

Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet Miketz 5772

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CHANUKA :: Rabbi Berel Wein

Chanuka in its halachic discussions and various applications represents the necessary two components of Jewish life. These are reality and potential. We are all aware of the differing opinions of Beit Shamai and Beit Hillel regarding the number of flames/lights that are to be kindled each night during the eight day holiday of Chanuka. The opinion of Beit Shamai is that on the first night of Chanuka all eight flames are to be kindled while Beit Hillel is of the opinion that only one flame is to be kindled.

Beit Shamai is of the opinion that the number of flames is to be diminished each night so that on the final night of Chanuka only one flame will be kindled. Beit Hillel on the other hand increases the number of flames to be lit each night of the holiday so that on the final night of Chanuka all eight flames will be lit and burn brightly.

Though there many different interpretations advanced by the Talmud and the commentaries as to the basis of these differing opinions, the one that I have always found relevant to me is that Beit Shamai is always dealing with potential while Beit Hillel deals with reality and actuality.

Thus, on the first night of Chanuka there is a potential for eight days of holiday to come yet and therefore Beit Shamai suggests that all eight lights be kindled. However, Beit Hillel in dealing with the actuality of the situation, states that only one day of the holiday has arrived and therefore only one light is to be kindled. And these two different views will naturally govern the number of lights to be kindled on all of the successive nights of Chanuka as well.

The halachic process always busies itself with deciding, in a practical manner, which of two conflicting opinions is to become the practice of normative Judaism. The halacha has taught us that we follow the opinion of Beit Hillel in our fulfillment of the ritual of lighting the Chanuka flames. Yet the opinion of Beit Shamai is not to be ignored and completely discarded.

The Talmud teaches us that the opinions of Beit Shamai and of Beit Hillel are both “the words of the living God.” We humans can only, in practice, follow one of the opinions and the halacha has instituted the opinion of Beit Hillel as the accepted practice of Jewish tradition and society. But we are bidden not to forget the underlying value that the opinion of Beit Shamai represents.

A society that lives only in the present and deals exclusively with the reality that it faces eventually loses spirit, drive and enthusiasm. Actuality rarely creates innovation and creativity. Those qualities stem from intuition, seeing potential, and, if you wish, dreams and as yet unrealized ideals. In education many times the failure of the school or the teacher and thus of the pupil as well, stems from seeing the student only in his or her present actuality and ignoring the great potential that lies within the young. When I was the head of a yeshiva in Monsey, New York, the great sage Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky warned me about the treatment of the mischievous student. He told me that he should not be summarily expelled from the school since mischievous students many times are the ones that usually possess great potential, which when activated in later life will be of benefit to all.

Chanuka represents the combination of these two essential values in Jewish national and personal life. The military victory of the Hasmoneans over the pagan Syrian Greek idolaters was necessary, practical and realistic. It restored Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel and because of it Jewish rule continued for more than one hundred years until the arrival of Pompeii and the Romans in the country.

Chanuka must therefore commemorate that physical, practical military victory. But Chanuka also represents the rededication of the Temple to its holy service and purpose. Holiness and spiritual achievements are always measured not only in terms of their current achievements but in their unlimited potential for later generations as well. The lights of Chanuka kindled almost twenty two centuries ago are still the spark that kindles our Chanuka lamps in our homes and society today.

The miracle of the small cruse of oil that somehow burned for eight days was the harbinger of the story of the inexplicable potential of the Jewish people to survive and still flourish in the dark night of an awful exile. Therefore Chanuka bids us to be practical and realistic in our behavior and policies. But it also guides us to see beyond the moment and to see the great potential that lies within Jews and Jewish society and to attempt to actualize that potential. The reality of the problems that face us should never be allowed to eclipse the talented, holy potential that lives within us. Shabat shalom. Chanuka sameach

Weekly Parsha :: MIKETZ :: Rabbi Berel Wein

The word miketz or keitz signifies “end” or “conclusion.” It is usually used to denote the end of an era, the defining moment of the passage of time. It also denotes that a great change of circumstances is about to occur. What was before will be no longer. The end of the past will give way to a new reality. In this week’s parsha the word introduces us to the radical change in the circumstances of Yosef – from dungeon inmate to viceroy of Egypt.

In Jewish tradition, the word is employed to describe the end of the period of exile and trials of Israel and the beginning of the longed for redemption and messianic era. Implicit in our understanding of the word as it appears in the Torah and Jewish tradition is the understanding that nothing is certain and what may appear to be long lasting and immovable is always only temporary and given to change.

Only uncertainty is certain in our lives and in all human affairs. There is always an end to the present and a new future, for good or for better, always is present just over the horizon of time. This short Hebrew word mocks all of the predictions of experts in any field of endeavor. All such statements are based upon the known past and present but these come to an eventual end and the future remains as inscrutable as ever. We are experts in hindsight. We rarely achieve meaningful foresight in any field of human endeavor, and in national and personal living.

All of this is true regarding humankind generally. It is doubly true regarding the future of the Jewish people and Israel. Only the diehards stubbornly insist that somehow the path of the Oslo Agreements has not yet come to an end. Only the hardened and Jewishly Torah ignorant secularist believe that somehow theirs is the solution to the “Jewish problem,” both internally and externally.

In our generation, the end has come to many ideas, ideologies and circumstances that were supposed to carry on for future centuries. The whole world’s economic structure is now threatened by the unthinkable, something that economic experts told us could never happen and that there never would be an end to consumer and debt driven prosperity.

Hitler’s Reich was to have lasted one thousand years and Marx’s economic theories were to have produced eternal peace, fairness and a certain and easily predictable future. The world operates as though the word miketz is not present in the human lexicon. That is the main tragic error in human society for it allows for faulty planning, a sense of overconfidence, and a pompous certainty of rectitude that is based on the false assumption that circumstances and eras do not change or end.

This week’s parsha reiterates this true fact of our existence, uncomfortable as that may be to our psyche. The Midrash introduces its commentary to our parsha with the verse “keitz – an end has the Lord brought to our darkness.” May that be the keitz to our era as well.

Shabat shalom.

Do You Want To Hear A Good Story?

“Seven years of famine...” (41:27)

If you examine most classic Torah insights, they often start with an anomaly in a verse, be it in the spelling, the grammar, or the sequence of the words, and based on this anomaly the writer will draw a homiletic interpretation. And then he will write, “To what may this be compared?”, and finish with a parable to illustrate the point.

I have had the merit, thank G-d, to write these insights on the weekly Torah reading for nearly twenty years. Early on in my career I made a discovery that I would like to share with you.

My feeling is that nowadays many readers are resistant to inferences based on textual anomaly—but everyone wants to hear a good story. So very simply, I reversed the classic structure, starting with the story and finishing with the textual analysis.

The great spiritual master Rava would always begin a deep Torah discourse by telling a joke. Why? As soon as the yetzer hara notices someone getting up to speak divrei Torah, it sends a powerful sedative to the brain.

Rava knew that to grab the attention of his listeners he would have to outflank the yetzer hara.

You can't get people to listen to you unless you can first grab their attention.

My intention was the same as Rava's, the same as any teacher – to grab the attention of the audience before they hit the delete button.

So having told you the story, here's the anomaly:

In this week's Torah portion, when Yosef interprets Pharaoh's dream, he starts off by first telling him about the seven years of famine. Chronologically, the seven years of plenty came first.

