

Parshas Vayeshev | Kislev 18 - 24 | December 19 - 25

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Zmanim by our incredible Gabbaim

Ephrayim Yurowitz
Tzvi Blech



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Shabbos Zmanim

2024 Early Friday Mincha, 18 Main
12:24pm and every 15 minutes until 3:00pm

4:12pm Candle lighting	4:22pm Mincha in tent א	4:22pm Chabad Mincha	4:30pm Shkiya
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SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:

6:39am <small>Vasikin, followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur. 20↑</small>	8:00am Shachris 2 18 main	9:15am Shachris 3 Tent א	10:00am Shachris 4 Bais Chabad 20↑	10:30am Shachris 5 18 main
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2:00pm Pirchei	4:10pm Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos	4:31pm Shkiya	5:11pm Maariv 1	5:16pm Maariv 2
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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 December 22 - 28

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	7:19am	8:52am	9:36am	10:22am	11:55am	3:33pm	4:31pm
Monday	7:20am	8:52am	9:37am	10:23am	11:55am	3:34pm	4:32pm
Tuesday	7:20am	8:53am	9:37am	10:23am	11:56am	3:35pm	4:32pm
Wednesday	7:20am	8:53am	9:38am	10:24am	11:56am	3:35pm	4:33pm
Thursday	7:21am	8:54am	9:38am	10:24am	11:57am	3:36pm	4:33pm
Friday	7:21am	8:54am	9:39am	10:25am	11:57am	3:36pm	4:34pm
Shabbos	7:21am	8:55am	9:39am	10:25am	11:58am	3:37pm	4:35pm

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Vayeishev and Chanukah

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

One of the greatest lessons in the Torah is hidden in the Targum Onkelos in this week's *parsha*. It's a lesson that echoes the Jewish people's destiny and essence.

The *pasuk* says וישנאו אותו ולא יכלו דברו לשלום the brothers hated Yosef and could not speak to him in peace. The Torah seems to be vindicating the brothers from any responsibility towards Yosef; if after all they were not able to speak to him in peace, it didn't seem to be within what Rav Desler would call נקודות הבחירה, the point of choice. However, it's not so simple. The Targum adds one small word בעי, which means want. They didn't want to speak to him in peace. That's pretty scary, the Torah says they couldn't, and Onkelos says they could have, but didn't want to. Which one is it? Obviously, Onkelos is not arguing with the Torah, since his translation is handed down from Har Sinai as the Gemara in *Megillah* states. But if so, why doesn't the Torah write that they didn't want to?

I suggest an idea based on something I heard from my Rebbi many years ago when learning the stories of Tanach. The Navi will write what is being previewed by the people. So, for example, when the incident of David Hamelech Bas Sheva took place, the Navi describes what David did according to what it looked like to the people. Perhaps one of the lessons is that one needs to think twice before

doing something that will seem wrong to the people, albeit that the person himself knows that they are doing what's permitted.

Similarly, in our *parsha*, the Torah describes what was being perceived by the onlookers, and I would add that it's not just the outsiders it was also by the brothers. The brothers convinced themselves that they couldn't speak to Yosef in peace, and therefore the Torah writes it in such a manner. This is a powerful lesson for us, too. How many times do we decide or live with a decision that we made years ago about our ability to change, or restart, or learn anew, and end up losing out on eternity?

The Chofetz Chaim encourages us to seclude ourselves at least once a month and take inventory of what we are doing, and what we might do differently, in order to reach goals that we never thought that we could reach

The Chashmonaim lived with this premise. If they had looked at the stark reality that was in front of them, they would have concluded that there was no hope that they could defeat the Greek army. How could they reignite the light of the Jewish nation? Nevertheless, they didn't say "we can't;" they said "if Hashem is sending us this challenge then we can. We will not make the same mistake as the *shevatim*."

The *Angel* Who Did Not Know He Was an *Angel*

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l



The story of Yosef and his brothers takes place over four *parshiyot*. It is the longest and most detailed narrative in the Torah. Nothing is there by accident; every detail counts. Let us look at one moment, which may seem unimportant, but in fact contains one of the most beautiful ideas in the Torah.

The scene is set. Yosef is envied and hated by his brothers. They cannot even talk to one another without arguing. Now the brothers have left home to tend to their sheep, and Yaakov tells Yosef to go and see how they are doing. This will ultimately lead to the dramatic incident where the brothers sell Yosef as a slave, and change everything.

But it nearly didn't happen. Yosef arrived at Shechem where he expected his brothers to be, but they were not there. He might well have wandered around for a while and then, failing to find them, gone home. None of the events that take up the rest of the Torah would have happened: no Yosef the slave, no Yosef the viceroy to Pharaoh, no storage of food during the years of plenty, no descent of Yosef's family to Egypt, no exile, no slavery, no exodus. The entire story – already revealed to Abraham in a night vision – seemed about to be derailed. Then we read the following:

"A man found [Yosef] wandering around in the fields and

asked him, 'What are you looking for?' He replied, 'I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?'

'They have moved on from here,' the man answered. 'I heard them say, "Let's go to Dothan.'" So Yosef went after his brothers and found them near Dothan." (Bereishit 37:15-17)

There is no other moment like this in the rest of the Torah: three verses dedicated to an apparently unimportant, forgettable detail of someone having to ask directions from a stranger. Who was this unnamed man? And what message does the episode hold for future generations, for us? Rashi says he was the angel Gabriel. Ibn Ezra says he was a passerby. Ramban however says that "the Holy One, blessed be He, sent him a guide without his knowledge."

I am not sure whether Ramban meant without Yosef's knowledge or without the guide's knowledge. I prefer to think both. The anonymous man represents an act of Divine guidance to make sure that Yosef went to where he was supposed to be, so that the rest of the drama could unfold. He may not have known he had such a role. Yosef surely did not know. To put it as simply as I can: *he was an angel who did not know he was an angel*. He had a vital role in the story. Without him, it would not have happened. But he had no way of knowing, at the time, the importance of his role.



