

וְהֵנָּה קָמָה אֶלְמָתִי  
וְגַם-נִצְבָּה, וְהֵנָּה  
תִּסְבֵּינָה אֶלְמַתֵּיכֶם  
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### SHABBOS

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<b>MINCHA/MAARIV</b>	Pirchei <b>2:00 PM</b>	18 Main Mincha <b>4:10 PM</b>	Shkiya <b>4:28 PM</b>	Tent א Maariv :40 <b>5:08 PM</b>	18 Main Maariv :50 <b>5:18 PM</b>

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**12 MIN.** before shkia

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## RABBI DANIEL COREN



### Can't or Don't Want To

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 285) rules that a person should read *shnaim Mikrah v'echad Targum* — read each weekly *parsha* twice in the Hebrew and once in translation. The classic translation we use is *Targum Onkelos*, traditionally attributed to an early authoritative chain going back to Sinai through Moshe Rabbeinu. Onkelos often preserves emphases and shades of meaning that are easy to miss in a quick reading of the *p'sukim*, and every so often, it yields a little gem that changes how we understand a story.

This week's gem comes in the story of Yosef and his brothers. The *passuk* tells us that the brothers "could not speak to him in peace" — ולא יכלו דברו לשלום. At first glance, the language sounds like they were helpless: they simply couldn't speak peacefully. If they truly were incapable, how can they be blamed? How do we explain the long-term consequences the nation later suffered — the animosities and even harsh decrees that Chazal say were a result of their hatred? (See Rabbeinu Bachya in *Parshas Mikeitz*, who connects the brothers' hatred to the later suffering of the nation.)

Onkelos slips in a single extra word: ולא צבן. The root צ-ב-נ / צ-ב-א (tzava/tsavon) is related to desire, wanting. Read together: They did not want to speak to him in peace. In other words, the Torah records how it appeared to them — "they couldn't" — but Onkelos tells us what was true at the core: they didn't want to. The difference is crucial. The Torah writes the reality as it presented itself to them; the *Targum* exposes the inner will.

That brings us to an important principle: אין דבר העומד בפני הרצון — nothing stands before the will. If a person truly wants to change, to act, or to make peace, they can summon the will to do so. The brothers' failure was not a metaphysical incapacity; it was a moral failure of unwillingness.

This is exactly the spirit of the Chashmona'im. When the Greeks imposed their culture and tyrannized the Jewish people, the Maccabees rejected the passive claim "we can't" and instead embodied the opposite: "we will." We will fight for our Torah and our light. That is why the miracle of Chanukah is not only military success or oil burning longer than expected; it is a celebration of the inner resolve to reclaim identity and practice against the voice that insists "it's impossible."

So the lesson for us is practical and immediate. Too often, we hear the inner voice that says, "I can't change my habit," or "I can't forgive," or "I can't break this pattern." But the brothers' story and Onkelos remind us to examine: Is it truly that we cannot — or that we do not want to? If we want to, and we ask Hashem for help, we discover surprising reserves of strength. Chanukah, then, is our annual reminder that with will and Divine help, the impossible can become possible.

Takeaway: The Torah's language may describe how people felt; the *Targum* reveals what choice was possible. Choose to want, enlist Hashem, and you'll be surprised by what change is possible.

## RABBI YAKOV YOSEF SCHECHTER



### Gan HaTorah

#### YOSEF/CHANUKAH - ALL ABOUT TEFILLAH

ויאמר ישראל אל יוסף הלא אחיך רעים בשכם לכה ואשלחך אליהם

As far as the brothers were concerned, Yosef snitched on them — he told their father that they had sinned. There was no love lost between Yosef and his brothers. Since there was an obvious dislike, to put it mildly, why did Yaakov Avinu send Yosef to check on his brothers? Wasn't Yaakov Avinu concerned that perhaps the brothers might harm Yosef?

Yaakov knew that they did not have a good relationship, but he also knew that these were the *Shivtei Koh*, holy individuals. Certainly, they would never harm Yosef, as that would be against the Torah. The brothers were indeed holy individuals. However, it appears that in this scenario, their generally excellent thought process was clouded due to their intense dislike for Yosef. The brothers sat in *din Torah* and *paskened* that Yosef was a *rodef*, he was chasing after them. He was telling their father that they were sinning, when, in fact, they had done no evil. Thus, they felt compelled to act in this manner. When they threw him into a pit with snakes and scorpions, they firmly believed that Hashem runs the world. If indeed Yosef's dreams were real *nevuah*, then certainly they would come to fruition, and no animals would be able to stop them. If they were a *nevuah*, no harm would come to Yosef from the animals, for he would become king.

The brothers thought that this was a great way to test out if Yosef was indeed correct, and either way, they were doing no wrong. If indeed Yosef was a *rodef*, and the dreams were nothing more than dreams, then the animals would kill him, a just punishment for his actions. If he was really innocent, and his dreams were accurate, he would be saved from the animals.

The *Maharsha* says that when one is *mispallel* that he be saved from something, it does not decrease his merits. This rule applies any time one is *mispallel*, for *tefillah* is part of the natural order of the world, and it works. The brothers knew that if Yosef was really innocent, he would be *mispallel* and would not be harmed and would not lose any of his *zechuyos*. This was all part of the master plan of Hashem that would send Klal Yisroel down to Mitzrayim and, ultimately, to the *geulah* of Mitzrayim, which was followed by *Matan Torah*.