Why didn't Yosef start by talking about them?

In a country as prosperous as Egypt, talking about seven years of plenty would have been about as interesting as watching wallpaper. Yosef deliberately started with the years of famine because he knew that such a cataclysmic disaster would be sure to make Pharaoh sit up and take notice of his advice.

In communicating your ideas to people, you must first gain their attention. Without that, the best arguments will fall on deaf ears.

•Source: Ramban

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**Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum
Parshas Miketz**

It was the end of two years to the day. (41:1)

Horav Meir, zl, m'Premishlan, related that his father had once experienced aliyas neshamah, during which his holy soul took leave of its physical container and ascended into the Heavenly sphere. He "noticed" that two "people" were being brought into Heaven; one was quite young, while the other appeared to be very old. Strangely, in Heaven, they referred to the young man as a senior citizen, while, concerning the old man, the converse was true. His father questioned this. After all, this is the Olam Ha'Emes, World of Truth. One's age should be registered in accordance with his biological journey on earth. If he had spent eighty years in this world, he should be treated accordingly.

The response that he received should frighten all of us, and serve as a wake-up call to the living concerning the meaning of life - as viewed through the Heavenly lens. He was told that, veritably, the youth had achieved so much in his life, both in Torah erudition and action. He was young in years, but old in achievement. In Heaven, this is what matters. Living a life of eighty years, during which his achievements are minimal, categorizes the individual as a young man. It is not how long one lives; it is how one spends his life and how full of achievement his life is. The famous World War II General, Douglas MacArthur, once quipped, "There

are people who die at the age of thirty, but are not buried until they are seventy years old."

How true this is. People go through life just watching the grass grow; having no idea that life on this world is for doing, achieving, building, assisting others. Sitting around and either feeling sorry for oneself, or feeling good about oneself but doing nothing to earn his space in this world, is wasting his life.

Rav Meir employed this idea in his interpretation of the pasuk. Va'yehi mikeitz shenasayim yamim, "A man reaches his keitz, the end of his days on this world." His soul now divests itself of its earthly container and returns home, feeling that it has had a long, fruitful life. Alas, when it arrives in the Olam Ha'Emes, it is dismayed to discover that of all the years which it has lived is considered only shenasayim yamim, two years. Heaven has a different view of "time lived."

So Yaakov said to his sons, "Why do you make yourselves conspicuous?" (42:1)

In the Talmud Taanis 10b (cited by Rashi), Chazal explain Yaakov Avinu's words. Being in possession of grain when the whole countryside is starving would catalyze envy and ill will on the part of the descendants of Yishmael and Eisav who were the neighbors of Yaakov and his family. Yaakov Avinu's rhetorical question has been the motif of many Jewish leaders who admonish their fellow Jews not to shtech ois di oigen, "pierce the eyes of their gentile neighbors," by flaunting their good fortune. Regrettably, the theme has not been exhausted over time, as the issue has demanded constant reiteration.

This idea applies whenever one's actions may provoke envy on the part of another fellow. Horav Meir Tzvi Bergman, Shlita, relates that his father-in-law, Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, went out of his way to circumvent any issues of envy. Once, one of his grandchildren gave birth to twin boys. The revered great-grandfather was, of course, asked to be sandek at their brissim. While it is well-known that the custom is not to serve as sandek for two brothers, the Rosh Yeshivah, nonetheless, accepted the role of sandek at both brissim. The reason was so that, when the boys grew up and one would comment to the other that their great-grandfather had been his sandek, the other brother would not feel a sense of jealousy. This indicates the sensitivity of the esteemed Rosh Yeshivah.

The Steipler Gaon, zl, writes that if one seeks to be successful in an endeavor, he should conceal both himself and the endeavor as much as possible. Notoriety causes envy; envy causes an ayin hora, evil eye, which can lead to lack of success. It is related in the name of Horav Shlomo Zvihil, zl, that he was acutely aware that once he became well-known in Yerushalayim, this fame had caused him spiritual damage.

A well-known Torah scholar, who had undergone a number of tribulations, visited with the Steipler to ask his sage advice and to seek his blessing. The Steipler told him, "Your fame is causing you to have these troubles. Everything has its limits, and this will also end shortly." Indeed, the Steipler once attributed a serious bout of illness to the fact that an American Rosh Yeshivah had authored a volume of Torah novella, in which he had cited the Steipler a number of times, using reverential accolades. We must learn to realize that every accolade engenders envy, and envy is a poison we can do without.

All of us, sons of one man are we; we are truthful people; your servants have never been spies. (42:11)

Yosef leveled an excoriating accusation at his brothers, denouncing them as treacherous spies. They responded that they were all sons of one man, as Ramban explains, an individual of eminent standing, whose reputation was well-known. It would not be difficult for Yosef to inquire about him and his family. In other words, they were contending that, since they were distinguished people, all sons of a well-known, eminent person, labeling them as spies was totally out of line. Ramban adds that they were all sent together, because their father did not want to break up the family unit. Understandably, Yaakov Avinu could just as well have sent one or two of his sons with a group of slaves to accompany them. Why did he insist on sending his whole family just to purchase some food? In addition, what about the bitul Torah, wasting time from Torah study, which is inevitable when one is on the road? The mitzvah of yishuv Eretz Yisrael, inhabiting the Holy Land, should not be ignored eith

er. Traveling to Egypt in those days was not a hop, skip and jump. It was a journey. Did they all have to go?

Horav Henach Leibowitz, zl, derives from here that Yaakov Avinu viewed the achdus, unity, of his family as superseding the mitzvos of Torah study and yishuv Eretz Yisrael - despite the apparent danger. Yaakov did not want his sons to separate from one another - even for a short while. By remaining together as a family, their love for one another would be complete. This is what the brothers emphasized to Yosef. Our family is unique. We stay together, because that way we remain together. Yaakov was willing to chance danger - both spiritual and physical- but not to break up the family unit. He understood that true success in Torah study and mitzvah observance is predicated upon the foundation of achdus Yisrael.

The Rosh Yeshivah notes that some truly believe that they fulfill the mitzvah of ahavas, love of, Israel, when, in fact, they are far from fulfilling this mitzvah. They expound the importance of achdus, unity, but do not understand its true meaning. These individuals erroneously love the Jewish People as a unit, as an entity. Do they, however, love each and every Jew individually, as well as the unit collectively as a whole? No! They care about Am Yisrael - the nation - the entire unified nation. The mitzvos of Jewish unity and the love for Klal Yisrael begin with our love for every Jew - regardless of religious background, affiliation, personality, etc. If he is a Jew, then we already have reason to care for him. He is one with us. We are all in this together.

They said to one another, "Indeed, we are guilty concerning our brother in as much as we saw his heartfelt anguish when he pleaded with us and we paid no heed." (42:21)

The saga of Yosef HaTzadik and his brothers slowly came to a positive conclusion. The brothers, having descended to Egypt for the purpose of purchasing grain, confronted the Egyptian viceroy, who was really their long-lost brother, Yosef. They were unaware of his true identity, and, after accusation and counter diplomacy, they returned home to bring Binyamin to Egypt. Otherwise, Shimon would have been compelled to establish permanent residence in Egyptian captivity. This would have ultimately catalyzed Yaakov Avinu's descent to Egypt and the commencement of galus Mitzrayim, the Egyptian exile. As we read the narrative, the discerning mind notes Hashem's handprint on the ensuing events. Veritably, the entire course of events was orchestrated by the Almighty, so that Klal Yisrael would end up in Egypt.