Rabbi YY Jacobson

There is something strange about the Chanukah celebration. The festival of Chanukah commemorates an extraordinary victory of the Maccabees, a relatively small and dedicated force of fighters, against one of the great imperial powers of classical antiquity, the Seleucid branch of the Alexandrian empire.

This story takes us back 2100 years ago, to the year 164 BCE, some 150 years before the birth of Christianity and two centuries before the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans. Israel was then under the rule of the empire of Alexander the Great. A Syrian ruler, Antiochus the 5th, ascended the throne, and he was determined to impose his values on the Jewish people. He forbade the practice of Judaism, set up a statue of Zeus in the Temple, and systematically desecrated Jerusalem's holy sites. Jews who were caught practicing Judaism were tortured to death. This was tyranny on a grand scale. Sadly, he was helped in this endeavor by two Jewish high priests, Jason and Menelaus, who assisted him in banning the Jewish lifestyle and turning the Temple into an interdenominational house of worship on Greek lines.

To put it into historical perspective, had Antiochus succeeded, Judaism would have died. Its daughter religions – Christianity and Islam – would have, of course, never come to be. A small group of Jews, led by the elderly priest Matityahu and his sons, rose in revolt. They fought a brilliant campaign, and within three years they had recaptured Jerusalem, removed sacrilegious objects from the Temple, and restored Jewish autonomy. It was, as we say in the Chanukah prayers, a victory for 'the weak against the strong, and the few against the many.' Religious liberty was established and the Temple was rededicated. Chanukah means "rededication."

This was a remarkable event. We, the Jewish people, are here today only because of the courage and vision of this small group of determined Jews who would not allow their G-d and their Torah to be reduced to the dustbins of history by the Syrian-Greek tyrant. Yet astonishingly, the Talmud, the classical text of Jewish law and literature, gives us a very different perspective on the Chanukah festival.

"What is Chanukah?" asks the Talmud (Talmud, Shabbat 21b.) The answer given is this:

"When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary, they contaminated all its oil. Then, when the royal Hasmonean family overpowered and was victorious over them, they searched and found only a single cruse of pure oil that was sealed with the seal of the High Priest—enough to light the menorah (candelabra) for a single day. A miracle occurred, and they lit the menorah with this oil for eight days. The following year, they established these [eight days] as days of festivity and praise and thanksgiving for G-d."

So, according to the Talmud, the festival of Chanukah is less about the military victory of a small band of Jews against one of the mightiest armies on earth, and more about the miracle of the oil. The Talmud makes only a passing reference to the military victory ("when the royal Hasmonean family overpowered and was victorious"), and focuses on the story with the oil, as if this were the only significant event commemorated by the festival of lights.

This is strange. The miracle of the oil, it would seem, was of minor significance relative to the military victory. Besides the fact that this was a miracle that occurred behind the closed doors of the Temple with only a few priests to behold, it was an event concerning a religious symbol without any consequences on life, death, and liberty. If the Jews would have been defeated by the Greeks, there would be no Jews today; if the oil would have not burnt for eight days, so what? The menorah would have not been kindled. Would the latkes taste any worse?

Continues next week...

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.

UFARATZTA



TESHUVAH THROUGH LEARNING TORAH

We therefore find in *Tanna*

Dvei Eliyahu: "A man commits a sin and is liable to death before the Almighty, what shall he do and live? If he was accustomed to studying one page, let him study two; if he was accustomed to studying one perek, let him study two perokim...."

This resembles a rope that is severed and then reknotted. The place of the knot is twofold and fourfold thicker than the rest of the rope. So it is, with the "rope of His heritage," [with the soul's bond with its source.] And this is what the *pasuk* says, "Through kindness and truth is sin forgiven..." and "there is no truth but Torah..." [Thus, it is through the study of the Torah that sin is forgiven.]

Similarly, on the *Pasuk* [*Shmuel* I, 3,14] that "the sin of the House of Eli will not be atoned by sacrifices and offerings," the Talmud [*Rosh Hashanah* 18,1] comments: The sin of the House of Eli will NOT be atoned by sacrifices and offerings, but it WILL be atoned through the study of Torah and through good deeds..."

==== Tanya – Igeres Hateshuvah, Perek 9.

Yud Tes and Chof Kislev 5559 / 1798: The Baal HaTanya was freed from Prison in St Petersburg, Russia.

Yud Tes Kislev: Rosh Hashanah LeChassidus.

Gut Yom Tov! May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year in the study of Chassidus and the ways of Chassidus.

Yud Tes Kislev

Its history and meaning

Yud Tes Kislev is celebrated as the Chag HaGeulah of The Alter Rebbe, also known as the Baal HaTanya. It was on this date, in the year 5559 (1798), that Reb Shneur Zalman of Liadi was freed from his imprisonment. Reb Shneur Zalman was the founder of Chabad Chassidus.

26 years earlier, on Yud Tes Kislev 5533 (1772), the Alter Rebbe's Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezritch, passed away. Before his passing, he said to Reb Shneur Zalman, "This day is our *yom tov*."

On the day after Simchas Torah 5559, the Alter Rebbe was arrested from his home on charges of treason and brought to the Fortress of Petropavlovsk. During his 53 days in prison, he was interrogated multiple times and asked to explain various teachings of chassidus. On Yud Tes Kislev, while reciting the words from Tehillim *pada beshalom nafshi*— my soul was redeemed in peace—the Alter Rebbe received the news that he had been exonerated of all charges and would immediately be freed.



We have seen many similarities that we find between the *menorah* of Chanukah and the *menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. But when it comes to the type of oil that we use, this does not apply.