Chanukah is for eight nights, while the miracle of one day's oil lasting for eight nights was only a miracle for seven days. That *tefillah* works is considered part of the natural order of the world, but really it isn't. We must realize that it is all from Hashem, and when He answers our *tefillos*, that is a miracle, just as other "miracles" are. Chazal tell us that Klal Yisroel had the *koach* of *tefillah* at that time. They were *mispallel* to Hashem with great intensity and were *zoche* to win a completely lopsided battle, a battle in which they should have been crushed. Instead, they returned with a great victory. They were *mispallel* that they should find oil, and they found for one night. It did not detract from the *zechuyos*, but was nonetheless a miracle, and thus we have Chanukah for eight nights.

May we be *zoche* to tap into the great power of *tefillah*, and may we be *mispallel* with great intensity that Hashem take us out of this dark *golus* and that we be *zoche* to the *geulah shelaima*, במהרה בימינו אמן!

# RABBI YY JACOBSON



## Cold Soup

Rabbi Manis Friedman once shared the following thought:

Three thousand three hundred and fifteen years ago, G-d asked us if we would marry Him. We had an extraordinary wedding ceremony, with great special effects—we were wowed. After the wedding, He said, “I have a few things I’d like you to take care of for Me, so please... I’ll be right back.” He hasn’t been heard from since, for more than three thousand three hundred years. He has sent messengers, messages, postcards—you know, writing on the walls... but we haven’t heard a word from Him in all this time.

Imagine, a couple gets married, and the man says to his new wife, “Would you make me something to eat, please? I’ll be right back.” She begins preparing. The guy comes back 3,300 years later, walks into the house,

up to the table, straight to his favorite chair, sits down, and tastes the soup that is on the table. The soup is cold.

What will his reaction be? If he’s a wise man, he won’t complain. Rather, he’ll think it’s a miracle that the house is still there, that his table and favorite chair are still there. He’ll be delighted to see a bowl of soup at his place. The soup is cold? Well, yes, over 3,300 years, soup can get cold.

Now we are expecting Moshiach. If Moshiach comes now and wants to judge, what’s he going to find? Cold soup?

He will find an incredibly healthy Jewish people. After 3,300 years, we are concerned about being Jewish, which means we are concerned about our relationship with G-d.

Yes, if Moshiach comes today, he’ll find that our soup is cold. We suffer from separation anxiety. We suffer from a loss of connection to our ancestors. We suffer a loss of con-

nection even to our immediate family. The soup is cold. The soup is very cold. But whose fault is that? And who gets the credit for the fact that there is soup altogether?

We are a miracle. All we need to do is tap into it. We are the cure. Not only for ourselves, but also for the whole world. So let Moshiach come now and catch us here with our cold soup because we have nothing to be ashamed of. We are truly incredible. When G-d decided to marry us, He knew He was getting a really good deal.

A Jew is a child of G-d. A Jew is a prince. A Jew is the holiest of the holy. A Jew is truly one with G-d. And even when you look at yourself in the mirror and you feel disloyal, the truth is that your ultimate loyalty remains to G-d, to truth, to holiness, to purity.

Moshiach is ready to come. May we see him now!

SHIUR SCHEDULE

**MONDAY & THURSDAY** Chassidus Shiur 7:45 AM (18 Main) • **TUESDAY** Womens Shiur 9:30 AM (84 Viola Rd)  
**SHABBOS** Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs) • **Morning 8:40 AM** (20 Upstairs) | **After Davening 12:00 PM** (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.

# RABBI DON JARASHOW



## Nun, Ches, Lamed

The *brachah* we recite when lighting the menorah, according to the Arizal, is נרות חנוכה להדליק.

The Arizal teaches that the ראשי תיבות of this *brachah*, when rearranged, spell the word “לחן.” This is a profound allusion to the *pasuk*: “לשם חתה נפשו” – *Our soul yearns for Hashem*” (Tehillim 33:20).

This teaches us that the act of lighting the menorah symbolizes our deep longing for and connection to Hashem. It is not only the performance of a mitzvah, but also an opportunity to express our spiritual yearning and devotion.

As we approach the mitzvah of הדלקת נרות, we must recognize the immense spiritual potential of this moment, of the *hadlakah* process, or more correctly, experience. Before rushing off to a party or returning to our mundane daily routines, we should pause and inhale the holiness of these lights. These flames represent more than the miracle of the oil. They reflect our desire and anticipation for Hashem’s light and presence in our lives. לשם חתה נפשו – *Our soul yearns for Hashem.*”

Let us seize this opportunity to connect deeply, allowing the flames of the menorah to illuminate not only our homes but also our hearts and souls.

As elucidated by the *Sefas Emes*, the Arizal offers another profound insight into the *brachah* of נרות חנוכה להדליק, noting that the ראשי תיבות “נחל” – align with the phrase “נוצר חסד לאלפים” from the מידות הרחמים, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. This phrase, which we fervently cry out on Yom Kippur in our plea for Hashem’s mercy and forgiveness, serves as a reminder of His boundless compassion and His yearning to grant us purity and renewal through *teshuvah*.

When we light the menorah, we reconnect with this process. The act of kindling the flames is far more than symbolic – it is transformative. It draws down Hashem’s mercy and provides us with a unique opportunity to cleanse our spiritual essence and recalibrate our focus.

