

VAYESHEV | 21 - 28 KISLEV 5783 | (DEC 15-22 2022)

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HAFTARAH PARASHOT VAYASHIV

The prophet Amos begins by informing us of the limits of Hashem's tolerance. Hashem says, "I can be patient over the three offenses of the Jewish people, but the fourth is inexcusable. Namely, the sale of the righteous for silver and the pauper for shoes.

The Pirkei D'Reb Eliezer (Chapter 38) sees in the above passages a reference to the infamous sale of Yoseif Hatzaddik by his brothers, the tribes of Israel. Chazal explain that the brothers sold Yoseif for the equivalent of twenty silver dollars and that each brother purchased a pair of shoes with his portion of the money, two silver dollars. According to R' Eliezer, this is the incident Amos refers to when reprimanding the Jewish people for selling the righteous for silver and the pauper for shoes.

This week's haftarah shares with us an important perspective regarding the offense of Yoseif's sale by focusing on a particular aspect of the offense. As we glean from the prophet's words it was not the actual sale that aroused Hashem's wrath, rather the condition of the sale. Amos refers to the indignity shown to Yoseif and the insensitivity towards his feelings, being sold for an inexpensive pair of shoes.

The result of this is that there was some room to justify the actual sale of Yoseif. The Sforno (37:18) explains that the brothers truly perceived that their life was in serious danger as long as Yoseif remained in their surroundings. After closely following his actions and anticipating the outcome of his inexcusable attitude and behavior the brothers found it necessary to protect themselves from his inevitable attack of them. Although they

totally misread the entire situation from the start it can be argued that their precautionary measures were somewhat justified and permissible. However, Sforno draws our attention to their insensitivity during these trying moments. The brothers are quoted as having reflected on their decision and said, "But we are guilty for observing his pain when he pleaded with us and we turned a deaf ear to it." (Breishis 42:21) Even they faulted themselves for their insensitivity towards their brother. When he pleaded for his life they should have reconsidered and adjusted their harsh decision. It is this insensitivity that the prophet refers to when focusing upon the sale for shoes. Apparently, they purchased these shoes in exchange for Yoseif to indicate that he deserved to be reduced to dirt. Their statement reflected that whoever challenged their authority deserved to be steamrolled and reduced to nothing. (see Radal to Pirkei D'Relizer)

This expression of indignation was inexcusable and required the most severe of responses. Hashem chose the illustrious era of the Tannaim to respond to this offense. During those times a quorum of prominent scholars presided over Israel which personified the lessons of brotherhood and sensitivity. An elite group was chosen for the task, including: the Prince of Israel, the High Priest and Rabbi Akiva who authored the statement, "Love your friend as yourself" is the fundamental principle of the Torah." In atonement for the inexcusable sale Hashem decreed upon these martyrs the most insensitive torturous death ever to be experienced. The Tzor Hamor (see Seder Hadoros year 3880 explains that the lesson this taught the Jewish people was eternal. After this horrifying experience the Jewish people were finally cleansed from all effects of the infamous offense done to Yoseif. From hereafter they could be authentically identified as a caring and sensitive people.

From this we learn how sensitive we must be and even when our harsh actions are justified we must exercise them with proper sensitivities. As difficult as the balance may be we must always feel for our Jewish brethren and show them the proper dignity and compassion they truly deserve.

Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Aaron Lankry

NEW MINYANIM ADDED:

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Table of Shabbos Zmanim including Candle Lighting, Mincha, Shachris, and Marriv with times for various tents.

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Mincha Mariv Minyanim advertisement for Beit Midrash Ohr Chaim, including location, contact info, and a detailed schedule for Mincha and Mariv minyanim.



PARSHAS VAYESHEV TRIP TO MOROCCO AND CHANUKA

There is an amazing Targum Onkalos in this week's Parsha. The passuk tells us that Yosef's brothers couldn't speak to Yosef with peace. The Targum adds a crucial word to the translation לא צבו --they didn't want to. The Torah is stating that Hashem would not hold the brothers responsible for their hatred if not for the fact that if they had really wanted to they could have worked things out. Those that are learning the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Yomi have just learned in Siman 29 that the transgression of hating another Jew takes effect when one keeps the hatred within the heart instead of talking it out with the one who hurt them. The additional word צבו is the basis of Judaism. There is a Jewish principal based on a Zohar אין דבר העומד בפני הרצון --if you really want something (the Mefarshim explain that this is talking about spiritual accomplishments) than nothing will stand in your way of reaching that goal.

Throughout the generations there have been remarkable men and women who lived up to this principle, willing to sacrifice everything so as not to transgress the commandments of Hashem. A unique and moving example is the story of a young 14-year old Bas Yisrael from the city of Tangier in Morocco who was tested with one of the greatest adversities in history. She shook the heavens and beseeched the thousands of Jews in the city of Fez where she is buried until today.

We've traveled all over the world and I have found that Morocco is one of the most impressive countries we have visited. Certainly, like most places, there is room for improvement. However, it is truly a majestic place. Both historically and spiritually it has been a haven for Jews, providing them with the opportunities to develop and flourish religiously and financially. The country is literally saturated with burial sites of incredible men and women who reached great heights of holiness in their Avodas Hashem.

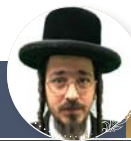
Back to the young lady. Her name is Sulika. She was known to be an extraordinarily beautiful yet modest young lady who kept herself away from the eyes of others. However, one of the outside Muslim neighbors saw her beauty and did everything in his power to get Sulika to marry him. She continually refused his offers of extreme wealth and ignored the frightening warning that if she didn't join the Muslim faith she would suffer a grave punishment—which she did. She was placed in jail and despite attempts by several great Rabbis to convince her to relent because of the risk she was taking both for herself and the other Jews in Fez she remained steadfast in her decision. The king and the court decreed based on false testimony that she had joined the Muslim faith and had then rebelled against it

and this was punished with a gruesome death. One of the last cruelties she was threatened with before her death was to be tied behind a horse and pulled through the town. She was prepared to go through the torture with out flinching. However she made one request--that they bring her some safety pins with which she tied her skirt to her flesh. She refused to have any part of her body uncovered while being pulled along the streets of Fez. The townspeople watched as Sulika was dragged through the town. Her unwavering determination that had kept her from conceding to a Muslim proved moving to both the Jews and the non-Jews alike. In fact, at one point some of the safety pins came loose and she begged the rider of the horse to stop and reconnect the pins as she screamed Shema Yisrael amidst her anguish. The rider was so moved that he eventually ran away and converted to Judaism. Sulika's bruised and battered body was saved by the Jews of Fez and as they buried her, the entire city fell into a state of complete Teshuva crying their hearts out for this tragedy and accepting upon themselves the Yoke of Heaven.

