

Mikeitz | Kislev 25 - Rosh Chodesh B Teves | December 26 - January 1



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בני בינה
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קרעו שיר ורננים

- Shabbos Mevarchim Teves -

Parshas Miketz

The Moad will be Monday afternoon 33 minutes and 16 Chalakim after 5

Rosh Chodesh is Tuesday and Wednesday

Zmanim by our incredible Gabbaim

Ephrayim Yurowitz
Tzvi Blech



This week we bentch Rosh Chodesh Teves.
The Moled will be Monday afternoon 33 minutes and 16 Chalakim after 5.
Rosh Chodesh is Tuesday and Wednesday.

Shabbos Zmanim

2024 Early Friday Mincha, 18 Main
12:27pm and every 15 minutes until 3:30pm

4:16pm Candle lighting	4:26pm Mincha in tent נ	4:26pm Chabad Mincha	4:34pm Shkiya
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SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:

6:41am <small>Vasikin, followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur 20↑</small>	8:00am <small>Shachris 2 18 main</small>	9:15am <small>Shachris 3 Tent נ</small>	10:00am <small>Shachris 4 Bais Chabad 20↑</small>	10:30am <small>Shachris 5 18 main</small>
2:00pm Pirchei	4:15pm <small>Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos</small>	4:35pm Shkiya	5:15pm Maariv 1	5:20pm Maariv 2

Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes!
5:45 pm and every 15 minutes until 8:15pm | 18 Main

Weekday Zmanim

Zmanim for the week of Dec 29- Jan 4

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz
Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and more (see posted times)

	Neitz	Shma Magen Avraham	Shma Gra	Tefila Gra	Chatzos	Plag	Shkiya
Sunday	7:22am	8:55am	9:39am	10:26am	11:58am	3:38pm	4:36pm
Monday	7:22am	8:55am	9:40am	10:26am	11:59am	3:39pm	4:36pm
Tuesday	7:22am	8:56am	9:40am	10:26am	11:59am	3:39pm	4:37pm
Wednesday	7:22am	8:56am	9:40am	10:27am	12:00am	3:40pm	4:38pm
Thursday	7:22am	8:56am	9:41am	10:27am	12:00am	3:41pm	4:39pm
Friday	7:22am	8:57am	9:41am	10:27am	12:00am	3:42pm	4:40pm
Shabbos	7:22am	8:57am	9:41am	10:28am	12:01am	3:42pm	4:41pm

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Darkness and Light

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

The *parsha* begins with the words *ויהי מקץ שנתיים ימים ופרעה חולם*. The *Midrash* connects the word *מקץ* to a *passuk* in *Sefer Iyov* *קץ שם לחושך* – there is a set time for the end of darkness. What exactly is the message that *Chazal* wanted us to learn from this connection? In the past, we quoted the incredible words of the *Bais Halevi*, who derives from this comment a powerful message about *סיבה ומסובב* – cause and effect. Who is the cause and who is the effect in this story? Was Yosef released because of Pharaoh's dream, or was it the opposite: Pharaoh had a dream because it was time for Yosef to be released from jail? The difference between the two is the true understanding of Hashem's *hashgacha*. However, today we will add another point that connects to this week's *parsha*.

Rav Schwab has a beautiful *peirush* on *Sefer Iyov*. In chapter 36, Elihu says *לתת לי זעור ואחור* and in the next *passuk* he says *אשר דעי למרחוק*.

There is a big *machlokes* as to who exactly this mysterious wise man Elihu was. However, one thing is clear; there

is very deep wisdom in his words *לתת לי זעור ואחור*. Rav Schwab *zt"l* explains that Elihu was saying to *לתת לי זעור ואחור* – give me some time, and I'll make things clear to you. In a similar vein, when Elihu said *אשר דעי למרחוק* he was telling him – you need to raise your knowledge from a distance, meaning to say that there are many times in life where only *מרחוק* – only from a distance, in the future, can you see why things that seem bad happened.

I think that *Chazal's* message about *קץ שם לחושך* is similar to the above message. There is an exact time to the end of darkness, and for every darkness that a person has to experience, there is an incredible light at the end of the dark tunnel.

Chanukah is a time where we celebrate the victory of light over darkness. Many times, we can be in a great state of darkness, just as Yosef was in the Egyptian prison cell, and it looks like there is no light in sight. Then, suddenly, a powerful light starts to shine, as it did for the *Chashmonaim* during Chanukah time. *B'eizras Hashem*, very soon, we will be stunned by the powerful light of redemption, *bimhera beyaminue bekarov*.

The Divine Plan

Rabbi Berel Wein



The entire narrative of the story of Joseph and his brothers, as he sent off the Jewish people to Egyptian society, slavery and ultimate redemption, is meant to illustrate to us the guiding hand of Providence in human affairs.

There is no question that all of the participants in this dramatic narrative acted according to their own wishes and wisdom. Yet the confluence of all of these conflicting personalities and ambitions leads to the desired end of the fulfillment of the prophecy and promise of God to Abraham about the future fate of the Jewish people.

This principle, that man proposes but God disposes, is one of the basic beliefs of Judaism and is vindicated, for good or for better, throughout the history of the Jewish people and humankind generally. All of the twists and turns of daily and national life, the seemingly random and inexplicable events that assault us on a regular basis, somehow have a purpose and a goal. They help us arrive at the situation and circumstance that God's destiny has provided for us.

The difficulty in all of this is that very rarely is this pattern revealed, nor are we aware of it. The Lord told Moses that 'you will see My back, not My face.' We see things much more clearly in retrospect than in the ability to judge present events and somehow predict the future. All of the dreams of Joseph will be fulfilled but no one could have imagined at the onset of the story how they

could have been fulfilled and under what circumstances, of both tragedy and triumph, they would come to be the reality of the narrative of the story of Joseph and his brothers.

