will continue to defend the "ud mutzal me'esh"! ■



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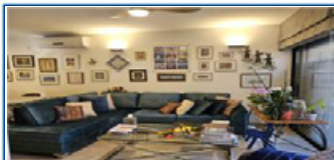
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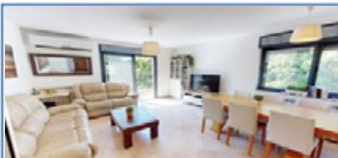
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CHANUKAH



Chanukah: Obvious and Subtle Miracles

The Talmud in Eirchin (10) enumerates eighteen days on which we recite the complete *Hallel* prayer in Israel. This includes: eight days of Succot, eight days of Chanukah, the first day of Pesach (the rest of Pesach we recite half of Hallel for various reasons), and on the yom tov of Atzeret (Shavuot).¹

CRITERIA FOR HALLEL

The gemara then addresses each holiday to better understand the impetus for reciting the complete Hallel. The gemara concludes that to recite the complete Hallel, the day has to have at least one of the following criteria: (i) it is labeled a *mo'ed* – a holiday (as opposed to Shabbat), (ii) a special sacrifice is offered on that date, and (iii) there is a prohibition on conducting *melacha* (work).

The gemara then questions why we recite the complete Hallel on Chanukah. The holiday of Chanukah does not satisfy the above established criteria. It is not labeled a *mo'ed*, work is not prohibited and there is no special sacrifice offered on Chanukah. The gemara suggests that the reason we recite the complete Hallel on Chanukah is “*mishum nisah*”- due to “the miracle”. All the other days on which

we recite the complete Hallel is due to the holiness of the day (*kedushat hayom*). Chanukah is the only time of the year that we recite the complete Hallel due to a miracle that transpired.

On Purim we also experienced a “*nes*”, a miracle – so why do we not complete the Hallel on Purim? The gemara provides three explanations: (i) the miracle occurred outside of Israel; (ii) we were still under Ahashveirosh’s rule (*avadim*) and not totally free; and (iii) the Megillah itself is a form of praise, so there is no need to recite the Hallel prayer itself.

WHICH MIRACLE OF CHANUKAH?

Now that we established that one is to recite the complete Hallel on Chanukah due to the “**miracle**” – which miracle is the motivation that triggered this obligation? There are two major miracles that are connected to the Chanukah story. One is the war, where the weak and few were victorious over the strong and many. The second miracle is that the small jug of oil that contained enough oil to light the menorah for one night, lasted for eight days. When the gemara deduces that we are to recite the complete Hallel on Chanukah due to the “miracle” – to which miracle is the gemara implying?

The gemara in Shabbat (21) inquires

1. In the diaspora there are 21 days, since the following days are added: second day of Pesach, Shavuot and Succot.

about Chanukah and concludes that Chanukah was established as a festival to commemorate the miracle that transpired with the ***pach shemen*** – the oil jug, that contained a small amount of oil that should have sufficed for one night only and miraculously illuminated the Menorah for eight days! Surprisingly, the military victory is not highlighted, other than being referenced to describe how we returned to the Temple to light the Menorah. This is in contrast to the “*Al Hanissim*” prayer that we include in *birchat hamazon* and in the *amida* prayer (after Modim), whose focus is primarily on the military victory (מסרת גבורים ביד חלשים) – the few were victories over the many....).

MAHARAL – SIGNIFICANCE OF PACH SHEMEN

The Maharal MiPrague is curious why a holiday would be declared solely due to the fact that we were able to fulfill a mitzva – the lighting of the menorah? True it was miraculous that a small amount of oil lasted for eight days, but isn't the fact that our enemy sought to annihilate us spiritually and physically and failed to do so, a more significant reason for a celebration?

The Maharal suggests that by understanding what the Greeks sought to accomplish, we can better comprehend the significance of the miracle of *pach hashemen*. The Greek's desire was to wipe out the study of Torah and the observance of mitzvot. In general, a miracle to enable Am Yisrael to perform a mitzva may not be a good reason to declare a holiday. However, since preventing us from the performance of mitzvot was the Greek's whole purpose, we celebrate the miracle that enabled us to defeat their purpose.

The Maharal's explanation resolves why



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the gemara in Shabbat focuses on the miracle of *pach hashemen* as the miracle with respect to which the holiday of Chanukah was declared. However, there seems to be a conflicting gemara, that suggests that the primary miracle was indeed the military victory.

RASHI – WHEN TO RECITE HALLEL

The gemara in Pesachim (117) references the recitation of *Az Yashir Moshe* following the crossing of Yam Suf. The gemara then inquires as to when one is obligated to recite Hallel and concludes that the prophets later on enacted that we should recite Hallel when we experience a dangerous situation (צרה) and are redeemed (נגאלין). Rashi explains how to classify a *tzara* – a dangerous situation:

ועל כל צרה שלא תבא עליהם - לישנא מעליא
הוא דנקט כלומר שאם חס ושלוה תבוא צרה
עליהן וישעו ממנה אומרים אותו על גאולתן כגון
חנוכה (רש"י שם)

...If Bnei Yisrael are chas v'shalom in a tzara (dire situation) and are redeemed, Hallel is recited – for example - Chanukah.

In other words, in providing an explanation as to what is considered a dangerous situation from which we were liberated that would require the recitation of Hallel, Chanukah is cited as the obvious example. This links the recitation of Hallel to the military victory, in contrast to the conclusion of the gemara in Shabbat cited above.

OBVIOUS MIRACLES

The Maharal explains a very important idea. Really, the primary reason that we celebrate Chanukah is to commemorate the miraculous military victory over the mighty Greek army. However, there is a risk that people may attribute the military victory to the clever strategies and shrewd

guerilla tactics of the Hashmonaim. The hand of God may be overlooked. Throughout history military victories are attributed to wise generals and great warriors and people may forsake the role of the messengers in the place of the Commander in Chief – the Almighty above! That is why God performed another miracle that cannot be forsaken for a natural event. A small jug of oil lasted for eight days. This apparent miracle will lead the people to understand that the other events that transpired, like the military victory were also acts designed from Above.

According to the Maharal, it seems that the main reason for the recitation of the complete Hallel on Chanukah is due to the miraculous military victory. The *nes pach hashemen* occurred so that all would understand that the related events, like the war, were in fact acts of God.

CONNECTION BETWEEN TWO MIRACLES OF CHANUKAH- QUALITY VS QUANTITY

Rav Mirsky (Hegyonai Halacha) posits that it is not a random selection of two distinct miracles, a war and a jug of oil. There is a substantive connection between these two miracles. The miracle of the *pach shemen* highlights **quality** over **quantity**. A small amount of oil can be of such **quality** that it lasts for eight days. Each night only one eighth had to burn to kindle the flame. That is identical to the miracle of the defeat of the Greek army. A small, outnumbered and weak nation can overcome a larger, stronger and more experienced army. The quantity of the Jewish people was insignificant. Hakadosh Barukh Hu provided us with the ability to perform with such quality that we were able to outsmart our opponent.

SUMMARY

Why do we recite the complete Hallel on Chanukah? The gemara in Shabbat seems to suggest that it is to commemorate the miracle of *pach hashemen*. Rashi in messcehet Pesachim records the military victory as the primary reason for the recitation of Hallel on Chanukah. The Maharal resolves the seemingly conflicting views, by suggesting that the military victory is the main trigger for the recitation of complete Hallel on Chanukah, but the miracle of *pach shemen* was necessary so that the military victory will be attributed to God as well and not to the might of man. May we be able to appreciate the many miracles both natural and supernatural that Hashem performs and that we encounter in our daily lives. ■

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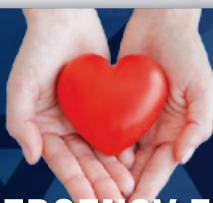
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Thanksgiving Thought

Every holiday has a main motif that expresses its unique character and energy. We experience Pesach as a time of freedom, we celebrate Shavuot with a renewed sense of *kabalat haTorah* and we feel the embrace of *emunah* on Sukkot. Chanukah personifies the concept of “*le’hodot u’le’hallel*,” to give thanks and praise. Rav Aron Kotler in *Mishnat Reb Aron* explains that Chanukah is a unique holiday in that its whole focus is dedicated to spirituality, to be mindful and reflect on the infinite kindnesses of Hashem.

