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OUR BELOVED RABBI
SOKAVA REBBE

מעט מן האור (חיים) דוחה הרבה מן החושך



*Rosh Chodesh
Teves Shabbos
& Sunday*

חנוכה שמאל!



RABBI YY JACOBSON

WILL NOT BE
IN TOWN FOR
SHABBOS



MONSEY
URGENT CARE

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77 Route 59, Monsey, NY
In front of Evergreen Shopping Center



PARASHOT MEKATZ HAFTARA

At the end of the Babylonian exile, 9 years before the story of Purim (3390-371 b.c.e), 40,000 Jews, led by Zerubavel and Yehoshua the Kohen Gadol, returned to Israel.

"Rejoice and be happy daughter of Zion for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst". These words refer to the sudden building of the second Bais Hamikdash after seventy dark years of exile.

Zechariah Hanavi continues and reveals a private discussion between Hashem and the assigned prosecuting angel. The discussion centered on Yehoshua ben Yehozadak who was designated to serve in the Bais Hamikdash.

himself in his children's choice of marriage. Unfortunately, the Babylonian exile took its toll upon the Jewish nation and corrupted their moral fiber.

basic barriers and numerous intermarriages occurred. Yehoshua's children were party to this mind set and married women forbidden to them according to priesthood standards.

Their esteemed father, Yehoshua was unsuccessful in influencing them to choose appropriate wives and was now seriously faulted for this. The prosecuting angel protested Yehoshua's priestly status because of his inability to properly preserve it.

The opening statement of the Haftara is "Roni Veshimchi Bat Tzion" Roni is one engaged in song from the word Rena, and then Shimchi from the word Simcha.

Happy Chanuka, Rabbi Aaron Lankry

NEW MINYANIM ADDED:

EARLY MINYAN MINCHA FRIDAY

12:26, 1:00, 1:30 ,2:00 2:30

SHABBOS ZMANIM

Table of Shabbos Zmanim including Candle Lighting (4:13 PM), Mincha Alef Tent (4:23 PM), Shachris Vashikin (6:42 AM), and MARRIV (5:12 PM).

WEEKDAY ZMANIM

Table of Weekday Zmanim including Shachris (6:59 AM), Mincha & Mariv (3:23 AM), and a special schedule for December 25-30.

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbi EPHRAYIM YUROWITZ TZVI BLECH : Gabbai



Mincha Mariv Minyanim advertisement for Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim, featuring a schedule of Mincha and Mariv services with times and tent locations.



Rabbi Coren

WHY ARE THERE NO MORE OPEN MIRACLES TODAY CHANUKA

Just a year ago on Erev Chanuka, my dear brother Naftali was hit by a bus. He hovered between life and death and didn't fully wake up until Chanuka was over. The year that followed was incredibly challenging for him, as he focused all his strength and motivation so he could survive both emotionally and physically. Following several complicated surgeries, Naftali had to relearn how to walk using his newly constructed hip and repaired legs. The journey to full recovery is not over but to mark the date of the accident, he made a Seudas Hodaya this past Monday night to thank Hashem for the myriad of miracles he experienced over the last 12 months and to acknowledge the new perspective and understanding he has acquired regarding the miraculous functioning of the human body and how awe inspiring the different systems working together are. After experiencing the discomfort of several blockages in the digestive and respiratory systems, the return of proper functioning was the greatest source of joy. As Rav Avigdor Miller Z"l points out, the great Tzadikim learned to love Hashem through the study of the every day gifts that Hashem created in nature especially the human body. As *lyov* says *בשרי מן בשרי* -- from my flesh I will see Hashem.

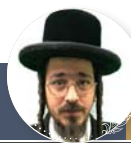
Chanuka is certainly an opportune time to appreciate miracles. The Maharal explains that the number 8 represents a system that is beyond the normal physical rules of nature. And the famed Shoel Umeshiv offers an astounding insight regarding the days of Chanuka. He explains a difficult Halacha regarding someone who forgot to recite Al Hanisim. The Halacha states that one does not have to repeat Shemona Esreh or Benching. However one should add at the end the following request. *הרחמן הוא יעשה לנו ניסים וכו*. "The merciful one should make miracles for us like he did in the time of the Chashmonaim". This is quite strange. After all, the Gemara teaches that one should not ask for open miracles because even if one's request is granted, it will diminish the person's merits. The Shoel Umeshiv gives a profound solution. According to him, during the year the world operates on what we call normal rules of nature. However, on Chanuka since it was a time of miracles it operates logically with the rules of miracles and hence asking for miracles during this time is normal.

The Bais Halevi asks a powerful question: why don't we see open miracles anymore today?. Keep in mind that he is asking this more than a hundred years ago and even then obvious miracles were already uncommon. The Bais Halevi says that Hashem will not make miracles when people's Emuna is directly affected by the miracle. This means that in order to have a balanced bechira we have to be able to work on our Emunah without special effects. This is telling us that up until a certain time people's Emunah was strong enough without miracles and therefore they would not subtract from their bechira. This is a deep concept. On a practical level, we should strive to build our Emunah through natural miracles and only afterwards will we be deserving of the unnatural miracles.

When we speak about living beyond nature we don't have to look very far. Working on ourselves is one of the greatest expressions of living beyond nature. This provides Hashem the opportunity to act with us in a miraculous way. The perfect example is Yosef Hatzadik. When did he earn this title of 'Tzadik?' Chazal posits *תמיד נקיים* -- someone who earns this title can change nature and can establish decrees that Hashem will fulfill. Why Yosef? The Zohar says that Yosef earned the title of "Tzadik" when he passed the test with Potifar's wife. When Yosef went against his nature and overcame his normal temptation, he earned the ability to change nature.

Chanuka is a time when we are encouraged to ask for miracles. Perhaps the best request we can ask of Hashem is two-fold. First, we must welcome all the natural miracles and appreciate that they are truly inexplicable and astounding and secondly that we should be able to constantly improve ourselves so we can merit to live a supernatural life.

Good Shabbas



RABBI
BENTZION SNEH

ADAPTED FOR ENGLISH FROM
THE WRITING OF RABBI SNEH

Shabbos Chanukah Raising Our Children To Care

Rav Gedalia Schorr Ztz"l was known to wonder aloud about the origin of the name Zos Chanukah (this is Chanukah), given to the last day of the holiday of lights.

"Just be sure, he remarked, that after Chanukah is over we don't all look back at the Yomtov and think to ourselves - Zos Chanukah?.. Was that all there was to Chanukah?!"

Familiarity can cause this to happen.

We can easily fall into the trap that makes a Yomtov so full of meaning into a mundane, ho-hum..it's Chanukah again experience- miles away from what Hashem wants us to take from the Yomtov.

The candles flickering and the fire burning atop our Chanukah menorahs should signal to us to be fully "in" with this mitzvah.

We must light our candles with a fire that burns from within us - Chanukah is no time for just going through the motions.

A crowd had gathered around the newly built railway tracks- running through this small Polish town. It was the inaugural ride of the very first railroad train in the country. A Rebbe and his chassidim were amongst the wide eyed visitors who came to gaze upon the new "horseless chariot" fully powered by a gleaming steam engine.

The train pulled slowly into the town. It was to remain there for a bit. The chassidim watched as their Rebbe went from car to car- running his hands over the steel compartments, until he got to the main car which carried the smokestack. With rapid smoke billowing furiously out of the stack, the compartment was way too hot to touch.

He murmured quietly to himself "there is so much to learn here.. so much to learn." His followers were puzzled.

The Rebbe responded; " The train shows how one should conduct themselves if they wish to be a leader that cares about his people.

Notice how all the railroad cars

are frozen cold..but yet get pulled into service by the front car which is burning hot and full of energy.

It takes only one person who cares, with all his heart and soul, and a burning desire to make a difference in the world- to help even those who might be cold and indifferent."

Many are concerned, where in our self-absorbed generation will the new askonim (community leaders) come from?

Can the selfless sacrifice required by someone who dedicates himself to the community be nurtured in an age of shameless self-promotion?

These are questions that must be asked if we are to nurture a new generation of community leaders who care about more than just mindless chatter and entertainment.

It's time to rededicate ourselves; creating a society that is motivated and yes, turned on to observance, as never before.

We can only reignite our spiritual engines by resetting the way we interact with those we are closest to and Chanukah is the best time to do this. Perhaps that is why the mitzvah of Chanukah is called a mitzvah for "Ish u' Beiso", a commandment for the entire family to observe.

In the spirit of the holiday of rededication- let's turn off our cell phones more often...focusing entirely on our families and spouses. Let's show each other that we really care. There is no substitute for quality time.

Creating children who care is the nisayon of our generation.

As the saying goes, children learn what they live- caring parents raise children who care about others.

May we all learn to be fully "there" with our children once more, as we were before the age of technology sullied the waters of our lives.

Translated by Rabbi Reich

A Frelichin Shabbos Chanukah!

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Manager

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Parting is such sweet sorrow.

It is hard to believe but after four incredible years, the one-of-a-kind Uri Follman has left Scheiners Shul. Uri has been the building manager here through much of the Shuls growth throughout the years. He was an integral part of the building of Tents Gimel and Daled as well as the maintenance of the Batei Medrash, tents and Mikvaos.