A basic question begs elucidation. This question invariably applies to a number of episodes in the Torah. How is it that individuals who play a role in events that have been foretold and are apparently pre-destined to occur, must take responsibility for their actions? After all, it was supposed to happen. Is this not what Hashem wanted?

In his commentary to Bereishis 37:14, Rashi quotes Chazal who say that when Yaakov sent Yosef to visit his brothers, this action was meant to fulfill the prophecy which Avraham Avinu received: Ki ger yiheyeh zarecha, "Your children will be sojourners in a strange land." This comment implies that the entire Yosef ordeal was preordained by Hashem. Yet, when one reads in the Haftorah of Parashas Vayeishev that Klal Yisrael will be punished for "selling a righteous man for money, and a poor man for a pair of shoes," Chazal say this pasuk is a reference to the sale of Yosef by his brothers. Why are they blamed if, in fact, the entire narrative was preordained? This is a hashkafah, philosophical, question which appears a number of times whenever calamities occur. On the one hand, Chazal say (Berachos 35b), "All is in the hands of Heaven except for fear of Heaven." In other words, man has free will. He decides how he wants to live. His religious life reflects his personal preference

. On the other hand, we certainly believe that Hashem controls the world. How are we to reconcile calamities which are the result of people's actions against the backdrop of Divine guidance? Free will and Divine Providence appear to be two contradictory concepts. Do they work collaboratively or exclusively of one another?

Horav Aharon Soloveitchik, zl, cites a principle from the Baal Nesivos HaMishpat, Horav Yaakov, zl, m'Lissa, in his commentary to Sefer Eichah, entitled Palgei Mayim. Commenting on the pasuk in Eichah 3:38, Mipi Elyon lo seitzei ha'raos v'ha'tov, "From Above neither evil or good

emanates." This pasuk, which addresses Divine Providence, has a noticeable anomaly in its text. The word used for evil, ha'raos, is written in the plural, while ha'tov, which refers to good, is written in the singular. Does more evil exist than good? He explains that, actually, we can distinguish two forms of evil and, likewise, two forms of good. There is ethical good and ethical evil, and physical good and physical evil. A man who acts kindly towards others is ethically good. This ethical good is a human action. It is not performed by G-d. Likewise, a person who steals, plunders, or murders is performing ethical evil. This is not G-d acting; it is man. A person who is in good health, who enjoys good

experiences, who is wealthy, is experiencing physical good. A person who is in poor health, victimized by poverty and misery, is experiencing physical evil.

When it comes to physical evil, however, the Palgei Mayim draws a distinction. While Hashem does not cause physical evil, He does directly cause physical good. A person who acquires wealth is the direct beneficiary of Hashem's Providence. One who becomes impoverished, however, is not the "victim" of a Divine decree. To recap: Ethical evil and physical evil are consequences of man's actions. Ethical good is the result of man's actions, while physical good results directly from Hashem's decree.

In further elaborating on the difference between physical good and physical evil, the Palgei Mayim explains that, at times, when a person acts inappropriately and performs an ethical evil, Hashem temporarily removes His Hashgachah, protection, from that person. The individual then becomes subject to the destructive forces that are within him and nature in general. An earthquake may strike, causing immense destruction. This is because Hashem has removed His Hashgachah from that location for a split second, allowing the forces of nature to run their course. In other words, without constant Divine Providence over the world, there would be no control over the world; there would be no control over the natural catastrophes. They would occur continually. This might give us some insight into many of the "natural" events that occur which seem "inexplicable."

In the area of human nature, a similar concept applies concerning Hashem's Hashgachah. He prevents the multitude of nefarious forces from executing their evil intentions. We are only aware of the evil doers that have perpetrated their malevolence against others. Numerous others - whose potential to harm is hanging in the balance - are kept in check by Hashem. His constant Hashgachah maintains that the human nature, which is intrinsic to many individuals, never sees the light of day and does not achieve fruition when punishment is deserved. However, the Almighty removes His protection, allowing nature as we know it, to run its course. This particular act of destruction is not a Divine decree. It is merely Hashem allowing events in nature to act "naturally." Thus, it is quite correct for the pasuk to use the plural in addressing evils, since neither ethical nor physical evil emanates from Divine decree. Concerning good, however, while ethical good is not decreed by Hashem; physical reward/good is a direct decree from the Almighty. This is why the word "good," which appears in the pasuk in Eichah is written in the singular.

The question that remains is: What about human beings - those who cause harm or destruction to others - are they held responsible for their actions? The Rosh Yeshivah says that they are certainly accountable for their evil. Nevuchadnezer and his minions, the evil incarnates of history, are all held in contempt for the harm which they wrought upon us. They chose to act maliciously. They will pay for their evil.

We now understand why the brothers were held accountable for selling Yosef - even though their actions were part of a Divine Plan to fulfill Hashem's prophecy to Avraham Avinu. No Divine decree pre-destined Yosef to be sold by his brothers. It was an action which they initiated of their own accord, motivated by their malignant relationship with him. They felt that he had sinned, a behavior that helped cause their jealousy towards him. When Yaakov Avinu showed favoritism to Yosef by giving him the kesones passim, he acted in a manner that, in accordance with his lofty spiritual plateau, was considered demeaning. Hashem is very exacting with the righteous, such as Yosef and Yaakov. Thus, he metes out retribution even for the slightest infraction. As a result of their actions, Hashem

removed His Hashgachah from them, thereby allowing Yosef's brothers to sell him, creating the ordeal which brought tremendous grief to our Patriarch. Concerning the brothers, however, they were held accountable for their actions, since their actions were not part of a Divine decree.

Their father Yaakov said to them, "I am the one whom you bereaved! Yosef is gone, Shimon is gone, and now you would take away Binyamin? Upon me has it all fallen." (42:36)

Yaakov Avinu had experienced two tragedies with the loss of two sons: Yosef and Shimon. Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, explains that Yaakov was addressing his sons from a practical, Torah-oriented perspective. It is quite possible that the "disappearance" of the brothers is unrelated. There is, however, one common thread between them: both tragedies directly affected Yaakov. He was left bereft of both sons. If things repeatedly happen to someone in a similar manner and he cannot see a clear reason why they should occur, he should not place himself into a position in which it could occur once again, until he develops some insight into its cause. He should view the repeated fact as a sign, an ominous warning that something in his life just might be wrong.

When a person experiences what might be termed as a klop, slap, from Hashem, and this happens again and again, he should first reflect on himself and his life. He should introspect his actions, asking himself: Am I acting properly? Am I observing mitzvos the way I should? Am I acting properly with my fellow-man, my immediate family? If he has worked through this checklist and found that he has led an exemplary life, Chazal say he should blame his troubles on bitul Torah, wasting time from Torah study, studying Torah with an attitude of indifference. If he is so perfect that he cannot find any failing whatsoever in his Torah study (there are such people), he should accept these troubles as yissurim shel ahavah, afflictions which Hashem brings upon a person out of a sense of profound love for the individual. Thus, his sins - or minor infractions - are cleansed in this world, allowing him to enter into Olam Habba in a state of spiritual purity.