As my rebbi, Rav Yaakov Moshe Katz, would often emphasize, Chanukah is a time to cleanse our spiritual “glasses,” which may have become fogged and obscured by the pervasive influences of Yavan. The נרות חנוכה are an opportunity to restore clarity and focus in our *avodas Hashem*. Through connecting to these sacred *neiros*, we strip away the layers of distraction and confusion, enabling us to experience the brilliance of Hashem’s presence once again.

This holy time of year reminds us that

Hashem is our אב הרחמן, the infinitely compassionate and forgiving Father. He eagerly awaits our return, always ready to grant us a clean slate and bestow upon us the abundant goodness He has in store for us.

When we light the menorah, we invoke the attribute of “נוצר חסד לאלפים,” drawing upon Hashem’s endless kindness and mercy to renew and deepen our bond with Him. These sacred flames are not only a reminder of the miraculous events of Chanukah, but are also a glowing expression of our belief in Hashem’s infinite love, compassion, and readiness to embrace us anew.

## UFARATZTA

RABBI SHALOM BER MUNITZ



### MISHNAYOS BA'AL PEH

Learn Mishnayos by heart, each person according to his capacity, and then while walking in the street, review Mishnayos from memory; you will thereby merit welcoming Moshiach...

==== Hayom Yom Kislev 21

# RABBI NACHUM SCHEINER



## MEHADRIN – ONE PERSON LIGHTS FOR ALL, OR EACH PERSON LIGHTS FOR HIMSELF?

We have seen that the *mehadrin* is to light one per person, and the *mehadrin min hamehadrin* add one candle each night. According to the Rambam, the higher level of *mehadrin* also includes the lower level, and in addition to lighting a candle for each member of the household, we add another candle each night. As the Rambam spells out, if there are 10 members of the household, on the first night 10 candles are lit, and then 20, until they reach 80 on the last night.

*Tosfos*, however, maintains that the higher level of *mehadrin* does not include the lower level, and only one menorah is lit for the entire family. According to *Tosfos*, on the first night, only one candle is lit, even if there are many members of the household, and then two, until they reach eight on the last night.

### DID THE RAMA FOLLOW THE RAMBAM?

How do we *pasken*? Usually, the Sefardim follow the Rambam, and the Ashkenazim follow *Tosfos*. But interestingly, here the Rama – and the Ashkenazim – follows the Rambam, and *in addition* to lighting a candle for each member of the household, we add another candle each night. However, if we take a closer look, we will see that there is a fundamental difference between the Rambam and the Rama.

The Rambam writes that the mitzvah of *mehadrin min hamehadrin* is for one person to light for all the people in the house. If there are 10 members of the family, the head of the house will light 10 candles and add 10 each night until he lights 80 candles on the last night. The Rama, on the other hand, writes that each person in the house lights his own menorah, and if there are 10 people in the house, each person lights his own menorah, starting with one candle and going up to eight.

The Beis Halevi wonders about this. If the Rama is following the Rambam, who rules that *mehadrin min hamehadrin* means that the head of the house lights all of the candles, why did the Rama rule that each person lights his own candles?

### THE BRISKER RAV'S ANSWER

The Brisker Rav explains that although the Rama was following the Rambam, he did change this point because there is another *machlokes* about how to perform a *hiddur mitzvah*, as we find in regard to the *hiddur* of *bris*

*milah*.

The Gemara in *Shabbos* (133b) states that once the *mohel* finished cutting the foreskin, he does not go back to cut the extra pieces of skin that are only cut as a *hiddur*. Rashi and the Tur understand that this Gemara is only referring to *Shabbos*. Since there is *chillul Shabbos* involved, we can only cut this skin while doing the mitzvah. Once the mitzvah is over, going back to cut again would be a separate desecration of the *Shabbos*, which is not allowed. According to this, during the week one could go back and cut the extra skin to enhance the *milah*.

The Rama follows the ruling of the Tur and allows going back and cutting more of the *milah* during the week.

The Rambam, on the other hand, explains that even during the week, we do not go back and cut the extra skin, since it is only a *hiddur*. This is because the Rambam holds that the *hiddur* must be done together with the mitzvah itself. Once the mitzvah is done, it is too late to enhance it.

Thus, we have a fundamental *machlokes* of whether it is possible to enhance a mitzvah after the mitzvah was performed. According to Rashi and the Tur, the *hiddur* can be done afterward as well, and that is why it is beneficial to cut more during the weekday, but not on *Shabbos*, which involves *chillul Shabbos*. But the Rambam holds that the *hiddur* must be done together with the mitzvah itself, and there is no reason to go back even during the week because that would not be considered enhancing the previous mitzvah.

Based on this understanding, the Brisker Rav explains the *machlokes* between the Rambam and the Rama in regard to *ner Chanukah*. According to the Rambam, the *hiddur* must be a part and parcel of the mitzvah, so the *baal habayis* must do all the candle lighting, thereby enhancing the mitzvah.

But the Rama holds that the *hiddur* can be done even after the mitzvah was finished. It is therefore possible for each person to enhance the mitzvah, even after the *baal habayis* has finished lighting.

### SUMMARY

There is a *machlokes* between the Rambam and the Rama. According to the Rambam, one person lights for all the people in the house, and according to the Rama, each person in the house lights his own menorah. This is based on the *machlokes* of whether one can add a *hiddur* even after the mitzvah was done.

## SHIUR SCHEDULE

### KOLLEL BOKER 7:00-8:00AM

Chavrusa learning - Gemara  
Currently: מסכת יומא  
Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei  
Dyoma and relevant topics

### NIGHT KOLLEL 8:15-9:45PM

Chavrusa learning - Halacha  
Currently : הלכות ניבוי אב ואם

### SHIURIM BY ROSH KOLLEL & FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS

Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45 PM  
Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00 PM  
Zera Shimshon Shiur | 8:15-9:00 PM

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"וישב יעקב – רשי: "ביקש לישב בשלווה" (לז, א).

