

BS"D



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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON MIKETZ
SHABBOS CHANUKA - 5765

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND
[mailto:ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: Dec 09, 2004
Subject: Rabbi Frand on Chanukah
Analyzing The Imagery of A Familiar Chanukah Poem

I would like to share a beautiful insight from Rav Matisyahu Solomon relating to the popular Chanukah liturgical poem, Maoz Tzur. Perhaps the most familiar stanza of this poem (owing to the well known song using these words) is the stanza beginning Yevanim nikbetzu alay azai b'yemay Chashmonim (The Syrian-Greeks gathered against me in the days of the Chashmoneans). The song then relates that they made breaches into the walls of my source of strength (u'fartzu chomos migdalay). It continues that a miracle was performed for the sake of the shoshanim. The word shoshanim literally means roses. The poet metaphorically calls the Jewish nation "shoshanim".

Why, we may ask, was the name "shoshanim" seen as a particularly appropriate way to refer to Klal Yisrael at this time in history?

Rav Solomon's basic theme is an idea mentioned by Rav Yeruchum Levovitz in his work Daas Chochmah U'Mussar. Rav Yeruchum writes that if we are to seek out one theme that Moshe Rabbeinu constantly repeats throughout his life, it is the theme that Klal Yisrael should not assimilate with idolatrous societies and learn from their ways. Moshe's greatest fear was that after his death the nation of Israel would learn the ways of their non-Jewish neighbors and be pulled into the trap and the lifestyle of the nations of the world. Moshe first mentions this theme as soon as the Torah is given and he does not let up until the very day he dies.

Rav Yeruchum cites chapter and verse to prove his point. Here are just a few of many examples: "Don't make a covenant with them or with their gods. They shall not dwell in your land lest they cause you to sin to Me." [Shmos 23:33]; "Take heed lest you make a covenant with those who dwell in the land." [Shmos 31:24]; "When you cross the Jordan to the land of Canaan, you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the Land before you; and you shall destroy... and you shall demolish... but if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the Land before you, those of them whom you leave shall be pins in your eyes and thorns in your sides..." [Bamidbar 33:51-55]. These same themes are repeated by Moshe again and again and again.

Unfortunately, in spite of all these warnings and exhortations, Klal Yisrael did not do a very good job of keeping away from assimilation with the nations. The history of both the early and later prophets is replete with examples of spiritual backsliding on the part of the Jewish people due to having learned from and copied the abominations of other nations. This occurs over and over in the Book of Yehoshua, in Shoftim, in Shmuel, and in Melachim. Not only did "the masses" of Jews learn from idolators, even Jewish Kings learned from them, to the extent that

some of them tried to eradicate Judaism from the nation. Ultimately, the Jews paid the price of this spiritual backsliding and were exiled from the Land.

After seventy years, the Jews were put back into the land, having seemingly learned their lesson, only to return to their wayward behavior and to again learn from the Hellenists in the time of the Second Temple. Concerning this constant historical challenge to the preservation of unique Jewish identity, Dovid HaMelech [King David] says, "And they intermingled among the nations and they learned from their ways" [Tehillim 106:35].

If there is a way to sum up the essence of the battle between Klal Yisrael and the Yevanim [Syrian-Greeks] at the time of the Chanukah story in twenty-five words or less it is by describing this very issue. The Yevanim's battle with the Jews was not a physical battle to eradicate our people. Their vision was not that of Haman in an earlier era nor that of Rome in a later era. The Yevanim were not interested in killing Jews. The Greeks did not destroy the Beis HaMikdash even though they were certainly militarily capable of doing that. Their goal was not to destroy the Temple, but to de-sanctify it. They wanted to take Jewish culture and adulterate it. Their vision was to Hellenize Judaism and to blur the differences between Greek and Jewish culture. It was not a battle for the lives of Jews. It was a battle for their souls -- a cultural war.

Perhaps this is what the Mishneh is alluding to in Tractate Middos [2:3]. When detailing the layout of the Har Habayis [Temple Mount], the Mishneh mentions a ten hand breadth high fence known as the Soreg, just inside the perimeter of the Har Habayis. The Mishneh comments that the Soreg contained thirteen breaches that were made by the Greek Kings. The Mishneh says that the Jews were successful in mending the fences and instituted a corresponding number of prostrations, where visitors bowed when passing these places. The Rabbis enacted that when a Jew came to the Har Habayis and saw the mended fences, he should bow down in grateful thanks to the Master of the Universe for the successful defeat of the Syrian-Greek empire.

The Tosfos YomTov comments that the purpose of the Soreg fence was to separate the Jews from the non-Jews. When people of other nations came to the Har Habayis (which they had the right to do, as found in King Solomon's prayer at the Temple dedication [Melachim I 8:41-43]), they had to know their limits. If they wanted to join the Jewish nation, they could convert. But they did not have to. They could donate to the Temple and make offerings, but from "the other side of the fence", a small but symbolic separation between the Jews and the nations.

When the Greeks were successful in conquering Eretz Yisrael, what did they do? They did not destroy the fence or jump over the fence. They made breaches in the fence, in effect saying we are not different. We are no different from you and you are no different from us. We want to intermingle with you, and we want you to assimilate with us.