Olive Oil

When it comes to the *menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, there were very specific rules and regulations in regards to which oil could be used. However, when it comes to Chanukah, the Gemara tells us that these rules do not apply, and any oil and wicks can be used. But if the *menorah* of Chanukah is to replicate the *menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, should it not require the same oil as the *menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*? Indeed, the *P'nei Yehoshua* proves from here that the *menorah* of Chanukah does not have to be exactly like the *menorah* of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

The *Chasam Sofer*, however, suggests that there is a specific reason for this exception. The *Chachamim* did not make this as a requirement because of the extreme difficulty involved in following the exact requirements needed for the *menorah* of the *Beis Hamikdash*, requiring pure olive oil. Since requiring exactly what was used in the *Beis Hamikdash* was not feasible, they did not make it a requirement to use olive oil.

The Gemara does mention that it is preferable to use olive oil. *Tosfos* explains that this is because it burns better. The Rama adds that since the reason for the preference of olive oil is that it burns better, we do not need to use oil per se, and the prevalent custom was to use wax candles, since they burn nicely.

The Rama, however, in *Darkei Moshe* mentions that olive oil is preferable because it was the oil that was used at the time of the miracle. This is also mentioned in the *Me'iri*.

Hidur to use the precise oil used in the Beis Hamikdash

In fact, there is a *hidur* (beautification of the *mitzvah*) quoted in the name of Rav Elyashiv, to use the precise oil that was used in the *Beis Hamikdash*. He rules that the oil should be edible, as only oil that was edible was *kosher* to be used in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Similarly, cooked oil was invalid for use in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Hence, one should use oil that is cold pressed and not cooked. The third *hidur* is to take out the seeds, since the oil from the seeds is not considered olive oil and was not *kosher* for the *menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Congeaed Oil

There is an interesting question about using congealed oil, since in the solid state it is not a liquid and not *halachically* considered oil. The *Shevet Halevi* was of the opinion that although congealed oil may not have been allowed in the *Beis Hamikdash*, it may still be used for *Chanukah*. Since as the oil starts burning it will return to a liquid state, it is similar enough to the oil of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and will suffice for the *hidur* of using olive oil on *Chanukah*. However, Rav Shternbuch, in *Teshuvos V'hanhagos* asserts that congealed oil should not be used.

Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

מוהל מומחה

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Do You Like Your Son's Yeshivah?

Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation

Mordechai, whose son is starting yeshivah next year, saw me learning with my son at Avos Ubanim. Afterwards, Mordechai said, "I see your son is learning so nicely. Yeshivah Yeled Tov must do a great job! Do you recommend it?" The problem is that I don't recommend Yeled Tov. I'm in the final year there with my youngest child and I've seen it all. It's poorly run and the rebbeim did not connect with my sons. The only reason my son learns so nicely is because I put a lot of effort into him. Can I tell Mordechai: "I don't recommend this yeshivah?"

THE DILEMMA

THE HALACHAH

Yes, but you should not give a blanket negative report about the yeshivah.

Speaking negatively about an institution is also *loshon hora*, but if it will prevent a loss to someone, it is permitted. But saying "I don't recommend it" is too vague. Rather, Aryeh should ask Mordechai for specific questions, and when he answers, he should add some positive points about the yeshivah ("The yeshivah has some very good boys.") Aryeh should not put down the yeshivah as a whole. Furthermore, if Aryeh's son had a specific issue, Aryeh should mention that. It could be that the yeshivah was not suited to Aryeh's son.

Reviewed by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy, shlitza. For discussion only; pls consult a rav. From Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation's Shabbos Menu info@powerofspeech.org.

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

SHUIRIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

- Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45pm
- Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00pm
- ZERA SHIMSHON SHUIR | 8:15-9:00pm Thursday Nights

ADDITIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMS:

- Yarchei Kallah / Shuirim on Legal Holidays - by acclaimed Guest Speakers
- Yeshivas Bein Hazmanim
- Yeshivas Kiyumu v'Kiblu / Purim Shushan Purim
- Shovevim Program / Early Friday morning learning b'retzifus.
- Evening Shuirim in Halacha and Hashkafa by prominent Morei Horah



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How Could Yaakov Avinu Send Yosef to the Lion's Den?

ועתה לנו ונהרגו ונשלכהו באחד הבורות ואמרנו חיה רעה אכלתהו,
(37:12) ונראה מה יהיו חלומותיו

“And now, come and let us kill him, and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, ‘A wild beast devoured him.’ Then we will see what will become of his dreams.” Chazal tell us that undoubtedly the *shevatim* were great and holy people. How are we to understand this *Posuk*, that they were literally prepared to kill Yosef, and that they sold him?

There was a master plan in place, and *Klal Yisroel* needed to go down to *Mitzrayim*. They needed to be slaves there, to leave *Mitzrayim*, and be *zoche* to receive the *Torah hakdoshah*. Hakodosh Boruch Hu had foretold this to Avrohom Avinu, and it was what *Klal Yisroel* needed in order to receive the *Torah Hakdoshah*, the most precious thing in the world. Why did Yaakov Avinu send Yosef to check on his brothers, when he knew that they hated him and it would be very dangerous for him? The answer is, it didn't make sense. This was what was needed and thus it happened. The brothers needed to sell Yosef so that Yaakov and his family would end up in *Mitzrayim*, and that would set up their ultimate redemption from *Mitzrayim*.

If we are saying that the brothers did not have *bechirah*, choice, in selling Yosef, then why was there such a severe punishment for doing so? The test for the holy brothers was how they would deal with it after they sold him. When Binyamin is accused of stealing Yosef's goblet, he takes them to task – and says how dare you accuse me, when you were the ones who dipped Yosef's

tunic into blood so that our father would think he was dead. That was the sin of the *shevatim*. They were very holy individuals, but on their level, they should have overcome it. They should have admitted to their father what they did. Perhaps it would have caused Yaakov to go down to *Mitzrayim* earlier, and the entire process of receiving the Torah would have happened earlier.