Taking the inspiration and dedication that Sulika left with the Town of Fez, I think we can find similar messages echoed throughout other stories connected with the holiday of Chanuka, including that of Chana and her children refusing to bow down to Greek idols. And there were the actions taken by the Maccabees led by יוחנן נפיש towards the purity of tradition by not allowing the non-Jews to breach the wall that separated them from the Jews in the Bais Hamikdash (see Tosfos Yom Tov Mashas Middos regarding the wooden partition that prevented the non-Jews from entering further when they brought their sacrifices).

Although tradition has emphasized the use of pure oil for the lighting of the Menorah, it wasn't really required. (See Pnai Yehoshua in the Sugya and Chanuka (טומאה הותרה בציבור). The search for the oil was mostly about keeping the purity of the Jewish tradition. And so, it was proper for Hashem to facilitate the finding of the special jug of oil sealed with the seal of the Kohen Gadol which according to the Kav Hayashar and its commentary originated from non other than Yakov Avinu.

As we prepare for the holiday of Chanuka may I suggest that we ponder how far we would go to keep to our traditions. We don't realize that when we speak, dress or act differently from the Children of Yisrael, we're surrendering to the Yevanim. However, when we dedicate ourselves to live like the righteous men and women of the past and try to purify ourselves inside and out, we are re-igniting the light of the miracle of Chanuka.



Parshas Vayeishev From Out of the Darkness Comes Light

אָלֶּה תְּלֻדוֹת יַעֲקֹב, יוֹסֵף.. אָלֶּה תְּלֻדוֹת יַעֲקֹב, יוֹסֵף..

It's been a long galus - an almost unbearable exile for our people.

We have been through wars, pogroms, inquisitions and holocausts.

But we are still here, in fact we are growing Bli E"H and thriving.

The Chofetz Chaim points out the significance of the words Eileh Toldos Yaakov, Yosef (these are the generations of Yaakov- "Yosef") as notated in the beginning of our Parsha.

There is a deep message here.

Toldos Yaakov, whatever happened to Yaakov, will happen to us - his children. Simply put, Yaakov symbolizes our long journey through Galus.

This journey, however, will take the path that Yosef himself took. We will go through many hardships, but although Yosef's path to greatness was preceded by much suffering- it was clearly the suffering that eventually led to his success. All the tragedies that befell him (being scorned by his brothers, sold as a slave, put into prison) merely paved the way to his eventual role as the ruler of Egypt.

The Torah is sending a personal message to each and every one of us. Do not despair when things do not go as planned- when our world seems dark..for it is all well within the Heavenly plan, in fact it is from this darkness that our path to salvation will surely arise.

We have all been trained differently - keep it positive, keep it light, warm and fuzzy, as they say. We do all we can to shield our children and ourselves from failure and pain.

But the world outside is not like that. The Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk (1801-1866) tells us that Hashem has an irrevocable rule. From destruction comes

rebirth, from darkness comes light. A seed cannot grow unless it disintegrates into the ground and those who stay up through the night take notice that it is always darkest before the dawn. We must re-educate ourselves that everything that seems "bad" is really good.

In every burst of growth there exists an uncomfortable moment of pain. But this pain will eventually bring way to happiness and fulfillment. As Dovid Hamelech says.."those who plant with tears will surely harvest with joy."

All this occurs on a national as well as a personal level.

Consequently in the story of Sodom (Lot and his daughters) the light of Moshiach was born and through actions of dubious integrity (Yehuda and Tamar), the line of Moshiach was advanced.

As we approach Chanuka, a period in our history when it looked as if all would be lost, G-d forbid, it is no coincidence that year after year we celebrate by bringing more light into the world.

No life is perfect, everyone experiences setbacks. Will these setbacks push us deeper into darkness or will we re-energize ourselves, despite- or better yet, because of the setbacks- knowing that they are merely stepping stones to greatness, not boulders standing in our way.

This is the heart and soul of our life's journey; realizing that darkness and pain were sent for our benefit- to serve as a virtual road map, helping us spread light into every corner of our existence.

Translated by Rabbi Reich

Good Shabbos and A Freilichin Chanukah!

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Rabbi YY Jacobson

When You Encounter a Lost Soul, How Do You React?

A Tale of Two Angels

Brother's Keeper

One day the zookeeper noticed that the orangutan was reading two books, the Bible and Darwin's Origin of Species.

Surprised, he asked the ape, "Why are you reading both those books?"

"Well," said the orangutan, "I just wanted to know if I was my brother's keeper, or my keeper's brother."

The Contrast

Sometimes, the contrast is too conspicuous to ignore. In both stories, the Torah employs the same term: "Ish," which means, a man. (The term is already used in Bereishis, to describe the first man, Adam.) In two consecutive portions, Vayishlach and Vayeishev, the same term is used. Yet Rashi, based on the tradition of our sages, changes his commentary from one extreme to the other.

In the portion of Vayishlach, we find the term "Ish," a man.

And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.

Rashi explains that this "man" was the spiritual angel of Esau. In other words, this battle in the middle of the night between Jacob and this mysterious "man," was part of the ongoing struggle between Jacob and his brother Esau.

Yet, in Vayeishev, we have the same exact term used. But there everything changes.

Joseph was sent by his father Jacob, to go visit his brothers and seek their welfare. Despite his brothers loathing him, Joseph embarked on the journey and he got lost on the way. The Torah tells us:

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

And he said, "I am looking for my brothers. Tell me now, where are they pasturing?"

Who was this mysterious man, "Ish," who encountered Joseph at that vulnerable moment?

Rashi says it was angel Gabriel, who we see is defined elsewhere in Scriptures as Ish.

Strange. In Vayishlach it says that Jacob remained alone, and a man wres-

ted with him. In Vayeishev, Joseph is alone, lost in the field, and, again, a man encounters him and asks him what he is searching for. The same exact word is used in both cases to describe this person: Ish. Yet in Vayeishev, Rashi sees him as the angel Gabriel, and in Vayishlach as Esau's angel?

A Tale of Two Men

The Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum (1887-1979), shared the following explanation in the name of Rabbi Chaim Halberstam, the Divrei Chaim of Tzanz (1793-1876).

Context is always the key. The word may be the same, "Ish," but the question is what does this "Ish," this man, do?

In both stories, there is a person who is vulnerable. In Vayishlach, "Jacob remains alone," in the middle of the night. He has been away from home for 34 years, and has been dealing with a world-class crook. In Vayeishev, Joseph, a young 17-year-old lad, is also lost and vulnerable. He has left his father, he was an orphan from his mother, and how he was on the way to brothers who despised him. He does not know it, but this journey would take him to slavery, prison, and complete alienation from his family.

In both stories, two people are deeply vulnerable. Father and son. Jacob and Joseph. Both of them meet a stranger. A man who appears out of the blue.