Of all of the brothers, Joseph seems to be the one that is most aware that he and they are merely instruments in God's plan. The Rabbis teach us that Joseph was distinguished by the fact that the name of God never left his lips and that he always attributed events to divine providence and God's will.

That is why Joseph is seen as the main antagonist to Eisav, for Eisav always attributed events to random chance and to human action and power. We will see later that this was also the main contest between Pharaoh and Moshe. Pharaoh continually maintained that the troubles of the Egyptians were coincidence and that all of the blows that he sustained were due to circumstance and nature. Even when his wise men stated that the finger of God was pointing at him, he refused to admit that it was the divine presence that was driving Egypt to destruction.

We also live in a world where many see the events that surround us as being mere happenstance, random events engendered by human beings. However, Judaism knows better and teaches better, and we are therefore confident that all of the processes ordained for us millennia ago will yet be completely fulfilled. There is a divine hand that guides the affairs of mankind.

Chanukah – Eyes Fixed on Eternity –Part II



Rabbi YY Jacobson

Let's compare Chanukah to Passover and Purim. In both of these holidays, we celebrate the salvation of the Jewish people from genocide. On Chanukah, in contrast, we are celebrating that the oil lasted for eight days.

Imagine that following the Israeli victory of the 1967 six-day war, during which six Arab armies were determined to exterminate Israel and its three million Jews, a candle located in a Jerusalem synagogue would have burned for six days. Sure, it would have added a nice sentimental touch to the euphoria of Israel's salvation, but would this, rather than the deliverance of millions of innocent human beings from a second holocaust, have been the cause of the celebration? Would this detail even make it to the front page of the news?

Similarly, the burning of the Temple candelabra for eight days was, no doubt, a heart-warming follow-up to a great victory. It was a demonstrative sign that G-d cherished the sacrifice of His children and had rewarded them with a display of unique affection. Yet this was merely the icing on the cake, a coup-de-grace to a historical momentous victory on the battlefield. Yet the Talmud turns this minor detail into the decisive motif of the Chanukah celebration!

What is more, the miracle with the oil is the only element of the Chanukah events that we commemorate to this very day. We have no custom or ritual commemorating a miraculous triumph. What we do have is the kindling of a menorah for eight days, commemorating the fact that the oil in the Temple menorah lasted for eight days.

The answer allows us to appreciate the essential ingredient that has defined 4,000 years of Jewish history. The military victory was extraordinary, yet it didn't last. The dynasty of the Hasmonean family became entrenched in civil war and corruption. 210 years after Chanukah, in 68 CE, the Temple was destroyed, this time by the Romans. Jerusalem was plundered, Israel was decimated, and the Jewish people exiled. It was the beginning of a period of Jewish powerlessness, dispersion, and persecution which had lasted almost two millennia.

The political and military victory of Chanukah did not last. What lasted was the spiritual miracle — the faith which, like the oil, was inextinguishable. Strength that is founded on military power alone is temporary. It may endure for long periods of time, but ultimately, its might will wane, and it will be defeated by another power. The strength that is founded on moral and spiritual light can never be destroyed.

With their eyes focused on eternity, the Rabbis of the Second Temple era grasped that the timeless core of Chanukah was not the victory on the battlefield alone, but rather the fact that this military triumph led to the rekindling of the sacred light and the moral torch. The military victory was an enormously significant event that we must be deeply grateful for. Yet what makes Chanukah a vibrant and heart-stirring holiday thousands of years later across the globe is the story of a little cruse of oil that would not cease to cast its brightness even in the darkest of nights and among the mightiest of winds.

For more than two millennia, Jews have been gathering around their Chanukah candelabras, kindling an additional candle each night. As they gazed at the dancing flame atop their menorahs they heard the candles sharing their story. It consisted of a simple punch line: The flame of Jewish faith, the flame of Torah, the flame of the Mitzvos, would never be extinguished. The candles were right: Judaism lives.

Imperial Greece and Rome have long since disappeared. Civilizations built on power never last. Those built on care for the powerless never die. What matters in the long run is not simply political, military or economic strength, but how we light the flame of the human spirit.

A Teacher Who Makes Social Surveys

Mishmeret Shalom

Question:

I am a first-grade mechaneches, and I have learned a therapy approach for improving children's social skills. In the course of the school year, I make "social surveys" in which I ask each girl in the class to state who are the three classmates she likes best, and who are the three she likes least. Based on the results, I learn about each girl's social situation, identify girls in the class who are "transparent," and try to use my professional tools to help them. It occurred to me: Could there be a halachic problem with asking girls to tell me the names of girls they don't like or don't get along with?

Answer:

Since the purpose is to help the students change themselves and get along better in their social circle, the teacher is permitted to ask these questions, and it is all considered *l'to'eles*, especially since we're speaking about little girls, and mentioning their flaws is not always prohibited. However, before asking, the teacher should first explain to the students that even though we have to be very careful to avoid *lashon hara*, in this case, since the questions are *l'to'eles* - so that the teacher will be able to help the girls, the *halachah* permits her to ask, and them to answer. This introduction is an obligatory condition for allowing such discussions, as the *Chofetz Chaim* wrote (LHR 4:10-11).

UFARATZTA



BE A LIGHT UNTO OTHERS BY HOW YOU LIVE LIFE

One is inspired, not by someone else's good thoughts, intentions and by what he says. Rather one is inspired by a living example.

==== Excerpt of Rebbe's letter to a psychologist.

Editor's note: By the Chanukah candles or at a Shabbos table, when a story is told about a tzaddik, the actions of that pious person inspires a child more than any well-meaning lecture.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)
Shabbos: Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)
Morning 8:40 (20 Upstairs) | After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)
Please Note: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 am, followed by the Minyan at 10:00 am.