The upcoming Yom Tov of Chanukah is all about *pirsum hanes*, publicizing the miracle. We are to publicize the great miracle Hakodosh Boruch Hu performed, and we must know that He is running the world. If *chas v'sholom* we sin, we must not try to sweep it under the rug, for that makes things worse. Yehudah taught us how we are to act after “sinning.” Yehudah sinned with Tamar, yet we don't see anywhere that he was punished. He was not punished, for that was not his test. His test was after; to see how he would deal with it.

The light shone brightly from Yehudah, and he said, צדקה ממני – Tamar is righteous; I am the one. He admitted to his act, and he passed his test with flying colors. When it came time for Yaakov to send someone down to *Mitzrayim* to prepare for *Klal Yisroel* going down, he sent Yehudah to set up a *Yeshivah*. It was Yehudah who understood that one can only have the proper resolve, and know how to act, if he is connected to the *Torah hakdoshah*. Chanukah is a time to connect the *torah hakdoshah*, to our *mitzvos* and to all of our actions. May we be *zoche* to see the true light, the *ohr haganuz*, with the coming of *Mashiach*, במהרה בימינו אמן.

The Treasures Within

One of the special gifts we receive from our Creator is the power to create! The creative urge is strong when not blocked by our own insecurities (“what will it look like”) or the critical voice inside of us (“you can't do that!”). The power to create can help us achieve anything we do.

Destiny is always a willing partner to our dreams, but first we must seal the connection and the results can be potent. Many years ago in Bnei Brak there lived a Yid by the name of R' Yaakov Schwartz. R' Yaakov had recently arrived from Europe. The year was 1938 and R' Yaakov decided to open a *makolet*. An Ehrlicher Jew, he was befriended by and admired for his piety by none other than the Chazon Ish, his next door neighbor. R' Yaakov's *Makolet* was the largest supermarket in young Bnei Brak, but it consisted of just a few shelves of produce and staple items.

Chanuka was arriving soon and R' Yaakov had bought 5 small bottles of olive oil. But the prices were beyond expensive. Who would be able to pay the high cost, he wondered?

The bottles were delicate and R' Yaakov placed them on the top of the very highest shelf. One day an older, distinguished gentleman walked into the store to purchase one of these flasks. Climbing up on a makeshift ladder, R' Yaakov's hands slipped and the bottles came tumbling down from above. One of the bottles rolled into an open drainpipe. After hours of searching the pipe, they abandoned their quest. The bottle had fallen all the way down to the Te'home, the underbelly, they surmised as they gave up.

Fast forward to November 1948, the economic situation was desperate- there was not a drop of any kind of oil to be found. The

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



wife of the Chazon Ish visited daily in hopes of securing one of the bottles that R' Yaakov Schwartz had ordered. Daily, she visited. “Has the shipment come in yet?” she asked R' Yaakov's wife? “My husband says it will hopefully arrive before the holiday,” Mrs. Schwartz replied, “but Rebbetzin Karelitz was hardly placated.

As the final days of the month were approaching, Rebbetzin Karlitz brought word from her husband that there was one flask of oil in the store. R' Schwartz was adamant –unfortunately there would be no oil of any kind (even baby oil) this year.

Returning later, the Rebbetzin assured Mrs. Schwartz, “my husband claims that there is a bottle on the premises.” Undaunted, and with a fierce faith in Talmidei Chachamim, Mrs. Schwartz's memory finally jarred open, “Do you recall what happened perhaps 10 years ago? The bottle that rolled down the drain pipe.”

R' Yaakov swung into action, calling some Arab workers they worked to dismantle the shelves. Excavating both ground and pipe they tunneled down six feet or more, and there it was, the oil had been preserved ten years earlier for the Chazon Ish, who gladly covered the excavation costs!

Sometimes, things are hidden - we simply cannot get what we want, what we feel is rightly ours. But when the time is right, events start to beat a path to our door, the fury of destiny behind them. What is rightfully ours can never be truly withheld from us.

Extinguishing Evil or Spreading the Light?

Rabbi Shalom Rosner



It is interesting to note that Yosef is the only one of the twelve shvatim to whom the Torah attributes two reasons for his choice of name. First we are told that Rachel selected the name Yosef “asaf Elokim es herpasi” (God has taken away my reproach; Bereshis 30:23). In the very next pasuk, Rachel provides an additional explanation for naming her son Yosef - “yosef Hashem li ben acher” (may Hashem grant me yet another son!). Essentially these exemplify Yosef’s two strengths, one with respect to the past – (removing Rachel’s past suffering) and a second looking towards the future (Rachel requesting another son in the future).

Yosef transmitted these two strengths to his sons as evidenced by their names. One was called Menashe “shenashani Elokim es kol amali” (God has caused me to forget all my toil and all my father’s house; Bereshis 41:51), relating to forgetting a painful past. The other was named Efraim - “ki hifrani Elokim (God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction), relating to Yosef’s present and future.

We know that the actions of the fathers are signs for their descendants; in this case, these two children represent middos that we all must internalize. We’re referred to as she’eris Yosef and haben yakir li Efraim. We are all Yosef’s children, so we are all Menashe and Efraim. They represent two of our kochos: Menashe represents turning from evil – help me root out my pain, my difficulties, the negative. Efraim represents doing good, gaining the positive. We need to incorporate both “sur me’ra” (avoiding evil) and “asei tov” (actively pursuing good). Klal Yisrael is never referred to as Menashe’s children, because turning from evil is not the ikar. We are called the children of Efraim because the ikar is the obligation, the doing good, the light of Torah. Focusing on doing good will eventually lead to eradicating evil and difficulties.