Regrettably, there are individuals whose arrogance misguides them into thinking that life's troubles are G-d's test of their spiritual mettle. They will proclaim, "I will hold my head up high! I will fight this! I will persevere!" What they do not realize - or, perhaps, refuse to confront - is the notion that G-d is not testing them, but rather, speaking to them, telling them to change their lives: Something is wrong; this is not a time for arrogance, it is a time for teshuvah.

The Baal Akeidah interprets Yaakov Avinu's statement as a lesson to his sons: "Yes, you are grieving. You lost two brothers. It is a tragedy, but it does not compare to a father's pain. I lost two sons!" I think what we derive from here is that not all tragedies are the same. Different people react to a given event in various ways. A blanket reaction does not occur. There are parents, spouses, siblings, children, and friends. Each of these individuals represents his own personal and unique relationship, closeness and reaction. When dealing with people, one must take their unique emotions in mind.

Malbim and Sforno interpret Yaakov's reaction as a declaration of taking personal blame. The onus of guilt is on me. Their reasoning, however, is different. Malbim attributes Yaakov's expression of guilt in Yosef's "death" to himself: "I sent him to Shechem, a place of danger. I will be held similarly accountable for Shimon's being taken captive. Ultimately, if I allow Binyamin to leave, and something happens to him - it will all be my fault. Thus, I dread the punishment in store for me."

Sforno takes a different approach. Yaakov takes the blame because he is the father. His sons argued among themselves. Yet, they were not punished. He was punished. This was an indication that he was being held accountable for the sins of his sons. The fact that there was sibling rivalry, envy and contempt for Yosef, is a blemish on Yaakov's chinuch, education. He did not raise his sons properly. Had it been purely the fault of his sons, they would have been punished, or their own children would have been punished. Since, with the loss of his two sons, it appears that the punishment was directed at Yaakov, it is an indication that something was lacking in his parenting skills.

In the Talmud Yevamos 63b, Chazal relate that when the Chabarim, evil and contemptuous Persians - who had no respect for the Jews - came to Babylon, they enacted three decrees. The third one seems inconsistent with logic. They began exhuming the dead. Chazal said this was punishment for the Jews who had begun to amuse themselves together with the Babylonians on Chabarim holidays. Consequently, Hashem "provided" the Jews with an opportunity to mourn. The question is obvious: Why should parents who have passed on from this world be subjected to further anguish with the exhumation of their bodies, just because their children were acting inappropriately by celebrating gentile holidays?

Horav Chaim Zaitchik, zl, explains that, regrettably, the parents are held liable for the sins of their children, because they are at fault. Had the parents respected Shabbos and held it in its proper esteem, had they beautified their home for Shabbos, generating an air of spirituality and joy, then their children would have maintained a much different attitude to Judaism. They would have seen and sensed the holiness of Shabbos and the beauty of Jewish life. They would have had no reason to gravitate to other religions, to celebrate with the goyim. When they see their parents' indifference to shul attendance, however, when davening becomes a drag to the point that they must talk all the time, when they count every minute until Shabbos concludes, they serve notice not only as a poor example for their children, but they are causing them irreparable life-long harm.

In the Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 63:10) Chazal teach that a father must address his son's spiritual needs until he reaches thirteen years of age. Afterwards, he should recite the blessing, Baruch she'p'tarani mei'ansho shel zeh, "Bless that He relieved me of this (source of) punishment." There is a debate among the poskim whether this blessing should be recited b'Shem u'Malchus, articulating Hashem's Name, as we do in all blessings. Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl, explained the reasoning behind the individual who contends that Hashem's Name not be mentioned. If the father's education of his son had been lacking or inappropriate, the father should then not recite the blessing. One can make the blessing only if he is truly absolved from liability, by having executed his responsibilities to the fullest. If the father failed his son, then the father is held responsible for whatever the son does in life which is counter to Torah-orientation. He is at fault because he was the first line of defense. He should have provided a solid Torah education. He should have supported this education with his personal example.

I know things can - and do - go wrong, even in the finest of families. Parents cannot always be blamed, but they are the first ones who are scrutinized. They are the source of a child's education, either by example or by provision.

Children are always watching. They hear everything that goes on at home and are indelibly impacted by both negative and positive activity. When a father is involved in contentious strife, the children are affected. They learn that machlokes, controversy, is permissible. After all, "my father does it" When a father is late coming to shul, and, when he is there he does nothing but talk incessantly, the children learn that shul and davening are jokes. When a father manifests little respect for Torah scholars, including his children's rebbeim, the children learn to be disdainful of Torah. It all begins at home. The flip side, of course, is that the positive impact also begins at home. When parents act appropriately, respectfully and joyfully, it rubs off on their children. The first line of defense is usually the responsible party.

Tov yatzar kavod liShmo.

He formed all this goodness as glory for His Name.

The physical universe, with all of its Heavenly bodies, is a tribute to Hashem. The Creator is concealed from us. We recognize Him, however, through His manifold creations, which attest to the most powerful and awesome Creator Who brought all of this to existence. Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, explains the word tov, used here as a metaphor for all of Creation. Vayaar Elokim es kol asher asah, v'hinei tov me'od, "And G-d saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Bereishis 1:31). Thus, the phrase, Tov yatzar kavod lishmo, means: "He formed all of this goodness as glory for His Name." The word kavod is not translated as personal honor which Hashem, in His total perfection, does not require; rather, it

means glory. His creations constitute an affirmation that He exists. Hashem makes His Presence known by virtue of His creations. Sponsored by Dr. Herbert Taragin & Family I'zechar nishmas his parents. his father - Asher David ben HaRav Menachem Mendel z"l; his mother - haisha Chaya Bluma bas HaRav Moshe Zelig z"l

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Person in the Parsha Miketz

Rabbi Weinreb's Torah Column, Parshat Vayeshev

Sponsored in memory of Nathan and Louise Schwartz a"h

Sadist, or Therapist?

Once again, my three eager disciples were already seated when I entered the room and were engaged in a raucous discussion.

"He is a sadist! He is motivated by revenge, and I don't see why we think of Joseph as a model for our behavior."

If you've been following these columns for the past several weeks, you know that it is Richard who is talking. He is the most opinionated and most expressive of the three young men who signed up for my course on "Basic Jewish Concepts in the Book of Genesis."

The assigned readings included this week's entire Torah portion, Parshat Miketz, (Genesis 41:1-44:17 which continued the Joseph story, beginning with Joseph still imprisoned, continuing with his rapid rise to power, and concluding with his dramatic encounter with his brothers.

Richard, Leon, and Simon were captivated, but perplexed, by Joseph's behavior. For starters, "... He made himself strange unto them, and spoke roughly with them..." (Ibid., 42:7)

Leon, who usually has some unique insight in the back of his mind, oddly echoed Richard's frustration this time: "He begins by speaking roughly with them," he exclaimed, "but then goes on to make matters worse. He accuses them of espionage and refuses to listen to their explanation of their suspicious behavior."

Simon, again struggling to overcome his characteristically bashful self, entered the fray: "What really upsets me is that Joseph is not just cruel to his brothers. I could understand why he would do that, if only for revenge. But by insisting that they bring Benjamin, the youngest, down to Egypt, he is torturing his beloved father Jacob as well. Why would he do that?"