כבר בתור ילד נחשב משה לנער מחונן. מהירות התפיסה שלו, יחד עם זכרונו המופלא הקנו לו מעמד של אחד התלמידים המחוננים ביותר בכיתה. בתחום אחד נחשב משה ל"גאון" של ממש, הזיכרון המעולה והידע הרב שרכש כמעט בכל תחום, הפכו אותו למסמר הכיתה! בכל חידון טריוויה שנערך. כאשר המורה היה שואל למשל מהו השם של עיר הבירה של זאיר, או מי היה נשיאה הרביעי של ארצות הברית, היה משה יורה את התשובה במהירות. רוב ילדי הכיתה לא אהבו במיוחד את הנער השחצן שלא הפסיק להוכיח עד כמה הוא חכם ומוכשר, אבל למשה זה לא היה לאכפת. והוא המשיך להפגין בכל הזדמנות את כשרונו בטריוויה. באחד הימים, התפרסמה בעיתונים ידיעה כי בימים אלו נרקמת תכנית טריוויה עולמית בה יתמודדו מומחי הטריוויה ובעלי הידע הטובים ביותר בעולם, כאשר הזוכה יקבל פרס של 052 אלף דולר. דמיונו של משה דרך, הוא ידע כי הוא חייב להשתתף בחידון המיוחד ולנסות לזכות בפרס הגדול. הוא גם ידע שמלבדו יתמודדו מיטב המוחות בעולם, כך שעליו להתכונן כראוי.

משה עקב אחרי הפרסומים ונרשם במשרד החברה שהפיקה את התוכנית. עד מהרה החלו תכניות המשחקים לעלות לאוויר, ומשה התמודד עם עשרות מומחי טריוויה מכל העולם. המתח של הצופים טיפס מתכנית לתכנית. משתתפי התחרות ידעו כמעט הכול, בכל תחום ובכל נושא, מטבע ועד גאוגרפיה, משירה ועד לרפואה, מבין המתמודדים משה היה שייך לקבוצת הגאונים. על כל שאלה הוא ירה תשובה מהירה, ניכר היה שהוא כלל לא מתאמץ. לא חלף זמן רב והתברר כי על הזכייה הגדולה מתמודדים משה עם עוד שני מתמודדים נוספים מצרפת ורוסיה. המתח בתכנית האחרונה, בה יוכרע מיהו הזוכה הגיעה לשיא צפיה שכמותן לא היו בשנים האחרונות. כל אחד משלשת המתמודדים נשאל בשלב הראשון חמש שאלות, הובהר להם כי במידה ולא ידעו להשיב תעבור השאלה למתמודד הבא. לאחר הסיבוב הראשון התברר כי שלושתם השיבו בקלות על השאלות, השלב הבא היה קשה יותר והוא כלל חמש עשרה שאלות שעליהם צריכים לענות בארבעים וחמש שניות ולהשיב בשלוש שניות לכל שאלה. בסיבוב הזה כבר הייתה הכרעה חלקית, המתמודד הצרפתי כשל בשתי שאלות והשיב עליהם כעבור חמש שניות, כך שנתרו משה והמתמודד הרוסי.

לשלב האחרון נבחרו שאלות קשות בהם נכשלו רוב הנשאלים בחידוני טריוויה לאורך השנים. כדי להעלות את רמת הקושי, התבקשו השנים לענות במהירות על השאלות ובמקביל להקליד במחשב שמולם פרטים רבים ככל האפשר אודות נושא השאלה. הם נשאלו שלוש שאלות קשות במיוחד, כשמיד לאחר התשובות יצאו השופטים לבחון את הפרטים שהקלידו בנושא השאלה. לאחר דקות מתח ארוכות חזרו השופטים והכריזו כי הזוכה הגדול הוא משה, שזכר עשרות פרטים אודות



נושאי השאלות.

קנת הגיע השלב הסופי והמותח ביותר של התוכנית:

משה יישאל שאלה אחת ויחידה. כאשר המתמודד מולו יהיה אדם אקראי שיעלה במחשב, שאליו תחייג מערכת התכנית. משה יתבקש להחליט אם הוא מעדיף לנסות ולענות על השאלה, או לאפשר לאותו אדם ששנה בטעות לטלפון לנסות ולענות. אם יבחר משה לענות ויענה תשובה נכונה, הוא יקבל את הפרס הגדול של מאתיים וחמישים אלף הדולרים. אולם אם יענה האיש שמעבר לקו הטלפון את התשובה הנכונה, יפסיד משה את כל הכסף שצבר עד כה, לטובת המשיב האלמוני.