Many of you know him for his easy smile and likeable temperament. He is always polite and sweet to even the most interesting of personalities. From the parking lot to the electronic screens, Uri's fingerprints are all over the place. In many ways Uri was the glue that held the place together. And I don't just mean the fact that he literally glued parts of the tents together when the rain and wind tore holes through the walls. He was and is still known as the one to turn to from the smallest to largest issue.

The heat is off in Tent Beis?

Call Uri.

The Kapparos chickens are running away?

Call Uri

The Mikvah is overflowing into the Sofrim Trailer?

Call Uri

On behalf of the Rabbonim, staff and Mispal-elim of Beis medrash Ohr Chaim we would like to Bentch Uri with all of the Brachos in the world. May he go Mchayil el Chayil and see much hatzlachah in all of his future endeavors.

He will truly be missed.

For all those of you who are wondering who will fill Uri's very large shoes, stay tuned next week for Manager part 2.

Akiva Pollack

Director of Development



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A Short Message From

Rabbi Bentzion Shafier

“SUCCESS CONSISTS OF GOING FROM FAILURE TO FAILURE WITHOUT LOSING ENTHUSIASM.”

If you haven't figured out who said this quote, let's take a little hint. It was a college professor, a statesman, someone who wrote a treatise which won the noble prize, and a world leader who was knighted by the Queen of England. He was the prime minister of England, Sir Winston Churchill. Yet let me share with you just exactly who Sir Winston Churchill was. Historians credit him with saving the free world. If not for his galvanizing strength and energy, Nazism would have won the war. It was Churchill's strength of character which brought the Allies together.

Yet in May of 1945, Germany surrendered, and in August of that year, Churchill found himself voted out of office. England viewed him as a great wartime president and man of battle, but it was now a different era which called for a different leader. After bringing England to its finest hour and saving the free world, he found himself unemployed and on the streets without a job.

But that was his life. Going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm. If you ever find a human being who has succeeded in any endeavor in life, you will find a person who has failed many times. Such is the key to understanding life and understanding what is required for a human being to reach greatness.

בס"ד

בית מדרש אור חיים

BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER
18 FORSHAY ROAD, MONSEY, NEW YORK 10952
UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF RABBI AARON LANKRY

Early Friday Mincha

Winter 2022/23

➤ מנחה גדולה (between 12:10 - 12:41)

➤ 12:30

➤ 1:00

➤ 1:15 **NEW!!**

➤ 1:30

➤ 1:45 **NEW!!**

➤ 2:00

➤ 2:30

➤ 3:00

18 Main Bais Medrash



Rabbi Steinfeld

CHANUKAH QUESTIONS

PARSHAS MIKEITZ / CHANUKAH YOUR HOME – YOUR HOLY COURTYARDS

44:10 ויאמר גם עתה כדבריכם כן הוא, אשר ימצא אתם תהיו נקיים ואתם תהיו נקיים

“And he (Yosef) said (to the brothers): Even now, as you say, so it is; the one with whom it is found shall be a slave to me, but the rest of you shall be exonerated.” Yosef was saying that only one of them would be enslaved, while the rest would be exonerated. In what Zechus would they be exonerated? On the Yom Tov of Chanukah we say, “והדליקו נרות בחצרות קדש” – that they lit the Neiros in Hakodosh Boruch Hu’s holy courtyard. The Menorah was in the Heichal – and thus we should be saying that the Neiros were lit in the Heichal. Why do we say that the Neiros were lit in the courtyard?

Rashi says that Yosef was telling the brothers that the rule is that if a stolen object is found in the possession of one among ten, all of them are arrested. While that is the rule, Yosef said that he would act Lifnim Mishuras Hadin, going beyond what the law requires. Thus, he said that only the one who they find the goblet by, the one who stole it – would become Yosef’s slave, while he would let the others go free. Why does the Posuk say, “גם עתה” – “Also now”, instead of saying, “גם זאת” – “Also this” – which would seem to be more appropriate? It says in Bereishis Rabbah 21:6 that the Loshon of “ועתה” is a Loshon of Teshuva. The Gemara in Yuma 86b says that Teshuva is so great, that even for one person doing Teshuva, the entire world can be forgiven. This seem to be very far from the true and accurate Din, judgment, for why should one person doing Teshuva help for others? In truth, it is not far from judgment, for the rule is that if there are ten people, and one of them is caught stealing, they all get locked up. The Gemara in Sotah 11a says that the Midah for good is much better than for bad. If there is a Shul that has one person who does Teshuva, all are forgiven, and not only that, but the whole world is forgiven because מדה טובה מדה טובה – for the Midah of goodness is five hundred times better. This is what the word, “ועתה” means here, that Yosef was alluding to them that they should do Teshuva. “כדבריכם כן הוא” – Just as your words that the rule is that if there is one in a group of ten steals, they all get punished, all the more so if you do Teshuva, that all will be forgiven, for the Midah Tova is greater five hundred times, and when one does Teshuva, all can be forgiven. “אשר ימצא אתו” – This refers to Teshuva, as it says in Yeshaya 55:6 “ואתם תהיו נקיים” – and then all of you will be forgiven. (דברי ישראל)

Chanukah – על הניסים... ואחר כך באו בניך” – לדביר ביתך ופינו את היכליך וטיהרו את מקדשיך – “והדליקו נרות בחצרות קדש” – We say in the Al Hanisim of Chanukah, “והדליקו נרות בחצרות” – “קדש” – that we lit the Neiros in the Chotzer, the courtyard, of Hakodosh Boruch Hu’s holy place – presumably a reference to the Bais Hamikdash. We know that the Menorah was situated in the Heichal of the Bais Hamikdash

and not in the courtyard. Why do we say that they lit the Neiros in the courtyard, when the Menorah was in the Heichal – and we should say that we lit the Menorah in the Heichal? Perhaps we are speaking about the lighting of the Menorah of the Chanukah Neiros, and not the actual Mitzvah of lighting the Menorah. The actual Menorah of the Bais Hamikdash, they lit in the Heichal. In addition to that, they also lit a Chanukah Menorah in the courtyard of the Bais Hamikdash as a reminder of the great miracle that Hakodosh Boruch Hu performed for them. “ואחר כך באו בניך לדביר ביתך ופינו את היכליך” – “וטיהרו את מקדשיך” – After the Chashmona’im defeated the Yivanim, they went back into the Bais Hamikdash and they cleaned it out, and purified it, and they were once again able to kindle the Menorah. Additionally, “והדליקו נרות” – “בחצרות קדש” – they also kindled Neiros in the courtyard of the Bais Hamikdash, as a remembrance of the great miracle that happened for Klal Yisroel for they only had oil to burn for one night for the Menorah, and it burned for eight nights. We can also give another answer based on the concept that is known, that in any place that a Yid is Mekayeim a Mitzvah of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, he elevates that place and makes that place into a place of Kedusha. So much so, that the place can be called a “בית ד” – “a house of Hashem” or a “חצר ד” – “a courtyard of Hashem.” When we say, “והדליקו נרות בחצרות” – “קדש” we are speaking about the Mitzvah of Hadlokas Neiros Chanukah, which was established for future generations. This is what all homes of Klal Yisroel are Mekayeim every year in order to thank and praise Hakodosh Boruch Hu for all the miracles He performed and performs for us. Thus, “in Your holy courtyards” is a reference to all the homes of Klal Yisroel throughout all the generations, those who perform the Mitzvah of Hadlokas Neiros Chanukah, and bring Kedusha into their homes, making their homes into, “holy courtyards of Hashem.” (מהר”ש מבעלזא)

Yosef was alluding to “ועתה” – Teshuva. The brothers sold their brother Yosef, and caused much pain to their father, Yaakov Avinu. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is the all-merciful G-d, and always awaits our Teshuva. We have tremendous power within us, and we can always come close to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. On Chanukah, we say that the Neiros were kindled in the holy courtyard of Hashem. It is a reference to the Chanukah Neiros which we light in our homes. The Chanukah lights represent the future light which we will be Zoche to with the coming of Moshiach. How will we be Zoche to Moshiach – it will be through Teshuva. How great is the power we have within us; we just need to bring it forth like a shining light. The Yom Tov of Chanukah is a time for us to dig deep within ourselves, to find that light. May we be Zoche to truly tap into this great light and do a proper Teshuva so that we will be Zoche to the true light, with the coming of Moshiach, במהרה, בימינו! אמנ

There are a few questions we will pose here and to which we will provide appropriate answers. How is it possible that a person correctly lights one candle on the first night, two candles on the second night, three candles on the third night, four candles on the fourth night, four candles on the fifth night, three candles on the sixth night, two candles on the seventh night, and one candle on the eighth night?

How is it possible for a person not to be yotzei the mitzvah while he lights the Chanukah candles, but ten minutes later he will be yotzei?

How is it possible that a person will be required to repeat Shemoneh Esrei if he forgot “Al Hanisim?”

Dayan Dunner answers the first question. In the scenario that a person will be adding a candle the first four days, and will be subtracting a candle each subsequent day. We learn that we will pasken like Bais Shammai when Moshiach comes. Bais Shammai says we will light one less candle every day. If Moshiach arrives after the fourth night of lighting the Menorah, then we will switch to Bais Shammai and start lighting fewer candles for the rest of the Chanukah days. Hopefully we will have this She’ailah soon!