"And to imprison Simon", thundered Richard. "That's the last straw!"

Simon, that is, our Simon, expressed his thanks to Richard for defending the biblical figure whose name he carried.

"Rabbi," concluded Leon, "you have got to help us out here. We are searching for some admirable Jewish concepts, but, frankly, Joseph's behavior is hardly a model for how a good Jew should conduct himself."

Then, Leon went on to add a different sort of question entirely: "It has struck me," he said probingly, "that you and all Jews who attend synagogue weekly have been reading this story year in and year out for decades. To us, reading it for the first time, it is exciting literature. But reading it as often as you have must make the material quite boring. Can you speak to that?"

Simon, who was not only getting over his diffidence but who was becoming rivalrous with Leon, added: "I must say that this is not the first time I read the Joseph story. I read Thomas Mann's novel, *Joseph and His Brothers*, and loved it. But this is the first time I am reading the scriptural version. But you, Rabbi Weinreb, have read this version dozens of times in your life. Isn't it monotonous?"

I pondered the proceedings for what must have seemed like an eternity. I really wanted to get the answer right. This is what I found myself saying:

"The Jew who reads the Torah portion every week does indeed confront a challenge. He has to find a new and deeper meaning in the text each year. He certainly cannot allow the understanding of the biblical narrative that he had as an adolescent, for example, to remain the way he understands it when he is more mature.

"What I find helpful in my own personal study is to consult a different commentary each year so that I am assured that I will gain new perspectives on the old stories.

"You would be amazed, and that could be the subject of another course, of the great variety of interpretations given to the stories of the Torah even just within the circle of traditional commentaries. I guess, though, that you would not be amazed by the fact that your questions about Joseph's behavior have been asked for thousands of years and that numerous explanations are given.

"Let me share with you the perspective of one of those commentaries. I refer to the commentary of Rabbi Don Isaac Abarbanel, who, you won't believe this, was the minister of finance for King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, and who probably knew Christopher Columbus firsthand.

"This Rabbi, known in traditional circles as 'the Abarbanel,' has this to say about your concern. I paraphrase his insight:

"Joseph was attempting to have his brothers experience for themselves the tribulations that he went through. He wanted to give them, and here I use jargon from my other field of interest, clinical psychology, the opportunity to have a 'corrective emotional experience.' That is, he was convinced that if they would experience a taste of what his experiences had been, they would come to regret their own behavior. They would gain empathy for him, their victim, by reliving themselves what they inflicted upon him.

"Thus, just as they once despised him and could not speak to him peacefully, so too, he pretended to be a stranger to them.

"Just as they accused him of being a tale bearer to their father, so too, he accused them of being tale-bearing spies.

"Just as they threw him into a pit, so too, he had one of them, Simon, thrown into prison.

"And just as their father's world had been shattered by Joseph's disappearance, so too, he caused them to tremble at the thought of causing suffering to their father."

I concluded: "Joseph dished out some very harsh medicine. But note that again and again, Joseph weeps in private. In Genesis 42:24, he 'turned himself from them and wept' and in 43:30 '...he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.' This proves to me that he was not merely acting vengefully, but, if I may resort to my psychology vernacular, he acted therapeutically."

We had reached the conclusion of the class hour. And we all realized that we had not yet identified any simple basic Jewish concepts. Luckily, Richard, having started the discussion, chose to conclude it as well:

"I guess we learned several basic Jewish concepts today. One is not to judge another by his or her superficial behavior. They may have profound motives of which we are ignorant. We also learned the importance of asking questions of a teacher, not assuming that we know it all. And finally, we learned the value of continuous Torah study. Wouldn't you agree that those are some essential basic Jewish concepts?"

Leon and Simon nodded their consent. I could hardly contain my applause.

Rabbi Yissocher Frand Parshas Miketz

Different Missions In Life Require Different Techniques of Living

As Yosef predicted to Pharaoh, a terrible famine gripped the entire land. People from everywhere descended upon Egypt to buy the food that Yosef had wisely stored away during the years of plenty. Yaakov too saw that soon he would need to send his sons down to Egypt to acquire food for the family.

The pasuk says [Chapter 42 Verse 1]: "And Yaakov saw that there were provisions in Egypt and he told his sons 'lamah tisra-u' [why do you make yourselves conspicuous]?" The interpretation of the words "lamah tisra-u" is not immediately obvious. Rashi says he asked them "Why are you conspicuously showing off in front of the children of Eisav and Yishmael that you still have food? For at that time, Rashi says, they still had food.

The Ramban questions Rashi's comment: The descendants of Eisav and Yishmael did not live in the land of Canaan! They had their own places where they lived. So where, he asks, was this contact between the children of Yaakov and their cousins, the descendants of Eisav and Yishmael, supposedly taking place? The Ramban notes that it is perhaps more logical

to interpret the instruction "Lo tisra-u" in regards to not showing off in front of the local Canaanite inhabitants.

However, the Ramban suggests -- in defense of Rashi's interpretation -- that perhaps the sons of Eisav and Yishmael had to travel from their own countries down to Egypt to get provisions from Yosef and they passed through the Land of Canaan en route. Yaakov told his sons not to give the impression to their cousins that they had plenty of food and were not suffering along with them during the famine. If they would see that Yaakov and his family had food they might invite themselves in to dine with them. Yaakov did not want the sons of Eisav and Yishmael coming into his house to share meals with his family.

The description that the Ramban paints of Yaakov as a person who would warn his children to fake poverty so that their cousins would not come looking for a meal -- does not sound like a grandson of Avraham Avinu. Avraham had four entrances to his house so that all wayfarers could drop in any time for a meal. Would we expect Avraham's grandson to pull down the shades so that their own cousins will not know that they are home? How are we to understand this Ramban?

Rav Simcha Zissel Brody gives a very interesting interpretation, which teaches an important lesson. Rav Simcha Zissel says that everyone needs to know his own particular mission in life. One person's mission is not necessarily that of another. Avraham Avinu's mission was to introduce the concept of monotheism to the world. To accomplish this, Avraham felt the proper approach to have an effect on the people of the world was to bring them into his house and let them sit down at his table. Avraham would then feed them, talk with them and win them over to the concept of monotheism. Avraham knew that in order to fulfill his mission, he would need to have a lot of dregs of society at his table -- pagans, idol worshippers, people who had less than sterling character. However, that was his mission in life. He welcomed the challenge, and felt confident that he could handle it.

Yaakov Avinu was also a person who performed acts of hospitality and kindness (a baal chessed), but his primary mission was something else. His mission was to raise 12 sons to be the future progenitors of Klal Yisrael. In raising those children, Yaakov recognized that he needed to protect them from the horrible and decadent influences of outside society. In order to accomplish his own mission, Yaakov did not want the sons of Yishmael and of Eisav sitting at his table. That would have had a terribly adverse impact on his children. It could undermine his life's mission.

'There were noble acts that were appropriate and meritorious for my grandfather, but for me, because of my different mission in life "I cannot do these things now.' This is a novel idea, which has practical applications. The Mesilas Yesharim's opening line is that "a person must know what his duties are in his world. (mah chovoso b'olamo)". The Mesilas Yesharim does not make it an absolute statement (what the duties of man are in this world), but a subjective one (what his duties are in his world).