הרגע הגדול הגיע ומיליוני אנשים שמעו כיצד מחייג הטלפון לבית כל שהוא ברחבי הגלובוס. לאחר ארבעה צלצולים, ענה קולו הצעיר של נער שסיפר כי הוא בין שנים עשרה וחצי והוא מתגורר באוקלנד שבקליפורניה. המנחה ביקש מהנער להשתתף במשחק והוא הסכים בשמחה. משה חייר לעצמו בסיפוק 'מה כבר יודע נער בן שנים עשרה' חשב לעצמו, המנחה ביקש מן הנער לשאול שאלה. והנער שאל מה מספר הפעמים בהם מופיעה מילה מסוימת במגילת היסוד של ארצות הברית. קמטים נראו על פניו של משה והוא מלמל כי אינו זוכר האם המספר הוא שבע או שמונה. ואמר בחיור בטוח: 'אני מעדיף להעביר את השאלה הזו לילד' הוא היה בטוח שהילד בוודאי אינו יודע אפילו מילה ממגילת היסוד של ארצות הברית. 'האם אתה מוכן לענות על השאלה?' שאל מנחה התוכנית. הנער השיב בחיוב ומיד אמר: 'תשע פעמים!' והחל להקריא את כל הפעמים בהם הוזכרה המילה במגילת היסוד לתדהמת הצופים, ולתדהמתו של משה שהחוויר על הבמה בחוסר אונים. לאחר שאומתה התשובה, שאל המנחה את הנער: 'כיצד ידעת לענות על השאלה?' 'לפני כשבוע למדנו על ההיסטוריה של ארצות הברית ואני התלחשתי בזמן השיעור עם ג'פרי חברי הטוב, המורה שהבחין בי משוחח העניש אותי בכתיבת מגילת היסוד של ארצות הברית 04 פעמים' הסביר הנער. 'בדיוק לפני כשעה סיימתי לכתוב את העונש הארוך כך שאני שולט בכל התוכן מילה במילה, קצת אני מבין שהעונש הזה השתלם מאד עבורי. רק רציתי לדעת, במה בדיוק זכיתי...?'

לעיתים נראה לאדם כי הוא סובל בעולם הזה, אך למעשה הסבל כפי שהוא נראה לו אינו אלא שכר וטובה שתעמוד לו בעולם הבא. בפרשתנו אנו רואים כיצד ביקש יעקב לשבת בשלווה ומיד התרגשה עליו צרתו של יוסף. אולם במבט ארוך טווח, אנו רואים בסופו של דבר צרתו של יוסף התבררה כרפואה למכה והכנה לגלות ישראל במצרים. לכן עלינו לדעת, כי בכל משבר שחולף על האדם, ייתכן שזווקא מה שנראה לו כעונש, או כצרה, בסופו של דבר הוא טוב עבורו.

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#### THE DILEMMA

I'm a fundraiser for an organization that helps struggling teens. Once a year, I make my rounds speaking in different shuls around the country, and this year, I think I hit upon the most negative group of Jews in all of America. They kept telling me that it was a waste of money because the kids didn't want help, and if they did, there were plenty of local people they could go to.

At my next stop, everyone was concerned and wanted to help. I started my speech by joking that I was happy to be in such a warm community, so I could defrost from my reception in the other town, which I named. Now I think it might have been *loshon hora*, even though I didn't name any people. Was it? — Yaakov

#### THE ANSWER

The Chofetz Chaim teaches that speaking negatively about an

entire community of G-d-fearing Jews, just because they didn't give a person the welcome or the help he expected, is *loshon hora*, just as it would be about an individual. The community members are still considered G-d-fearing Jews, even though they didn't show generosity for this particular cause. In some ways, speaking about a whole community is worse because it doesn't stain just one person's reputation — rather, everyone from that town has been maligned. The Chofetz Chaim points this out, saying, "It is certainly a grave sin!"

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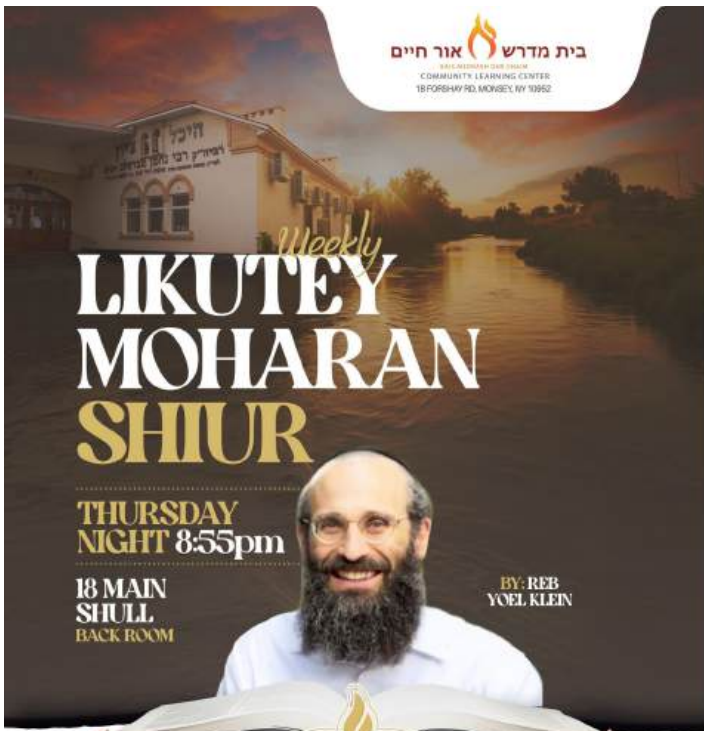
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# RABBI JONATHAN SACKS Z"l



## Never Give Up Hope

The Midrash states that Yaakov refused to be comforted for the death of Yosef because he believed that Yosef was still alive.

On what basis did Yaakov continue to hope that Yosef was still alive? Surely he had recognized Yosef's blood-stained coat. He said explicitly, "A wild beast has devoured him. Yosef has been torn to pieces." Do these words not mean that he had accepted that Yosef was dead?