The question is what does this "Ish," this man, do?

Here is the difference. In Jacob's case, the man sees a lonely man in the middle of the night and pounces on him. There is lonely Jacob in the middle of the night? Let me attack him.

What about in the second story? Here too Joseph is alone. And a man encounters him. But what does the man say and do?

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

Do you see the difference? He does not pounce on Joseph. He does not exploit his vulnerability, manipulate his moment of weakness toward his own goals. Instead, he sees it as an opportunity to help. He asks the young lad: What are you looking for? You are a dreamer. I see you are searching for something. What is it that you seek? How can I help you?

And Joseph tells him: "I am searching for my brothers!"

I want a relationship. I am searching for love. For belonging. For understanding. For comradeship. For attachment.

So Rashi is simply mirroring the context of the narrative. When a man, encountering a vulnerable person, seizes the opportunity to attack him, that man, Rashi says, is an angel of Esau. But when

a man, encountering a vulnerable person, seizes the opportunity to offer a loving hand, a guiding heart, to see how he can be here for you in your search for love and family, this person, Rashi says, must be the angel Gabriel!

The Lesson

We all encounter a person, a child, a teen, an adult, who is "alone," vulnerable, lonely, lost, confused, bewildered, pained.

We see them in their vulnerability. And we make a choice.

Some of us seize the opportunity to use exploit them. Some people even utilize the opportunity to use them in immoral ways, to abuse them, to pounce on them, to attack them, to hurt them, willingly or unwillingly. Even just to judge them.

But some of us encounter the same vulnerable people. And our response is: My dear boy, my dear girl, my dear friend, tell me what are you looking for? Let me find out what you are searching for, what you yearn for.

We each have to make a choice about what type of "man" we will be. I can either become a force of Esau, or I can become the angel Gabriel.

When the Rebbe Went to Warm Up Soup

It was the night of Yom Kippur, the holiest night of the year.

The Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, also known as the Alter Rebbe (1745-1812), was praying. Wrapped in his talis and his kitel, he was immersed in his davening, in intimacy with G-d.

Suddenly, he removed his talis and left the shul. It was shocking.

The Rebbe went to the home of a mother who had just given birth. The rest of the family went to the synagogue to pray, so nobody was present. The Rebbe kindled a flame, warmed up a soup on the stove, and fed it to the young mother who desperately needed the food.

I once heard the Lubavitcher Rebbe share this story. And he added: The greatness in the story is not that the Alter Rebbe went on Yom Kippur to save this mother. After all, saving a life override Yom Kippur. The uniqueness of the story is the Rebbe, in the midst of his Yom Kippur prayers, experiencing oneness with the Divine, felt the pain and anguish of the young mother.

Many spiritual people, when they are immersed in transcendence, they become deaf to the cry of a mother and a baby. In contrast, the Alter Rebbe, as he spoke to G-d on the holiest night of the year, his soul could not calm down till he went to comfort a young mother who yearned for help.



PARSHAS VAYEISHEV WHEN YOU ARE IN A FIGHT – SPEAK!

“וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ לֶךְ נָא רְאֵה אֶת שְׁלוֹם אַחֲרֶיךָ וְאֶת שְׁלוֹם הָצֹאן וְהִשְׁבִּי דְבַר” 87:14
 “וַיֵּשֶׁב רְאוּבֵן אֶל הַבּוֹר וְהָנָה אִין יוֹסֵף בְּבוֹר, וַיִּקְרַע אֶת בְּגָדָיו” 87:29

Yaakov tells Yosef – “Look into the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and to report back to me.” Yosef listens to his father. When he meets the Shevatim, they throw him into a pit, and then sell him. “Reuven returned to the pit, and behold Yosef was not in the pit so he ripped his clothing.” Reuven was there when they threw Yosef into the pit but was not there when they sold him. Where was he? Rashi says that Reuven was not there because it was his day to serve his father, Yaakov. Apparently, the brothers took turns being with their father. Yaakov knew that the brothers hated Yosef. It seems that Yaakov should have realized that it would be dangerous to send Yosef to the brothers who hated him. Even more perplexing is that it seems there was no need to check on the welfare of the brothers. The brothers took turns being with Yaakov. Why couldn’t whichever brother’s turn it was to be with his father, give Yaakov a report on his children? Why did he need to send Yosef?

37:2 את בני בלהה ואת בני זלפה נשי אביו, ויבא – “The sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives; and Yosef would bring evil reports about them (his brothers) to his father.” How was Yosef allowed to tell over Loshon Hara to Yaakov? There are three conditions which must be met in order to tell something bad about another. 1 – If you tell the person to stop doing the bad action, he will not listen to you, so you tell someone else whom he might listen to. 2 – You need to report exactly what happened without any subjective opinions. 3 – You cannot derive any benefit in telling. The Posuk is letting us know that Yosef was allowed to tell his father because all three conditions applied. “את בני בלהה ואת בני זלפה”, Had Yosef tried to tell them to change their ways, they would have responded that he is only telling them because they are children of the “maid-servants” and he thinks that he is greater than them. They would not have listened. “ויבא”, “And Yosef brought their words.” The Posuk should have said that he told their words; how does one bring words? “He brought the words” means that it was the exact story without any embellishments. “אל אביהם”, The Posuk does not say יוסף, to Yosef’s father, but rather he told their father. Yosef’s goal was not to get any credit from

“his father”; he just wanted them to change their ways. (בעל אפיקי ים)

37:4 ויראו אחיו כי אתו אהב אביהם מכל אחיו – “Yosef’s brothers saw that their father loved him more than all of the other brothers so they hated him, and they could not speak to him peaceably.” Vayikra 19:17 “לא תשנא את אחיך” – “Do not hate your brother in your heart, rather rebuke him.” When one has hatred for another in his heart, the hatred grows every day. However if one speaks about it to the person, the person has the opportunity to defend himself or apologize. This often leads to peace. This is why the Torah commands us not to hate in our hearts. “ולא יכלו דברו לשלום” – The brothers could not speak “peace” to Yosef. This caused the hatred of Yosef to fester and grow everyday instead of bringing peace. Had the brothers been willing to speak to Yosef, perhaps there would have been peace. (תפארת יונתן)

What does the Posuk mean that they were not able to speak for peace? Shemos 32:14 “וינחם ד’ על הרעה אשר דבר לעשות לעמו” – “And Hashem reconsidered regarding the evil that He declared that He would do to His people.” Moshe Rabbeinu Davened on behalf of Klal Yisroel that they should be forgiven for the Chet Ha’eigel. “אשר דבר” – The Alshich explains that the reason that Hashem reconsidered is because “He declared.” When one expresses his anger, the fact that the person verbalizes it, is in itself therapeutic. The Ribbono Shel Olam Kavayachol verbalized His feelings, and this brought about the ability for Him to forgive Klal Yisroel. “ולא יכלו דברו לשלום”, Because the brothers would not speak about their hatred, their ability to achieve peace was hindered. (צביו לצדיק)

Yaakov knew of the hatred of the Shiveit Koh towards Yosef. Yaakov knew that if Yosef and the brothers would talk it out, there would be peace. The brothers would realize that Yosef only wanted the best for them. He told on them to his father only because he wanted them to follow the will of Hashem. Perhaps the other Shevatim were only jealous of him because they thought that he hated them, and was telling on them. Had the brothers spoken to Yosef, they would have explained that Chas V’sholom, they would never eat Eiver Min Hachai or do anything against what the Torah says. Yaakov was telling Yosef, “ראה את שלום אחיך”, go see if you can find peace amongst your brothers. Speak to them, and they will speak to you, and there will be peace. We should be Zoche to have Sholom amongst Klal Yisroel, and we should care about our fellow Jews.