Avraham's mission was "bring as many people under the fold as possible". Yaakov's mission was "bring up 12 righteous children". That which Avraham needed to do to accomplish his mission would not necessarily work for Yaakov and indeed might be counter-act his mission. Yaakov felt that he could not have his own cousins dine at his table, lest they become a bad influence on his children.

Rav Simcha Zissel continues by stating a further novelty. Rav Simcha Zissel asks why it was that Avraham did not father Yitzchak until he was 100 years old and Sarah did not have a baby until she was 90 years old. Rav Simcha Zissel answers that if Yitzchak had been born when his parents were younger, they would not have been able to host half the world at their table. If they needed to concern themselves with raising a young son in a wholesome atmosphere, they would have had to be very particular about whom they invited into their tents. Once Yitzchak was born, indeed Avraham's priorities changed and he now had to protect his son. Once Avraham became a father, Rav Simcha Zissel implies, his table was perhaps less open to outsiders and outside influences. G-d did not allow him to have a son until after he first accomplished his life's mission with the rest of society.

Why Wait Until Parshas VaYigash To Cite A Pasuk Linked With Bedikas Chometz?

Yosef deliberately planted the royal goblet in the bag of Binyomin. The brothers protested their innocence and they readily allowed themselves and their baggage to be searched to prove that the missing vessel was not in their possession. The Torah tells us "He searched (vayechapes); he began with the oldest and ended with the youngest; and the goblet was found in Binyamin's saddlebag." [Bereshis 44:12]

The Talmud in Pessachim [7b] teaches that this pasuk is one of the sources from which we learn that the search for Chametz on the eve of the 14th of Nissan must be by candlelight. The Gemara connects several repeated words in diverse pasukim throughout the Torah to link the word "vayechapes" [and he searched] with the word "metziah" [he found] and "neiros" [candles] and "ner" [candle] to make this roundabout determination. The essence of the derivation is based on our pasuk containing the word "vayechapes" [and he looked] and the word "vaYimatze" [and he found] and this is linked to the words "lo Yimatze" in connection with Chametz.

However, the question may be asked, if the Gemara seeks a pasuk which contains both the word "vayechapes" as well as "vaYimatze" to make this derivation, why wait until Parshas Miketz to find such a pasuk? An earlier pasuk in Parshas Vayetzei contains these same two words [Bereshis 31:35]. When Lavan was searching for his stolen teraphim, the pasuk says, "Vayechapes v'lo matzah" [he looked but he did not find]. This is an earlier and more direct connection between the two words the Gemara seeking to make the derivation to candles and searching for chametz. Why wait until Parshas Miketz?

The Cherbiner Rav gives a beautiful answer. The Magen Avraham rules that a person should put out pieces of bread before the search for Chametz begins in order so that the search will not be completely futile and therefore so that the bracha [blessing] over the search not be in vain. There are those who question this (universal) practice, because it emerges that people are not really looking for "lost chametz." They are merely looking for the 10 pieces that were hidden away for that purpose. How, they ask, is this considered "finding chametz"? People merely collect the pieces, which they knew were placed in pre-designated locations throughout the house!

The Cherbiner Rav says beautifully that this is the reason why the Torah brings the pasuk by Yosef's servants. It says they "searched" and they "found". Even though they knew the exact location of the goblet and they were just going through the motions of looking for it, nevertheless the Torah uses the words "vayechapes" and "vaYimatze". We consider merely going through the motions of searching a real search and a real finding, even though we know the location all along. So too it is by chametz!

However, Lavan really did not know where the Teraphim were hidden. He was really looking for them. Had the Gemara brought this earlier pasuk, we would not have known the added chiddush [novelty] that even a "bedikah" with foreknowledge of the outcome is still considered a valid search. That is why the Gemara used the word from our parsha.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by David Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

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Rav Kook List

Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Mikeitz: Waiting for the Dream

It took a long time, but Joseph's dreams eventually came to pass.

How long? Joseph became viceroy of Egypt at age thirty, and nine years later (after seven years of plenty and two years of famine), his brothers came to buy food. So Joseph's dream that his brothers would one day bow down before him and recognize his greatness were fulfilled only when he was 39 years old. Since he had dreamt those dreams of future greatness at age 17, we see that they took 22 years to come true!

"Rabbi Levy said: one should wait as long as 22 years for a good dream to come true. This we learn from Joseph." (Berachot 54a)

What is special about the number 22? In what way is it connected to the fulfillment of dreams?

Rav Kook noted that the Hebrew alphabet contains 22 letters. Through myriad combinations and permutations of these 22 letters, we can express

all of our thoughts and ideas. If we were to lack even one letter, however, we would be unable to formulate certain words and ideas.

The ancient mystical work Sefer Yetzirah makes an interesting point concerning the creation and functioning of the universe. Just as hundreds of thousands of words are formed from a small set of letters, so too, the vast array of forces that govern our world are in fact composed of a small number of fundamental causes. If all 22 letters are needed to accurately express any idea, so too, 22 years are needed for the universe's elemental forces to bring about any desired effect. Thus, we should allow a dream as long as 22 years to come to fruition.

Rabbi Levy is also teaching a second lesson: nothing is completely without value. We should not be hasty to disregard a dream. In every vision, there resides some element of truth, some grain of wisdom. It may take 22 years to be revealed. Or its potential may never be realized in our world. But it always contains some kernel of truth.

(Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. II, p. 268)

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Weekly Halacha

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

SHABBOS CHANUKAH: LAWS and CUSTOMS

Lighting Chanukah candles on erev Shabbos and on motzaei Shabbos entails halachos that do not apply on weekday nights. The following is a summary of the special halachos that apply to Shabbos Chanukah.

PREPARATIONS

A. If possible, one should daven Minchah on Friday before lighting Chanukah candles.(1)There are two reasons for davening Minchah first: 1) The afternoon Tamid sacrifice, which corresponds to our Minchah service, was always brought before the lighting of the Menorah in the Beis ha-Mikdash.(2;) 2) Davening Minchah after lighting Chanukah candles appears contradictory, since Minchah "belongs" to Friday, while the Chanukah candles "belong" to Shabbos.(3)But if no early minyan is available, then it is better to light first and daven with a minyan afterwards.(4) The oil or candles should be able to burn for at least one hour and forty-five minutes.(5) If the oil and candles cannot possibly burn that long, one does not fulfill the mitzvah even b'diavad, according to some opinions.