The late David Daube made a suggestion that I find convincing. The words the sons say to Yaakov – *haker na*, literally, "identify please" – have a quasi-legal connotation. Daube relates this passage to another, *Exodus* 22:10-13, with which it has close linguistic parallels. The issue discussed is the extent of responsibility borne by a guardian (*shomer*). If an animal is lost through negligence, the guardian is at fault and must make good the loss. If there is no negligence, merely *force majeure*, an unavoidable, unforeseeable accident, the guardian is exempt from blame. One such case is where the loss has been caused by a wild animal. The wording in the law – *tarof yitoref*, "torn to pieces" – exactly parallels Yaakov's judgment in the case of Yosef: *tarof toraf Yosef*, "Yosef has been torn to pieces."

An elder brother carried a similar responsibility for the fate of a younger brother placed in his charge, as, for example, when the two were alone together. That is the significance of Cain's denial when confronted by G-d as to the fate of Abel: "Am I my brother's guardian [*shomer*]?" (*Bereishis* 4:9)

We now understand a series of nuances in the encounter between Yaakov and his sons upon their return without Yosef. Normally, they would be held responsible for their younger brother's disappearance. To avoid this, as in the case of later biblical law, they "bring the remains as evidence." If those remains show signs of an attack by a wild animal, they must – by virtue of the law then operative – be held innocent. Their request to Yaakov, *haker na*, must be construed as a legal request, meaning, "Examine the evidence." Yaakov has no alternative but to do so, and by virtue of what he has seen, acquit them.

A judge, however, may be forced to acquit someone accused of a crime because the evidence is insufficient to justify a conviction, while still retaining lingering private doubts. So Yaakov was forced to find his sons innocent, without necessarily trusting what they said. In fact, Yaakov did not believe it, and his refusal to be comforted shows that he was unconvinced. He continued to hope that Yosef was

still alive. That hope was eventually justified: Yosef was still alive, and father and son were ultimately reunited.

The refusal to be comforted sounded more than once in Jewish history. The prophet Jeremiah was sure that Jews would return to Israel *because* they refused to be comforted – meaning, they refused to give up hope (*Jeremiah* 31:15-17). So it was during the Babylonian exile, as articulated in one of the most paradigmatic expressions of the refusal to be comforted: "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept, as we remembered Zion..."

Jews are the people who refused to be comforted because they never gave up hope. All the evidence of Jewish history may seem to signify irretrievable loss, a decree of history that cannot be overturned, a fate that must be accepted. Jews never believed the evidence because they had something else to set against it – a faith, a trust, an unbreakable hope that proved stronger than historical inevitability. It is not too much to say that Jewish survival was sustained in that hope. And that hope came from a simple – or perhaps not so simple – phrase in the life of Yaakov. He refused to be comforted. And so – while we live in a world still scarred by violence, poverty, and injustice – must we.

# RABBI SHLOMO KATZ



## Lights in Heaven

R' Levi Yitzchak of Bereditchev z"l (1740-1810; famed chassidic rebbe) writes, citing the Zohar, that 36 "lights" are "lit" in Heaven to parallel the 36 candles that we light during Chanukah. Together, these 72 candles allude to the name of G-d that has 72 letters.

R' Levi Yitzchak continues: When we add to the foregoing the eight candles that we light as *shamashim*, one each day, plus the eight *shamashim* that are lit in Heaven parallel to ours, there are 88 candles. This alludes to the word "*pach*"/"snare" in the verse (*Tehillim* 124:7) "Our soul is like a bird that escaped from the snare of hunters; the snare broke, and we escaped." (The *gematriah* of "*pach*" is 88.) Because we escaped from the snare of Antiochus, we cause these 88 candles to be lit. Eighty-eight is also the *gematriah* of

the initial letters of the phrase (*Tehillim* 33:20) "Our soul longed for Hashem." These are the same initial letters as are found in the blessing "*L'hadlik ner Chanukah*"/"To light the Chanukah candle." This is the text of the blessing according to the Arizal, omitting the word "shel."

Based on the above, writes R' Yaakov Yechizkiyahu Greenwald z"l (prominent Hungarian rabbi; died 1941), we can better understand the text of "*Ha'neiros hallalu*"/"These candles..." the paragraph customarily recited after lighting the menorah. The text of this paragraph presents several difficulties: Why do we say these "candles" (plural) on the first night? Also, why do we say this paragraph after lighting the candles? (In contrast, when we perform other mitzvot – for example, when we don *tzitzit* and *tefillin* – the paragraph in which we describe the reason for the mitzvah is said

before performing the mitzvah.) Finally, how can we say "These candles are holy," when the Gemara (*Shabbat* 22b) seems to state expressly that the candles are not holy? (They do, however, have the status of mitzvah objects, which must not be treated disrespectfully.)

R' Greenwald answers: Even on the first night, when we light only one candle, there is more than one candle lit because our one candle has a parallel in Heaven. And it is to those lights in Heaven that we refer when we say that the candles are holy, not to our own candles, which have no holiness.

Why do we recite this paragraph after lighting our candles, not before? Because only after we light our physical candles are we prepared to light the spiritual lights above.