The Klausenberger Rebbe in the Sefer Divrei Yatziv answers the second question discussing how it is possible for one not to be yotzei the first ten minutes but will be yotzei afterwards. In a case where one lights his Menorah and his long candles are a little above twenty amos, as soon as the candles burn down to within twenty amos he will be yotzei. The reason he is yotzei after ten minutes is because we have a rule in the Gemara that says “Isho mishum chitzav” (Fire is like an arrow). It may take time for an arrow to reach its target; and even though when the arrow hits the other person the shooter may not be doing an action any longer, the arrow is still connected to the shooter’s action. Similarly, the fire is accorded to the original lighter and when it reaches under twenty amos, it is counted as if the lighter of the candles lit it and he is yotzei.

Rabbi Genichovsky speaks about a scenario where one would have to say Shemoneh Esrei even though we normally don’t repeat Shemoneh Esrei for forgetting “Al Hanisim.” This will answer our third question. If one forgot to daven Mincha on Erev Chanukah, he then has a chiyuv to daven two Maarivs. If he forgot to say “Al Hanisim” in the first one, but said it in the second Shemoneh Esrei, it would be problematic because that would show that the first Shemoneh Esrei is making up for Mincha when we don’t say “Al Hanisim.” However, the halacha for someone who missed davening and must daven again states that the replacement tefillah is always davened after the regular required tefillah of that time. Therefore, it would require the person to daven a third Shemoneh Esrei to render the second one for Maariv and the third additional Maariv as the replacement. He therefore would have to say “Al Hanisim” in the third one also. Let us hope we see the simcha and geulah in our day!



SEEING WITH 20/20 VISION – THE ESSENCE OF CHANUKA

A husband and wife are getting ready to go to sleep. The wife is ready to close her eyes and her husband stands staring at himself in the full-length mirror. “What’s the matter with you?” she says. Come to sleep already.” He turns to her and says, “Look at this, I am so depressed. All I see is a receding hairline, a growing gut, and wrinkles under my eyes and what hair I have left is grey. Tell me something positive, something uplifting so I can go to sleep.” She thinks for a moment and says, “Well the good news is your vision is still 20/20.”

There is a very high association between Chanuka and the sense of sight. “HaNeiros halalu kodesh heim, v’ein lanu reshus l’hishtameish bahem elah lirosam bilvad.” As we will begin to sing next week on each night of Chanuka, the candles are sacred, we don’t have permission to benefit from their light but their purpose is simply to be looked at. Moreover, we have a unique halacha on Chanuka. The Talmud tells us and the Shulchan Aruch records – ha’roeh mevareich, one who can’t light for himself or herself and sees the candles of someone else – nevertheless makes the second beracha, she’asah nissim la’avosainu. When I see someone put on tefillin, take a lulav, or blow shofar, I don’t make a beracha. Only on Chanuka do I make a beracha on seeing someone else do the mitzvah.

The Kedushas Levi, Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, tells us that Chanuka is the holiday of seeing. The different moadim correspond with our different senses. On Purim our hearing is heightened as we listen to the megilla. On Pesach our sense of taste is sharpened when we eat matzah and marror and on Chanuka, he says, we evaluate our sense of sight, how well do we see.

What kind of seeing are we honing? It is not our physical sense of sight. Indeed, in a sort of paradoxical way, our eyes are a liability. You see, we often feel that “seeing is believing.” If I can perceive and observe it, it is true. If I can’t, it is not real. Following this rule, we have dismissed and disregarded many of the most precious truths and realities in our lives. There are ideas, feelings, thoughts and dreams that are authentic and genuine, despite the fact that they can’t be seen or observed.

Our Rabbis describe the Greek empire and Hellenist influence as choshech, darkness. In expounding on the opening verses of the creation story, the Midrash Rabbah says choshech al p’nei sehom – zu galus yavan, darkness on the vastness, that is the exile of Greece. Moreover, our Rabbis taught that darkening our eyes was the goal of our Greek oppressors – shehechshichu einhem shel yisroel.

What is the difference between a room that is

filled with darkness or with light? Is there any actual change to the room itself? Whether the light is on or off in the room, the furniture remains the same, the layout of the room, the placement of the door and the height of the ceiling are a constant. What, then, is the difference whether the light in my room is on or off? The answer is just my perception. The only difference is my ability to identify and see the reality, the truth and that which was right before me all along. Chanuka is about seeing things, people, ideas, and miracles that are really right in front of me, even though I may not be able to visibly see them.

George Orwell once wrote: “To see what is in front of one’s nose needs a constant struggle.” One can live with his eyes open, perfect vision, and the light on and still be cloaked in darkness. On the other hand it can be pitch black all around and yet a person can see absolutely clearly. The Chashmonaim didn’t see their few numbers, weak army, and impossible task. They saw the mighty hand of Hashem, they saw the obligation to fight, and they saw Divine protection that would accompany them.

Chanuka is about lighting the candles and using them to harness our sight, not ophthalmologically speaking, but our deep vision of what is true, precious, and dear. When we look at our spouses and children, do we see the amazing blessing of their presence in our lives or do we hear lots of noise, see rooms that need to be cleaned up, and a messy house? When we face a challenge do we see no way out or an opportunity to further lean on our Creator? There are truths all around us; it is up to us to decide what to look at and how to see.

In her “Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust,” Professor Yaffa Eliach shared the incredible story of Chanuka in Bergen Belsen:

It was time to kindle the Chanuka lights. A jug of oil was not to be found, no candle was in sight, and a Chanukia belonged to the distant past. Instead, a wooden clog, the shoe of one of the inmates, became a Chanukia, strings pulled from a concentration camp uniform, a wick, and the black camp shoe polish, pure oil.

Not far from the heaps of bodies, the living skeletons assembled to participate in the kindling of the Chanuka lights. The Rabbi of Bluzhov lit the first light and chanted the first two blessings in his pleasant voice, and the festive melody was filled with sorrow and pain. When he was about to recite the third blessing, he stopped, turned his head, and looked around as if he were searching for something.

But immediately, he turned his face back to the quivering small lights and in a strong, reassuring, comforting voice, chanted the third blessing: “Blessed are Thou, O Lord, our G-d, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive, and has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season.”

Among the people present at the kindling of the light was a Mr. Zamietchkowski, one of the leaders of the Warsaw Bund. He was a clever, sincere person with a passion for discussing matters of religion, faith and truth. As soon as the Rabbi of Bluzhov had finished the ceremony of kindling the lights, Zamiechkowski elbowed his way to the Rabbi and said, “Spira, you are a clever and honest person. I can understand your need to light Chanuka candles in these wretched times. I can even understand the historical note of the second blessing, “Who wrought miracles for our Fathers in days of old, at this season.” But the fact that you recited the third blessing is beyond me. How could you thank G-d and say “Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our G-d, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive, and hast preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season”? How could you say it when hundreds of dead Jewish bodies are literally lying within the shadows of the Chanuka lights, when thousands of living Jewish skeletons are walking around in camp, and millions more are being massacred? For this you are thankful to G-d? For this you praise the Lord? This you call “keeping us alive?”

“Zamietchkowski, you are a hundred percent right,” answered the Rabbi. “When I reached the third blessing, I also hesitated and asked myself, what should I do with this blessing? I turned my head in order to ask the Rabbi of Zaner and other distinguished Rabbis who were standing near me if indeed I might recite the blessing. But just as I was turning my head, I noticed that behind me a throng was standing, a large crowd of living Jews, their faces expressing faith, devotion, and deliberation as they were listening to the rite of the kindling of the Chanuka lights.

I said to myself, if G-d has such a nation that at times like these, when during the lighting of the Chanuka lights they see in front of them the heaps of bodies of their beloved fathers, brothers, and sons, and death is looking from every corner, if despite all that, they stand in throngs and with devotion listening to the Chanuka blessing “Who performed miracles for our Fathers in days of old, at this season”; indeed I was blessed to see such a people with so much faith and fervor, then I am under a special obligation to recite the third blessing.”

You see, that night in Bergen Belsen, Mr. Zamietchkowski only saw what lay before him, dead bodies and terrible suffering. The Rebbe also looked, but he saw another layer of truth that was equally accurate – that there was a gathering of people who maintained incredible faith despite the most horrific circumstances.

As we celebrate Chanuka, let us remember that there are truths all around us not visible to the naked eye. Let us use the light of the Chanuka candles to inspire us to see the truth with clarity and 20/20 vision.



Rabbi Reisman

WHAT IS CHANUKAH ALL ABOUT?

What is Chanukah all about? As you know, there are two miracles. The miracle of the Pach Shemen and the miracle of the Nitzachin Hamilchama. We celebrate them. The miracle of the Pach Shemen we commemorate by lighting the Menorah and singing Maoz Tzur, and the miracle of Nitzachin Hamilchama we say Al Hanisim. Those are the two faces to the Pirsumai Nisa of Chanukah.

The Rama in Siman Taf Reish Ayin says that it is a Mitzva L'harbos Seudos K'tzas. It is a Mitzva to add to the Seudos. Why? Because of Chanukas Hamizbai'ach. Because there is a third aspect of Chanukah the Chanukas Hamizbai'ach.

Three questions:

1. Where did the Rama get this third reason of Chanukah? We have the Neis of the Pach Shemen and we have the Nitzachin Hamilchama where did he get this third reason about Chanukas Hamizbach?