Just so you should know...

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What is the status of oil, which was leftover in the *menorah* at the end of Chanukah? The *Tur* writes that since the oil was set aside for the *mitzvah*, one cannot derive any personal benefit from it, and at the end of Chanukah, all leftover oil should be burned. The *Shulchan Aruch* adds that this is only true in regards to the oil which was set aside to be used for the actual *mitzvah*, such as for burning for half an hour. But, if someone put in more oil than needed – as people often do – and the menorah burned for more than the required half hour, since the extra oil was not needed for the *mitzvah*, the leftover oil can be used.

At first glance, this concept is applicable for the leftover oil every night. If this is the case, one may wonder why the *Tur* only discusses the oil left over at the end of Chanukah? The answer is that oil left over on the previous nights can be used on the following nights for the candle lighting. But the oil left at the end of Chanukah can no longer be used and must be burned.

But the *B'tzeil Hachachma* points out that if one leaves the oil in the same cup of the previous night, there may be a problem. The *Shulchan Aruch* writes that the new cup added each night is always considered the main candle, and the previous ones are the *mehadrin*. Therefore, if he leaves the oil in that cup, it would be a downgrade in the *mitzvah*, from being the *mitzvah* itself, to being just the *mehadrin*, which would violate the rule of *maalin bakodesh v'lo moridin* – one cannot go down a level of *kedusha*. He therefore suggests that if one wishes to reuse the oil, it should be put into the newest spot, which is the main part of the *mitzvah*.

The *Biur Halacha* discusses the following case. If the *menorah* went out on the 7th night during the half hour, leaving some oil in the cup, and more oil was added for the 8th night. In this case, even if it burns on the 8th night for a half hour, all of the leftover oil will be prohibited. Although we have seen that once the oil was lit for a half hour, the rest of the oil is permitted, since there is leftover oil of the previous nights, which is forbidden, mixed in, all the oil becomes forbidden. However, if the oil added on the 8th night was 60 times the amount of the oil of the previous days, it will become nullified, and one can use all the leftover oil.

Burning All of the Oil

We have seen that according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, only the oil needed for the actual *mitzvah* is prohibited, and if it goes

out after a half hour, one can use the leftover oil. However, the *Mishna Berura* writes that others maintain that all of the oil put into the cups is prohibited, and even the extra oil cannot be used. He therefore recommends that one stipulate that he is not setting aside the extra oil, and then he would be allowed to use it.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach points out that this stipulation only works for the extra oil, and not for the minimum *shiur* of a half hour. Since one must set aside the amount needed, he certainly set aside a half hour's worth and that minimum *shiur* is definitely prohibited, and a stipulation will not help. This is similar to wood used for building a *sukkah*, which cannot be used for other uses, and a *tenai* does not help.

Rav Elyashiv is quoted as saying that in today's society, there is another reason to be stringent with the oil that is more than the amount of a half hour. The Gemara says that the *menorah* must be lit until all the people finish passing by. The *Rambam* writes that this can be a half hour or possibly longer, and the *Ritva* writes clearly that if there are passersby for longer than a half hour, one needs to light for longer. That being the case, the oil which is meant to burn after the half hour may also be part of the oil needed for the actual *mitzvah*, and will be forbidden to use.

Summary of Opinions

We have seen so far that according to the *Tur* and the *Shulchan Aruch*, all the leftover oil should be burned, and perhaps even the extra oil cannot be used.

Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am
 • Chavrusa learning - Gemara
 Currently: מסכת מועד קטן
 • Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm
 • Chavrusa learning - Halacha
 Currently: הלכות קריאת התורה

SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS
 • Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45pm
 • Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00pm
 • ZERA SHIMSHON SHIUR | 8:15-9:00pm
 Thursday Nights

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Reb Zushe and the First Night of Chanuka

The followers of Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, awaited his entrance into the synagogue for the lighting of the Chanuka menorah on the first night of Chanuka. For the past few years, Reb Zushe, one of the Maggid's greatest disciples, had been honored with lighting the shamash candle. Reb Zushe would then hand it to the Maggid who lit his menorah from it. But Reb Zushe was nowhere to be seen and the chasidim wondered if his absence was the reason the Maggid had not yet lit the menorah.

Minutes, then hours ticked by, as the chasidim waited for their Rebbe to emerge. Finally, at about midnight, the Maggid emerged from his room and walked towards the menorah. As if to himself, the Maggid said quietly, "Reb Zushe will not be with us tonight. We will light the menorah now."

The next morning, just as the Maggid and his chasidim finished davening, Reb Zushe walked in. His friends came over and gave him a hearty welcome. One of them reported, "The Rebbe waited a long time for you last night. What happened?"

"After we light the Chanuka menorah tonight," promised Reb Zushe, "and with the Rebbe's permission, I will tell you what happened."

That night, after the Maggid lit the menorah, they eagerly listened to Reb Zushe's story:

"As you all know, immediately after the High Holidays, it is my custom to travel throughout the small villages and hamlets near Mezritch. I go from town to town, speaking with the adults and teaching the children about the wonders of our heritage. I also speak to them about how G-d loves each and every single Jew and that they are all important to Him. I tell them about our Rebbe and explain some of the Rebbe's teachings.

"Yesterday, I was on my way back to Mezritch when a terrible snowstorm started. The storm worsened and I soon realized that I would have to stop and rest a bit before continuing, if I wanted to make it to Mezritch at all. And so, I stopped at the home of Yankel in a village not too far from Mezritch. By this time it was already quite late in the afternoon.

"Yankel's wife opened the door. She looked absolutely terrified as she bid me inside. I noticed that the children, too, looked frightened.