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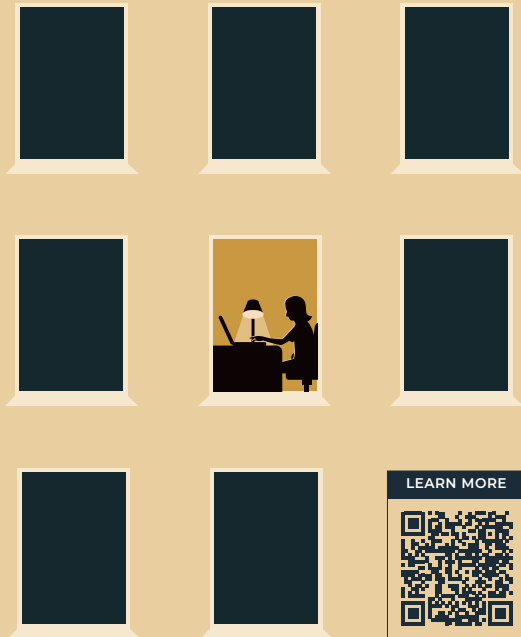
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## RABBI PINCHAS KASNETT

### Abarbanel on the Parsha YOSEF — THE FAVORED SON

In this Torah portion, it is very difficult to understand why Yaakov favored Yosef over all his other sons and why Yosef's brothers hated him to the point of selling him into slavery after having nearly executed him. Abarbanel makes it clear that even though all of Yaakov's sons had attained a high level of spiritual perfection, Yosef was the only one who totally absorbed Yaakov's teachings. Even though Yosef was only 17, Yaakov recognized his superior intelligence and put him in charge of the family's herds and flocks. Yet he lacked any trace of arrogance, as he is referred to as a "youth" in regard to the sons of the maidservants Bilhah and Zilpah. He attended them and deferred to them even though they were the least significant of the brothers. He considered Bilhah and Zilpah his father's wives, not mere concubines. His self-awareness also allowed him to demonstrate humility and self-effacement.

Even the fact that Yosef brought an evil report about his brothers to his father is indicative of his

superior character, for his intention was to improve their behavior. Yosef certainly did not slander them with his own opinion. Rather, he reported to his father in privacy what *others* were saying about them. Yosef's actions were based entirely on his love for his brothers, not by a desire to elevate himself at their expense.

Yaakov's love for Yosef was not the normal love of a father for his son. It was based on something deeper. When Yosef is described as "the son of his old age," this hints at Yosef's ability to relate to everyone in the family uniquely and individually. To his brothers, he was a youth who respected their seniority. But he dealt with Yaakov with a gentleness and moderation that indicated that he saw himself as a true son, not just a youth deferring to the seniority of the father. Yaakov perceived this as a sign of his superior intelligence and character and therefore loved him more than the other brothers. Onkelos, in his Aramaic translation, conveys this idea, as he renders the verse "son of his old age" as "son of wisdom." Yosef had none of the impetuosity of

youth. He thought through situations carefully, acting quickly when necessary and being deliberate when necessary.

There are two reasons for the brothers' hatred of Yosef. They were not able to understand that Yaakov did not find anything wrong with them. Rather, he favored Yosef because of his unique and unusual intellectual and ethical accomplishments. The brothers, however, were convinced that Yaakov was reacting to the slanderous accusations that Yosef had brought against them. We can assume that Yaakov chastised them without revealing the source of the information, as no father wants to create strife in his family. The brothers assumed that Yosef was the source of the accusations, and that was why Yaakov favored him.

Secondly, they believed Yosef would inherit everything and that they would be relegated to the status of sons of concubines. Just as Yishmael and Eisav had been sent away, they too felt that they would be completely cut off.

## RABBI MAYER TWERSKY

### The Opportunity of Chanukah

There is a well-known dispute between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel regarding the mitzvah of *ner Chanukah*. Beis Shammai maintains that on the first night of Chanukah, we light eight candles, the second night seven candles, etc., culminating in the lighting of a single candle on the last night of Chanukah. Beis Hillel disagrees. According to their opinion, we begin with a single candle on the first night and add a candle every night, culminating in the kindling of eight candles on the final night of Chanukah. Beis Hillel's opinion is, of course, the normative opinion. Nonetheless, Beis Shammai's opinion illuminates the nature of Chanukah.

One of the two reasons offered for Beis Shammai's opinion is that Chazal modeled *ner Chanukah* on the *Korbanos Mussaf* of Succos. Just as the number of *parim* dropped one per day on Succos, so too, the number of candles diminishes one per day on Chanukah. Chazal do not, however, elaborate on the relevance of the model of Succos for Chanukah. What connection is there between Succos and Chanukah?

Succos and Chanukah share an extraordinary defining feature. In essence, they are both holidays of the Beis Hamikdash, whose observance takes place at all times and in all places. It's forbidden to derive non-mitzvah benefit from the *schach* (and walls) of the *succah*. This prohibition is rooted in

a remarkable *drasha*. Just as Hashem's Name is associated with the *Korban Chagigah* (prohibiting benefit therefrom), so too, His Name is associated with the *succah* (generating a similar prohibition). The *succah* possesses the sanctity of a *korban*. Similarly, the mitzvah of *lulav* is essentially a Mikdash-centered mitzvah, as evidenced by the fact that *mitzvas lulav* is operative *min HaTorah* the entire seven days of *Succos* only in the Mikdash.

Chanukah is also a *yom tov* of the Mikdash. The defining mitzvah of Chanukah is *hadlakas hamenorah*. The Ramban (at the beginning of *Parshas Beha'aloscha*), elaborating upon the words of Chazal, explains that our *mitzvas ner Chanukah* is a direct continuation of the mitzvah in the Mikdash. According to the *Baal Hameor*, we are prohibited from deriving any personal benefit from *neiros Chanukah* because we must relate to them as to the *neiros* of the Menorah in the Mikdash.