Indeed, the Mussar masters note that this is the purpose of lighting the *chanukia*. In *Haneirot Hallalu*, we affirm that we light the candles, “*ke’dai le’hodot u’le’hallel le’Shimcha hagadol*,” so that we may give thanks and praise to Your great Name. One may not derive physical benefit from the candles since their only purpose is to invoke feelings of gratitude to Hashem. A *maschal* is given to illustrate this idea. Imagine giving a list of things to buy to your friend who is traveling abroad. Upon her return you ask if she remembered the list. “Of course!” she responds, “I read it every day!” When you ask her for the items, she looks at you incredulously, “was I supposed to buy the

items? I thought I was only obligated to read the list!” How ludicrous! Yet this is essentially what we do if we recite *Haneirot Hallalu* without actually expressing our recognition and appreciation to Hashem for His unending goodness. It is like reading the list without delivering the goods.

Rav Friedlander in *Siftei Chayim* explains that we give thanks not only for the miracles of the oil and the military victory, but also for every miracle that Hashem has done for us. The Rambam writes that “**one** should take care to publicize the miracle and to increase his praise to Hashem and express gratitude for the miracles He has done for **us**.” The switch from the singular to the plural teaches us that the Chanukah miracle is the impetus for us to express our indebtedness for every miracle, overt and hidden, that Hashem continuously does at all times.

Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev in *Kedushat Levi* explains that this may be one of the reasons we light candles as the evening sets in. Just as the lights of the menorah illuminate the darkness, we must find Hashem’s light in the darkness of our physical world. Although the mitzvah of Chanukah is about publicizing the miracle, we specifically light single wick candles, not torches, to highlight our obligation to discern Hashem’s Presence in each small occurrence in life, not only in the major ones.

We light the candles at night, but we devote the entire day to giving thanks. As we recite the full Hallel every day of the

chag, we should feel an overwhelming gratitude for the constant *chesed* of Hashem. May this feeling accompany us throughout the year; as this is the essence of a *Yehudi*, *le'hodot*, to acknowledge and appreciate. ■

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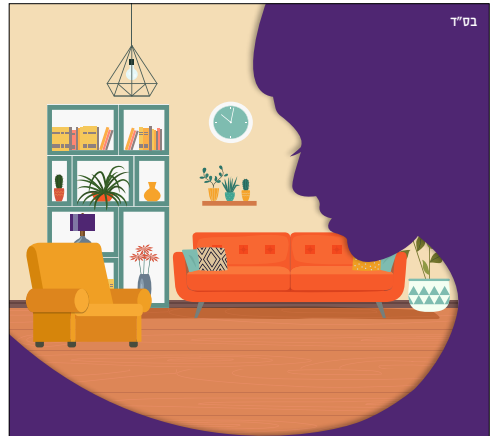
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UNITED WE STAND



Dear Friends,

In Rabbi Berman's recent Torah Tidbits message, the various challenges that have held us back from offering regular on-site programs at the OU Israel Center in the current circumstances were mentioned. B'Ezrat Hashem we intend to do our best to begin to gradually bring back as many of our beloved shiurim and programs as possible as we work to overcome those challenges in the weeks ahead.

There are now multiple ways to be kept up to date about virtual programs as well as in-person programs (which will be offered on-site at the OU Israel Center and in additional locations). In addition to advertisements for programs here in the pages of Torah Tidbits, we will also send periodic email newsletter updates. We also recently launched the OU Israel Community on WhatsApp, which allows those who join our WhatsApp community to access general program updates, as well as to join specific groups for many of our regular classes and programs.

To join the OU Israel WhatsApp community, enter this link into the browser on your phone:
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/DFr3rqmreSCE1wlBoWVzrl>

To view the updated schedule of all OU Israel Virtual and In-Person Programs, please visit
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We will continue offering two daily chizuk Zoom sessions. To access these sessions:



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*May HaKadosh Baruch Hu watch over and protect our chayalim,
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Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider, Editor, OU Israel's Torah Tidbits



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RABBI JUDAH MISCHEL

Executive Director, Camp HASC
Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)



CHANUKAH

Together

Orphaned of both parents at a young age, Reb Yehudah Leib Alter was raised by his grandparents, Rebbetzin Feige and Rebbe Yitzchak Meir, the “Chidushei HaRi’m”, the first Gerer Rebbe. With the untimely passing of Reb Yehuda Leib’s father, attention began to turn toward Reb Yehudah Leib, in hopes that the child prodigy would one day be a successor. After the *petira* of the Chidushei HaRim, as well as his disciple, the *tzadik*, Rebbe Chanoch Henoah of Alexander, all eyes turned expectantly to Reb Yehuda Leib. The young man was already renowned for his brilliance, *hasmada* and stellar character.

However, Reb Yehudah Leib felt unready and hesitant to cede to the pressure to ascend and assume leadership of the *kehilah*. Filling his illustrious grandfather’s shoes was a role meant for his father! Finally, at the behest of many elders and family members, he tremblingly accepted the task, and began to pray for the strength and awareness it would take to fill the spiritual needs of the community.

On the first Leil Shabbos of his leadership, an inaugural tish was to be held. Reb Yehudah Leib arrived a little late, and stepped slowly into the hall. The place was packed; the entire community, from learned sages to star-struck children, were all waiting

breathlessly to greet their new rebbe. Reb Yehudah Leib took one look at the empty *Rebbisheh* chair, the royal throne of his grandfather at the head of the table, and shook his head in disapproval. He moved to the side, to the middle of the table, and sat alongside the chasidim. *Halten zich tzu-zamen*, he said, “Let’s hold on *together*...”

Under his direction as rebbe and *av beis din*, Ger eventually became the largest Chasidic court in all of Europe. And thus the “*Sefas Emes*” became universally appreciated and eternally beloved, along with his classic Torah commentary by that name.

וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לִךְ-נָא רְאֵה אֶת-שְׁלוֹם אַחֶיךָ וְאֶת-שְׁלוֹם
הַצֹּאן וְהַשִּׁבְנִי דְּכָר וְיִשְׁלַחְהוּ מֵעֵמֶק חֶבְרוֹן וְיָבֵא
שְׂכָמָה:

So he said to him, “Go now and see to your brothers’ welfare and the welfare of the flocks, and bring me back word.” So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

וַיִּמְצְאוּהוּ אִישׁ וְהָיָה תֵּעָה בְּשָׂדֶה וַיִּשְׁאַלְהוּ הָאִישׁ
לֵאמֹר מֶה-תִּבְקֶשׁ:

Then a man found him, and behold, he was straying in the field, and the man asked him, saying, “What are you looking for?”

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת-אֲחֵי אֲנֹכִי מִבְּקֶשׁ הַגִּידָהּ נָא לִי אִיפֹה
הֵם רְעִים:

And he said, “I am looking for my brothers. Tell me now, where are they pasturing?”
(37:14-16)

Psychologist Carl Jung mapped out archetypes that represent innate, universal patterns and images that are part of the collective unconscious, and believed that we inherit these ‘archetypes’ much in the way that we inherit instinctive modes of behavior. ‘Archetypes’ include universal, inborn patterns and personality templates that influence the way we live and act.

The ‘shadow archetype’ represents the parts of our personalities, thoughts, impulses and *middos* that we would prefer to disavow. These may include negative instincts, weaknesses, desires and shortcomings — dynamics that, when expressed may be socially unacceptable, and also offensive in our own value system and moral compass. For example, a ‘shadow’ may be expressed as acts of anger, envy, greed, prejudice, hate or aggression. This corresponds to some degree with our view of the *yetzer ha-ra*, an oppositional force within us, an inclination to negativity and darkness.

“Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual’s conscious life, the blacker and denser it is.” This suggests that when we ‘disown’ a shadow, whether through lack of awareness, denial or fear, its influence grows.

A fundamental teaching of the Baal Shem Tov, *zy’a*, interprets a *pasuk* in Tehillim, ה' צִלָּךְ, “God is your protective shadow” (*Tehillim*, 121:5). This subtly implies that Hashem’s ‘actions’ in the world Above are a reflection of our actions below. Just as our physical shadow ‘follows us’ and moves whenever we move, so too the Ribbono shel Olam, ‘follows’ or mimics our choices and behaviors.

Rav Shlomo Wolbe, *zt”l*, offers (*Alei Shur*, Vol. 2) an explanation why a “shadow” is an apt metaphor for Hashem’s protection. A

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shadow is unique in that it reflects whatever is held against the light. If our small finger is set before the light, the shadow created will be small. If our whole hand is held up, the shadow will be greater. This is a way of understanding Hashem’s ‘reaction’ to us in the realm of faith. To the degree that we place our whole trust and reliance in Hashem, we will sense Hashem’s Presence in our lives.

According to Jung, the main task of human development is ‘individuation’, a lifelong internal process of clarifying and differentiating between the conscious and unconscious elements of our personalities. This includes elements of the self that are unsavory.