"The poor woman burst out, 'Yankel left the house early this morning to gather firewood. He promised he would come back early, for even then he saw we were in for a terrible storm. It is late already and still he has not returned,' she wailed.

"For a split second I hesitated. If I went into the forest now, who knew if I would come out alive? But I knew I had no choice. I put on my coat and scarf once again and set out toward the forest. I passed a few rows of trees when I saw the upright form of a man covered

with snow. Only his face was visible in that white blur. I saw right away that it was Yankel, and I thought for sure that he had frozen to death. But when I came very close, I noticed to my surprise that he was still breathing. I brushed Yankel off and tried to warm him up.

"Somehow I managed to drag and carry Yankel back to his house where his wife and children greeted us with cries of joy. With my last ounce of strength I deposited Yankel on the bench near the stove and fell to the floor myself. Miraculously, Yankel's wife was able to "thaw" him out. She brought us a bottle of strong mashke which we drank eagerly to warm our insides. At about midnight we felt sufficiently strong enough to stand up and light the Chanuka menorah. As we said the prayer, 'who made miracles for our ancestors, in those days at this time,' we knew without a doubt that G-d had made a miracle for us now, too.

"As soon as the sun rose in the morning I set out for Mezritch and arrived when you saw me this morning."

Reb Zushe finished his story. The Maggid looked deeply into Reb Zushe's face. "Know, Zushe, that in Heaven they waited--as it were--to light the Divine Chanuka menorah until you lit the menorah together with Yankel. In the merit of your saving a Jewish soul from death, the Heavens awaited you."

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Chanuka Mikeitz - From אור לבור

יישלה פרעה ויקרא את יוסף ויריצהו מן הבור, ויגלה
ויחלף שמלתיו ויבא אל פרעה 41:14

“And Pharaoh sent and called to Yosef, and they rushed him from the pit, he shaved and changed his clothes, and he came to Pharaoh.” The *Sar Hamashkim* told the king of *Mitzrayim*, Pharaoh, that there was a Jew in prison named Yosef, who knew how to interpret dreams. Pharaoh had dreams that greatly disturbed him, and was seeking one who could interpret the meaning of his dreams. At the end of *Parshas Vayeishev*, the Torah tells us of Yosef being in prison, and the Torah called it בית הסהר, translated to mean “prison.” The Torah also uses the term “משמר” – translated as “ward” which the Torah seems to mean as a place in the prison.

When the Torah speaks about Yosef, it says the term בית הסהר however in 40:15 when Yosef is speaking he says, “כי גנב גנבתי, כי מארץ העברים וגם פה לא עשיתי מאומה כי שמו אותי בבור רש”י – “For I was kidnapped from the land of the Jews, and even here I have done nothing for them to have put me in this pit.” 41:14 – “From the pit” means from the prison which is made as a type of hole in the ground. If the בור here refers to a prison according to Rashi, why does the *Posuk* here say that Pharaoh had Yosef taken out of the בור, and why does Yosef himself call the place he was in a בור, while the Torah seems to call it a בית הסהר? How is this story of Yosef, which is lained on Chanukah, connected to Chanukah?

While Yosef was in prison in *Mitzrayim*, he saw himself in the בור that his brothers threw him into. Yosef did not understand the reason for what was happening to him, but he had full *emunah* that it was all being orchestrated by the One Above, and whatever would happen to him would be for his good. When Yosef speaks of where he is, he calls it a בור, and the Torah tells us that *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* took Yosef out of that בור he was in, and raised him to be the viceroy in *Mitzrayim*. The *Yivanim* brought חשך to *Klal Yisroel*, which is the same letters of שכח which means to forget. The *Yivanim* wanted *Klal Yisroel* to forget the *Torah* and *mitzvos*. Yosef was in a dark place in *Mitzrayim*, yet he kept the light of fire within him burning. (ברכת הרי"ח)

בור is the *Gematria* of אור with the *kolel* – Yosef was in a בור, yet all the time he kept the light of Torah going. Chanukah is a time for us to gaze at the light of the Chanukah candles, and think about what the true purpose of this world is. It is not to follow after the pleasures of the human body, as the *Yivanim* focus on, rather it is the pleasures of the *Neshama* which we must focus on. We should gaze at the lights, and seek to purify our eyes, our eyes with which we should be *Zoche* to see that *Hakodosh Boruch Hu* runs the world, and that He does countless miracles for us each and every day. May we be *zoche* to see the ultimate light with the coming of *moshiach*, אמן!

Connection - Shabbos Chanukah

As our *Parsha* opens, Yosef is rushed out of prison to meet Pharaoh. Pharaoh has had a series of recurring dreams that no one could explain. Yosef then proceeds to reveal the meaning of the dreams as well as the solutions to the problems they pose. After letting Pharaoh know what lies in store for the people of Egypt, Yosef is appointed to be the Viceroy, the second in command to Pharaoh himself. He is in charge of storing food during the years of plenty, and thereafter, he takes command of distribution, throughout seven long years of famine in the region.

Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian, the *Lev Eliyahu*, asks an important question: The Torah describes the qualifications for this most senior position quite clearly: *Ish navon ve chacham* – an outstanding individual, full of wisdom and understanding. Rav Lopian asks – wouldn't it be wiser to request an expert in logistics? A man who can stop the unruly crowds from charging at the gates to get at the precious grain during the years of famine?

Not so, says the *Lev Eliyahu*. In years of plenty, it takes a wise man (a *chacham*) and a man with intuition and understanding (*navon*) not to be swayed by the excessive wealth surrounding him. This wise leader must realize that the day of reckoning is not far off – give away too much now, and there will be nothing for the future. The message is poignant; so too, we, in this world for a short time, should take note that now we still have the ability to accumulate spiritual wealth, but when we get to the next world, we will not be able to do *mitzvos*. The

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



accounting will have ended. We must do our best and not be blinded by the sparkle of the wealth around us seeking to give away our precious time to all that glitters, but is definitely not gold.