B. Enough oil (or long enough candles) to burn for at least one hour and forty-five minutes must be placed in the menorah before it is lit. If one neglected to put in enough oil and realized his error only after lighting the menorah, he may not add more oil. He must rather extinguish the flame, add oil, and then re-kindle the wick. The blessings, however, are not repeated.(6)

C. One who does not have enough oil for all the wicks to burn for an hour and forty-five minutes must make sure that at least one light has enough oil to burn that long.(7) [If, for example, Shabbos falls on the sixth night of Chanukah, and there is only enough oil for five lights to burn for the required length of time instead of the six that are required, most poskim maintain that only one should be lit, while a minority opinion holds that five should be lit.(8)]

D. Since it is customary in many homes that children under bar mitzvah light Chanukah candles, too, this custom should be observed on erev Shabbos as well. Preferably, the child's menorah should also have enough oil (or long enough candles) to burn an hour and forty-five minutes. If, however, it is difficult or impractical to do so, many poskim permit a child to light with the blessings even though his lights will not last for the full length of time.(9)

E. The menorah should be placed in a spot where opening or closing a door [or window] will not fan or extinguish the flame.(10)

E. A guest who is eating and sleeping over lights at the home of his host even if his own home is in the same city. Preferably, he should leave his home before plag ha-Minchah.(11)

THE TIME OF LIGHTING ON EREV SHABBOS

1. All preparations for Shabbos should be completed before Chanukah candles are lit so that all members of the household - including women and children - are present at the lighting.(12)

2. There are two points to remember about lighting Chanukah candles on Friday afternoon: 1) Chanukah candles are always lit before Shabbos candles; 2) Chanukah candles are lit as close as possible to Shabbos. The procedure, therefore, is as follows:

L'chatchilah, Chanukah candles are lit immediately before lighting Shabbos candles. B'diavad, or under extenuating circumstances, they may be lit at any time after plag ha-Minchah.(13)Depending on the locale, plag ha-Minchah on erev Shabbos Chanukah is generally a few minutes less or few minutes more than an hour before sunset.(14)

In most homes, where the husband lights Chanukah candles and the wife lights Shabbos candles, the correct procedure is to light Chanukah candles five minutes or so(15)(depending on the number of people in the house who are lighting Chanukah candles) before lighting Shabbos candles. As soon as Chanukah candles have been lit, the wife lights the Shabbos candles.

If many people are lighting and time is running short, a wife does not need to wait for everyone to finish lighting Chanukah candles; rather, she should light her Shabbos candles immediately.(16)[If sunset is fast approaching, the wife should light Shabbos candles regardless of whether or not the Chanukah candles have been lit by her husband. If she sees that her husband will not light his menorah on time, she should light the Chanukah menorah herself, followed by Shabbos candles.]

In a home where the man lights both the Chanukah and the Shabbos candles [e.g., the man lives alone; the wife is away for Shabbos], the same procedure is followed. If, by mistake, he lit Shabbos candles before Chanukah candles, he should light his Chanukah candles anyway [as long as he did not have in mind to accept the Shabbos].

In a home where the woman lights both Chanukah and Shabbos candles [e.g., the woman lives alone; the husband is away for Shabbos], she must light Chanukah candles first. If, by mistake, she lit Shabbos candles first, she may no longer light Chanukah candles. She must ask another person - a man or a woman - who has not yet accepted the Shabbos to light for her. The other person must recite the blessing of lehadlik ner shel Chanukah, but she can recite the blessing of she'asah nissim [and shehecheyanu if it is the first night].(17)

If, after lighting the Shabbos candles but before the onset of Shabbos, the Chanukah candles blew out, one must re-kindle them. One who has already accepted the Shabbos should ask another person who has not yet accepted the Shabbos to do so.(18)

ON SHABBOS

1.The menorah may not be moved with one's hands for any reason, neither while the lights are burning nor after they are extinguished.(19)When necessary, the menorah may be moved with one's foot, body or elbow(20)after the lights have burned out. If the place where the menorah is standing is needed for another purpose, a non-Jew may be asked to move the menorah after the lights have burned out.(21)

2. If Al ha-nissim is mistakenly omitted, the Shemoneh Esrei or Birkas ha-Mazon is not repeated.

3. Children should be discouraged from playing dreidel games on Shabbos, even when playing with candy, etc.(22)A dreidel, however, is not muktzeh.(23)

4. Oil may be pressed out of latkes on Shabbos, either by hand or with a utensil.(24)

5. Chanukah gifts may not be given or received, unless they are needed for Shabbos use.(25)

6. In the opinion of some poskim, women are obligated to recite Hallel on Chanukah.(26)

ON MOTZAEI SHABBOS

Candlelighting must take place as close as possible to the end of Shabbos.(27) Indeed, some have the custom of lighting Chanukah candles even before havdalah, while others light them immediately after havdalah. All agree that any further delay in lighting Chanukah candles is prohibited. Therefore, one should hurry home from shul and immediately recite havdalah or light Chanukah candles.

A Shabbos guest who lives nearby and must go home immediately after Shabbos is over, should light in his home.(28) If, however, he does not leave immediately after Shabbos, he should light at the home of his host.(29) Preferably he should also eat melaveh malkah there.

FOOTNOTES:

1 Mishnah Berurah 679:2. Many working people, though, are not particular about this practice, since it is difficult to arrange for a minyan on such a short day.

2 Sha'arei Teshuvah 679:1, quoting Birkei Yosef.

3 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 679:7, quoting Pri Megadim.

4 Birkei Yosef 679:2; Yechaveh Da'as 1:74.

5 See Beirur Halachah 672:1. The breakdown [in this case] is as follows: 20 minutes before sunset, 50 minutes till the stars are out, and an additional half hour for the candles to burn at night. Those who wait 72 minutes between sunset and tzeis ha-kochavim should put in oil to last for an additional 22 minutes at least.

6 O.C. 675:2 and Mishnah Berurah 8.

7 Mishnah Berurah 679:2.

8 Mishnah Berurah 671:5 (based on Chayei Adam and Kesav Sofer) maintains that when the "correct" number of candles is not available, only one candle should be lit. See also Beis ha-Levi, Chanukah. Harav E.M. Shach (Avi Ezri, Chanukah), however, strongly disagrees with that ruling.

9 Based on Igros Moshe O.C. 3:95, Y.D. 1:137 and Y.D. 3:52-2. See also Eishel Avraham (Tanina) O.C. 679 who permits this.

10 O.C. 680:1.

11 See Chovas ha-Dar 1:12.

12 Mishnah Berurah 672:10. See also Chovas ha-Dar 1:10.

13 See Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62.

14 Note that only on erev Shabbos is it permitted to light this early. See Hebrew Notes, pgs. 4-8, where it is proven from several sources that during the week, plag ha-Minchah should be figured at about an hour before tzeis ha-kochavim, and not one hour before sunset. See also Mor u'Ketziyah 672:1.

15 For one half hour before this time, it is not permitted to learn or eat.

16 Ben Ish Chai, Vayeishev 20.

17 Mishnah Berurah 679:1.

18 Mishnah Berurah 673:26, 27. [Concerning asking a non-Jew to light; see Rambam (Hilchos Chanukah 4:9), Ohr Gadol (Mishnah Megillah 2:4), Da'as Torah 673:2 and Har Tzvi O.C. vol. 2, pg. 258.]

19 O.C. 279:1.

20 Mishnah Berurah 308:13; 311:30; Igros Moshe O.C. 5:22-6. Chazon Ish O.C. 47:13, however, does not agree with this leniency.

21 Mishnah Berurah 279:14.

22 See Mishnah Berurah 322:22.

23 See Igros Moshe O.C. 5:22-10.

24 Mishnah Berurah 320:24, 25.

25 Mishnah Berurah 306:33.

26 See Machazeh Eliyahu 22 for the various views.

27 Those who wait 72 minutes to end Shabbos all year round, should do so on Shabbos Chanukah as well; Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62. But those who wait 72 minutes only on occasion, should not wait 72 minutes on motzaei Shabbos Chanukah; Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Shevus Yitzchak, pg. 75).

28 Chovas ha-Dar I, note 65.

29 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Piskei Teshuvos, pg. 498).

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"Starting off on the left foot" is an expression in many cultures of getting off to a bad start.