Yaakov Avinu charges Yosef despite the toxicity and strain in your relationship with his brothers: *Lech, re’eh sh’lom achecha*, “Go forth, search and see the good in your brothers” — focus on their strengths

and what they do right. Know that you are meant to complement one another, not to compete and cast darkness on one another. Confront and resolve your own inner shadows so you don't project them on others.


Speaking at the dedication of *Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin*, a student of the great Reb Meir Shapiro of Lublin, expressed the goal of the new institution and interpreted our *pasuk*: “*Es achai anohi mevakesh*, to mean, ‘**With** my brothers I seek the *Ribbono shel Olam*.’” “The new *yeshiva*,” he said, “will enable students to seek the *Ribbono shel Olam* together — not merely as individuals.” For *avodas Hashem* to thrive, we must complement and strengthen one another. Authentic growth demands an environment of connectivity, not a top down hierarchy of authority. It doesn't occur in vacuum, but in a warm, open atmosphere of togetherness.

Reb Yaakov Meir Shechter relates this approach to the miracle of Chanukah. The oil alludes to wisdom. Each cup in the *chanukiyah* represents a different individual's particular intellectual accomplishments. When kindling the lamp, the oil becomes *mevatal*, surrendering its own existence, and becomes part of the flame. As it nullifies itself to the flame, light is produced. The lights of each candle join together, and the glow that illumines and warms the area is a singular glow. When we dedicate our wisdom, intellect and abilities to the greater whole, in service to Hashem and one another, we create a miraculous light of togetherness.

Prof. Elie Weisel z'l adds to this idea. Just as every individual candle casts a shadow, we each have blind spots that project


shadows into our surroundings. Only when a second candle is placed next to the first, do the shadows of both disappear. We illuminate each other.

Through the illuminated days of Chanukah we are strengthened by the awareness that there is no force in the universe, whether personal or collective, within us or without us, that is not from Hashem. Thus there is no force that cannot be sweetened and directed into goodness. Everything - and every experience - is designed for some beneficial purpose. Although we are surrounded by darkness, our collective light illuminates all of us. These special days invite us to stand together, to appreciate and raise up one another's flame and good points, to enable each other's souls to shine — and to *hold on together*. ■



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CHANUKAH



Perhaps, even more than our *neirot Chanukah*, and the donuts and latkes many of us are accustomed to eating during *Chanukah*, the most beloved *Chanukah* tradition is the *minhag* to spin and play with the *dreidel* on *Chanukah*.

The most well known explanation for the significance and origin of this custom is that the Greeks forbade the study and teaching of *Torah*. Children would gather together to clandestinely learn with a teacher, and if a Greek soldier approached the group, the group would pull out these small toys, and would appear as a play group and not a *Torah* lesson.

Another well-known message associated with the *dreidel*, is that the letters which appear on each side of the *dreidel* are an acronym for the words: **Neis Gadol Hayah Sham**-A Great Miracle Happened There. Alternatively, our *dreidels* here in *Eretz Yisrael* replace the **Sheen** for the word *Sham* (there) with the letter **Pay**- for the word *Po-here*.

In addition to these familiar messages associated with the *dreidel*, the Chasidic Masters suggest other secrets hidden within this tradition.

Reb Pinchas M' Koretz, zy'a, one of the earliest disciples of the *Baal Shem Tov*, cites two different teachings from the *Baal Shem Tov* related to the *dreidel*. The letters on the *dreidel*, **Nun, Sheen, Hay, Gimmel** represent an acronym- not solely our familiar acronym associated with the miraculous nature of the *Chanukah* story, but rather of

the two *mitzvot* associated with *Chanukah*.

Neirot Shmoneh-Eight Candles and Hallel Gamur- Full *Hallel* (which is recited each day of *Chanukah*).

Additionally these same letters, explains *Reb Pinchas*, are equal in numerical value to **Mashiach**. Our *dreidels* remind us that as we recall the miraculous story of *Chanukah*, that we must also simultaneously look forward and anticipate the days of salvation yet to come.

Again in each of these teachings the *Rebbe* is referring to a *dreidel* with a letter *sheen* and not the letter *pay*. In fact, when the Belzer *Rebbe zy'a* made *Aliya* in 1951, he purportedly sent his *shamash* to find a *dreidel* specifically with the letter *sheen* and not a *pay*, presumably because of these two ideas mentioned in the name of the *Baal Shem Tov*.

Rebbe Nachman MiBreslov zy'a, suggests that the *dreidel* represents the reality that the entire world revolves, everything spins and is constantly changing. *Chanuka* is of course connected to the *Beit HaMikdash*, which *Rebbe Nachman* explains is also represented by the *dreidel* as well. The *Beit HaMikdash* is a realm where the lower world spins and is blended with the upper world, where Heaven and Earth spin together and become one, where awareness of *Hashem's* presence spins into this world from above.

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz shlita, further points out that particularly in times of war

or other difficulties, our *Tzadikim* have pointed to this practice of spinning the *dreidel* as a sacred reminder and source of *chizuk*. Just as the *dreidel* can only stand upright, and be spun around, when there is a hand that takes its stem and spins it, so too the *dreidel* is meant to remind each of us, that we are able to stand, to spin and move, because *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* holds on to each of us and allows us to stand, to spin, to move forward and to thrive.

Yehi Ratzon, as we spin our *dreidels* this *Chanuka*, may we merit to recall that this little toy is not solely a reminder of the great miracles of the past, but may we also have the awareness and perspective to envision and see ourselves as spinning forward, of moving beyond our current challenging circumstances to the miraculous times yet to come! Chanukah Sameach. ■

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GEULAS YISRAEL

BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN
Ram, Yeshivat Har Etzion

CHANUKAH



Cultural Insularity

Every miracle in Jewish history creates a template for the future. No major event is limited to its own historical context. מעשה לבנים אבות סימן means that stories in Bereishit, as well as major Jewish milestones, set the molds for our future. In particular, the epic miracles of Purim and Chanukah carved out patterns for Jewish survival throughout exile. While the three major chagim of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot provided blueprints for “redeemed” Jewish history, the two Rabbinic yomim tovim of Chanukah and Purim set the tone for Jewish survival in exile.

The enduring message of Purim was clear. Even though we had been evicted from Israel and appeared to be cast aside by Hashem, our covenant remained firm. As Hashem’s children, we would not be annihilated. Purim announced to all future generations that, as bleak as our condition appeared to be and as distant as we were from our Homeland, we were still privileged to Hashem’s love and to His focused hashgacha. We were not, as Haman wagered, just an ordinary scattered nation, but remained בנים אתם לה’ אלוקים.

The lasting messages of Chanukah are less obvious. The entire episode of Chanukah

feels extremely “temporary”: though we bravely fended off Greek persecution and restored Jewish sovereignty, it was very short-lived. Two hundred years later the Romans marched into Yerushalayim, crushed our state and set fire to our Mikdash. What are the long-term messages of Chanukah?

In part, Chanukah set in motion the single greatest intellectual supernova in the history of mankind. The immediate aftermath of Chanukah launched Torah sheba’al peh, an avenue of torah which preserved collective Jewish identity throughout exile. It is hard to imagine Jewish survival over the past 2000 years without our secret common language called torah sheba’al peh.

Additionally, Chanukah marked the first time that a group of people voluntarily sacrificed their lives on behalf of Hashem’s presence in our world. Without our willingness to defend our belief with our lives, we would have collapsed under the weight of the religious persecution of exile.

CULTURAL INSULARITY

Additionally, Chanukah introduced a communal “orientation” crucial for continued survival in Exile. Chanukah taught us about the value of cultural insularity.

Though the Torah repeatedly warns against excessive assimilation into the surrounding cultures, these admonitions are predominantly concerned with the theological danger of immersing in pagan cultures. Surrounded by idol worshippers, we could easily sink into betrayal of Hashem and loss

of faith. Sadly, we didn't heed the Torah's caution, consistently betraying Hashem for foreign kings and pagan gods, thereby shipwrecking the first Beit HaMikdash.

Absent the threat of defection to paganism, though, cultural assimilation *per se* was never a primary concern. When we lived amongst backward and savage cultures there was little reason to worry that Jews would abandon a life of dignity, nobility and moral literacy for a violent life of savagery and voodoo. The Torah's sole concern was religious erosion caused by assimilating too intimately with the surrounding pagan cultures.

DANIEL'S STAND

After the destruction of the first Mikdash we faced our first purely cultural challenge. Attempting to acculturate the captured Jews to Babylonian society, Nevuchadnezar subjected a cadre of Jewish youth to cultural retraining. Placing them in his palace and schooling them in the ways of Babylonia, he hoped to form a young leadership unit to help segue the Jewish immigrants into local Babylonian culture.

Daniel Hanavi grasped the danger. If Jewish cultural identity recedes Jewish religion soon vanishes. Defying this plan, Daniel refused his palace food instead, smuggling in lentils and beans for nutrition. His act of resistance was, arguably, the first recorded instance of Jewish cultural insularity.