Rav Zevin and the Shemen Hatov both suggest that these two middos may serve as the root of the well-known makhlokes between Hillel and Shammai. (Shabbos 21). Fire does two things – on one hand, it destroys and removes, yet in addition, it illuminates and shines. Both aspects are necessary. We have to root out our yetzer hara and our negative tendencies, and of course, we have to focus on the positive, to spread the light of the Torah. The Maccabim did both. They had to burn out the Greek mentality, the Hellenistic nature of some Jews, and then they had to purify the Beis HaMikdash and rekindle the Menora’s lights and the light of Torah and mitzvos.

What was the Maccabim’s primary objective? Which aspect do we remember? That’s the makhlokes between Hillel and Shammai. Shammai posits that we descend from lighting eight candles to one, to underscore that the main objective is to root out the negative, symbolized by this descending kindling of the menorah. Hillel believes that the main objective is to spread the light, and the darkness will automatically disappear with the addition of light, so we are to increase the light by increasing a candle each night.

Our practice follows that of Hillel - the main objective is the element of Efraim (spreading the light) over Menashe (extinguishing evil). This Chanukah, let’s take that active approach and share inspiring thoughts so that we can enlighten those around us with the beauty of the Torah.

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12:00 PM
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1:00 PM
Procession & Dancing to
Bais Medrash Ohr Chaim
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10:00 am
Tent A

For Men & Women

The Attitude *towards* Money

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman



Like other *mitzvos*, lighting *ner Chanukah* should be done with one's right hand.

The Rambam writes in *Hilchos Chanukah* 3:1 that we celebrate *Chanukah* because the *Yevanim*, the Greeks, stretched out their hands to Jews' money and daughters – ופשוטו ידם בממונם ובבנותיהם.

Why does the Rambam say that the Greeks stretched out their hands for the money of *Klal Yisrael*, it should say that they stole their money, or they cheated them out of their money, or they seized their money? What does it mean that they stretched out their hands to the money and daughters of *Klal Yisrael*?

A beautiful *vort* was said in the name of Rav Mordechai Shapiro by his son *yibadeil l'chaim*, Rav Efraim. *Upashtu yadam bmemonam* does not mean that the Greeks stole money that belonged to a Jew. Not at all. It has nothing to do with stealing the money that belonged to a Jew. I don't think that we find a Gemara that says that the *Yevanim* stole Jewish money. It means that the Greek culture infiltrated and changed the Jewish money and the Jewish women in a way that was not proper.

Chazal say that the Torah is *sama d'chaya* for he who holds it in his right hand, and it is *sama d'maves* for he who holds it in his left hand. What is the *pshat* in this statement of *Chazal*?

Rav Efraim Shapiro says that the right hand is the one with which you hold what is most important to you, and the left hand is the one with which you hold secondary things. If the Torah is primary, it is *sama d'chaya*, but for someone who holds it with his left hand, meaning that money is more important, honor is more important, a fancy home is more important, comfort is more important, then the Torah is *sama d'maves*. Not only is it not positive, but it is negative. The attitude towards Torah is crucial. When you have an attitude that Torah is primary, you live a *Torahdika* life.

Pashtu yedaihem doesn't mean that we are worried about the Greeks stealing from us, as *goyim* stole from us throughout all of the generations. We are concerned about the Greeks changing us, giving us an American attitude towards money, an American attitude towards *tzniyus*. That is something that there is reason to be afraid of.

This attitude towards money continues throughout our galus in the Western countries that we live in, where the need for money is primary. ופשוטו ידם בממונם means the *Yevanim* stuck their hands into our pockets, not to steal our money, but rather, on the contrary, in order to make money so important to us that it overrides the other things that we know we have to do to be *matzliach* in *avodas Hashem*.



BELOW TEN TEFACHIM

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman



The Rambam (*Hilchos Chanukah* 4:12) writes, "The *mitzvah* of lighting Chanukah *licht* is an extremely beloved *mitzvah*, and a person must be cautious with it." Why are Chanukah *licht* called a *mitzvah chaviva meod*, an extremely beloved *mitzvah*? We will explain with a *mashal*:

There was a poor girl who married a very wealthy man. She felt honored to live in the large mansion. She had never lived amidst so much wealth before. But one day, she told her husband that she preferred her old, humble home, where she lived before she got married.

The husband agreed to move to his wife's old home to please her. The wife was overjoyed since now she knew that her husband loved her. She enjoyed a better lifestyle when they lived in the mansion, but she thought: "He brought me to his fancy home because he lives there. Where else should he bring me? This doesn't prove that he loves me." But when she saw that her husband was prepared to forgo pleasure and comfort to please her, that assured his love to her.

That is why the Rambam calls Chanukah *licht* a very beloved *mitzvah*. It is very special because on Chanukah, Hashem comes down to our low levels to raise us, proving that He loves us. He comes down to us to elevate us so that we can be close to Him.

The *Meor Einayim* writes, "The *Shechinah* never descends below *ten tefachim* (see *Succah* 5). However, Hashem makes sure that no Jew will be detached from Him. So, during the miracle of Chanukah, Hashem *kiveyachol* comes down below *ten tefachim*. He comes close to man to bring him back up to Him."

The *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz *zt'l* said, "On Shabbos, Hashem brings us up to Him. On Yom Tov, Hashem comes down to us. On Chanukah, Hashem visits His children in prison." It is the holiday for the people imprisoned by the *yetzer hara* and distant from Hashem's presence. On this holiday, Hashem comes to them.

The *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz *zt'l* explains, "When a king is on his throne in his palace, the average person can't visit him. Surely, those being punished by the king won't be able to visit the king. However, when the king travels around his kingdom, it's his custom to visit the prisoners in jail. At this time, the prisoners shout, 'King! Save us!' This is what happens on Chanukah. Hashem comes to us to save us from our imprisonment."

One night, before lighting Chanukah *licht*, the Tolna Rebbe *zt'l* asked a *chassid* who had a short wife, "When you speak to your wife, does she climb up on a chair to speak to you or do you bend down to speak with her?" After asking this question, the Rebbe lit the Chanukah *licht*.