This apparently refers to one who is naturally right-footed but leads with the wrong foot. But what about someone who is naturally left-footed?

If it is a kohen who is left-footed he is disqualified from performing the service in the Beit Hamikdash since left-footedness is considered a physical flaw just as is left-handedness.

In his commentary Rashi explains that since the Torah refers to the kohen's role in the sacrificial service as "to stand and serve" this indicates that he must be capable of using his right foot for the main support in his standing like the majority of kohanim.

Another interesting example of a physical flaw which disqualifies a kohen is height! A kohen who is unusually tall and very thin is disqualified because his height is so disproportionate to his weight that he presents a most unattractive figure.

WHAT THE SAGES SAY

"A convert has not fulfilled the command to have children with those born before his conversion because a convert is considered as a newborn child." Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish (The halacha, however, is like Rabbi Yochanan that he has indeed fulfilled the commandment.) - Bechorot47a

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False Zealotry and its Victims

by Jonathan Rosenblum

Mishpacha Magazine, December 21, 2011

During Chanukah we will tell the story of Mattisyahu and his five sons, whose rebellion against the mighty Seulucid Greeks began with Mattisyahu killing a Hellenized Jew bowing down to an idol. And it was the kana'us (zealousness) of Pinchos that turned Hashem's wrath from the Jewish people, after Zimri and Kozbi defiled the Mishkan. So there is a form of kana'us that is not just permissible but praiseworthy in the extreme.

Yet the Torah clearly recognized the dangers of kana'us. The din of kanaim pogi'im bo is a halacha that is not taught – if you need to ask, you are not the one to act. The Torah specifically relates Pinchos's descent from Aharon HaKohen, writes Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz, to teach us that only one filled with Aharon's quality of pursuing peace and overwhelming love of every Jew can fill the role of the kana'i. Anyone who does not act out of that closeness to Hashem or lacks the quality of being a rodef shalom is a murderer pure and simple.

My guess is that of the ratio of acts of true kana'us to those that deserve the most forceful condemnation is about one in a thousand. One clue: the overwhelming preponderance of teenagers, including, unfortunately, American yeshiva bochurim joining in the "action," whenever violence breaks out. I doubt that a fifteen-year-old ordering an eighty-year-old great-grandmother to move to the back of the bus is primarily moved by his care for shemiras einayim, or that those chasing religious little girls down the street and calling them filthy names are filled with the requisite ahavas Yisroel.

Second clue: the refusal of the self-styled kana'im to listen to daas Torah. Even Rav Elyashiv has been assaulted in Meah Shearim. Rabbi Aharon Feldman, Rosh Yeshivas Ner Israel, once told me how he and a group of other distinguished rabbis were laughed at and ignored by a group of kids throwing rocks at cars on the Ramot Road on Shabbos.

That lack of deference constitutes one of the two greatest dangers of contemporary-style kana'us: Those who view themselves as the sole protectors of the "Truth" make it harder for our Torah leaders to fulfill their role as the einei hador (eyes of the generation). Even Rav Schach, zt"l, used to say, "I'm afraid of the stone throwers." Those stones can be real, or take the form of pashkevillan, or even editorial pages. We have witnessed great Torah leaders disparaged or given the "silent treatment" by certain organs.

A few years ago, I asked a gadol whether he had addressed certain socio-economic problems in a new work on contemporary issues. He told me that he could not do so because if he did the kana'im would say he was not really a gadol. In other words, he could not address pressing issues because

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by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

THE UNEXPECTED FLAWS - Bechorot 45b

if he did he would become so discredited that no one would listen to him anyway. And then we complain that there is no leadership.

THE SECOND GREAT DAMAGE wrought by the kana'im is that they distort the Torah and make it ugly in the eyes of those far removed from Torah observance. Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of the Eidah HaChareidis, an outspoken and brave opponent of the kana'im, frequently quotes his own rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Dushinsky, zt"l, to the effect that those who make the Torah ugly push off the geulah. And he notes that Rabbi Amram Blau, the founder of Neturei Karta, modeled all his protests on Mohandas Gandhi's non-violent approach.

Often when I'm struggling with a particular middah, Hashem seems to send me little hints as to how off-putting is the behavior I'm trying to correct by exposing me to others in need of the same behavior modification. If as a community we want to understand the negative impact of kana'us, we have to look no further than the reaction this week to the attack on an army base (however exaggerated by the media) by a group of hilltop youth. The media talked about nothing else all week, and leading politicians and former IDF generals took to the airwaves to say that the IDF should have shot to kill. Spokesmen for the residents of Judea and Samaria spent the entire week condemning the hilltop youth in the sharpest possible terms in order to mitigate the damage to their cause.

The backlash in Europe against Muslim immigrants who have turned areas in which they are the majority into no-go zones for government officials provides another example from which we can learn. Islam is a territorial religion, which divides territory between that under Islamic sovereignty and that which is not yet under Islamic sovereignty. Judaism is not territorial in the same sense. But frankly, a lot of contemporary Israeli kana'us – e.g., attempts to impose standards, often by force, in what we view as "our neighborhoods" --smacks of a similar territorial impulse. The resulting secular fear of being under chareidi control constitutes one of the greatest barriers to chareidim seeking to purchase housing in non-chareidi neighborhoods.

THE MORE FREQUENT MANIFESTATIONS of kana'us in Israel has less to do with the spiritual elevation of Eretz Yisrael than with certain historical and sociological factors. Most of the kana'us comes from the

community centered in Meah Shearim, which has been waging a hundred year war with Zionism and is in perpetual battle mode.

From the pre-State days, Israeli society has been marked by a certain strain of lawlessness and an admiration of those who establish facts on the ground without undue attention to legalities. Violence has often proven effective in various political struggles, and that success has encouraged further resort to violence.

Finally, as the Brisker Rav once pointed out to Rabbi Amram Blau, even the fiercest anti-Zionists often act as if they were living in a Jewish state, in which they need not worry about harsh responses such as they would receive in chutz l'aretz. Satmar Chassidim in Williamsburg do not try to impose their standards of modesty on the gentiles with whom they share elevators in high-rise apartment buildings because doing so could prove life-threatening.

KANA'US THAT DOES NOT DERIVE from an inner closeness to Hashem, like that of Pinchos, not only damages the chareidi community, but the kana'im themselves. In a certain ba'al teshuva yeshiva, with which I'm familiar, students are forbidden to wear hats, lest they confuse donning an external garb with having achieved a certain internal spiritual level. That is a profound insight. Kana'us that does not come from a deep connection to Hashem is by definition a purely external action. The Chovos Halevovos writes that such external actions designed for their impression on others are in some ways worse than avodah zara. A worshipper of avodah zara serves only one false god; a person who acts out of a concern for the impression of others serves thousands.

Of course, we anti-kana'im have the opposite challenge: We can become overly sensitive to what those far removed from Torah and mitzvos will say, and, as a consequence, cold to the sight of Hashem's mitzvos being trampled underfoot. Combatting that danger requires eternal vigilance. For that reason, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, the gentlest of souls, used to cry out "Shabbos" to himself when he would see people driving on Shabbos.

This response was part of a symposium on kana'us in Mishpacha Magazine parashas MiKeitz. Rabbi Moshe Grylak's article in the same symposium also deserves a wide audience. One of the questions was directed at the greater levels of kana'us in Eretz Yisrael.

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