THE UGLY SIDE OF PERSIA

Unfortunately, not all Jews stood the test. A few decades later many were invited to Achashverosh's decadent party, a 180-day celebration of hedonism and ostentation. The gemara in Megillah indicts the partygoers as the reason for Haman's genocidal

threat. After Haman was defeated, we quickly realized that the Persian culture of hedonism and paid-for-genocide was not worth acculturating to. We had uncovered the ugly side of Persian culture.

HELLENISM

About two hundred years later a very different cultural challenge emerged. The rise of the Greek empire marked the first time that Judaism was challenged by a competing "civilization". In the past, we had encountered barbaric cultures of cannibals and blood drinkers who worshipped molten images. These crude cultures provided minimal challenge to our Torah-inspired life of meaning, human dignity, and social welfare.

By contrast, Greek society radically improved our world, creating the first society of civility and democracy. This was the first time that Judaism faced off against a different "civilization", one which offered an alternate "dignified" human experience.

We now faced the challenge of responding to an enlightened and educated culture. Hellenism was an intellectual, rather than religious movement. With enough creativity many of its features were reconcilable with halachic observance. The Greeks banned milah, Shabbat observance, and Rosh Chodesh but did not seek to completely eradicate our religion. We now encountered a purely cultural challenge.

The heroic stand taken by the Chashmonaim shaped Jewish history. Chanukah taught us that even when core religious

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values aren't directly threatened, full cultural adaptation must be resisted. For our people to survive throughout the dark night of exile, it was not sufficient to maintain different dietary laws and different marital rules. To preserve Jewish identity and Jewish spirit, our cultural norms must also be different. Chanukah taught us the value of cultural insularity.

Throughout history, each community calibrated cultural insularity differently. Some adopted more of the surrounding culture while some staunchly banned any cultural influences. Either way, we always recognized the necessity to carve out distinct cultural spaces and uniquely Jewish lifestyle habits to prevent the loss of Jewish identity.

LEAVING THE GHETTO

Throughout much of our history insulation was provided, involuntarily. The ghetto experience assured a natural barrier between Jewish and Gentile culture, regulating where we could live and which educations and professions we could pursue, thereby limiting our social interactions. In the 19th century everything changed. Gentile society threw its doors open to Jews, offering them full membership as citizens of the newly formed states. In most cases freedom of religion accompanied this invitation. Many found this open cultural invitation too enticing to resist.

Not only did the broader society beckon us, but society itself was evolving. The 19th century witnessed dynamic political changes, rapid industrialization, as well as major advances in psychology, philosophy, and the arts. Jews weren't just eager to break down centuries-old cultural barriers but were euphoric at the prospects

of becoming architects of the new world. Western European Jews spearheaded scientific discoveries, economic growth, the evolution of art and culture and the emergence of modern psychology. Further east, Russian Jews almost single-handedly engineered the new Communist state. In the USA Jews eagerly took advantage of open horizons, entering the newly emergent fields of entertainment, industry, and finance. Cultural insularity was replaced by full immersion. As the doors swung open the allure of modern society tantalized the Jewish imagination.

Sadly, millions of Jews lost their religion. Among them, many even abandoned their Jewish identity. They failed to heed the lessons of Chanukah.

Tragically, the 20th century exposed the ugly side of the cultures we eagerly embraced. WWII exposed the underbelly of a supposedly enlightened cosmopolitan Europe. Stalin's brutal purges and executions displayed the moral rot of the Communist state which Jews eagerly built.

We may be standing at a similar historical juncture. The current war is showcasing the moral decay of the progressive liberal culture which Jews across the world devotedly constructed. Will the horrors of Oct 7. and the violent backlash against our moral war, reaffirm the lessons of Chanukah? Will we be more adept at cultural insularity? Will we better learn to borrow the knowledge, progress, and values which modernity offers without abdicating Jewish culture and identity?

This is our Chanukah moment. Not just on the military arena, but on the cultural battlefield as well. ■



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HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR. ADINA
SHMIDMAN



CHANUKAH



Haftorah Vayeishev - Chanukah ZECHARIA 2:14 - 4:7

This week we read the *haftorah* for Shabbat Chanukah as it contains a vision of the golden Menorah. The Menorah described in this week's haftorah and envisioned by Zecharia is a very unusual menorah. It is not the menorah we are familiar with from the Beit HaMikdash nor from the holiday of Chanukah. The Menorah in Zecharia's vision is a fascinating self-contained system. The menorah had an olive tree on each side which provided the oil that dripped into the seven bowls on the top. Zecharia questioned the angel to understand the system. The angel's response was, "Isn't it obvious, you don't know?" to which Zecharia responds that he doesn't understand the message of the menorah. The angel explains that the message of Hashem is directed toward the leader of the Jewish people, Zerubavel. He is being instructed that it is neither with might nor with strength but rather with the spirit of Hashem that he will lead.

What is the message that baffled Zecharia and was ultimately meant for Zerubavel to hear? What is the meaning of this unusual menorah? Radak explains that it was the self-contained system of the menorah which

puzzled Zecharia. Zecharia wondered how could there be light without any outside intervention? How can the menorah "run by itself"? The angel explained to him - and ultimately to Zerubavel, that Hashem gives each person the abilities and talents necessary to impact this world, the capacity to generate one's own light.

Zerubavel was given his unique G-d-given strengths to rebuild the Beit HaMikdash and it was only a matter of tapping into these strengths. Rather than waiting for an outside interceder, Zerubavel needed to access the G-dliness within him to rebuild the Beit HaMikdash as symbolized by the Menorah. *לֹא בְחֵל וְלֹא בְכֹחַ כִּי*, *אִם-בְּרוּחַ*, *not with valor or strength but rather with My Spirit.*

The Haftorah closes with the exquisite phrase describing the completion of the Second Beit HaMikdash, *וְהוֹצִיא אֶת-הָאֶבֶן*, *הָרָאשָׁה תִּשָּׂאוֹת חֵן חֵן לָהּ*, *For he shall produce that excellent stone; it shall be greeted with shouts of 'Beautiful! Beautiful!'* When a person recognizes his or her unique strengths and uses them to create and contribute to Hashem's world, the result is a rousing shout - a triumph of creation. It demonstrates how each person has what to add to this world which ultimately increases Hashem's divine presence in this universe. In these days of challenge, may we all be blessed to tap into our inner G-dliness and contribute to Hashem's world to impact widely and wisely. ■

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RABBI AARON GOLDSCHIEDER

EDITOR, TORAH TIDBITS



CHANUKAH

A Tree of Light

Roots, branches, buds, flowers and fruit are all components of a fruit tree.

These same components describe one of the most beloved of all Jewish objects: the Menorah.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch describes the Temple Menorah as a *light-bearing tree*.

The Menorah in the Temple consisted of the following: A base, similar to the root of a tree, a central shaft similar to the central trunk of a tree, branches extending outward from the center, called *'branches'* of the Menorah *"קני המנורה"*. On each branch of the Menorah there were flower cups called *'almond shaped cups,'* *גביעים משוקדים*, and *'knobs'* shaped like apples *כפתורים*, and *'flowers,'* *'פרחים'.*

What is the symbolism of a tree-shaped Menorah?

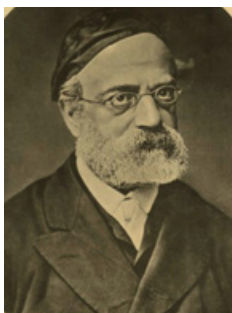
The Menorah, fashioned in the likeness of a beautiful blossoming tree with flowers and fruit, represents growth and vitality. The lights that emerge from the top of each branch represents the joy and exuberance that a life committed to the Torah provides for each of us.

Rabbi Hirsch teaches that light, when it is mentioned in the Torah, is a metaphor for the pulsating joy of living. Joy is essentially "the

feeling of awareness of a blossoming life."

Light is a symbol of growth, energy, an unfolding and a flowering, of progress, dynamism, happiness and joy. In the book of Esther, when the Jews were saved, we are taught, "For the Jews there was *light* and joy, gladness and honor (8:16). The light described here refers to joy.

Viewing the Temple's Menorah as a whole - its roots, branches, flowers and fruit symbolize exuberance and vitality.



Rabbi Hirsch brilliantly notes that the Hebrew words for joy and the Hebrew words for growth are closely related: the word for "happy", *sameach*, (שמח) is almost identical to the word *tzomeach* (צמח),"growing." In addition, *sees* (שיש), which means "joy" is almost identical to the word *tzitz* (ציץ), which means "blossom."