Rebbe Mordechai Dov of Hornesteipel *zt'l* explained the Tolna Rebbe's intention. The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 59.) says, "If you have a short wife, bend down to seek her counsel." The Tolna Rebbe hinted that on Chanukah, Hashem *keviyachol* bends down to whichever level we are on to elevate us.

The *Sfas Emes* writes, "Chanukah is mostly for the *chalashim* and the *beinonim*." Chanukah is mainly for the *Yidden* who are at a low or mediocre level. Chanukah is their opportunity to come close to Hashem.



The Benefits of Mitzvot

Rabbi Eli Mansour

We read in *Parashat Vayeishev* the difficult story of Yosef and his brothers. The Torah describes the enmity that the brothers felt toward Yosef, and their decision to sell him as a slave. Among the many questions that have been asked regarding this incident is how God allowed Yosef to suffer harm when, at his father's behest, he traveled to Shechem to check on his brothers. Our *chachamim* taught us a famous rule known as "*Sheluchey mitzvah enam nizokim*" – people do not suffer harm while involved in performing *mitzvot*. When a person goes to do a *mitzvah*, Hashem grants him special protection from harm. The question thus arises, how could Yosef meet this tragic fate, being thrown into a pit and then sold into slavery, when he was fulfilling the *mitzvah* of honoring parents? His father instructed him to visit his brothers, and he obediently complied. Why was he not granted God's protection? What happened to the rule of "*Sheluchey mitzvah enam nizokim*"?

The *Or Ha'haim* (Rav Haim Ben-Attar, 1696-1743) suggested an answer that is very relevant to our lives. He explains that in truth, Yosef did not suffer harm as a result of this *mitzvah*. Although he was sold as a slave, this sequence of events ultimately turned out to be a great blessing. It was decreed that *Am Yisrael* would endure exile in a foreign land, and as a result of Yosef's sale as a slave in Egypt, Bnai Yisrael moved to Egypt under the protection of the Egyptian government, as Yosef rose to the position of viceroy. And, because of Yosef,

grain was stored in Egypt ahead of the years of drought, thus ensuring that Bnai Yisrael would be supported during this harsh period. Yosef himself tells his brothers later in *Sefer Bereshit* (50:20) that although they intended to cause him harm, Hashem worked it out for everyone's benefit.

Thus, Yosef's experiences are entirely consistent with the principle of "*Sheluchey mitzvah enam nizokim*." Although he suffered short-term harm, in the long-run, his *mitzvah* of obeying his father yielded enormous benefit for himself, his father and his brothers.

We know situations where, unfortunately, a person was struck by tragedy as a result of a *mitzvah*. Such incidents can pose an enormous challenge to one's faith in the value of *mitzvot*. The story of Yosef must remind us that *mitzvah* performance is always to our long-term benefit. We cannot always understand how, just as Yosef likely could not understand how his status as a slave in a foreign land would prove beneficial. But we must retain our faith under all circumstances that *mitzvot* are beneficial. "*Sheluchey mitzvah enam nizokim*" – people involved in *mitzvot* will always benefit from the *mitzvot* they perform. Somehow, in the end, the *mitzvot* will prove to have been to their benefit, even if in the short-term this benefit cannot be seen. We can draw inspiration and encouragement from the remarkable story of Yosef, bolstering our faith in the ultimate value of *mitzvot*, even when we cannot immediately recognize this value.

The Lesson of the Ness Nigleh

Rabbi Yaakov Neuberger torahweb.org

"And a man found [Yosef] him and he was wandering in the field and the man asked him, '*what do you seek*'(37:15)". At first glance this *pasuk* seems to add nothing to the narrative. The details of Yosef's search for his brothers are all left to our imagination and are seemingly inconsequential bar this one unremarkable event that occurred to the wandering Yosef. The fact that it is singled out signals to Chazal that even if the man appeared as a person, he was no less than the maloch Gavriel on a divine mission. Indeed, the sale of Yosef would have never occurred if not for this one meeting. Perhaps Yosef would have continued to wander and returned home reporting the unsuccessful search for his brothers. Thus this moment teaches us, as the Ramban explains, that Hashem was guiding all the events leading up to the sale of Yosef and that He wanted the Egyptian exile to unfold in this manner.

More importantly, it would be a source of instruction and strength for Yosef for years to come. Throughout the many times that Yosef would feel desperate and forsaken by family and by Hashem, he would be able to look back at this moment and be reassured that Hashem's watchful eye was directing his life's course. It was these moments of clarity when Hashem allowed Himself to be revealed, that illuminated moments of ambiguity and aloneness, which would have otherwise left room for doubts of Hashem's providence.

This life perspective quite possibly may have been part of the upbringing of Yosef. His father's fight with the maloch [angel], according to the Ramban, occurred in order to shape the way that Yakov would view his upcoming meeting with Eisav, much as it should shape our understanding of the entire parsha as well. If not for the struggle with the maloch, one could have easily

thought that Eisav came with good intentions, never planning to engage Yaakov in battle. After all, when they meet, Eisav appears to be a benevolent brother having long buried his difficulties with a paranoid younger brother. In the midst of all of this uncertainty comes the fight with the maloch, the moment of clarity that teaches us the true intentions of Eisav and his four hundred men. Once again it is the moment of Hashem's revelation that interprets the series of events that are to follow.

This pattern of interplay between the *ness nigleh* [revealed miracle] and the *ness nistar* [hidden miracle] is at the core of the celebration of *Chanuka*. Here too the war is the classic *ness nistar*, as one could have forever questioned Hashem's involvement in our military success. It should not surprise us that the Macabbeans were venerated for their battlefield skills and their cunning stratagems. "*Rabim beyad meatim*" [many given into the hands of the few] could have been attributed to the skills of dedicated Macabbeans. However, the seemingly unnecessary miracle of the oil was the *ness nigleh* to show that all that transpired was miraculous even if slightly hidden.