Chanukah is a time of rededication. It's a time for us to reconsider our path in life. A time to answer some very difficult, personal questions. Life moves faster than a speeding train, and yet we must look deep and take the time to connect to our essence.

Do we run through our morning prayers as if being chased by a demon urging us to move faster and faster, lest we ponder the value of the prayers we are saying, or do we respect the time allotted by our sages for prayer and use it to reconnect with G-d, expressing our love and gratitude for all He does to enhance our lives? Do we realize the value of learning another *Mishnah*, another *daf* of *Gemara*, a *halacha*, a *pasuk Chumash* with *Rashi*, or do we waste away our precious time with frivolous behaviors, however enjoyable they may seem at the time?

Let's take a moment, when we light our *menorahs*, to close our eyes, to take a deep breath, and when opening them once more – to gaze upon the beauty Hashem has given us in our very homes. With love in our hearts we can be truly grateful for the precious lights in our lives.

Written by R' Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story
by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita

The Haftarah for Shabbat Chanukah

Rabbi Gershon Winkler

The *navi* Zecharya spread the word of Hashem to the returnees from the Babylonian exile at the beginning of the Second Commonwealth. He, together with his contemporary Chaggai, shared words of encouragement to the newly returned exiles who faced the challenge of resuscitating the Jewish community that had been gone for fifty years. Both prophets encouraged these "*chalutzim*" to rebuild the *Beit Hamikdash* and return to G-d, an important message to those who made the long trek back to Jerusalem only to find their Temple in ruins and their beloved city decimated. It was certainly understandable, that such a community felt incapable of conquering the challenges that now faced them and needed the reassurance and inspiration that the *nevi'im* would give them.

In today's *haftarah* (one also read for *Parashat B'ha'alot'cha*) Zecharya envisages a glorious future for the nation when G-d would return to dwell in the Holy City once more. Referring to the returning exiles as an "*ud mutzal me'esh*", a firebrand that had barely escaped the destructive flames. Hashem's angel, in the prophet's vision, admonishes Satan for his attempts to prosecute their holy *Kohen Gadol*, Yehoshua, and, by extension, the people themselves. The *navi* goes on to describe his vision of G-d removing the soiled garments of the High Priest and dressing him in clean attire, symbolic of the purification of the entire nation and the removal of any sin.

Zecharya also addresses the political leader of the returnees, Zerubavel, a descendant of the Judean royal family, by describing the vision of the *Menorah* and sharing Hashem's explanation of its symbolism: "*Lo v'chayil v'lo v'cho'ach-ki im b'ruchi*", Israel's success in rebuilding their lives, their city and their Temple does not depend upon physical strength or material wealth but rather on G-d's spirit. The message given to the small and impoverished Jewish community would spur them to overcome the adversities and succeed in their undertakings.

The connection of this *haftarah* to the holiday of Chanukah would appear to be quite obvious. Certainly, the vision of the seven branched *Menorah* connects powerfully to the very symbol of the holiday, the nine-branched *menorah*. But far more significant is the message left for that generation: that overcoming the obstacles and meeting the challenges depend upon the strength of spirit, something that is also a basic theme of Chanukah and a lesson from the struggle of the Maccabees as well.

We look back upon the struggles that our State has faced over the past 76+ years and we should draw inspiration from the message of our *haftarah* and of Chanukah. As we have seen so often, the prophets of the past still speak to us today. We only have to listen.

Zera Shimshon

לזכר נשמות רבינו שמשון חיים בן רב נחמן מיכאל זצ"ל בעל הזרע שמשון זיע"א

The Eight-Day Miracle

The *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 21b) cites the dispute between *Beis Shammai* and *Beis Hillel* regarding what is the proper way to light the *Menora*. According to *Beis Shammai*, on the first night of *Chanukah*, one lights eight lights, on the second night one lights seven lights, on the third night six and so on. *Beis Hillel* holds the order is, one light on the first night, two on the second, and so on.

The *Zera Shimshon* explains their argument as follows: The *Beis Yosef* asks, why do we commemorate the miracle of *Chanukah* for eight days when in reality the miracle only lasted seven days being that the flask of oil had enough oil to burn for one day. If so, the first day was not a miracle and there is no reason to remember it?

The *Beis Yosef* offers two answers. The first answer is that the *Kohanim* realized that it would take eight days to get new pure oil, and that they only had enough oil for one day. Therefore, on the first day they put one eighth of the oil from the flask into the cups of the *Menora*. The miracle was that this small amount of oil filled up the entire cup in the *Menora* and burned for the entire night. Thus, even the first day of *Chanukah* was a miracle. The second answer the *Beis Yosef* gives is that the *Kohanim* placed all the oil from the flask in the *Menora* on the first night, and the miracle was that only an eighth of the oil burned, and this kept on happening for all eight nights. Therefore, even on the first night there was a miracle, since the *Menora* burned the whole night only using one eighth of the oil in the cup.

These two answers, explains the *Zera Shimshon*, are the source of the dispute between *Beis Shammai* and *Beis Hillel*. *Beis Shammai* holds that the *Kohanim* put the entire flask in the *Menora* on the first night, and from there, the oil got less and less with each passing night. Therefore, in order to commemorate the miracle in the way it happened, *Beis Shammai* holds that on the first night we must light eight lights and each subsequent night light one less light, to symbolize how the oil got less and less on each night.