One of the most beloved verses, which we sing as the Torah is returned to the Ark, compares the Torah itself to a tree. *'etz*

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chaim hee, (עץ חיים היא), "It is a tree of life" (Proverbs 3:18).

This metaphor suggests that the Torah is not only a source of ancient wisdom, but also that it is dynamic and ever relevant. Its laws are *lights* that continue to nurture and enrich us. The eternal teachings of our tradition are a source of ardor that encourage spiritual blossoming and personal growth.

Chanukah celebrates this vitality and vibrancy of the Torah and also contains the recognition that we as people cannot grow and prosper without remaining committed to the Torah's ideals and teachings. Indeed, Chanukah celebrates the indispensability of God in our lives.

As we gaze at our menorah, our "light bearing tree," may we become more attuned to the precious gift of Judaism that enriches and ignites our lives. ■

Rabbi Goldscheider is the author of the newly published book 'Torah United' (OU Press), featuring divrei Torah on the weekly parasha from Rav Kook, Rabbi Solovetichik, and the Chassidic Masters.

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When to Say *Haneirot Halalu*

לעילוי נשמת
יואל אפרים בן אברהם עוזיאל זלמן ז"ל

Question: When do we say *Haneirot Halalu* ... (=Hnhl), when one person lights and when several light?

Answer: The earliest source of the practice to recite *Hnhl* is Massechet Sofrim (20:4), an early, post-Talmudic work. While many early *Rishonim* (including the Rambam) do not mention the practice, the Maharam Meirutenberg and his students (see Rosh, Shabbat 2:8) helped make it mainstream, so that it is accepted by the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 676:4) and practiced by all *eidot*.

The recitation's timing is debated. Massechet Sofrim seems to present it (see Bach, OC 676) as being said after the *beracha* of *L'hadlik ner* ... as an accompanying "condition," before *She'asa Nissim* and *Shehecheyanu* (perhaps before or during the lighting). This diverges greatly from normal rules of *mitzvot/berachot* (see Shut Maharil 145).

The Shulchan Aruch describes it as after the *berachot* and lighting, but does not say after how much lighting. The Maharshal (Shut 85) posits that *Hnhl* is after the first

candle, which is the main *mitzva*. The Pri Megadim (676, MZ 5) demonstrates that the *beracha* relates to all of the candles, and therefore sees it as a problematic break before the *mitzva* is complete. The main answer is that after a *beracha* takes effect on the beginning, primary fulfillment of the *mitzva*, speaking to help enhance the continued fulfillment of the *mitzva* is fine. This concept finds expression regarding *bedikat chametz* (Shulchan Aruch, OC 432:1; Mishna Berura 432:6) and *shofar* blowing (Shulchan Aruch, OC 592:3; Mishna Berura 592:14). The Mishna Berura (676:8) cites both opinions (after the first candle, after the last) as legitimate, but the main practice (which the Pri Megadim concedes), is to recite *Hnhl* after lighting the first candle, accompanying the lighting of the other candles.

I did not find *poskim* discussing multiple lighters. Does each lighter recite *Hnhl* in its regular place, or is there one recitation and when? Let it be clear that regarding this far from critical practice (see Aruch Hashulchan, OC 676:8), there are many legitimate and practiced permutations on timing, and I do not mean to oppose them. We will focus on what logic based on the concepts may suggest, rather than what one **should** do.

The basic content of *Hnhl* is twofold: 1. The

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Valerie Seidner and family
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candles are an expression of thanks to and praise of Hashem; 2. The candles may not be used for another purpose other than looking at them. This may suggest that a main goal of *Hnhl* is to remind oneself/others not to benefit from the light because the candles were lit for the *mitzva* (see Moadim L'Simcha II:4). According to that, reciting *Hnhl* after the first candle could be to reduce the chance of benefiting at that stage. If so, the first person likely should recite it out loud after his first candle. However, it seems more likely that the recitation's main purpose is to put the lighting into perspective – it is instituted to praise Hashem for saving our ancestors in their battle against the Greeks (ibid.; Minchat Shlomo II:58). According to that, it is done after the first candle to give the correct perspective in the midst of the lighting. Since we do not recite it before the lighting but as we are doing it, it makes sense that everyone recites it as he lights.

Presumably, either way, we would not want to wait until the last lighting to recite *Hnhl*, which many people do (Harav Mordechai Willig told me he recommends saying it only after the last person lights his first candle.) The idea of waiting can be justified by the concept that the lighting constitutes a joint lighting of the household. One such indication is that one candle for the household is essentially enough; another is the Rambam's opinion of *mehadrin min hamehadrin* (Chanuka 4:1; admittedly, few do so) that one person



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lights candles corresponding to the number of people in the household.

While all permutations are fine, the following appeals to me – the first lighter recites it out loud for all; other lighters recite for themselves; at the end, all (including any non-lighters) do it festively. ■

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BY RABBI MOSHE BLOOM

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Separating *Terumot* and *Ma'aserot* From Fruit in Home Gardens

Question

I have several citrus trees in my garden – oranges and clementines. I heard once that if I eat the fruit outside I don't need to take *terumot* and *ma'aserot*, and the obligation only applies once I bring the fruit inside the house. Is that so?

Answer

In general, in most cases, *terumot* and *ma'aserot* need to be taken from any fruit before eating it. What you mentioned is true, however, under the following conditions:

The garden is not private (ex. the yard of an apartment building) and anyone can enter without being asked, “what are you doing here?” Private homes gardens **do not** fall into this category.

Each time, you only pick and eat one fruit at a time (one grape, one cherry, etc.).

This is true only for fruits that are generally eaten completely by one person in one sitting.

Oranges and clementines are composed of units (slices), so when you pick even one fruit it becomes obligated in *terumot* and *ma'aserot*. The same holds true for grape clusters and pomegranates.

Beside most citruses (aside from kumquats and dwarf lemons), this also refers to large fruits: watermelons, pomegranates

and melons. Avocados and mangos are often cut up and eaten with other people. For this reason, it's best to be stringent and separate *terumot* and *ma'aserot* even if you eat them outside.

For most other fruits and vegetables, in public gardens they will be obligated in *terumot* and *ma'aserot* only if you pick two at a time (cherries, pears, dates, etc.). ■

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RABBI GIDEON WEITZMAN

Machon Puah for Fertility and
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

The Memory and the Well

Last time we discussed the very important and powerful meeting that PUAH arranged for families evacuated to Jerusalem hotels from the Southern and Northern border communities. PUAH's counselor, Ofira Hachohen-Kerner, listened to the women's concern that living in a hotel room, together with their children, was having an adverse effect on their marriages and their ability to interact and have time together as a couple.

Ofira offered some good practical advice that can be useful for many others, with their own emotions and challenges during these difficult and troubling times.

The first suggestion was that the couple draw on their experiences and positive connections that they developed prior to the war and their evacuation. Each couple should develop a "bank of good times" that they can use to remind them of their love and concern for each other. The existence of such memories and the knowledge that there were good times can offer hope and promise for the future. Sometimes, the present is complicated and does not offer any real opportunities for healthy interaction. Knowing that there were good times in the past can assure us that there will be good times in the future. And this can help us overcome

the hurdles and challenges of the present.

Another piece of advice that she gave to the women was to create a community within the displaced collective that they have become. We find throughout the Tanach, particularly in the stories of Avraham and his family, as we read in the current weekly Parshiyot, that the focus of communal life was the well. People gathered at the well to chat, share information, help each other and connect.

Mrs. Hachohen-Kerner suggested to the women that they create a well; a focus to collect at, to share experiences and support each other. This space should be used by the entire community, and can help connections develop. Each group of people can create their own communities, and find links and associations. Community is an extremely essential and positive force in each person's life, and, during difficult times, community becomes even more important.

The suggestions were very well received by the women and the discussion lasted until after midnight. Rabbi Burstein, the Head of PUAH, concluded the evening, with blessings and support for all the families. The participants were very extremely grateful and PUAH is now offering similar sessions for other evacuated communities. ■



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CHANUKAH



The Light of the Candles

On Chanukah we celebrate the miracle of the one flask of pure oil that should have been sufficient to burn for only one day, that was enough to light the Menorah in the Temple for eight days. It is also a celebration of our being able to live freely and actively as Jews.

The sages of that generation decreed that on each evening for 8 days we should light and display candles at the entrance of the house. The candles should be lit at a time when people are coming home from work so many more people will see the candles adding to the *"pirsumei nisa"* publicizing the miracles that God has done for us.

The mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah lights is so important that even a person who is destitute and is dependent upon public assistance for his livelihood is required to borrow money or sell his clothing in order to be able to fulfill this obligation.