2. What is Chanukas Hamizbaiach? Chanukas Hamishkan. Chanukas Habeis Hamikdash. What is Chanukas Hamizbaiach? Chanukas Hamizbaiach is one of the Klei Shareis in the Beis Hamikdash. What is Chanukas Hamizbaiach? אָד אָגמור בְּשִׁיר מְזֻמֹּר הַנִּצְחָן (הַמִּצְבָּח). What is Chanukas Hamizbaiach? It should be Chanukas Hamishkan? What is the Inyan of Chanukas Hamizbaiach?

3. On the 25th of Kisleiv the Chashmonaim did not do a Chanukas Hamizbai'ach. Chanukas Beis Hamikdash perhaps, but not Chanukas Hamizbai'ach. The Gemara says in Maseches Avodah Zorah 52b (ובאו בה פריצים וחללוהו). The Yevonim were Mechaleil. The Baal Hamaor says on this Gemara that they were Mechaleil all of the Keilim of the Beis Hamidash. As a matter of fact the stones of the Mizbai'ach were stored forever in one of the Lishchos of the Beis Hamidash. They had to put together a new Mizbai'ach. The Rambam says that on the 25th of Kisleiv that they were still fighting the war. They won the war that day. There was no Chanukas Hamizbai'ach that day. This whole thing is such a Pele!

To answer it let me tell you something that I heard from Rav Pam. Rav Pam gave Shiur in Yor'e Dai'a and I attended his Shiur for two years. Rav Pam's Shmuz was his Shmuz and his Shiur was his Shiur. During the Yor'e Dai'a Shiur he did not speak Mussar except for once according to my recollection. Once there were two

sentences. We were learning Hilchos Shechita and the Halachos of whether the Shochet makes a Shehechyanu the first time he Shechts. Rav Pam stopped and looked at us and said when a person gets married why doesn't he make a Shehechyanu at his Chasunah? He paused for a moment and then he said when a person gets married he doesn't know what it is. It is what you make of it. He doesn't know if it is good. It is what you make of it. Then he went back to learning Yor'e Dai'a. When something happens to a person it is what you make of it.

It reminds me of something that Rav Moshe said. Rav Moshe said that Moshe Rabbeinu had two children the first he named Gershom as it says in 18:3 (גֵרְשֹׁם--כִּי אָמַר, גֵּר הָיִיתִי בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעִיָּה). I was a stranger in a distant land. The second one he named Eliezer (כִּי-אֶלְדִּי אָבִי בְּעֵזֶר (רִי, וַיִּצְלַנִּי מִיַּד פַּרְעֹה). That HKB"H saved me from Pharaoh's sword. So Rav Moshe asked the order is backwards. First he was saved from Pharaoh's sword and only subsequently was he a Ger B'erez Rechoka. So the children should have been named Eliezer the Bechor and Gershom the second one?

Rav Moshe answered when a miracle happens to you, is it good or bad? It depends what you make of it, it depends what you do with it. He was saved from Pharaoh's hand and he ran away. If he would have run away and assimilate that would be a terrible thing that happened to him. He ran away (גֵּר הָיִיתִי בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעִיָּה). I did not assimilate in this strange land. Now you can thank Hashem for saving you because something good came of it.

Ocasionaly I have people who tell me you will never believe what happened to me a mirale and they tell me that they were diagnosed with an illness and it went away, it disappeared. Or something happened and there was a big Tzar in the family and there was a Yeshua. I say to them NU? What is the end of the story? The beginning of the story is that something miraculous happened to you. Nu? What is the end of the story? Tell me what you did with it? You didn't do anything with it so what is the big deal that a miracle happened to you. It is a story. It is only worth something if something good and something positive comes from it.

Back to our Kasha. What happened on Chanukah? Miracles, Nitzachin Hamilchama and the Neis of the Pach Hashemen. Klal Yisrael what are you going

to do with it? On that day there was a Chanukas Ha'Beis Hamikdash, of course they came to the Beis Hamikdash. Klal Yisrael what are you going to do with it? Klal Yisrael went (אָד אָגמור בְּשִׁיר מְזֻמֹּר הַנִּצְחָן (הַמִּצְבָּח)). The Mizbai'ach was Posul and they went and they built a Mizbai'ach, they celebrated a Mizbai'ach, they put into it the Kochos that were befitting. Once that happened then it is worth celebrating. The celebration is not on the miracles alone. It is what happens afterwards. After the miracles take place. What happens next? (אָד אָגמור בְּשִׁיר מְזֻמֹּר הַנִּצְחָן (הַמִּצְבָּח)). After they did a Chanukas Hamizbai'ach. Now we see from the behavior afterwards. On that day of course they were moved, but subsequently they got to work and did things in a Lechatchila way. Now it is a time to celebrate.

It is an important lesson. Something good happens to you make something of it. Do something with it. Rav Pam used to tell the story of once when he went on vacation in a city in Massachusetts in the summer, and he had a kidney stone or something similar and he had to be helicoptered to a hospital in NYC in order to save his life. After that, he didn't gon vacation again. From then on his vacation was that he would stay at home and sit and learn. He didn't go on vacation again.

Now my lesson is not that you should never go on a vacation again, my lesson is if something happens to you Nu? Where is the rest of the story? The Ribbono Shel Olam did something for you or he did something to you. Nu where is the rest of the story? There has to be a cause and an affect. Chanukah there was a Neis, Klal Yisrael did something. Purim there was a Neis and Kimu V'kiblu Hayehudim so then Leshana Haba they made it a Yom Tov. When the Neis happened they didn't make it a Yom Tov. They waited. What are you going to do with it? Klal Yisrael did something with it. Kimu V'kiblu, so then we are going to make it into a Yom Tov. It is what you do with it. Marriage is what you make of it. Miracles are what you make of it. Nisyonos, illness what do you make of it? Let's make good things out of it.

Wishing everyone a meaningful Chanukah, a wonderful Shabbos and the great joy of celebrating the Am Yisrael that HKB"H watches wherever we are, whenever we are as we resist the Yevonim. Good Shabbos to all!



Rabbi YY Jacobson

Nathan Sharansky, the famous refusenik, shares the following story in his book, *Fear No Evil*. He suffered many years in the communist prisons from 1977 to 1986, most of the time in Siberia. One year, Chanukah, he was the only Jew in this prison, but when he explained to the other inmates the significance of Chanukah – a holiday representing religious liberty – they became so enthusiastic about the symbolism of Chanukah, they all helped him construct a wooden menorah. They also managed to get their hands on some wicks and some oil, and the first night of Chanukah, Nathan Sharansky lit the menorah. It was a celebration for the entire prison.

He continues with the celebration, the second and third and fourth and fifth nights of Chanukah. The sixth night, the guard on duty comes in and confiscates the burning menorah. Sharansky was furious. He goes to the guard and says, "Why did you do this?" The guard tells him, "Because you used state material to build your menorah. That itself is illegal. You can be punished for that. Besides, your fellow prisoners are complaining that you're going to start a fire and endanger their lives." Sharansky says, "Come on, I'm watching the menorah and the state is going to get back all of the materials. I promise you. There's only two nights left for Chanukah." He calls his superior, and the superior tells him, "This is not a synagogue. We will not let Sharansky pray." So Nathan Sharansky declares hunger strike. Now, when you declared a hunger strike in the Soviet gulag, it could go one of either two ways. Either it was futile, and they just let you die, or they actually surrendered. They'd acquiesce to you. You never knew how it went.

Sharansky had good fortune that he was unaware of.

Finding Its Light

Two days later, a committee was coming from Moscow to visit this particular gulag in Siberia. And the last thing the supervisors of the prison needed was that the Committee for Moscow should hear that the prisoners are not content and they're revolting on hunger strikes. Sharansky had mazel, which is why two days later, the eighth night of Chanukah, he was summoned to the office of Major Olsen, who was the man in charge of the entire prison. Olsen, Sharansky says, was a criminal. He liked to see people suffer. But for him, the advancement of his career was the most important thing. And he always knew how to take care of a crisis to make sure it doesn't endanger his career and his future. But Olsen was a real, real communist, and Olsen put on this fake smile on his face as he told Sharansky, "Don't worry, in the future you're going to have religious liberty. Everything will be good. You could quit your hunger strike." Sharansky says, okay, great, so give me back my menorah. Olsen says, "I can't give you back the menorah, but in the future, everything will be good." Sharansky understood his thinking. If he would give him back the menorah, it would be an embarrassment. He would be embarrassed and humiliated in front of all of the prisoners. So Sharansky has an idea. "Major Orson, why don't you give me the menorah right here in your office? I'm going to light the menorah the last night of Chanukah in your presence, and nobody's going to see." Sure enough, Olsen opens the drawer. Out comes the menorah. Sharansky says, we need a candle. So Olsen has the guard bring in a candle. He says we need eight candles. Olsen takes a knife and he cuts the candle into eight very beautiful, even parts. Sharansky sets up the menorah, Olsen gives him fire, he makes the blessings, and he lights

all eight candles of the menorah. And then, seizing the opportunity, he says a prayer in Hebrew. And the content of this prayer in Hebrew is, "Almighty G-d, just as You saved us from the Syrian Greeks during the times of Chanukah, please deliver us from all of our enemies and our oppressors today. Let them all watch us light the menorah and let us worship our G-d and freedom and let us say Amen."