The Gemara in Yuma 33b discusses the topic of “Ein Mavirin al Hamitzvos.” Rashi explains that one who encounters a mitzvah should not leave it. We learn this out from “Ushmartem ... hamatzos” and we read it mitzvos.

The Radvaz in Vol 2:509 says that the concept of not leaving a mitzvah is a DeRabbonon and the posuk mentioned above is an “asmachta” (a remez in the Torah.) The Levush and Taz and Pri megadim in Siman 25 Argue and hold that not leaving a mitzvah is a DeOraysa.

Rashi explains this by saying one should not leave a mitzvah because he may miss doing the mitzvah altogether. The Chasan Sofer, siman 8 says that there are two reasons why one should not leave a mitzvah upon encountering it. One reason is that it is embarrassing to the mitzvah when you leave it, even if you do some other mitzvah. The second reason is that you end up delaying the mitzvah you encountered first.

In a case where one has two mitzvos to do and he encounters one of the mitzvos, he must do that one first. This is the case even if the other mitzvah comes more often as the rule of ein mavirin al hamitzvos pushes away the preference that the other mitzvah comes more often. The Chasan Sofer says that this would apply even if the mitzvah you encounter first is only a DeRabbonon; it must be done first.

The Magen Avraham in 25:4 says that a person encounters a mitzvah and could do it then but is not ready to do it at that time, he can skip the mitzvah and do the other mitzvah which is time sensitive to him. A practical application of this would be if Shimon picks up his weekday tallis on Shabbos by mistake. He can put it down and then take his Shabbos tallis instead.

What happens if Reuven is on his way to daven maariv on Chanukah and it is after the zman of lighting candles, but he did not yet light his menorah? He should light the candles first as he would be passing the mitzvah of hadlaka. This is even though maariv and krias shema come around more often than candle lighting. We could say that his daas is not to light right now since he wants to daven first, so it would fall under the category of the Magen Avraham that he is not ready for the first mitzvah. We could argue and say that Magen Avraham is talking about a case where he is not intent on doing the mitzvah that he encountered at all (for example, Shimon does not intend to put on his weekday tallis at all.) In the case of Reuven going to maariv, he wants to light the menorah, but not this second. Nevertheless, it would seem to be the halacha that he should light first and then daven maariv. Proof to this can be brought from a case where one picked out the tefillin shel Rosh before the shel yad. He must put on the shel rosh first because of ein mavirin despite the fact that he really wants to put on shel yad first.

Once Reuven starts lighting his menorah he should finish lighting the rest of the candles even if he is yotzei with the first candle and the rest are only a hiddur. When he is done he should then go out to daven maariv.

Do you have a topic or discussion you want to read about? Please send comments or questions to hymanbsdhevans@gmail.com or berachsteinfeldscorner@gmail.com



DO YOU PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

Much of our attention and concern these days is focused on the explosive increase in antisemitism. In November alone, there was a 125% increase in antisemitic hate crimes in New York City. Also alarming is the continued increase of intermarriage rates, particularly outside of the Orthodox community. While 98% of Orthodox Jews marry Jewish, among non-Orthodox, 72% are marrying a non-Jew.

While resources and efforts are understandably being directed to fighting antisemitism and outreach efforts to stop intermarriage, we must never neglect “in-reach” or take retention in the observant community for granted. While people leave Orthodoxy for all sorts of reasons, some of which are complicated and difficult to solve, one of them should be relatively easy to eliminate – the inability to afford Jewish education.

As long as there have been Jewish Day schools there have been families struggling to pay tuition. Fortunately, though, there have also always been remarkable people devoted to Jewish education and Jewish continuity willing to help.

In 1959, due to insurmountable financial stress, the Board of Directors of the Hebrew Academy of Miami instituted a Draconian policy. If parents didn't pay tuition, their child could no longer attend the school. One affected family told their young son that he would sadly need to leave the school permanently. The child was devastated. He loved the Academy and was especially enjoying the Torah studies.

The very mature young man boldly wrote a handwritten letter to the dean, Rabbi Alexander (Sender) Gross:

Dear Rabbi Gross,

I would very much like to go to the academy, but even though I cannot, I do not hold anything against you or the board. I believe that if G-d wanted me to go to the Academy everything would have been arranged so I could've gone.

If G-d wants me to be a rabbi I will be and if not I won't. Whatever G-d has planned for me to be I will follow faithfully without asking questions or being disappointed.

Rabbi Gross was so touched by the letter that he shared it publicly at the next meeting of the Board of Directors. They decided to let the child continue at the Academy. He stayed through eighth grade and was the class valedictorian. He continued his studies in the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland and became an accomplished and renowned Talmid Chacham, a prominent Rav and popular author.

The young boy who wrote the letter was Rabbi Zev (then known as Billy) Leff. Rav Mordechai Gifter, the famed Rosh Yeshiva of Telz, once told Rabbi Gross, "If the Hebrew Academy was created just so that it could produce this one talmid, Rabbi Zev Leff, dayeinu - it would have been worthwhile."

Rabbi Gross carried the letter of the young Billy Leff in his wallet. It was with him wherever he went and whenever he had a hard time, he opened the letter and drew strength. Once, referring to the letter, he told his family, "This is my entrance into Gan Eden."

That part of the story is known. What is much less well-known is that while Rav Leff's letter moved the Board of the Academy, he was able to stay in school only because Rabbi Gross took it upon himself to personally pay his tuition. Indeed, when he passed away, Rabbi Gross's family were looking through his personal desk and found a folder that had "מיינע קינדער," my children, written on the outside. It was a list of children that he personally paid tuition for so that they could stay in the Academy and not go to public school.

Rabbi Gross put his money where his heart and his mouth were. He dug deep to enable Jewish children to get a Jewish education and among those it impacted for generations was one of the great rabbis of our generation.