It is so inspiring to walk outside on the nights of Chanukah and see all the chanukiot illuminating the black sky. Groups come from all over Israel for tours of our neighborhood on Chanukah just to watch us lighting our chanukiot. This is a real opportunity for

us to publicize the miracle *"pirsumei nisa"* to people who may not light a chanukia of their own. It is also a time to think of those people whose husbands might be on the battlefield and might appreciate an invitation for candle lighting.

Did you ever notice that the flame of a candle will always rise upwards no matter which way it is held? When we see all the candles lit this Chanukah, and we remember and talk about the miracles that God has done for us in the past, let us remember

this special property of the candle.

Especially this year, with all the darkness around us, we must rise upwards above it all, like the flames, and pray to God to continue to be with us and along with the rain shower on us more miracles. Channukah Sameach.

There is no specific mitzvah for "feasting and rejoicing" on Chanukah, yet we may find ourselves being served many fattening delicacies on this holiday. Wouldn't it be nice to have some yummy healthy options as well? My cousin, Sima Herzfeld Navon gave me just such a latke recipe. She is a naturopath and healthy cooking teacher who also



created Navon Naturals, a line of healthy, aromatherapy based, skincare products. In this latke recipe she adds a bit of wakame (seaweed) which may slow stomach emptying, which helps you feel fuller for longer so you may not reach for that next latke so fast. The wakame may help reduce body fat and cholesterol levels too. Be sure to soak and wash the wakame well before using it, so the latkes won't taste fishy.

LATKES WITH WAKAME

- 3 potatoes
- 1 onion
- 1 zucchini
- 1 sweet potato
- ½ tsp wakame, crumbled and then soaked for 15 min. in ½ glass of water.
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup flour
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ tsp baking powder (optional)
- ⅛ tsp turmeric
- oil (as needed)

Grate the vegetables and squeeze out any excess water. Squeeze the excess water from the wakame and add the wakame to the vegetables. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Heat the oil in a frying pan. Drop the mixture one tablespoon at a time into the oil. When the bottom is golden brown, flip the latke and brown the other side. Put a paper towel on a plate. Place the latkes on the plate to remove any excess oil. These can be served with a bit of sour cream or a slice of smoked salmon for something different. ■

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With the country at war, the activities of UH volunteers such as Oren Daos are more vital than ever. Oren provides critical responses to emergencies in Rosh Haayin and the surrounding region.

Rosh Haayin has had its fair share of shelling in the past few weeks. Yet, with the tension of war as a constant background, daily life continues along with inevitable emergencies. One afternoon in late October, Oren was on his ambucycle when he was notified of an accident on Route 5. Oren flicked on his lights and sirens and arrived extremely quickly at the location.

One car had flipped over upon impact. Oren and additional first responders worked to extricate the injured driver and stabilize his condition.

As the team treated the victim, a Red Alert siren sounded. There were just seconds to reach shelter before a missile would fall in the area. Pandemonium raged as people rushed to find relative shelter. But Oren wouldn't leave the terrified victim alone. He positioned the patient for maximum safety and shielded his own head with his hands.

The siren stopped, the boom was heard and the medical personnel got back to treatment. With the patient fully immobilized on a backboard, he was loaded into the ambulance and whisked off to the hospital.

"I believe people who do the right thing won't be harmed," said Oren. "I couldn't leave an injured person by himself on the highway. I felt that G-d would protect me."

With faith, courage, and compassion, Oren and thousands of other UH volunteers across the country continue to care for people and save lives.





The Jewish Home

In this week's Parsha Yaakov Avinu is presented with arguably the greatest test of his life- the apparent "murder" of his favorite son, Yosef.

The Parsha begins with Yaakov's most basic desire- his hope to live a life of peace. As opposed to the pesukim at the end of the previous Parsha which list the chieftains of Esav, and those associated with war, this pesukim at the beginning of this Parsha stand juxtaposed.

"וישב יעקב בארץ מגורי אביו, ארץ כנען"

"Yaakov dwelled in the land of his father's sojourning, the Land of Canaan"

Rashi explains on this pasuk:

בְּקֵשׁ יַעֲקֹב לֵישֵׁב בְּשָׁלוֹה

"Yaakov desired to live in tranquility."

Yaakov Avinu's life was far from tranquil. In specific, it was his home life which was so strewn with conflict. Whether it was the challenges he faced with Esav, to his father-in-law, Lavan, with his wives Rachel and Leah, or his many children, Yaakov's home was the setting for his greatest challenges.

Ironically, it is the concept of "home" which Yaakov Avinu connects to most throughout his life. In פרשת ויצא, on his route towards Charan, Yaakov falls asleep

and G-d appears to him for the very first time. When he awakens from this vision he declares (Beraishit 28:17):

"...מה נורא המקום הזה אין זה כי אם בית אלוקים וזה שער השמים."

"How awesome is this place! This is none other than the **house** of G-d, and this is the gate to Heaven."

The Gemara in Pesachim 88a discusses this statement and says:

...לֹא כְּאַבְרָהָם שֶׁכָּתוּב בוֹ "הֵר", שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "אֲשֶׁר יֹאמֶר הַיּוֹם בְּהֵר ה' יִרְאֶה", וְלֹא כִּי־צִחַק שֶׁכָּתוּב בוֹ "שֹׁדֶה", שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "יֵצֵא יִצְחָק לְשׁוּחַ בְּשׁוֹדֶה", אֲלֵא כִּי־עֵקֶב שֶׁקָּרָא "בֵּית", שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וַיִּקְרָא אֶת שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בֵּית אֵל".

"Not like Avraham that it says about him "a mountain" as it says, "As it is said on this day: On the mount where the Lord is seen" (Genesis 22:14), And it will not be referred to as it was referred to by Isaac. It is written of him that he called the location of the Temple field when he prayed there, as it is stated: "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field" (Genesis 24:63). Rather, it will be described as it was referred to by Jacob, who called it house, as it is stated: "And he called the name of that place Beth-El" (Genesis 28:19), which means house of God."

Unlike Avraham or Yitzchak, Yaakov perceived the holiest place on earth as a house, a home. After this first prophecy, Yaakov then made an oath to G-d that if Hashem would return him home safely, he would turn that very place into a House of G-d- a forward thinking idea- and one

which would lead to the notion of building a בית המקדש:

”והאבן הזאת אשר שמתני מצבה יהיה בית אלוקים...”

“And the stone which I have set as a monument will be a house of G-d...”

Furthermore, in the Torah, Yaakov’s connection to בית, can be seen in the fact that the Jewish people are referred to in many locations as בית יעקב, “the house of Yaakov”.

What is a בית? Why did Yaakov Avinu sense that the holy place in which he slept was like a “house”? Why is it that he was tested almost exclusively with issues pertaining to his home?

Upon first glance, the shoresh of the word בית is unclear. In the Torah, when looking for the meaning and essence of a word, one can begin by looking at the first time that word appears in Tanakh. The word בית is first mentioned in Parshat Noach. Hashem commands Noach (בראשית ו:יד):

(יד) עֲשֵׂה לָךְ תֵּבַת עֲצֵי גֹפֶר קִנִּים תַּעֲשֶׂה אֹתָהּ תִּבְהָה וְכָפַרְתָּ אֹתָהּ מִבֵּית וּמִחוּץ בַּכֹּפֶר.

“Make an ark of gopher wood. Make the ark with compartments and cover it **from within** and without with pitch.”

It is clear from this first appearance in the Torah, that the word בית is something meaning “within” or “inside”.

Rav Hirsch explains that the word בית is related phonetically and in meaning to פקד, “appoint”, and בגד “clothing”. “בית” is the home, the private sphere in which the individual thrives, received special care, and develops...” He continues to explain that a בגד, “clothing” protects a person’s body. According to Rav Hirsch, the home is the next line of defense, protecting a person from the evils of the outside. (It is

worth noting that פקד, too, relates to this idea. פקד להפקיד means to appoint something into someone else’s care- much like the care one receives in their home.) Similar to garments, the בית is meant to protect an individual, and also to help him maintain his individuality and dignity.

Interestingly, in Lashon HaKodesh, each letter’s name (i.e. aleph, bet, gimmel) is actually a word. The letter ב’ when written out in Hebrew is בֵּית (“bet”). What can we learn about a home from the letter ב?

Firstly, and appropriately, the form of the letter ב actually looks like a house with three walls and an opening (for a door). Secondly, inside of a ב, is a dagesh, an accent dot, which much like the source above in Parshat Noach, once again draws our attention to its **inside**. Finally, every time that we add the letter “ב” before a Hebrew word as a prefix, it means “**in**.” Why do so many aspects to the letter ב, and בית point to “in” and “within”?