When he finishes his prayer, Sharansky hears somebody say Amen. He takes a look. It was Major Olsen. For a while, they both looked silently and humbly at the burning menorah without saying a word. And then after a few minutes, Olsen caught himself and he called in the guard and said, "Come on, clean this up." And it was over.

When I read this story, I remembered that the Talmud says there are types of oils and wicks that were not allowed to be used for Shabbos candles because they don't flicker well. They don't create a sturdy flame. And we're afraid on Shabbos, somebody is going to tamper with it in order to enhance the fire. But on Chanukah, you can use all types of oils and all types of wicks. We don't care. One of the great Chassidic masters, R' Nachum Chernobyl, sees spiritual symbolism here.

The Jewish person, the Jewish soul is called a wick. On Shabbos, you can't always kindle all wicks; but on Chanukah, you can kindle all wicks, which means every type of wick, every type of soul could be inspired. Even somebody, when you look at them and you don't see any light, you don't see any potential for light. But on Chanukah, every soul can be inspired if you only believe in the power of that soul to find its light.

Rebbetzin Chaya Sora Gertzulin

Playing My Song

Several years ago, in my younger days, I was in a get-into-shape mode. I joined a gym, and signed up for a women's step class.

All was good. And then came December. I walked into class. Something was different. The music changed, it was livelier, cheerier. I listened to the lyrics. It was holiday music, just not my holiday.

Exercise to X-mas music?

My inner conscience, my neshamah, the spiritual flame within, started talking to me. "You can't stay here. This isn't for you. They're not playing your song." Then and there I made a decision. I'm walking out.

I thought of the Chanukah story from years long ago. The story of the Jewish nation living under the tyrannical rule of Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus wanted to expand the power and influence of the Greek empire. He had his own "Final Solution". Not to physically annihilate, but to spiritually assimilate the Jews among the Greeks. He waged a war against the Jewish soul, with the goal of extinguishing the fiery spirit within the neshamah. He brought Greek philosophy, religious beliefs, culture, entertainment – and yes – even gymnasiums to the Holy Land. He wanted to wipe out the nation's Jewish identity. They should dress, act, and even think like the Greeks.

As we recite in Al Hanisim, Antiochus' aim was "to make them (Bnei Yisroel) forget Your Torah, and compel them to stray from Your will". He forbade the Jewish people from keeping mitzvos that separated them from other nations. Shabbos, Bris Milah, Rosh Chodesh (the lunar calendar), and the learning of Torah were prohibited. Observances punishable by torture and even death. Antiochus understood that these mitzvos not only separated them, but built a strong connection between Am Yisroel and HaShem – a connection he wanted to sever.

Antiochus tried to break the nation's spirit. He enacted a law instructing the people to inscribe upon the horns of their oxen "You have no part in the G-d of Yisroel". Every time the Jewish people went out to work their oxen in the fields, they saw these words: "You have no part in the G-d of Israel". Words to make them feel forgotten about, abandoned.

Antiochus' enactments continued. He brazenly placed a statue of Zeus in the Bais HaMikdash, and offered sacrifices to pagan gods. It was a time of darkness for Am Yisroel.

Kislev. The month of Chanukah. Chanukah comes during the darkest time of the year, when the days are the shortest, and the nights are longest. For the Jewish people living under the Greek oppressors, the times weren't just physically dark; they were spiritually dark as well.

Sadly, there were the Misyavanim, Hellenists, those within the Jewish nation who succumbed to Greek values and beliefs. They experienced, choshech – darkness. It

is interesting that the Hebrew word choshech, spelled ches, shin, chof, contains the same letters as the word shochach – shin, chof, ches, meaning to forget. Unfortunately, the Hellenists forgot – shochach – their Jewish identity.

But there was a determined group of Jews who fought back. The Maccabees, led by Mattisyahu and his five sons, fought a valiant battle, standing up to Antiochus and the Greeks. HaShem was with them. "You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few..." (Al Hanisim prayer) The miracle of Chanukah.

The miracles didn't stop there. They reclaimed the Bais HaMikdash, cleaned it up and removed the idolatrous symbols. They wanted to make a Chanukas HaBayis, to rededicate the Bais HaMikdash. We know that they found one jug of pure olive oil. A jug which symbolized the pure soul within man. An everlasting soul which yearns to connect to HaShem and His Torah. The pintele yid within each of us. "Ner HaShem nishmas adam – The candle of G-d is the soul of man." (Mishlei 20:27)

The story of Chanukah is the story of our people. A people that refuse to allow their inner spark to be snuffed out. Throughout our long exile, there have been periods of spiritual choshech – darkness, where we unfortunately forget who we are. But HaShem never abandons His people, and gives us the wherewithal to grasp the lifeline to Him. In fact, within the word shochach, is the word koach – chof and ches – strength. The strength to return. The strength to once again see the light. No matter how far one may have drifted, HaShem always gives us the koach, the strength to return. When we light the Chanukah candles, we connect to HaShem. No matter how many mistakes we may have made in the past, how many regrets we may live with, we can always reconnect to our Father.

Though my gym is not the gymnasium of the ancient Greeks, I felt that I had to step away. We live in the world of golus, a world where we are surrounded by outside influences. A world where we are exposed to cultural values that are very different from Jewish values. A world where the glitter and gold, the shiny lights on the outside are difficult to ignore. Chanukah is a celebration of our spiritual lights. While we don't have a Bais HaMikdash, we can make our home a mikdash me'at, a sanctuary in miniature.

I love Chanukah. I love driving around my neighborhood seeing the menorahs in the windows. Some have one, some have many. All are beautiful. They seem to illuminate the darkness outside. "Even a little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness" (Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi)

As I stand before the menorah, gazing at its beautiful lights, and surrounded by the warm Chanukah melodies – Haneiros hallalu and Ma'oz tzur – I feel at peace, an inner joy. We are singing "our" songs, songs which lift us up and proclaim that we are indeed a Holy Nation.

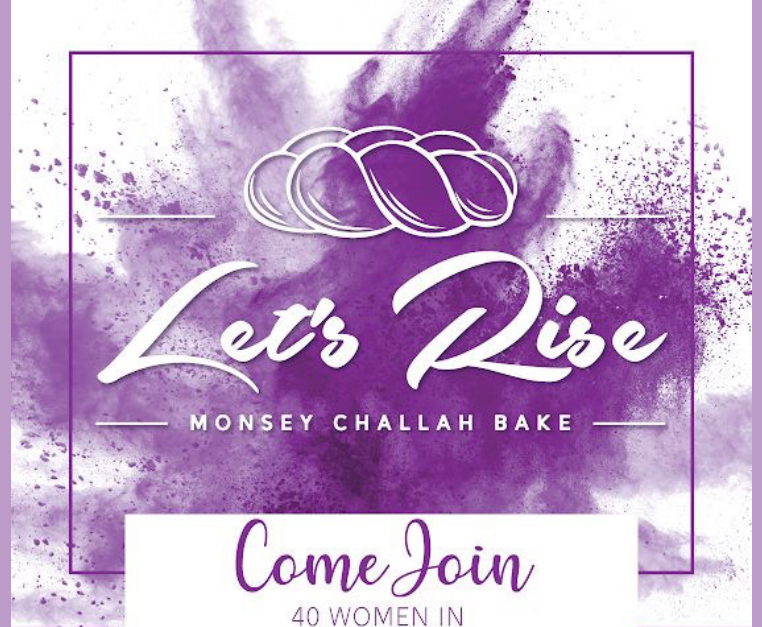
May the lights of Chanukah shine bright and strong, and remove any choshech, pain and difficulty. As the flames rise, may our tefillos accompany them heavenward.

Segulos OF ZOS CHANUKAH

*The day is mesugal for one to daven for; barren women to have children, for a Refuah Sheleimah, and for one to be blessed with increased Parnassah.

*It is said in the name of the holy Rebbe, Rav Yisroel Rhiziner zechuso yagen aleinu that "what the tzaddikim of the generation accomplish through their lofty Neilah prayers on Yom Kippur, a simple Jew can ask and accomplish with his prayers on Zos Chanukah, the eighth day of Chanukah".

*The Bnei Yisschar brings down that for barren women it is a special time during Channuka and especially Zos Chanuka. The Gemara in Shabbas(23B) itself brings down a segula of having children who are talmidim chachmim by lighting as Rashi brings down from Mishlei(6) ner mitzva v'Torah ohr, ner mitvah = Shabbas and Chanukah = Torah ohr.



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The Continuing Clarity of ‘Zos Chanukah’

By Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim

“I can’t believe it’s almost over!” Those words said so often at the end of Chanukah (and our other holidays). It expresses the feeling that although we might have had our fill of doughnuts and latkes, we may not have taken in all the spiritual gain of the holiday.

Let me share with you an incredible insight into the power of the last day of Chanukah, referred to as Zos Chanukah. This name originates in the Torah reading of the last day, which contains the words “zos chanukas” (this is the dedication). Let’s take a closer look at this Torah portion to glean a deeper insight into Zos Chanukah and its power.

On each day of Chanukah, we read the portion corresponding to the prince who brought special sacrifices in honor of the dedication of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) in the desert. There were 12 princes (heads of the tribes) in all. On the first seven days, we read the portion relating to the first seven princes. On the eighth day, however, we read about the sacrifices of princes eight through 12. Why don’t we stop at the eighth prince? After all, there are only eight days of Chanukah.