When I heard this story from his own family, I was reminded of a story I read about the great Rav Yitzchak Dovid Grossman, the Disco Rabbi. When he first went to Migdal

HaEmek as a young newly married man, he found the city was a center of crime. Arab men were coming into the city and preying on young Jewish girls. He said to himself, the only way Arabs could enter the city and behave in that way is if someone was taking money to protect them and allow them to enter. After inquiring, he found out the crime boss being paid to protect them was an incredibly tough thirty-five year old named Kobi.

Rav Grossman, a young Chassid who had rarely ever left Meah Shearim, decided to pay this crime boss a visit. He knocked on the door and Kobi, a tall and powerfully-built, frightening figure, answered. He barked at the Chassidish man, "What do you want," and Rav Grossman responded, "I came to drink a l'chaim with you."

Kobi was at a loss for words but motioned for him to come in. When they were sitting across from each other, Rav Grossman said to him without preamble, "Kobi, I'm sure you know what I've been doing for the youth here in Migdal HaEmek." Kobi nodded. "Of course I do. All the chevrah (the gang) talks about you and how much they love you." "Thank you for the compliment. But the truth is I came here tonight to discuss something else - something I saw here in town. Something that disturbed me very much." Rav Grossman described how he found out that Arabs from the nearby towns were coming there to date the Jewish girls of Migdal HaEmek.

After admitting he had been accepting a fee to let the Arabs enter, and after hearing Rav Grossman's passionate protest, Kobi responded: "I understand you, Rabbi but this is business. It's not easy, making money here in Migdal HaEmek, and this is a good moneymaker. For some reason, these Arabs want to marry Jewish girls, and they're willing to pay money for the opportunity. It's nothing personal."

Rav Grossman knew he had to find another source of income in order to get Kobi to stop. He asked Kobi what he wanted to do and Kobi answered, "If I had my own truck, I could do deliveries around the country and get paid very well for my work. I could make my own schedule and get up when I want and come and go when I please. If

you're asking me what I would want to do with my life, that's the answer: I'd be very content working as the driver of my own truck." Rav Grossman nodded. "I hear you. You just need a truck." They drank a l'chaim and Rav Grossman left.

Rav Grossman's father and father-in-law had purchased the young couple an apartment in Yerushalayim at the time of their marriage. It was their only asset, it represented essentially their entire net worth. The Sunday after meeting with Kobi, Rav Grossman traveled to Yerushalayim, where he put his apartment up for sale. Soon after, with the money received from selling the apartment, he purchased a Volkswagen truck.

Rav Grossman returned to Kobi's home and knocked on the door. When he was invited in, he placed the keys to the truck on the table and pushed them across the wooden surface toward the speechless Kobi. "You said that your dream is to have your own truck. Well, here it is. Now you have your own truck." With that, Arabs lost their protection and no longer entered Migdal Ha'Emek. The Jewish girls were no longer in danger, their future as proud and practicing Jews more secure.

I find this story simply amazing. To protect young Jewish girls and keep them part of our faith, Rabbi Grossman, without hesitation, sold his apartment and gave all the money he had. How many of us would do the same? How many of us would be bothered and moved enough to give a meaningful gift altogether?

Fighting antisemitism and stemming the tide of assimilation are critically important, but so, too, is ensuring a Jewish education is available to all who seek one. They say if you want to know what someone cares about, check where they spend their money. Granted, the cost of tuition for our own children is not small. Simply paying for one's own family can take great sacrifice and reflects a profound commitment. But it isn't enough. We must go into our pockets and do our part to ensure Jewish continuity. As it turns out, there is nobody better to confront antisemitism and be the response to antisemites than young, knowledgeable, practicing Jews.



Rabbi Reisman

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים HOW DOES WORK?

Yosef goes down to Mitzrayim, a young 17 yiddishe bachur. And there he experiences everything. He is sold as a slave, he experiences nisyonos and hardships, and then he is elevated to a position of power.

We know מעשה אבות סימן לבנים. The Yidden will eventually go to galus. Where they will be servants and sometimes they will be on top of the world. Yosef's experience was מעשה אבות סימן לבנים.

There is a rule that מעשה אבות סימן לבנים is not just a siman.

It says in Pirkei Avos that ten things were created bain hashmashos. One of them is the mouth of Bilaam's donkey. The Ra'avad asks that in sefer Shmuel aleph (6:12) we find "וישרנה הפרות," the cows sang. Isn't that a greater miracle than a donkey speaking? The answer, says the Ra'avad, is that for it to happen the first time is a big deal, but once there is a breakthrough it can easily happen again.

Similarly, the Pe'as Hashulchan writes in the name of the Gra, that although it takes great zechusim and abilities to be mechadesh chiddushei Torah, once there is a breakthrough even a child in the street can think of it on his own. That is Olam HaZeh. It is difficult to innovate, but once there is a breakthrough it is easier to imitate.

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים isn't just a siman. Yosef was a trailblazer. He was mechadesh that one can be in galus, in the most adverse of circumstances, and remain a frum ehrlicher Yid. For that to happen is a miracle. But we ride on the first one to do it, Yosef.

It used to be believed that running a four-minute mile is impossible. Science journals explained why it is impossible for a human being to run so quickly. In 1954 an Englishman, Roger Bannister,

ran a mile in 3 minutes and 59 seconds. He broke the barrier which everyone had thought was impossible. It was incredible. Interestingly, since then about 1500 other people managed to run and under four-minute mile. As a matter of fact, just 46 days after Roger Bannister broke the word record, another person ran a mile in under four minutes.

What happened? What changed? Did they invent a different sneaker then? Different diets?

Scientists, before something happens, they explain why it cannot happen, and then when it happens, they explain why it happened. But what really happened?

Hashem created the world in a way that until something happens, it is very difficult to make it happen, but once there is a breakthrough it becomes possible to achieve.

Why am I saying this?

It used to be believed that balei batisim are incapable of sitting in Bais Midrash until midnight. They simply cannot keep their eyes open until then. And years have gone by now, and Baruch Hashem there is a chaburah learning late mishmar night!

Some people think that there are plumbers, tailors, scholars, and then there are mishmar-goers who can stay up. 'But I cannot stay up.' Are you a baby? What is going to be in Mesivta D'Rakia when Moshe Rabbeinu gives a shiur 11:30 at night? Are you going to want to miss it?

You can do it! The people currently there aren't supermen. They are simply willing to try something new.

A gutten Shabbos to everybody!

Stories for Shabbos

It's Never Too Late!