Thus we see that both Succos and Chanukah are essentially holidays of the Mikdash. Each of these *yomim tovim* affords the remarkable opportunity to be exposed to the *kedushah* of the Mikdash, even two millennia after its destruction. We can be "to'aim" the *kedushah* of Mikdash on these holidays.

Chanukah is also a time of initiative and awakening. The initiative of the *Chashmonaim* was the catalyst for the events of Chanukah. Their awakening and *mesiras nefesh* was rewarded by Hakadosh Baruch Hu with the miracle(s) of Cha-

nukah. (The *Sefas Emes*, 5636, develops this theme as well). We are encouraged to take initiative in a *halachically* sanctioned fashion by fulfilling the mitzvah of *ner Chanukah* according to the *mehadrin* or *mehadrin min hamehadrin*.

These two motifs of Chanukah - Mikdash and awakening/initiative - are intertwined. The mitzvah of building the Beis Hamikdash is prescribed in the Torah as "you shall seek out His presence and come there." The Ramban (*Parshas Korach*) explains that we are supposed to awaken ourselves to fulfill the mitzvah of building the Beis Hamikdash. We must awaken ourselves to pursue *kedushah*. *Kedushah* is not attained through passivity.

Thus, Chanukah, a *yom tov* of the Mikdash, is also a time for personal religious awakening. It is a time to awaken ourselves, to accept upon ourselves resolutions to improve our *avodas Hashem*. Perhaps one will accept upon himself to cherish the Shabbos and observe it accordingly: to prepare for Shabbos early and to devote extended time to studying Torah and singing *zemiros* on Shabbos. Perhaps one will accept upon himself to recite *brachos* slowly, thoughtfully, without simultaneously engaging in any other activities. Perhaps our *bein adam lachaveiro* can be improved. Indeed, there are many other possible resolutions; each individual must prioritize them for themselves. However we rededicate ourselves, Chanukah is a priceless opportunity to absorb *kedushah* and take the initiative in improving our *avodas Hashem*.

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## JOKES

Teacher: Shlomo, go to the map and find North America.

Shlomo: Here it is.

Teacher: Correct. Now class, who discovered America?

Class: Shlomo.

Father to son: Did your teacher notice my help with your homework?

Son: I think so. She said I made too many mistakes for one person.

A professor was lecturing his class the other day. "In English," he said, "A double negative forms a positive. However, in some languages, such as Russian, a double negative remains a negative. But there isn't a single language, not one, in which a double positive can express a negative." A voice from the back of the room said, "Yeah, right."

Teacher: You missed school yesterday, didn't you?

Student: Not very much!

Math teacher: Out of the thirty students in the class, twenty-eight passed the test successfully.

Me: I wonder which three students didn't pass...

Teacher: What is the value of pi?  
Student: Depends on what pie. Usually, it's \$12.99.



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## ZERA SHIMSHON

### Eternal Hope

*And they (the brothers) sat down to eat bread (37:25).*

This *passuk* tells how, after the *shevatim* sold Yosef Hatzaddik, they sat down to eat. The Medrash (*Rabbah* 84:16) says: R' Achva Bar Ze'ira taught on this *passuk* that the sin of the *shevatim* is remembered eternally, and it brings eternal hope.

The *Zera Shimshon* asks the obvious question: These two things clearly contradict each other. How can the sin be remembered eternally, which is clearly a description of the magnitude of the sin, and at the same time, it brings eternal hope, which seems to put this sin in a positive light?

The *Zera Shimshon's* explanation will also explain what eternal hope the sin of the *shevatim* brings us.

The *Zera Shimshon* prefaces his answer with the following words of the *Shach* (*Sifsei Kohen* on the Torah, by a student of the Arizal).

The *Sifsei Kohen* writes that he heard that were it not for the sin of selling Yosef Hatzaddik, the Jewish people would have eventually been destroyed in *galus*, Heaven forbid.

The *Shach* explains that had the *Shechina* (Hashem's divine presence in this world) never gone into *galus* before, then when the Jewish people sinned during the period of the first and second *Batei Mikdash*, there would not have been the unthinkable option of the Jews going into exile, which would force the *Shechina* to also go into exile with the Jewish nation. The only other option would be to wipe out the sinning Jewish people, Heaven forbid.

However, when Yosef Hatzaddik went down to Egypt, the *Shechina* was there with him, as is hinted at by the word *מצרימה*, to Egypt, which has the same numerical value as the word *שכינה*. This being the case, the *Shechina*, so to speak, had already tasted exile and could now join the Jewish people in their subsequent exiles.

The *Zera Shimshon* explains that the difference between the two was that Yosef didn't cause the *Shechina* to go into exile because of his sins, whereas the Jews of the period of the *Batei Mikdash* caused the exile of the *Shechina* with their sins, which is unacceptable.

In other words, since the *Shechina* had already experienced exile, it would be easier for the *Shechina* to go through another exile, even though it was as a result of the Jewish people's sin.

This is the meaning of the aforementioned Medrash. Although the sin of the *shevatim* will be remembered eternally, since as a result of it, the *Shechina* must now go through continual exile, at the same time, it also brings eternal hope, since the *Shechina* will eventually be redeemed and we, the Jewish people, along with it.

SHIUR  
SCHEDULE

ZERA SHIMSHON SHIUR  
BY RABBI SIMCHA BUNIM BURGER  
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