It seems that the eighth day of Chanukah contains special significance. It has the power to project itself into days nine through 12, which discusses completion of the dedication of the Mishkan.

The brother of the Tur teaches that our

holidays correspond to the patriarchs: Pesach to Avraham, Shavuot to Yitzchak, and Sukkos to Yaakov. The Bnei Yissaschar adds that Chanukah corresponds to Yosef, since Yosef is an extension of Yaakov and Chanukah is an extension of Sukkos. That’s why sources say that a person can still do teshuva for sins of the prior year until Chanukah.

Rav Gedalia Schorr explains that the word Yosef means to gather and to add. Just as Yosef is considered the gatherer of all the qualities of the 12 tribes, so too Chanukah gathers in all the qualities of the holidays to build on what we have gained from them. The sacrifices on the eighth day were brought by the prince of the tribe of Menashe, who is the son of Yosef. And the eighth day has the power to take in all the days of Chanukah and all the holidays from Pesach through Sukkos.

How so? The Torah reading on the eighth day, containing “Zos chanukas hamizbeiach, this is the dedication of the altar,” is similar to the words “Zos chukas HaTorah, this is the law of the Torah.” The eighth day of Chanukah contains the power and the ability to harness the clarity from the eight days of Chanukah and the holidays of the year and to continue that clarity for the entire year, through the words of Torah that we learn. This clarity is a clarity of purpose: knowing what Hashem wants from us and what our role should be in this world.

The Rokeach gives a fascinating revelation. We light a total of 36 candles

during the eight days of Chanukah (not including the shamash). The 36 candles correspond to the special light Hashem created on the first day of Creation, which shone for 36 hours until Hashem hid it away for the benefit of tzadikim (true righteous ones) in the messianic era to come. This action by Hashem seems to have had no benefit for most of us. What’s the point of creating the light if it is hidden away? However, it was not removed from us forever—it comes back during Chanukah to give us the greater clarity of purpose we just discussed. This explains why Jews of even minimal or no observance of mitzvos have a special affinity to the Chanukah menorah and its light, and they might even be motivated to get closer to their spiritual roots.

Bnei Yissaschar notes the 25th word in the Torah is ohr, light, hinting to the special light created on 25 Kislev—the first day of Chanukah. This allusion to the special light that shone for 36 hours and shines forth in our Chanukah candles is also expressed elsewhere. There are 36 tractates in the Talmud and the word “ohr”—light—is mentioned 36 times in the Torah. What’s the connection to Chanukah? The special clarity of purpose we have on Chanukah also exists within the words of the Torah itself, especially in the words of the 36 tractates of the Talmud.

Let us make a commitment of daily Torah study to achieve more clarity. Find a place of Torah study, find a study mate or a Torah class.



SHABBOS ROSH CHANUKAH: THE MYSTERIOUS SEGULAH OF THREE PARSHIYOS

THREE SIFREI TORAH

This Shabbos, an abundance of kedusha is coming our way. As with all such gifts, we must prepare properly for this present from above or we may miss the opportunity to seize the riches that can be ours.

Klal Yisroel will be celebrating the confluence of Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh and Chanukah, with the bonus of removing three Sifrei Torah from the Aron Kodesh for three independent readings. Not only should we be glowing with joy over this rare occurrence, but we should realize that this moment in every shul in the world represents an incredible eis ratzon – a time of Divine grace and acceptance – for all of us.

Rav Elimelech Biderman (Be'er Hachaim, Chanukah, page 125) writes, “The Zohar (206a) teaches that whenever the Aron Kodesh is opened, it is an eis ratzon. We have a direct kabbolah from the Tzemach Tzedek, who heard from his grandfather, the Baal Hatanya, who heard from his rebbe, the Maggid of Mezeritch, who heard from his own rebbe, the Baal Shem Tov, that all prayers and supplications that are uttered when the Aron is open will be fulfilled in part or in full. All the more so when three Sifrei Torah are taken out, many students of the Baal Shem Tov testify that at that moment the gates of compassion are opened and great things can be accomplished.”

What exactly is the nature of the eis ratzon that is coming upon us this Shabbos, G-d willing?

Rav Shalom Noach Berezovsky, the Nesivos Shalom (Chanukah, page 86), explains how the neiros of Shabbos and those of Chanukah work hand in hand. “The light of Chanukah,” he writes, “elevates a Jew from the depths of lowliness to which he may have sunk. Then the ner Shabbos brings him up to the loftiest heights to which a person can hope to reach. That is why we first light the menorah on Erev Shabbos and then the Shabbos lights.”

Somewhat later (page 92), he quotes the Koznitzer Maggid, who says that for this very reason, the Chanukah neiros were originally meant to be kindled outdoors, as they are today in Eretz Yisroel. This represents the concept that “the Chanukah lights are meant to illuminate the souls of those who stand outside Judaism, outside the borders of holiness, who are simply incapable of perceiving kedusha. This is the role of the Chanukah neiros, which must be kindled below ten tefachim (about 40 inches).”

We might add that indeed, most Chassidic rebbes light large menorahs that stand on the floor, not high on a table or pedestal, for they are designed to lift up those who have fallen or perhaps have never even reached any level

of spiritual stature.

The Nesivos Shalom (page 96) concludes by asserting that the three Torah readings this Shabbos correspond to the three evil decrees promulgated by the Greeks against us to eradicate the observance of Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh and bris milah.

All of this is true, but we must probe even deeper for the source of the eis ratzon when we carefully take three Sifrei Kodesh out of the Aron. The Gemara (Shabbos 23b) teaches us that “one who is rogil b’ner, accustomed to lighting Shabbos and Chanukah candles, will be blessed with sons who are talmidei chachomim. Many meforshim wonder why the Gemara uses this strange phrase “rogil b’ner, when concerning the rewards of other mitzvos, such as mezuzah and tzitzis, it uses the term zohir, meaning “one who is scrupulous.” Indeed, in the case of other mitzvos, the reward for conscientious performance of a mitzvah results in a concomitant result. For mezuzah, it is a beautiful home and for tzitzis it is a fine garment. However, the recompense of scholarly children for proper lighting of the Shabbos or Chanukah candles is somewhat incomprehensible.cccc

The answer may be hidden in another mystery. One of the Rishonim (Rokeiach, Hilchos Chanukah) reveals that the reason we light a total of 36 lights on Chanukah is because the ohr haganuz, the primordial light of creation, lasted for 36 hours during the earliest moments of the universe. This teaching is a reference to the words of Chazal (Yerushalmi, Brachos 8:5) that the light of the first day, which preceded the sun and all other physical sources of light, cast its celestial illumination for thirty-six hours. What happened to that special incandescence?

Rav Chaim Volozhiner (Nefesh Hachaim, note, end of Shaar 1) reveals that it was transferred into the Torah itself. There are two times when this light becomes most available to us.c

The Medrash (Tehillim to Mizmor 92) tells us that this light illuminated the entire first Shabbos of creation, when there was no darkness at all, and we have seen from the Rokeiach that Chanukah channels those 36 hours as well. cc

We may now examine why appropriate dedication to the Shabbos and Chanukah neiros are referred to as rogil. Actually, this would seem to be a pejorative term. The Chidushei Harim notes that the Gemara in Shabbos refers to raglei Tarmudai – literally the feet of a certain group of businessmen – as representing the last time one may light

the Chanukah menorah. He comments that raglei evokes the word hergel, which usually refers to one who performs a mitzvah out of rote and habit. Chanukah, however, represents hischadshus, renewal and freshness. The question therefore arises as to why we recite daily in the morning, “May it be Your will...shetargileinu beSorasecha – that You accustom us to [study] Your Torah.” Surely, hergel is the very embodiment of habituation and regularity, as opposed to exciting freshness and motivation. In fact, Rav Chaim Shmulevitz often writes of hergel as the most destructive way to approach Torah and mitzvos.

My rebbi, Rav Yitzchok Hutner (Sefer Hazikaron, pages 13 and 72), gives us the answer in a life-changing bit of advice, which explains the essence of Chanukah as well.

Rav Hutner notes that Dovid Hamelech’s punishment for having referred to the Torah as a song was that he forgot a halacha that even children know, namely that the Aron had to be carried on the shoulders, not on a wagon (Sotah 35a). Rav Hutner explained that in actuality, there are two seemingly opposite approaches to Torah study. One stresses the yoke of the Torah – the requirements and the obligation to fulfill the word of the Creator. The other is the tremendous pleasure of Torah study, the sheer joy of exploring the meaning and depth of His word.

Dovid Hamelech mistakenly stressed the joyous aspect over the yoke and so was shown that he should not denigrate the yoke by forgetting that the Torah must indeed be a burden upon one’s shoulders as well. Of course, he was not fully wrong about the Torah being a song or else the posuk declaring the Torah as a song would have been deleted from the eternal words of Tehillim. The words are infinitely true and should be repeated for forever, but Dovid Hamelech stressed them temporarily a bit too much.