The Torah is giving us a message: The Jewish home is defined by the attention spent inward. Even with the hustle and bustle world around, with the various forces which try to pull us away- בית is meant to draw our attention back to our center, our home. A Jewish home is a place reminding us to be present, and “here” when we interact with our family. It is meant to remind us that throughout the ages, we have survived because of the importance placed on all that has happened within our homes. No, one cannot ignore the needs of those in their community. We are meant to graciously open our homes and tend to the needs of people outside of our home, but Hashem teaches us that the attention to our family

comes first. A true בית is where those who live inside the home take center stage, where each person is seen and nurtured and loved.

Finally, there is one more aspect to the letter ב which is meant to teach us something about a “בית”, a home: When written in a Sefer Torah, the upper left corner of a “ב” has a line which points upward towards Hashem. Yes, a home is meant to physically nurture the family inside, but it is also supposed to be a place which mirrors the values of the Torah, cultivating spirituality. Our homes are not meant to be mere meeting places of convenience for members of our family, but rather according to the Torah, to be incubators of spirituality, places which allow those inside to feel safe, seen and nurtured and which help bring them closer to Hashem.

From the inward focus of the word בית, and the letter “ב” we learn that in a Jewish home we are not meant to compare our house, our car, our parents, our children to others. Instead, our energies are meant to be spent focusing on the treasures which lay inside- for each person to have one dedicated and intimate space in the world where they can be given the attention needed to help actualize their own spiritual potential.

When Yaakov Avinu perceived Har HaMoriah as a בית, it was because Yaakov sensed the intimacy of the place. Unlike his forefathers who felt it to be a mountain or a field, which are both public domains, Yaakov saw the place as a private space- a location meant to draw one’s attention solely to what was inside, and focus Am Yisrael only towards a relationship with Hashem. In so many ways the Beit

Hamikdash, the ultimate “house”, was the model of this idea. It was a place designated to truly be “present” with HaKodosh Baruch Hu, drowning out the distractions of the outside world. It reminded Am Yisrael about the importance of their relationship with Hashem.

The Midrash explains, however, that Yaakov’s perspective of a *human* “home” was flawed. בקש יעקב לשב בשלוה - Yaakov believed a home was to be like the house of Hashem- a place of serenity and quiet.

The Midrash (בראשית רבה כ”ד) continues to explain:

”אָמַר רַב אַחָא בְּשַׁעָה שֶׁהַצְּדִיקִים יוֹשְׁבִים בְּשִׁלּוּהַ וּמִבְקָשִׁים לֵישֵׁב בְּשִׁלּוּהַ בְּעוֹלָם הָזֶה הַשָּׁטָן בָּא וּמִקְטָרְג, אָמַר, לֹא דִין שֶׁהוּא מִתְקַן לָהֶם לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא אֲלֵא שֶׁהֵם מִבְקָשִׁים לֵישֵׁב בְּשִׁלּוּהַ בְּעוֹלָם הָזֶה. יִתְדַע לָךְ שֶׁהוּא כֵּן, יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ עַל יְדֵי שֶׁבָקֵשׁ לֵישֵׁב בְּשִׁלּוּהַ בְּעוֹלָם הָזֶה נִדְּוָג לּוֹ שֶׁטָנוּ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף. וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב (איוב ג, כו): לֹא שְׁלוֹתִי וְלֹא שְׁקֻטִּי, לֹא שְׁלוֹתִי מִעֲשׂוֹ, וְלֹא שְׁקֻטִּי מִלָּבֹן, וְלֹא נִחְתִּי מִדִּינָה, וַיָּבֹא רָגֹז, בָּא עָלַי רָגֹזוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף.”

Rav Acha said: When the righteous live in tranquility and seek to live in tranquility in this world, the accuser comes and accuses them. He says: Is what is prepared for them in the World to Come not sufficient for them, that they seek to live in tranquility in this world? Know that it is so; Jacob our patriarch, because he sought to live in tranquility in this world, was confronted by the accuser regarding Joseph. “I was not tranquil, was not silent” (Job 3:26). “I was not tranquil” – from Esau; “was not silent” – from Laban. “And I did not rest” (Job 3:26) – from Dina. “But turmoil came” (Job 3:26) – the turmoil of Joseph came upon me.

The Midrash points to the fact that Tzadikim are not meant to desire tranquility in

עולם הזה, in this world, but rather through their tests, they are meant to earn their reward for the next world. Hashem was teaching Yaakov Avinu something profound about a human home- that even amidst the complexity of a home, even within the noise, the differing personalities and opinions, **there too, G-d is found.** Yaakov, by nature, was always running towards the אוהל, the tent, the solitude of the yeshiva, and the notion that “if only one day my home life would become easier, then I could become even closer to G-d...” G-d, in turn, was teaching him that further closeness to G-d could be found by directing his efforts to steering his ship even upon turbulent waters, by leading and inspiring his family even in extremely difficult times.

This past week, I had the distinct honor of leading Matan’s Eshkolot Educators’ Mission, bringing female Jewish educators from the United States and the world to Israel. The mission focused on helping and lending support to the many women who are being affected by the current war. We made care packages and danced with chayalot. We met with Noa Lewis, a remarkable woman in the חברה קדישא of the רבנות הצבאית who prepares the bodies of chayalot for burial. We visited hotels in Jerusalem and spoke to mothers of families who have been displaced from Sderot. We farmed and met with high school students in Ofakim, some of whom had lost parents on October 7th. Finally, we visited the ככר הרחוקים, the square in Tel Aviv dedicated to the return of the hostages. With each visit, with each volunteer opportunity, with each interview, it became clear how, for so many, the concept of בית has been



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turned upside-down. For many, the feeling of protection associated with “home” has been snatched away. People of all levels of society feel alone, scared, and vulnerable. And yet, at the very same time, within this horrible turmoil, one can feel the Shechina peaking its way out. Meeting members of the Jewish people who are actively trying to restore the feeling of בית, of safety, of normalcy for our nation was incredibly inspiring. Whether it was the retired ganenet who has chosen to come back to volunteer in a gan for displaced children, or speaking a woman, Miri, who has taken it upon herself to fundraise and provide for the needs of an entire hotel of women and children. Whether it was talking with Yael Bitton about her role in galvanizing the civilian population to help families of fathers who are in the army or meeting with a high school teacher in the South who actively is devoted to healing her students through their participation in a robotics club- the work that these women are doing is kadosh.

It is no coincidence that Parshat Vayeishev and Miketz fall out around Chanukah time. In both Parshiyot, we see Yaakov Avinu’s “home” in shambles. This parallels a major theme of Chanukah. What does one do when a בית has been violated? After all, the Greeks defiled our holiest of holies, they put idols in the sanctuary of the בית המקדש. And yet, in spite of that pain, the Jewish people collectively searched to return the sense of בית to the בית המקדש. They searched for one small shred of purity- one vial of oil- and from that the miracle of Chanukah took place. The oil was lit and the light spread. Here we stand today as a people. The sense

of “home” for so many has been temporarily taken away, but here we are again, finding metaphorical vials of oil, trying to help people kindle their sense of “home” the best way we can... and in this holy work, Hashem’s shechina can be found.

May we learn from the courage, strength and perseverance of those who are helping this effort. May we copy their examples as they help put the broken pieces of our collective בתים together, spreading rays of light in this deep darkness. Finally, may we merit a present-day Chanukah miracle very soon, defeating all of our enemies and returning all of our hostages and soldiers safely. Shabbat Shalom. ■

Dr. Ariella Agatstein has been involved in Jewish educational leadership for over 20 years. She received her Doctorate in Jewish Educational Leadership from Azrieli Graduate School, focusing her thesis on the religious development of Modern Orthodox high school students. Dr. Agatstein has taught Limudei Kodesh in various schools throughout the United States and was the Assistant Principal of Girls Judaic Studies in Yeshivat Yavneh of Los Angeles. She subsequently moved with her family and children to Jerusalem where she became an Eshkolot Fellow at the Matan-Sadie Rennert Women’s Institute for Torah Studies. Dr. Agatstein continues to lecture all over Israel on topics related to Torah and pedagogy and she remains very passionate about bringing her knowledge and experience to the field of Jewish education in Israel. She is currently the Director of the Bellows Eshkolot Professional Development Fellowship in Matan.

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SPECIAL GUEST DVAR TORAH

KALMAN SAMUELS

FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT
OF SHALVA



CHANUKAH

Believe in Miracles

As we welcome the festival of Chanukah, the holiday of miracles, I reflect on the power of light and the miracles that enabled Shalva to become the organization it is today.

Rabbi Yosef Karo, the author of the Shulchan Aruch asked a famous question: if oil for one day was found and it lit for eight days until fresh oil could be prepared, why do we celebrate eight days of the miracle rather than seven, since there was in fact oil for that first day. There have been a multitude of learned answers to this question over generations but for me it has always been very simple. In spite of the fact they knew they had oil for one day, they didn't give up but rather they went ahead and lit their oil, doing what they could and relying on G-d for the rest. This lesson has served us well.