Beis Hillel holds the exact opposite; that the miracle happened the first way the *Beis Yosef* described, namely, that the oil's volume increased each night after it was placed into the cups of the *Menora*. To commemorate this, *Beis Hillel* holds that we must add to the amount of lights that we light each night.

The *Zera Shimshon*, Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmani, was born in 5467 (1706/1707) into an illustrious family with great Rabbinical lineage. He served as Rav of Modena, Pisa, Sayna and Reggio, Italy. His *Seforim* were named, *Zera Shimshon* (al HaTorah) and *Toldos Shimshon* (*Pirkei Avos*). He passed away on the 6th of Elul 5539 (1779). His passionate plea and promise regarding learning his *Chiddushim*:

I implore of you with ten terms of supplication to choose from my Chiddushim (novella) the piece

that finds favor in your eyes, for your learning will sooth my soul etc...

This righteousness will stand by you forever - to eat in this world, and be satiated in the next. In this merit, Hashem will repay you with children, health and sustenance.

...and now my brothers and friends etc. do a true kindness, and with your eyes you will see children and grandchildren surrounding your table, houses filled with all that is good, wealth and honor will not cease from your children...

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Pitying the Spiritual Have-Nots

Rabbi Yitzchak Adlerstein



*"Go to Yosef. Do whatever he tells you to do."
(Bereishis 41:55)*

What did Yosef tell them? *Rashi* cites *Chazal*: He told them to circumcise themselves. At face value, he had them all go through a conversion process. This, of course, leads to another question: Why would he do that? They were not expected to convert, and had no real reason to. As Jews, we don't push conversion on non-Jews. To the contrary, we actively discourage many who come to us who show interest in converting. Why would Yosef preside over a mass conversion of Egyptians?

I wish to convey a possible answer that is based primarily on a feeling I have. Let's start with an observation. The *halachic* procedure for acquiring an *eved canaani* is also a form of *giyur*. It results in an obligation upon the *eved* to observe almost all the *mitzvos* of the Torah, i.e. all *mitzvos* to which Jewish women are obligated. According to *Chazal*, a recalcitrant *eved* is forcibly immersed in the *mikvah* to accomplish his conversion. Yet, forcible conversion is otherwise foreign to us. It is completely at odds with the procedure for any other conversion candidate, which must be completely voluntary and self-motivated. Why does the Torah make an exception for the *eved*? Why is the Torah itself interested in converting someone who has no genuine interest in joining the Jewish people?

This is my feeling: An *eved* enters his master's life. The master is obligated to feed him, to sustain him. He concerns himself with the earthly needs of his *eved*. He learns to become responsible to the *eved*, to become a giver to him. One who gives, learns to give to the entire person, not just to a single aspect of that recipient. So how could it be that a person could occupy himself with providing the physical needs of another human being without addressing his spiritual needs as well.

Yosef's intention was certainly not the conversion of the Egyptian nation. He did find himself in the role of provider for all of Egypt during the years of famine. We must imagine how Yosef discharged the duties of his office. We see Yosef *HaTzadik* walking in the ways of Hashem, and imitating the *chesed* and *rachamim* of his Creator. We see him providing for each and every one with genuine concern, responding to the needs of each person. (*Chazal's* depiction of Yaakov's funeral cortege makes so much sense. When the assembled kings saw Yosef's crown sitting atop his father's casket, they removed the crowns on their own heads, and placed them on Yaakov's bier as well. This must have been a response to the goodness that Yosef displayed in his position of power. It gained the admiration and respect of all who knew him.)

The Alter of Kelm used to say that when he observed non-Jews troubling themselves to travel considerable distances to attend their religious services, he was not able to endure the pain and compassion he felt for them! They were longing for something – and going down the wrong road to get it. (I, too, have a bit of sensitivity regarding this. I find it extremely difficult to observe a non-Jew violating *Shabbos*. I know that he has no obligation whatsoever to observe it. Yet still – he is created in Hashem's image! Look at what he is losing out in life! And how will he gain eternal life?)

Yosef's love and concern for the Egyptians created tension within him. He found it impossible to address their earthly needs while ignoring their spiritual ones. How could he not do something to give them eternal life as well?! By promoting the *mitzvah* of *milah* to them, Yosef felt that he was giving them a chance.

Based on Daas Torah by R. Yeruchem Levovitz

Tips the Parenting Books Won't Tell You

The un-PC guide to being a real parent

Rabbi Tzvi Freeman

Part II

Nachas (not the chips)

Nachas is the Jewish word for enjoyment, satisfaction, and pride—all bundled together. If you like ice cream, the feeling of *nachas* is like your entire innards becoming one big vanilla fudge ice cream sundae. If you want *nachas* from your kids, the best way to get it is by getting *nachas* from your kids.

That means letting slide the stupid little things that kids do, and getting a kick out of the cute, smart and beautiful little things they do. Let them see your smile. For every "No!" there's got to be at least five hugs, kisses, pats on the back, cheek-pinching, and just plain loving smiles. Kids thrive on your enjoyment of them.

As Ashley Montagu pointed out, no culture provides attention and affection to their kids as do Jews. In English, we don't

even have a word for *nachas*!

Eat Together

Want a cohesive family? Eat together. Make a big deal of turning off your cell phones. Set a place where all devices will stay put for the half-hour of dinner time. Including yours. No exceptions—nothing is more important than this time now. Enjoy each other's company. Be happy to be with your kids. Each day, find some story or interesting fact to say at the table. Each week, save stories and neat Torah facts to say at the Shabbat meal. Friday night meals (and Saturday, as well) are your main tools for creating a family. Never come to the Friday night table exhausted. The holy Rebbe of Rimanov often wondered why taking a nap on Friday afternoon was not one of the Ten Commandments.