As Rav Hutner once put it, at the time of Chanukah, Klal Yisroel was in danger of having aged to the point that their attitude to Torah had become somewhat ossified and settled into a dangerous hergel. Chanukah and the Chashmonaim restored the ohr haganuz, bringing back the youthful excitement and pleasure of the Torah. But at the same time, perhaps, there needed to be a rededication to the yoke of the Torah as well. That reference may be hidden in the raglei Tarmudai, the absolute obligation to light the menorah at a certain time and place. One must not only light the menorah, but one must become a ragil b’ner, learning at regular unbroken times, following a precise order, schedule and system.

Indeed, as Rav Hutner stressed, these two ideals must be carefully calibrated and balanced, not accentuating one over the other, lest one forget, as did Dovid Hamelech momentarily, the necessity of each ideal. It seems that Rav Hutner once felt that he required strengthening in the kabbolas ohr aspect of the Torah, so he spent several consecutive days learning Mishnah Berurah. He then returned to his regular world of adding chiddushei Torah

and singing the joyous song of the Torah. The balance had been achieved and he was able to move back to the middle road.

Shabbos Rosh Chodesh Chanukah brings together the two interfusing roads. Rosh Chodesh and the new moon represent the ideal of freshness and renewal. A new month represents a totally new start, as did the rededication of the Bais Hamikdash. Shabbos, however, represents that which is kevi’i vekaymi, that which is not manmade but eternal and constant. Chanukah itself combines the two ideals into one. The joy of Torah study, as represented by the menorah, counteracts the lure of Yovon and its call to imitate their philosophies and innovations. Yet, the mesirus nefesh of the Chashmonaim reminds us that the new and exciting cannot overshadow the ancient and time-honored.

The three Sifrei Torah of Shabbos Rosh Chodesh Chanukah are this year’s gift to show us that these seeming opposites are really one and can be reconciled, but are, in truth, the only path to kedusha. As we sing in the Shir Hakavod, “Vayechezu becha ziknah uvacharus – They envisioned in You agedness and virility.” May we emulate Hashem in both the yoke of Torah and the eternal joy of renewal and youthful dedication.

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Stories for Shabbos

How to Give Charity

One who wishes to give charity intelligently will make sure the recipient will feel as though he is the giver. There is a story about a man who purchased stacks of wood & placed them on his porch in the front of his house. When he would meet a poor person, he would hire him to move the wood for him to the back of the house. When he would then upon another person in need, he would hire him to move the stacks back to the porch. In this way, he provided financial assistance to those who so desperately needed it, while preserving their dignity by having them feel that they earned the money, rather than receiving a handout. *Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

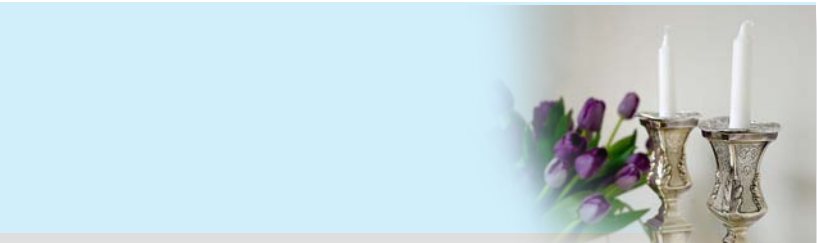
Yossele the Miser

In 1550 in Krakow, during times of poverty, there was a rich Jew named Yossele who was known as The Miser of the community. He hoarded his wealth and never gave charity. He was an outcast. Children would walk by his house and throw stones; people would ignore him as he walked past them. One day, he became ill and was on his deathbed, and the Chevra Kaddisha was notified to meet with him to discuss burial. They told him, "You're dying, and you can't take your money with you. Donate 1,000 rubles and we will bury you with honor and give the money to the poor, whom you've neglected your whole life." Yossele replied, "I could only give 50 rubles, not more." The people were disgusted with his behavior, telling him, "You can't take it where you're going. Once in your life give some money to the poor." But Yossele insisted he could only donate 50 rubles. The Chevra Kaddisha refused to bury him, and Yossele said he will bury himself. After they left, he uttered the words, "Hashem Elokenu Hashem echad—G-d is One," and his soul left him. Days passed, and his body was not buried. A neighbor felt very sorry for Yossele's wife and children, and decided he would privately bury him himself. He hauled Yossele onto his wagon, dug a grave for him near a tree outside of the cemetery, threw him in, and put dirt on him, leaving The Miser to be forgotten. The next night, on Thursday, the Chief Rabbi of the community, Reb Kalman, answered a knock on his door. It was a poor person, asking for some money for Shabbat. The rabbi said, "Sure, but I've never seen you before. How did you make last Shabbat?" The poor man said, "I have never been able to make a decent living, and for 20 years, every Thursday morning, there were five rubles in an envelope on my broken doorstep, but not this morning." Five minutes later, there was another knock at the door. Another pauper asked, "Reb Kalman, please help me, I need some money for Shabbat."

Reb Kalman replied, "I'd be glad to, but where were you last week?" And the man said, "I've been living here ten years and unable to make enough money for Shabbat. Every Thursday morning, there was an envelope with 2 rubles underneath my broken door, but not this morning." Within hours, all the poor people in Krakow came to the rabbi and told the same story. After Reb Kalman caught on that it was Yossele supporting the entire community, he asked, "How come one gets five rubles, one gets two, one gets 10? How did he know their addresses?" So, he asked the paupers at his door, and one by one they told similar stories. "I knocked on his door, and he answered warmly. Yossele asked me where I'm from, how many children I had, and what I did for a living. He was attentive and kind when he asked me what I would need to tide me over for the week. He wrote everything down and thanked me for visiting. "Then out of nowhere, he screamed and threw me out of his house! He told me he would never give up his precious money! I went home to my wife to tell her Yossele was a crazy and selfish miser. And that Thursday, I received five rubles on my doorstep. I had forgotten all about him." Reb Kalman was heartbroken. Not only did Yossele give, but he also gave like Hashem gives, without credit, in the holiest way. And they didn't even bury him. The rabbi called for a fast day for all of Krakow. The people of the community cried and begged Yossele for forgiveness. When Reb Kalman was crying and inconsolable at the ark, he fainted, and Yossele came to him in a dream. "Reb Kalman, please tell all my brothers and sisters there is no reason to fast. This is the way I wanted it. I wanted to have the privilege to give like G-d gives—without anyone knowing. Please tell them I am in Gan Eden in the highest place. "I have everything I need, but there is one thing I miss so much. I would give up Heaven for one Thursday morning, one broken door, one envelope with five rubles in honor of Shabbat." Reb Kalman said to him, "But, tell me, Yossele, aren't you lonely being buried there all alone?" Yossele smiled and said, "But I was not alone. Our Avot Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov were there. Our Imahot were there too. Moshe Rabbenu, Aharon Hakohen, Yosef Hatzaddik, and David Hamelech walked with me, and Eliyahu Hanavi led the way with a candle to show me to my place in Gan Eden." This is true giving. Yossele did the ultimate chessed like Rachel Imenu, sacrificing without anyone having any idea. On his elaborate tombstone in Krakow, Reb Kalman had it engraved, saying: Here lies Yossele Hatzaddik, the Holy Miser. *Jack E. Rahmey based on the Torah teachings of Rabbi Amram Sananes.*

What's in the Name—“Zelig”?

R' Elimelech Biderman shlit'a recounts the following amaz-



ing story. A family living in Jerusalem had a son by the name of Zelig, who was getting on in years, & couldn't seem to find his soulmate. The family did its utmost but things were not turning out the way they had hoped for their son. The boy's mother decided that she would travel to Meron & daven at the kever of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, in the hopes of finding a shidduch for her son. She took the bus from Jerusalem and while she was sitting on the bus, she called her husband on her cell phone. "Do you remember," she asked him, "that when we were first married, we didn't have a child right away & we went to Meron to daven? At that time, we made a promise that if we were to have a son, we would name him Shimon, after the great Tanna. "Boruch Hashem, we had a son but for some odd reason, we seemed to have forgotten our promise and in the end, we named him Zelig. I was thinking, maybe this is what's holding back his shidduch?" Her husband agreed with her premise but felt that he must discuss the matter with his Rov before taking any measures. Immediately, he called his rabbi and explained the whole situation. The Rov also agreed and told him to add a name to their son, and from then on he should be called Shimon Zelig. He called back his wife and told her to daven at the kever of Rashbi for their son "Shimon Zelig" that he should finally find his soulmate and become engaged. She arrived in Meron and davened with heartfelt tears for a very long time. When she returned back home, she felt as if a stone had been lifted off her family's collective chest and they were excited about the future prospects. In order to make it official, the following Shabbos during Krias HaTorah, the gabbai called up "Habachur Shimon Zelig ben Reb" for an aliyah, and afterwards he made a Mi Shebeirach using the same name. A few eyebrows were raised but no one seemed to have an issue. Except for one man who also davened in the same Beis Medrash, and his name was also Zelig. As soon as davening was over, he walked over to the gabbai & asked him, "Why did you call this bachur Shimon Zelig? His name is Zelig. When did he suddenly get a new name?" The gabbai shrugged his shoulders & replied, "Don't look at me. This is what his father asked me to do. I don't know why. I didn't ask questions." This man Zelig had a daughter who was in shidduchim for a while as well. Long ago, he had his eye on the bachur Zelig as a chosson for his daughter, but since both of their names were Zelig, he couldn't do such a shidduch. After all, it is famously quoted from Rav Yehuda HaChasid that the names of a father-in-law & son-in-law mustn't be the same. He had never pursued the shidduch - until now. Now that he realized that their names weren't exactly the same, he was willing to go forward with the shidduch. He involved a local shadchan who put forth the idea. It didn't take long, & with amazing siyata dishmaya, Shimon Zelig became engaged to Zelig's daughter. *Rabbi Dovid Hoffman's Torah Tavlin.*



Learning at the Kollel Boker

JOKES

THE CHELMER AND THE PSYCHIATRIST

A Chelmer is speaking to a psychiatrist.
 Chelmer, "I'm on the road a lot, and my clients are complaining that they can never reach me."
 Psychiatrist, "Don't you have a phone in your car?"
 Chelmer, "That was a little too expensive, so I did the next best thing. I put a mailbox in my car."
 Psychiatrist, "Uh ... How's that working?"
 Chelmer, "Actually, I haven't gotten any letters yet."
 Psychiatrist, "And why do you think that is?"
 Chelmer, "I figured it's because when I'm driving around, my zip code keeps changing."