What is the purpose of a *ness nistar* if one receives the *ness nigleh* in a separate context? What are we to learn from the coupling of revelations rather than the more efficient single *ness nigleh* necessary to address our needs?

It seems to me that the *ness nigleh* reassures and directs us to carefully analyze all of life's events and actively discover Hashem within them. As a result, we proceed to pierce the veil of nature and coincidence, earning the singular privilege of participating in the revealing of Hashem and making His presence all the more palpable for all.

Tips the Parenting Books Won't Tell You

The un-PC guide to being a real parent

Rabbi Tzvi Freeman

Part I



The good news is that they are cute and little. The bad news is that you're going to have to grow up. The parenting books don't tell you how to do that. But don't sweat it. Here's everything they left out, in a few simple points:

Feed Thyself

Always carry a snack. Not for the kids—for yourself. Hungry parents make lousy parents. One piece of kosher chocolate can do wonders for your parenting skills.

Grow Up

To be a parent, you need to become an adult. Who will teach you to be an adult? Your parents failed. Your teachers failed. Your manager failed. But your child can do it. Your child, after all, made you a parent—just by being born. Pay real close attention, and you'll hear how she's trying to make you into an adult as well. As Rabbi Chantina confessed, "Most of what I know, I got from my students."

Same with your kid—but much, much more.

Meditate

When the kids are bouncing off the walls, sit still and do nothing. Close your eyes, calm down and relax. Open your eyes, and all the kids have calmed down as well. Okay, maybe they haven't. But you'll be in better condition to deal with the situation. Works better than chocolate (which you can now save for your grumpy hunger attack, later).

Where did I get this from? None other than the Baal Shem Tov. Kids, he taught, are tuned into your thoughts. If you're having problems with your kids, fix up your thoughts.

Be There for Them

When the teacher calls to complain that your kid is doing lousy and needs help with homework, take the kid out and play catch. He has enough enemies already. He needs a friend. And when the principal calls you with that "I know you really don't want to hear this" voice, explain that we're both on the same side — the side of your kid. You are your child's only advocate in the world. Think of Jacob, father of the Jews, who called his sons his brothers. I'm sure they treated him like a king, but he thought of them as brothers — because he was there at their side to help them. And so, they were at his side, at his time of need, to help him.

Listen

Good parents talk a lot to their kids. Great parents mostly listen. Especially to the ones that don't say anything. They need the most listening to.

Modeling

Everything you disliked about your parents, you ended up imitating. Guaranteed, the same will happen with your kids. It's an instinct. Maybe they're not imitating you now, but in ten years, twenty years — at some point they will, whether they like it or not.

So keep doing the good stuff, even when they don't like it. And whatever you don't want your child to do, don't do it yourself. Want your kids to speak politely? Speak politely to them. Don't want them to yell? Don't yell at them. Want them to be good Jews? Do Jewish things.

Whatever it is — imagine what you want them to be, and act that way yourself. And if you fail, admit your failure and make amends. They'll imitate that too.



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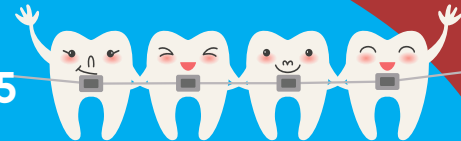
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This Chanukah Savor the Moment

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg



Several studies have shown that adopting routines can make you more productive. Routine is a hallmark of efficiency and can also help harness your creativity. Many successful, creative people swear by the routines they formed: author Stephen King famously sits down at the same time every morning, which he believes allows his writing to “kick on.” Routine is a hallmark of many big thinkers: Geniuses like Steve Jobs and Albert Einstein liked to wear the same thing every day in order to not expend mental energy on wardrobe decisions.

Perhaps that is why Yaakov wanted to finally settle into a routine. *Vayeishev Yaakov b'eretz m'gurei aviv*, Yaakov settled in his father's homeland. Rashi quotes Chazal: *Bikeish Ya'akov leishev b'shalva*, Yaakov wanted to live with a quiet routine, he wanted to settle into a peaceful and stable life and lifestyle. Until now, his whole life has been characterized by tension, conflict, living on the run and often in fear. No two days have been the same. All he wants is *leishev b'shalva*, he wants to retire, settle down, and develop a routine in life.

Yet, for some reason, Hashem saw this desire and goal as detrimental and inappropriate. In fact, instead of giving Yaakov peace of mind and a stable routine, *kafatz alav rogzo shel Yosef*, the most tumultuous and stressful episode of Yaakov's life ensues. Somehow, craving a peaceful routine was so wrong it actually served as the catalyst for Hashem mixing things up. Why?

The truth is that while there are benefits to routines, when people are too settled in their routine, complacency and contentment result. Complacency breeds apathy, one of the biggest obstacles to growth and progress. It also leads to poor decision-making and being blind to new choices and possibilities that could benefit us.

Researchers have long studied why people purchase name-brand items when the equivalent generic is available with a significant cost savings, which could compound to real money. This phenomenon is noteworthy for drugs, when generics and branded options are chemically equivalent. Why continue to buy a name-brand aspirin when the same chemical compound sits next to it on the shelf at a cheaper price? Scientists have already verified that the two forms of aspirin are identical. The only difference is the label and the price. And yet, most buy the name brand. Why? Habit, ritual, and thoughtless routine.

So, on the one hand, habits are powerful; they can help promote creativity and efficiency. But on the other hand, habits and routines can deny us the openness and flexibility to learn, to see new things, to grow, experiment, adjust and make changes that will improve us and improve our lives.