The Three-tiered Obligation

Rabbi Eli Mansour



The *Gemara* in *Masechet Shabbat* (21b) outlines the three levels of the *mitzva* of lighting Hanukah candles. The basic obligation, the *Gemara* teaches, requires every household to light just one candle each night of Hanukah. The next level – the level of "*Mehadrin*" – is to light one candle for each member of the household, each night of Hanukah. The highest level – the "*Mehadrin Min Ha'mehadrin*" – is, according to the accepted opinion, to light one candle the first night, two the second night, and then one additional candle on each subsequent night. Of course, we all observe the *mitzva* on the highest level, the level of "*Mehadrin Min Ha'mehadrin*."

Why did the Sages institute three different levels of this *mitzva*, something which was not instituted for any other *mitzva*? Rav Pinchas Friedman (contemporary) explained that the three levels of observing this *mitzva* can be understood in light of the precise nature of the threat posed by the Greeks.

The Hebrew word "*Yavan*" ("Greece") is spelled with three letters – *Yod*, *Vav*, *Nun*. These three letters are all a straight line, each one longer than the preceding one. The *Yod* is a small line; the *Vav* extends lower than the *Yod*; and the *Nun* extends even lower. Rav Friedman explains that the Greeks' strategy was to pull the Jews down slowly, one step at a time. This is, indeed, the only way the *yetzer hara* – our evil inclination – can lead us to betray Hashem. The *Gemara* in *Masechet Shabbat* (105b) teaches that the *yetzer hara* works by first persuading a person to commit a minor offense, then persuading him to commit a more grievous offense, and then persuading him to abandon observance entirely. It's a gradual process.

Elsewhere, in *Masechet Sukkah* (52b), the *Gemara* expresses this idea by teaching that the *yetzer hara* is first called a "*holech*" ("passerby"), then an *ore'ah* ("guest"), and finally an "*ish*" (which Rashi explains to mean a permanent resident). The process of decline unfolds in these three stages – with an occasional misstep, which is then followed by more frequent violations, which then becomes permanent abandonment.

This was the strategy of "*Yavan*" – to begin with the "*Yod*," with leading the Jews to relatively minor infractions, and then gradually proceeding to the "*Vav*," and then, finally, to the "*Nun*," pulling them all the way down, Heaven forbid.

On this basis, Rav Friedman explains, we can understand the three levels of the Hanukah candle lighting. We are to learn from the method of the *yetzer hara*. Just as the *yetzer hara* tries to defeat us incrementally, in stages, similarly, our process of spiritual growth is to proceed gradually, one step at a time. If we try to grow rapidly, and to leap directly to the greatest heights of piety, we are bound to fail. We might suggest an analogy to extreme weight-loss programs, which are often effective for losing weight in the short-term, but their effects are eventually reversed, as the individual is incapable of permanently following such an extreme diet.

Likewise, people who undertake extreme religious measures, trying to instantly transform themselves into great *tzaddikim*, are all but guaranteed to fail. Religious growth must be slow, steady and incremental. And so to celebrate our triumph over the Greeks, who tried to pull us down one step at a time, the Rabbis instituted the three-tiered obligation of the Hanukah candles, which represents the notion of incremental growth. We must first begin with the observance of our basic obligations, and then gradually proceed to the higher level of "*mehadrin*," and then to the lofty standard of "*mehadrin min hamehadrin*."

This is also the message of the custom of "*mosif ve'holech*," of adding one candle each night of Hanukah. We express the notion that when it comes to spiritual growth, we need to follow the system of "*mosif ve'holech*," of growing one step each day, without ever trying to jump straight to the top.

May Hashem help us all to continually be "*mosif ve'holech*," to increase our light of sanctity gradually, one day at a time, throughout our entire lives, *Amen*.

Bungee Ropes of Love

When your kids morph into *mashugana* teenagers, hold tight to the bungee ropes. If they know you love them no matter what, they won't want to do things that will hurt you. And if they do, eventually they'll bounce back up. In *Tanya*, the basic book of *chassidic* thought, those ropes are called "thick cords of love." They're the only way to pull someone back.

Be Together

Take family trips. Squeeze into the car together. Take pictures. Okay, so you won't get out until 3 in the afternoon. Okay, you'll spend more time packing, making sandwiches, loading the van, unpacking, etc., than you will spend having fun. But you'll be a family, the kids will have good memories, and when they have their own families, they'll take you along on their own family trips.

But, nevertheless, make sure to have time to take out each child alone. Even if it's just to run an errand, grab a kid—but just one kid—and throw him or her in the back seat. It's just

the two of you, and that's what counts. The Baal Shem Tov taught that G-d treats each of us as an only child. Our kids deserve the same.

Invest

Parenting is not a hobby, and children are not the collateral damage of marriage. These are people's lives you are dealing with, a Divine mission. Besides, these are also the people who might one day sign you into some horrible retirement home—or, do things right, and they'll make you the king and queen of the palace.

Basically, they're the biggest investment you'll make in life—the only one that's for perpetuity. Invest all you got. You'll reap the dividends now, and when you need it the most, you'll cash in big-time, with grandchildren who think you're the greatest grandparents in the world. What greater wealth could there be?





The Menorah That Lit Up My Life

By Laura P. Schulman

Two years ago I was in Baltimore on business, and happened to pass by the public *menorah* in front of Johns Hopkins University just as the first light was being lit. My eyes welled with tears. Although I was raised a secular Jew, my family has always celebrated *Chanukah*. To be away from my family that first night of the holiday felt cold and lonely. Now, seeing the lights of the first night's flames of that big *menorah*, my heart lit up also, and I felt the warmth of my people all around me.

The next day I was walking by the waterfront, and a young man in a black hat ran up to me and politely asked, "Excuse me, are you Jewish?" Somewhat surprised that anyone would care, I answered in the affirmative.