Following the wedding of his granddaughter, Horav Yisrael Gustman, zt"l, began to wear a gartel, silk wrapped-around belt designated to be worn during davening. A chassidic man, to whom the gartel was part and parcel of his davening preparations asked, "Why does the great gaon wear a gartel?" (He was probably alluding to the fact that a gartel was not part of the davening dress code in the Lithuanian yeshivos.) Rav Gustman replied, "My Rebbe, Horav Shimon Shkop, zT"l (Grodno), began putting on Rabbeinu Tam Tefillin one day after davening. When one of his students questioned this practice, Rav Shimon said, "I have constantly spent time and exertion in an attempt to explain the expositions of Rabbeinu Tam. Can you imagine that when I will go up to Heaven and be greeted by Rabbeinu Tam, I do not want him to rebuke me for being a karkafta d'lo monach Tefillin, a man who did not wear Tefillin (since, according to Rabbeinu Tam, the sequence of the placement of the parshiyos, differs from that of Rashi)." Likewise, when Rav Shimon reached a certain age, he began to wear a gartel. When he was queried for a reason for this practice, he said, "That he wanted to prepare for the davening." (Hikon l'kraas Hashem Elokecha, "Prepare to meet your G-d." One should perform a preparatory act prior to davening. The gartel, belt, is used by many as a garment set aside for prayer.) "Like my revered Rebbe, I have reached an age at which I would like to accept a new mitzvah (manner of serving Hashem) upon myself. *Rabbi A.L. Scheinbaum's Peninim on the Torah*

The Legacy of a Breslover Chossid in the Lodz Ghetto

By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser

In the ghetto of Lodz during the Second World War, R' Simcha Borenstein – a Breslover chossid – was very active in the Lodz ghetto, giving Torah classes, organizing tefillah b'tzibbur, and hosting Seudos Shabbos with zemiros. He was literally a wellspring of hope, spreading light in the darkness of despair. He was especially devoted to inspiring the younger generation, trying to ignite within them a strong love for Torah and mitzvos, to ensure that they would continue to carry the torch of Torah. Even at a time when the Nazis had forbidden all such activity, R' Simcha continued. At that time, when even suspicion of the slightest crime could result in certain death, someone accused R' Simcha of theft. R' Simcha could only raise his eyes and heart to Hashem and plead for salvation. Unbelievably, the accuser was found to be the real thief. R' Simcha was set free, and resumed his holy work. His mesiras nefesh not to give up was an inspiration to everyone. R' Simcha, unfortunately, did not survive the war. When the war was over, though, his sister who had miraculously survived,

came to the ghetto looking for some memento of her brother. As she searched among the ruins, she was shocked to recognize her brother's handwriting on a bundle of letters that she discovered. The writings contained words of emunah and bitachon that he had penned to his brother. One letter that was particularly poignant read: Today is Lag B'Omer, and here in the ghetto it was an exceptionally difficult day of gloom and despair. In honor of the great day, though, I was able to learn a small piece of the Zohar I had obtained. As I studied it, I fell into a deep sleep, and the great Tanna R' Shimon Bar Yochai and other great people, including R' Nachman of Breslov, appeared in my dream. I remember shouting, "Rebbe, you have forgotten us! The Jews are suffering greatly!" R' Nachman heard me, and he lifted me up and danced with me, as everyone joined in. When I awoke I searched for a small sefer of R' Nachman that I had in my possession and I came across his teaching that said, "Through dancing we sweeten the judgment of the Jewish nation." *The Jewish Press*.

A Guiding Light

By Nachman Schachter

Alex Szendro was born in Sarbogard, Hungary, in 1905. He grew up as a secular Jew. When World War II broke out, he was fortunate to have a very close friend who worked in the government office of birth records. This non-Jew did Alex an incredible favor: He destroyed Alex's birth records, and therefore there was no record of his status as a Jew. In fact, as a result, as far as the Hungarian authorities were concerned, Alex Szendro did not exist. Even though he had no papers identifying him as a citizen, he managed to rent a small room. Alex was careful to stay under the radar of the authorities so as not to be noticed. He was somehow able to remain undetected by police until 1944, when he was almost forty years old. As the war was nearing its end, Alex was picked up by the police and sent to a work camp. Alex felt very fortunate when he learned that his work responsibilities included helping in the kitchen. That meant that he had easier access to food than others. From Alex's vantage point, he discerned the unspoken basic camp survival system. When one needed anything, he should acquire it by any means at his disposal. If that entailed lying or stealing, that was fine. Survival of the fittest was the rule. Alex noticed that all the inmates of the camp acted this way, except for one small group of people. This group was dramatically different from the others. When one of them needed food, the group made sure that he received it. If someone needed medical care, the others made sure he got it. Members of the group looked out for one another. After weeks of admiring them from afar, Alex identified this group as Orthodox Jews. Seeing how wonderfully they looked after each other, as well as the beautiful camaraderie they shared, he desired such a relationship for himself and



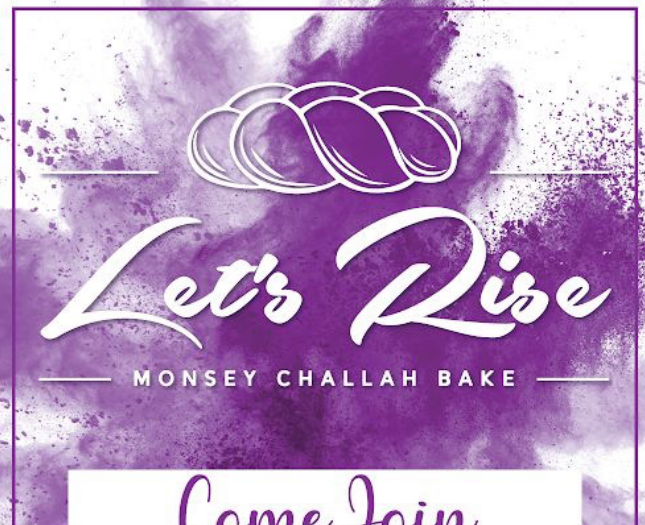
his future family. He approached the group and expressed his genuine feelings about the life he wished to lead. They put him in touch with Rabbi Benedikt, their rabbi. The rabbi became Alex's mentor and taught him all about Orthodox Jewish life. Soon after the war ended, Alex, who was the only surviving member of the Szendro family, moved to Budapest, close to the home of Rabbi Benedikt. He married and started a family. He did his best to acquire sefarim written in Hungarian, and went to classes given on Jewish topics, so that he and his family could become productive and active Orthodox Jews. Alex established a photography business, and became successful and financially comfortable. In Budapest, though, there were very few opportunities for his children to receive a Jewish education or for his family to practice their religion properly. Alex realized that it was time for his family to leave Hungary. Only one barrier stood before him: a rule to discourage immigration. An emigrant from Hungary was permitted to take with him only \$50 per person. Any remaining funds had to be left behind. Even so, Alex made the decision to leave. In March of 1957, Alex, now Shimshon, his wife Magda, and his children Yosef and Miriam, landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Halifax was a hub for immigrants, the Ellis Island of Canada. Within a few days, they joined the Orthodox community of Toronto, Ontario – proud and thankful to Hashem that they were going to be living a wonderful new Orthodox Jewish life in a religiously hospitable community. - *Heard from Yosef Szendro, Providence, Rhode Island. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – "Ten Steps to Eternity."*