One of the first miracles we witnessed was when our son Yossi had his miraculous breakthrough to communication. Yossi had been injured by a faulty vaccination when he was just a baby, which rendered him deaf and blind and severely hyperactive.

At the age of eight, Yossi's teacher at the school for the deaf, finger-spelled the five letters of the Hebrew word for table,

'Shulchan' in the palm of his hand for days on end. At some point, Yossi's face lit up and she recognized that he had just had his breakthrough to communication and his world literally opened up as he learned to communicate via signs in his palm and later he miraculously learned to speak Hebrew.

Remembering her pact with G-d, Malki sat me down and said 'Kalman it is pay-back time' and on the back of Yossi's miracle, Shalva was founded.

Over the coming decades, while Shalva grew both in the number of programs, people we serviced and the physical space we needed, we had no shortage of challenges but each time when we truly felt the issues faced were insurmountable, we witnessed G-d's hand as a solution came along.

It is this foundation of miracles that we at Shalva endeavor to help families navigate the challenges they face with faith and fortitude.

We appreciate all too well the despair and sense of darkness families face when they learn they have a child with disabilities, and at the same time, we know the impact of hope.

We know that hope is the key to relieving the sense of despair and helping families see the light, understanding the potential that each and every child has and their unique role within our society.

Yossi, our beloved son and the catalyst for us starting Shalva is our bright miracle as he continues to live his life heroically, overcoming the many obstacles in his path

despite his obvious limitations. Today he is able to communicate and live a life of great meaning and contribution.

There is no greater testimony to the realm of the miraculous than to bear witness to the human being's ability to overcome his greatest obstacles, and to do so successfully.

The Chanukah story brings the narrative of the powerful Maccabee family to life. The Maccabees were a family who did not give up on their faith or on G-d, despite the tremendous obstacles they faced in their fight against the cruel Greek army.

At Shalva, we see this same Emunah (faith) and Bitachon (trust) manifest daily as we watch hundreds of families walk through the door every morning to fight for miracles for their children, and in doing so, their children have become the Maccabees of Shalva.

Our hope and prayer is that the treacherous battle our Jewish nation is currently fighting will end with the miracles of Chanukah, igniting much needed light. We are not a nation who merely believes in miracles, we are a nation who are witness to them, every moment of every day.

Keep believing... miracles are our Jewish birthmark. ■

Kalman Samuels serves as the President of Shalva, which he founded with his wife Malki in 1990. As the head of Shalva, he is recognized as a leading figure in the field of disability care and addresses gatherings internationally. Since the organization's inception, Kalman has played a leading role in ensuring Shalva's sustainability and growth. He has received many awards for his contribution to Israeli society, most recently in 2022 when he lit the Independence Day Torch and in 2019, an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy from Bar Ilan University. Kalman's memoir, *Dreams Never Dreamed*, was released in Hebrew and English and available online and in bookstores.



The advertisement features a purple background. At the top center is a heart-shaped logo with the Israeli flag's stripes and a Star of David. Below it, the text "TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER" is displayed in large, bold, white and yellow letters. Underneath, it says "Large selection of 'My Israel' products at the Shalva SHOP". The central image shows two hands, palms facing each other, with the Israeli flag's stripes and a Star of David on the palms. To the left is a white t-shirt with the Hebrew words "ביחד" (together) and "ננצח" (we will conquer) and a heart logo. To the right is a white mug with the text "LIFE BEGINS WHERE TEARS END" and a butterfly logo. At the bottom left is the Shalva logo with the tagline "Inspiring Hope. Changing Lives." and the text "Shalva National Center, 1 Shalva Road, Jerusalem, 02-6519555 ext. 315". At the bottom right is a QR code. The bottom of the ad has a yellow bar with contact information: a globe icon for "shop.shalva.org", a phone icon for "052-4011238", and an email icon for "shop@shalva.org".

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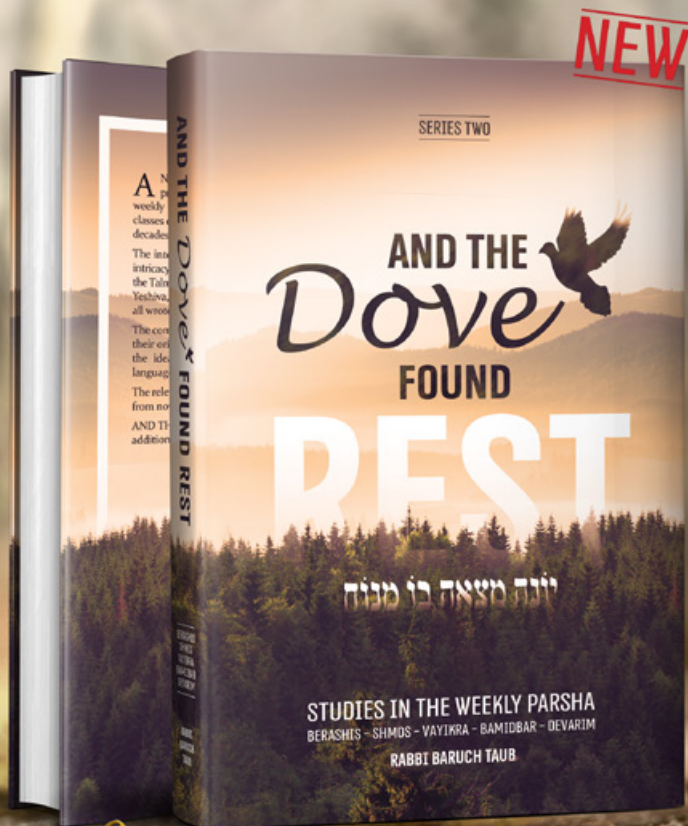
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Gavriel Novick
Director of
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It's All Part of the Plan

Yaakov sends Yosef to check on his brothers who were shepherding away from home. Yosef accepts the task but soon seems to get lost on the journey. A man sees him and asks Yosef what he is looking for. Yosef responds "I am looking for my brothers. Tell me now, where are they pasturing?" The mysterious unnamed man immediately remembers Yosef's brothers and points Yosef in their direction.

This entire episode seems strange. Why does the Torah relate this seemingly unimportant tangent where Yosef is briefly lost and a man shows him the way? Who is this man and why does the Torah not tell us anything about him? Chazal teach us that this man was actually the angel Gavriel. Why then did an angel, a messenger of God, point Yosef in the direction of harm, a path which would result in his sale as a slave to Egypt.

A central theme in parshat Vayeshev is the choice of the individual coupled with the destiny of the nation. While Yaakov, Yosef and the brothers are all making their own decisions, Hashem is ensuring the predestined fate of the Jewish people. The Levush Orah points out that in the pasukim Yosef doesn't find the man he can then ask for directions. Rather the man finds him. The man, or

Gavriel, was sent to find Yosef and steer him along the road that had been decided for him (and for the Jewish people) in advance.

Sometimes it is hard for us to see Hashem's master plan, something we have certainly felt in recent challenging times. We only experience the pain and suffering and question why, what is this all for. Yet we can see from the parsha that Hashem has a plan for the Jewish people. We are able to move through and beyond all hardships knowing that they are on the path leading us to the final redemption.

עם הנצח לא מפחד מדרך ארוכה



Ayal Weinstein
9th Grade
Ma'ale Adumim

Following Yosef's Footsteps

In this week's parsha, we read that Yosef was sold into slavery by his brothers because they were jealous that he was their father's favorite. But what did Yosef do that caused him to be the favorite son in the first place?

The Torah tells us that Yaakov asked Yoseph to go to Shechem to check on his brothers, "Your brothers are herding sheep in Shechem. Come I will send you to them." It isn't clear exactly what his father wanted from him. Nevertheless, Yosef answered by simply saying "הנני."

When we are asked to do something, we automatically ask why? What's the reason? Can I do it later? But Yosef doesn't complain or make any

excuses. Instead, he says "I am here" without even knowing the reason why his father wants him to go there and what he needs to do.

This is a lesson that we can learn from Yosef which is specifically relevant during these challenging times. There are so many people suffering now and there are so many things that we could do to help. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, it is important that we follow in the path of Yosef and just respond "I am here" no matter what the task is. Instead of making excuses, asking the reason why or arguing that someone else can do it, we should all say "הנה" to any opportunity where we can help and make a difference. ■



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Yoni thanks Hashem for having
the opportunity of having Tziporah in
his life, to learn of her caring, patience and
happiness, to overcome her challenges. May
Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world,
in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama
shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with
tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a
crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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