"Do you know that it's the second night of *Chanukah* tonight?" he asked earnestly.

I nodded.

"Do you have a *menorah*?" he inquired, looking a bit anxious.

"No," I replied.

"Do you want one?" he asked hopefully.

"Do you have one?" I asked, almost shouting with joy.

"Yes, I'll get you one!" he replied, almost as excited as I.

He ran off, and returned moments later with an entire menorah kit in a box: little brass candleholder, box full of the right number of candles, and complete instructions. Also a DVD full of *Chanukah* stories, how-tos, even recipes. I raced off to my hotel room to

examine the contents of the box and watch the DVD.

Childhood memories of *Chanukah* lights, my father telling stories of the *Maccabees*, the miracle of how one day's worth of oil somehow lasted for eight days . . . it all came flooding back. I knew I had been given a gift that *Chanukah* in Baltimore: the gift of the return of Judaism to my life, and of my life to Judaism. All this because of a *menorah* on the steps of a public institution. And all because I "happened" to be passing by that day, and the flame of the *menorah* ignited the spark that had been sleeping in my Jewish heart for nearly 50 years.

When I returned to Seattle the following week, I called a rabbi for the first time in my life. I told him what the *menorah* in Baltimore had stirred in me. Over the next two years, with his wise and gentle guidance, I found my way as a fully observant Jew. The spark that was rekindled by a public menorah is now a steady burning flame.

How grateful I am to live in a country that is founded on the right to worship as we choose, in the manner in which we choose. I thank our founding fathers who crafted the Constitution of the United States of America, which recognizes our freedom to express and practice our religion. And I thank those who have the courage, in these sometimes dark times, to defend those rights.

We never know how many hearts and lives are touched and, yes, even transformed by the sight of the miraculous Chanukah lights, shining into the darkest reaches and reminding us of miracles long ago and not so long ago. All those selfless souls whose courage and staunch commitment fuel the kindling of light the world over deserve our heartfelt gratitude. I know they have mine.

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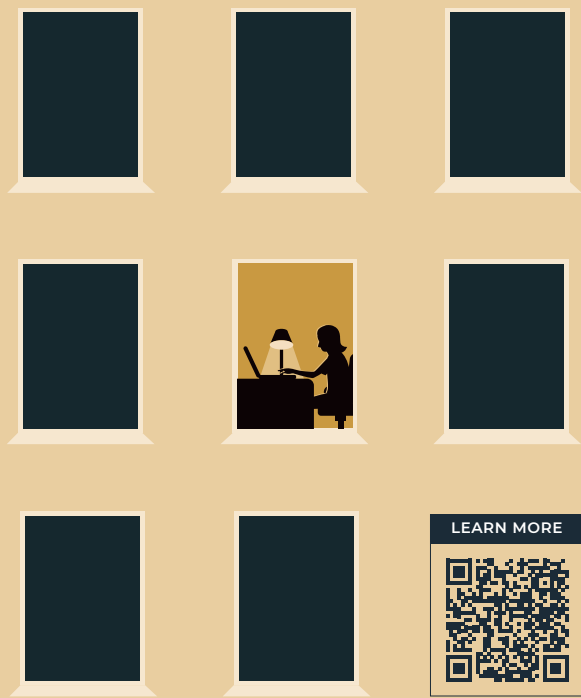
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JOKES

Only 25 cents!

One night a man was walking homeward when a thief jumped on him all of a sudden. Man and the thief were caught in a terrific tussle. They rolled about on the ground, and the man put up a tremendous fight, until at last the thief managed to get the better of him and pinned him to the ground. The thief then went through the man's pockets and searched him all over. There was only a 25-cent coin he could lay his hands on.

The thief was so surprised at this that he asked the man why he had bothered to fight so hard just for a 25-cents.

"Was that all you wanted?" said the man, "I thought you were after the five-hundred dollars I've got in my shoe!"

The Shidduch Date

Yankel went on his first shidduch date, and his parents were eager to hear how it went. "Nu? How was she?" asked his mother.

"Well," said Yankel, "she was nice, but very quiet."

"Quiet is good," said his father. "Did she say anything?"

"Not really," Yankel admitted. "She just sat there and kept staring at her watch."

His mother's face lit up. "Oh! She was thinking about how time flies when you're having fun!"

Yankel shook his head. "No, Totty. I think she was checking to see if it stopped!"

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."

Son of a lawyer...

While two families were waiting in line to see the Washington Monument, their two 5-year-old boys were getting acquainted.

"My name is Joshua. What's yours?" asked the first boy.

"Adam," replied the second.

"My daddy is a doctor. What does YOUR daddy do for a living?" asked Joshua.

Adam proudly replied, "My daddy is a lawyer."

"Honest?" asked Joshua.

"No, just the regular kind," replied Adam.

Never Been Married

I've never been married... but I've had a few near Mrs.!!!

Record Keeping

A lumberjack once told me he's cut down 27,653 trees.

"How do you know exactly how many?" I inquired.

"Easy. I keep a log."

Shidduch

How was your date?" the Shadchan asked the girl.

"Terrible!" she answered. "He showed up in his 1952 Rolls Royce."

"Wow! That's a very expensive car. What's so bad about that?"

"He was the original owner."



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 צפרה מלכה ע"ה
 בת יחזקאל שרגא
 הכהן סאבוי הי"ד

Sunday, Dec. 29th

יום א' פרשת ויגש, ד' דחנוכה

12:00 PM

כתיבת האותיות

At the home of

The Scheiner Family
 1 Celia Court, Suffern, NY

1:00 PM

Procession & Dancing to
Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim
 18 Forshay Rd, Monsey, NY

Followed by dancing & buffet