The Advice of the Steipler Gaon

By Rabbi Mordechai Levin

Around 50 years ago, in Bnei Brak, there was a young lady who was mentioned to a fine, budding Talmid Chacham as a possible shidduch (marriage match). Both sides were extremely interested. However, as is customary, the parents of the learning boy asked for a handsome sum as a dowry. They wished for their son to be able to continue learning undisturbed, & not need to worry about supporting his young family. The father of the young lady appreciated the request & even had the means to provide such a large sum. However, he had planned to divide the sum amongst all his daughters, not give it all to this one daughter. As he was therefore about to say no to the suggested shidduch, his friend suggested that he go discuss the question with Reb Yisroel Yaakov Kanievsky, the Steipler Gaon, ZT"L. The Steipler immediately answered that he should agree to the shidduch, & commit to the entire requested amount. The father attempted to explain that he had other daughters that he was also concerned about etc. The Steipler cut him off, saying once again that he should do the shidduch, & bid him adieu. The father got the message & faithfully followed the advice of the Gaon. A short while later, the young couple happily announced their engage-

ment. The father kept his word. He had money invested by a well-known, trusted individual by whom many people in the area invested their savings. He went to him & requested a withdrawal of his entire investment, explaining that he needed it for a shidduch for his daughter. A short while later, due to a sudden downturn in the market, this investor's private fund took a huge hit. Unfortunately, many good people lost their entire life's savings. The grateful father told everyone that because he listened to the Steipler, even though it was hard for him, he now had his money & a beautiful shidduch. If he had not followed Hashgacha, & had not listened to the Gadol who enjoyed a special Hashgacha from Hashem, he would have neither his money nor the shidduch! *Torah Sweets*



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JOKES

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Father: "Well, keep at it, son. Maybe one day you'll get a speaking part."

GREAT NEWS

College student: "Hey, Dad! I've got some great news for you!"

Father: "What, son?"

College student: "Remember that \$500 you promised me if I made the Dean's list?"

Father: "I certainly do!"

College student: "Well, you get to keep it."

LONGITUDE AND LATITUDE

The teacher of the Earth Science class was lecturing on map reading.

He spent the class explaining about latitude, longitude, degrees, and minutes.

Towards the end of class, the teacher asked his students, "Suppose I asked you to meet me for lunch at 23 degrees, 4 minutes north latitude and 45 degrees, 15 minutes east longitude..."

A student's voice broke the confused silence, and volunteered, "I guess you'd be eating alone, sir."

BAG

Saddam sent his son shopping to get some food. His son came back with the food on his head.

So Saddam says "Why have you got the shopping on your head?"

The son replies, "Because there is no Baghdad!"

GOOD-NATURED BOSS...

Finally, the good-natured boss was compelled to call Smith into his office.

"It has not escaped my attention," he pointed out, "that every time there's a home game at the stadium, you have to take your aunt to the doctor."

"You know you're right, sir," exclaimed Smith, "I didn't realize it. You don't suppose she's faking, do you?"

"I have a split personality," said Tom, being frank.

Last night, I dreamed I was swimming in an ocean of orange soda. But it was just a Fanta sea

When life gives you melons, you're dyslexic.

I tried to sue the airline for losing my luggage. I lost my case.

When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.


How does an attorney sleep? First he lies on one side, and then he lies on the other.

WHAT'S WRONG DOC?

A man walks into the psychiatrist's office with a zucchini up his nose, a cucumber in his left ear, and a breadstick in his right ear.

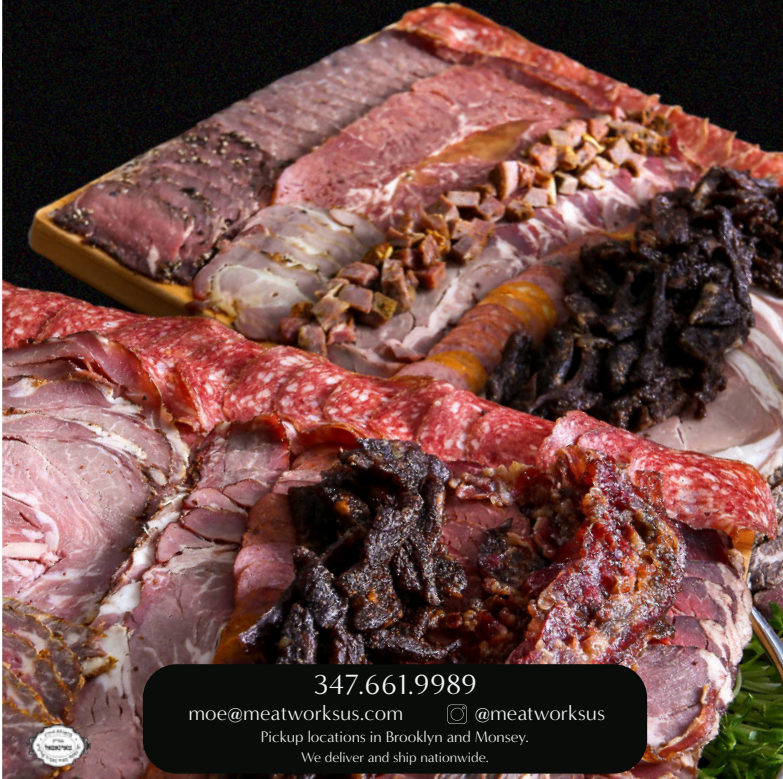
He says, "Doctor, what is wrong with me?"

The psychiatrist replies, "You are not eating properly."



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last two days on the 29th.

==== Hayom Yom Kislev 22.