This week we begin the holiday of Chanukah and the *mitzvah* of lighting the *menorah*. The *mitzvah* begins after sunset and the *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 21a) tells us, it extends עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק, until people are no longer walking around in the marketplace. The goal and purpose of the light of the menorah is פרסומי ניסא, to publicize God's great miracles. So once there are no longer people present to see the lights, the *mitzvah* is no longer applicable. In the time of the *Gemara*, and even the *Shulchan Aruch*, this time was a relatively short time after nightfall when people couldn't function outside

without natural light. Today, with artificial light, the time is significantly later.

So many of us are caught in the hamster wheel of life. We wake up, go to work, maybe exercise, brainlessly relax, go to sleep, wake up and start again. Or we wake up, make lunches, drive carpool, shop, cook, do homework, serve dinner, collapse, wake up and start again. Or some combination of the two. What these routines all have in common, is being carried by inertia and momentum, moving at such a fast pace that there is no time or space, no margin or room to ever stop, look, assess, evaluate and mindfully determine if we are allocating our time, energy and resources in the most optimal way, or if we are just creatures of routines, products of habits that were somehow formed at some time and have become our default, our normal, our assumed.

Chanukah can give us the energy to have the courage and will to תכלה הרגל, to break the habits and see the light, literally and figuratively. Imagine eight consecutive nights of half an hour screen-free time together lighting candles, singing Ma'oz Tzur, dancing to great music, sharing gifts, spinning the dreidel, sharing Divrei Torah, or however you want to spend it. Eight nights of quality, uninterrupted family time. You don't have to imagine it – it can be our reality this *Chanukah* and beyond, if only we are willing to break free from the routine.

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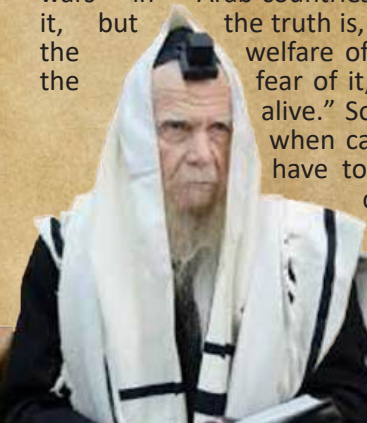


The Revolutions in Arab Countries Are a Wake-up Call for Us

Maran Rav Gershon Edelstein ztvk"l

There's a pasuk in Yeshayah (42:25), "And it blazed all around him and he did not know and it burned within him and he did not pay attention." At first, there are calamities "going around" — in other countries, but if that's not enough, and "he did not know" —the person doesn't wake up to rectify his ways, then "it burned within him" —we are struck with tragedies and calamities in our own circles *Rachmana litzlan*, and we still don't take it to heart, we still don't think about why it happened.

If we don't think about what *Shamayim* wants from us, it leads to an even more severe situation with worse calamities, *Rachmana litzlan*. (See *Shaarei Teshuvah* 2:2.) For many days already, there have been tragedies near us, revolutions and wars in Arab countries. Some people are happy about it, but the truth is, *Chazal* said (*Avos* 3:2), "Pray for welfare of the government, for if not for fear of it, man would swallow his fellow alive." So how is it possible to be happy when calamities are still occurring? We have to be aware of the fact that all calamities are meant to wake us up to strengthen ourselves and do teshuvah. We still don't see any special chizuk in the tzibbur; maybe there's just a little something in the recesses of your hearts.



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JOKES

Easy Answers

1. Why did the math book look so sad?

Because it had too many problems.

2. Why don't skeletons fight each other?

They don't have the guts.

3. What do you call fake spaghetti?

An impasta!

4. Why did the scarecrow win an award?

Because he was outstanding in his field.

Shlomy walks into a hat store looking for a new shtreimel. He tries one on and asks the shopkeeper, "Does this shtreimel make me look distinguished?"

The shopkeeper smiles and says, "Oh, absolutely—it's perfect! And if you want to look even more distinguished, I can show you the one with the price tag that's twice as much!"

I was getting my hair cut at a neighborhood shop, and I asked the barber when the best time would be to bring in my two-year-old son. Without hesitation, the barber answered, "When he's four."

Pickup Mixup

Husband brings the child home from kindergarten and asks his wife, "He's been crying the whole way home. Isn't he sick or something?"

"No," replies the wife, "he was just trying to tell you he isn't our Chaim."

Fee Meet Cop

Two police officers crash their car into a tree. After a moment of silence, one of them says, "Wow, that's got to be the fastest we ever got to the accident site."

A man to a psychiatrist: "How do you select who should be admitted to your facility?"

The psychiatrist replies: "We fill

a bathtub with water and give the person a spoon, a cup and a bucket. Then we ask that person to empty the bathtub."

The man smiles: "Ah, I understand, if you are sane you would take the bucket."

The Psychiatrist replies: "No, a sane guy pulls the plug. Do you want a room with or without a balcony?"

The people of Chelm decided they needed a new shul clock. They sent Moishe to the city to buy the best one he could find. Moishe returned with a huge sundial.

Everyone admired it, but someone asked, "What do we do if it rains?"

Moishe smiled and said, "That's simple! We'll just wait until the sun comes out to know what time it was!"

Have No Fear. You're Not Lost

Meyer and Judith, an elderly Jewish couple, were traveling together to the Far East. Suddenly, over the aircraft's speaker system, the captain announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am afraid I have some very bad news. Our engines have developed a problem, and we need to put this plane down in a few minutes' time. The good news is that I can see an island below us that should be able to accommodate our landing. The bad news is that this island appears to be uncharted—I am unable to find it on our maps. So the odds are that we will have to stay on the island for a long time before any rescue comes, if ever."

Meyer turns to Judith, "Judith, dear, did we turn off the oven?"

"Of course."

"Are our life insurance policies paid up?"

"Of course."

"Did we pay our pledge for the Kol Nidre appeal?"

"Oh my, I forgot to send off the check."

"Thank Heavens! They'll find us for sure!!"



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Chanukah: Then and Now

Tuesday, Dec. 24

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For Men & Women