ETHICS

A father is explaining ethics to his son, who is about to go into business...
 "Suppose a woman comes in and orders a hundred dollars' worth of material. You wrap it up, and you give it to her. She pays you with a \$100 bill. But as she goes out the door you realize she's given you two \$100 bills. Now, here's where the ethics come in: should you or should you not tell your partner?"

EFFICIENCY EXPERT

An efficiency expert concluded his lecture with a note of caution. "You don't want to try these techniques at home."
 "Why not?" asked somebody from the audience.
 "I watched my wife's routine at breakfast for years," the expert explained. "She made lots of trips between the refrigerator, stove, table and cabinets, often carrying a single item at a time. One day I told her, 'Hon, why don't you try carrying several things at once?'"
 "Did it save time?" the person in the audience asked.
 "Actually, yes," replied the expert. "It used to take her 20 minutes to make breakfast. Now I do it in seven."

THE HEARING AID

Seems an elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor and the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of nearly invisible hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear 100%. The elderly gentleman went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor said, "your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again."
 To which the gentleman said, "Oh, I haven't told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I've changed my will three times!"

THE MILKMAN

Yankel Pfeferkorn had never been a successful businessman until he went into the business of dairy farming. His business took off like a rocket and very soon his milk was the talk of the town. It was smooth, sweet and creamy and flew off the refrigerator shelves.
 Yankel's good friend Feivel Gezundheit goes to visit Yankel's dairy farm and asks him for the secret to his incredible milk. Yankel (after making him sign a NDA) tells him that most farmers feed their animals a mix of hay, grain and soy combined with pasture feeding and lots of water. What he does is, he substitutes the water with milk.
 Feivel says, "so, you don't give them water, you only give them milk?"

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UFARATZTA

LISTEN TO THE CHANUKAH CANDLES

The RaYatz [Admur Yosef Yitzchok] said, we have to listen to what the Chanukah candles are saying.

The Rebbe [Admur Menachem Mendel] says the Chanukah candles say that we must light up the darkness, outside. The outside, meaning anything that is outside of Torah and Mitzvos. And no matter good of a job we did yesterday in lighting up the world, the next day we add a

candle and light it up even more.
 =====**The tools to light up the world is Ner MITZVAH v'TORAH Ohr.**
The candles symbolize Mitzvos – the light symbolizes Torah.



"That's right" says Yankel
 "About how much milk do they drink a day?" asks Feivel
 "10 quarts" says Yankel
 "And how much milk do they produce a day?" query's Feivel
 "10 quarts" says Yankel
 Feivel is flabbergasted, "So how do you make money?"
 "That's the secret" says Yankel " what goes in is cholov stam
 and what comes out is cholov yisroel.

SEAT ASSIGNMENTS

It's the Super bowl , and a man makes his way to his seat right next to the 50 yard line. He sits down, noticing that the seat next to him is empty. He leans over and asks his neighbor if someone will be sitting there. 'No,' says the neighbor. 'The seat is empty.' 'This is incredible,' said the man. 'Who in their right mind would have a seat like this for the Super bowl and not use it?' The neighbor says, 'Well actually the seat belongs to me. I was supposed to come with my wife, but she passed away. This is the first Super bowl we haven't been to together since we got married.' 'Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that. That's terrible... But couldn't you find someone else, a friend, relative or even a neighbor to take her seat?' The man shakes his head sadly. 'No,' he says. 'They're all at the funeral.'



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RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER

ROSH KOLLEL

NO MENTION OF CHANUKA IN AL HAMICHYAH

PART III

We previously discussed the concept that the addition to al hamichya are dependent on how they appear in bentching. Since al hanisim is never recited as a brocha in bentching, it is therefore not mentioned in al hamichya.

Rav Leib Gurwitz adds that, based on this concept, we can understand a machlokes between the Rambam and the Tur if Rosh Chodesh should be mentioned in al hamichya. The Tur holds that it should be mentioned and the Rambam holds that it is not. This machlokes may be based on another machlokes between the Rambam and the Tur, as to what to do when one forgot yaaleh v'yavoh on Rosh Chodesh in bentching. The Tur holds that a full brocha is recited with an ending after uvnei yerushalaim, and the Rambam holds that one does not recite a full brocha.

That can be the basis for the machlokes understanding if Rosh Chodesh should be mentioned at all in al hamichya. Since according to the Tur a full brocha is recited after uvnei yerushalaim, with an ending, therefore, the Tur also holds that it should be mentioned in al hamichya. But according to the Rambam, when one forgot yaaleh v'yavoh on Rosh Chodesh in bentching, a full brocha is not recited therefore the Rambam holds that it should not be mentioned in al hamichya.

He also explains the text "v'samcheinu" used in al hamichya on Yom Tov, which is strange being that this expression is not used in the full bentching. The answer is that, according to Rav Chaim, it fits like a glove. The only reason we mention Shabbos and Yom Tov in al hamichya is because they are mentioned in a brocha form when one forgot to recite retzei or yaaleh v'yavoh, and in that brocha the text "v'samcheinu" is used. The only problem with this analysis is that when it comes to Shabbos we use the text "retzei" in al hamichya, which is not mentioned in the brocha recited when one forgot retzei in bentching, which seems to mean that we do use the text of the original bentching, and not of the brocha added when one forgot to recite retzei.

It is interesting to note that the Eliyahu Raba points out that the text of the Rambam seems to be that the additions in al hamichya should be added before uvnei yerushalaim, which would mean that it is exactly added in to the same place as in bentching. Indeed, there are many places that follow that minhag. According to that custom, it is indeed in the same place as it is in bentching.

But there is another perspective taken to address the original question as to the seemingly wrong placing of the additions.

The Sidur Shaar Hakolel, a student of the Baal Hatanya, who wrote explanations on the Baal Hatanya's sidur, explains that the additions are really in the exact same place as in bentching. He explains as follows.

Every brocha has 3 parts: the main text of the brocha; the mei'ein hachasima – the end of the main part before

the chasima; and the chasima – the brocha at the end. On Yom Tov, when we add something extra, we do so after the main part of the brocha, right before the mei'ein hachasima – the end of the main part before the chasima.

For example, in davening we have the brocha of רצה, which is the main part of the brocha; then comes ותחזינה, which is the mei'ein hachasima – the end of the main part before the chasima, followed by the ending: ברוך אתה ה' המחזיר שכינתו לציון, which is the chasima. And we add yaaleh v'yavoh before: ותחזינה, עינינו, which is the mei'ein hachasima.

Similarly, the 3rd brocha of bentching starts with: רחםך... שלא נבוש ולא נכלם לעולם ועד, which is the main part of the brocha; then comes ויבנה ירושלים עיר הקודש, which is right before the end of the main part before the chasima; and then comes ברוך אתה ה' ברוך אתה ה' which is the ending. In bentching, retzei and yaaleh v'yavoh are added in right before ויבנה ירושלים, which is the mei'ein hachasima.

It is therefore very fitting that in al hamichya we add these additions after the main part of the brocha, which, in this case, is right before the mei'ein hachasima, which is ויבנה ירושלים and after ויבנה ירושלים.

SUMMARY

Since al hanisim is never recited as a brocha in bentching, it is therefore not mentioned in al hamichya, or we add the additions after the main part of the brocha, right before the mei'ein hachasima, which is ויבנה ירושלים and after ויבנה ירושלים.

We say "v'samcheinu" in al hamichya on Yom Tov, because that is how it is used in a brocha form when one forgot to recite retzei or yaaleh v'yavoh.

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*
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- *Machlokes Beis Shamai & Bais Hillel in Hidar Mitzvas Chanukah*
- *3 Sifrei Torah, 1 Haftarah – Why the One for Chanuka*
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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.

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Please join us for an intriguing shiur
Insights of Maharal on the
פרשת השבוע
By
Rav Simcha Bunim Berger שליט"א
מורא דאתרא ק"ק ווילנעווע גרין

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO JOIN THE KOLLEL, PLEASE CONTACT
Rabbi Nachum Scheiner 845.372.6618 | ohrchaimmonsey@gmail.com

Kollel Beker SUNDAY MORNING Halacha Chabura Night Kollole YARCHEI KALLAH יבתיקין קללה BEIN HAZMANIM שובבי"ם PROJECT

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For all shul related questions please email Rabbi Nachum Scheiner
ohrchaim18@gmail.com or call 845-372-6618

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