Rabbi Fried

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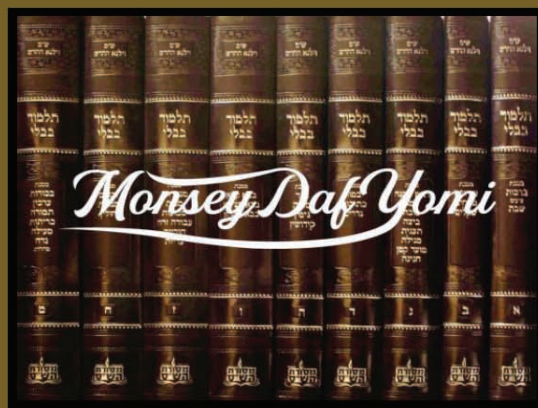


Rav Koslowitz at the Night Kolloid on Cooking on Chol HaMoed for Y"T Sheini shel Galuyos





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NO MENTION OF CHANUKA IN AL HAMICHYAH

PART II

We previously raised the question as to why al hanisim was not instituted in al hamichyah. There are many answers given:

1. THERE IS NO BROCHA OF THANK YOU IN AL HAMICHAYA

The Maharam Rotenberg and Levush explain that al hanisim just doesn't fit in to al hamichya, as there is no part which is devoting to thanking. Al hanisim is an expression of thanking Hashem for the miracles, and has a place in davening, during modim, when we praise and thank Hashem, as well as in bentching in the brocha of nodeh licha. Al hamichya, on the other hand, does not have a part of thanks, so there is no place to recite it. Although we do say the words of "v'nodeh licha" at the end of the brocha, it is just meant as a way to lead into the end of the brocha, but it is not a part of the brocha.

2. WE ONLY MENTION SCRIPTURAL HOLIDAYS

The Tosfos Yom Tov in his glosses on the Levush and the Hagahos Rav Avraham Azulai quote a Yerushalmi that we only mention the yom tov in al hamichya if it is mentioned explicitly in the Torah. This includes Shabbos and Yom Tov which are mentioned in the Torah. Even Rosh Chodesh is alluded to in the Torah. Chanuka and Purim, on the other hand, are rabbinical institutions and, therefore, they do not warrant being mentioned in al hamichya.

3. THERE WAS NO MINHAG TO RECITE IN AL HAMICHYA

As we have seen from the Gemara, even in bentching the recital of al hanisim is optional, but it is customary to recite. Based on that, the Mishna Berura quotes the Gra, who explains that this custom was only to recite al hanisim in bentching, and not in al hamichya.

4. NO PUBLICITY

As mentioned, the recital of al hanisim is mainly appropriate in davening which is done publicly and is a fulfillment of pirsumei nisa, whereas bentching does not have that level of publicity and is optional. But, as Tosfos writes, even bentching has some level of publicity. Very often, people bentch with a zimun, or the family bentches together, as mentioned in Shulcha Aruch. However, al hamichya is usually recited after a snack and eaten alone, with no publicity, and, therefore, al hanisim is not recited.

5. WE ONLY MENTION A HAZAKARA

Rav Yerucham Olshin, in his sefer, Yerach Lamoadim offers another explanation for why there is no mention of chanuka in al hamichya. He suggests that only a hazakara – making mention of the Yom Tov – is appropriate. Al hanisim, on the other hand, since it is not a hazakara, but rather an expression of thanks, it was not instituted to be mentioned in al hamichya.

6. WE ONLY MENTION BROCHOS

Rav Chaim Brisker suggests that since al hamichya is the

abridged version of bentching we only put in a short version of each one of the brochos, and therefore we only mention Shabbos and Yom Tov and not Chanuka, as we will see.

He uses this concept to answer another very strong question which is asked about al hamichya. In bentching, we mention Shabbos and Yom Tov before uvnei yerushalaimi. If so, why when it comes to al hamichya, do we mention Shabbos and Yom Tov after uvnei yerushalaim?

The answer is that al hamichya is only meant to be a short version of each one of the brochos, and any other additions are not mentioned. The only reason we mention Shabbos and Yom Tov, although not a brocha, is because they are also mentioned in a brocha form when one forgot to recite retzei or yaaleh v'yavoh. The halacha is that if one forgot to recite retzei or yaaleh v'yavoh in bentching, a special brocha is recited instead after uvnei yerushalaim. Therefore, when it comes to al hamichya, we also mention Shabbos and Yom Tov after uvnei yerushalaim. Al hanisim, on the other hand, is never recited as a brocha, and therefore does not get mentioned in al hamichya.

SUMMARY

We have seen many reasons as to why there is no mention of al hanisim in al hamichya:

1. There is No "Thank You" in Al Hamichaya.
2. We Only Mention Scriptural Holidays.
3. There Was No Minhag to Recite in Al Hamichya.
4. No Publicity like Davening.
5. We Only Mention Brochos that are in bentching.
6. We Only Mention a Hazakara.

A kuntres of shiurim on Chanukah – both in Hebrew and in English – is available, with the following shiurim included:

- *Neiros Chanuka and Neiros Hamenorah of the Beis Hamikdash – Similarities and Differences*
- *The Shul Menorah - Halacha or Minhag Associated Dinim and mekor of the Bracha*
- *Pirsumei Nissa at Home & in Shul – Halachic Requirement or Hiddur*
- *Menorah. Oil & Wicks – Any Preferences*
- *Concept Of Hiddur Mitzvah & its Application To Neiros Chanukah*
- *Machlokes Beis Shamai & Bais Hillel in Hidar Mitzvas Chanukah*
- *3 Sifrei Torah, 1 Haftarah – Why the One for Chanuka*
- *Bosor B'cholov and Chanuka – Connecting Both Halachos*
- *Lehodos Ulehallel – Why No Mention of Chanukah in Al Hamichyah*
- *Todir Koidem – General & in Hilchos Chanukah in Particular*
- *Disposing Of Leftover Wicks Any Restrictions*

If you would like a copy of any of these shiurim, or for any comments and questions, please send a request to: RabbiScheiner@18forshay.com, or reach out to me: 845 372 6618.

To receive updates of upcoming shiurim, to receive a link to current shiurim, or to access archived shiurim, please send a request to: Secretary@18forshay.com, or follow the prompts on our website 18Forshay.com.

Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER
7:00-8:00am

Chavrusa learning
Gemara
Currently: מסכת ביצה

Friday - *Shuirim*
Beinyonei Dyoma and
relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL
8:15-9:45pm

CHAVRUSA
LEARNING -
HALACHA

Currently: הלכות חול
המועד

SHUIRIM BY
ROSH KOLLEL &
FEATURED GUEST
SPEAKERS

• Daf Yomi
8:45-9:45

• Mishna Yomis
8:45-9:00

• ZERA SHIMSHON
SHIUR

8:15-9:00 *Thursday*
Nights

ADDITIONAL
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Rav Simcha Bunim Berger שליט"א
מורא דאתרא ק"ק ווילנעווע גרין

Thursday Night
9:45-10:15pm
20 Upstairs

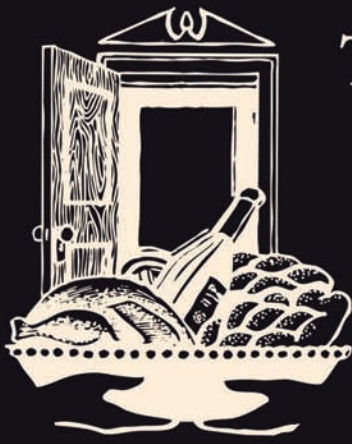
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