The mending of the fences was the symbol of the victory of the Jews over the Greeks. Therefore, how appropriate it is, for the liturgist to write - in describing the challenge that the Greeks presented to the Jewish nation: U'fartzu chomos migadalie [And they breached the walls of my Temple]. U'mi'nosar kankanim, na-aseh nes la'shoshanim [And from the left over vials of oil a miracle was performed for the 'roses'].

Why 'shoshanim' [roses]? The pasuk in Shir HaShirim [2:2] states, Like the rose (maintaining its beauty) among the thorns, so is My faithful beloved among the nations. Rashi there explains that the Jewish people are compared to roses. They live in a hostile environment. The delicate rose is in constant danger, lest the thorns puncture and pierce its beauty, destroying its pristine appearance. The Jewish people is under constant pressure to assimilate, and to replace Jewish values with those of the larger society around us.

This was the praise of the Jews who defeated the Greeks. They preserved their pristine beauty in the face of the hostility of the Yevanim

who were trying to puncture and destroy their spiritually delicate essence.

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These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 441, Taanis Chalom. Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. RavFrand, Copyright © 2004 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> Project Genesis, Inc. 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 250 Baltimore, MD 21208



From RABBI AVROHOM SCHNALL

www.ynj.org

Mi'at Min Ha'or Docheh Harbeh Min Hachoshech - "A small bit of light will dispel much darkness."

This statement of Chazal, associated with the miracle of Chanukah, has numerous meanings. On a superficial level, it is simply a stated fact. A small bit of light will indeed illuminate a large, dark area. Regarding the Chanukah miracle, it is interpreted to apply to the Torah light which beamed forth in spite of the darkness of the Greek culture which tried to suffocate it. It is also interpreted to apply to the miracle of the "Menorah", the last known revealed miracle in Jewish history, which must strengthen the Jewish people through the millennia of the darkness of Galus. In a less philosophic and more down-to-earth vein, it describes the Yom Tov of Chanukah; the last holiday that must keep us illuminated throughout the long, dark, dreary nights of winter, until we come to celebrate the miracle of Purim. Whichever interpretation you choose, Chanukah is indeed called "Chag Haoros". A Lichtige Chanukah!

From: Rafael Salasnik [mailto:rafi@BRIJNET.ORG] Sent: Dec 08, 2004 To: DAF-HASHAVUA@LISTSERV.SHAMASH.ORG Subject: daf-hashavua Miketz 5765/2004 U N I T E D S Y N A G O G U E - L O N D O N (O) Miketz Vol 17 No 13 11 Dec. 2004 28 Kislev 5765 SHABBAT CHANUKAH SHABBAT MEVARCHIM Shabbat ends in London at 4.45pm THE ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED BY: BRIJNET - British Jewish Network - UK branch of Shamash

Daf Hashavua

JEWISH VALUES

by CHIEF RABBI DR JONATHAN SACKS

THE FESTIVAL OF HOPE

Kislev is the month in which we celebrate Chanukah, and Chanukah itself is eloquent testimony to one of the great Jewish virtues - hope.

The commentators ask a simple question about the blessings we make over the Chanukah light on the first day. According to tradition, the victorious Maccabees rededicated the Temple, relighting the menorah. Among the wreckage they found a single cruse of oil with its seal unbroken, indicating that it had not been defiled. One cruse was enough to light the menorah for a single day, but by a miracle it lasted for eight days, long enough for new oil to be prepared. Clearly, we are right to make the blessing over a miracle - she'asah nissim - on the second to eighth days - but why on the first? There was enough oil for that day. Why then the blessing? What was the miracle?

The most profound answer is that they found it in the first place. There was no reason to suppose that the Hellenists would have left a cruse of oil intact. Yet the Maccabees found it. They found it because they searched. They searched because they were convinced that out of the

catastrophe, something would remain - something from which they could make a new beginning. That was the miracle of the first day: the miracle of hope.

There is no logic to hope. There is no irrefutable evidence that things will get better, that evil will not triumph, that something pure will survive. The sociologist Peter Berger calls hope a "signal of transcendence," a point where the human spirit breaks through the laws of nature and creates new possibilities. A signal of transcendence is that within us which comes from beyond us. Hope is the refutation of tragedy in the name of faith.

An extraordinary story is told about the violinist Yitzhak Perlman. Perlman suffered from polio as a child, and ever since has had to walk on crutches. Once, he was beginning to play a violin concerto at New York's Lincoln Center when, with an audible snap, one of the strings of his Stradivarius broke. The audience expected him to stop and call for a new instrument, but he did not. With astonishing virtuosity he completed the performance on three strings. At the end, he was given a standing ovation and called on to make a speech. He is reported to have said one sentence, which everyone knew referred not just to the broken string, but to his entire life of disability. He said: "It is our task to make music with what remains."

G-d never promised us that life would be easy. We suffer. We experience loss. Yet something survives, and out of that we can make a new beginning. Chanukah tells the story of that kind of hope. It is the festival of making light out of what remains.

Produced by the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue.
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EZRAS TORAH LUACH

SHABBOS PARSHAS MIKEITZ FOURTH DAY CHANUKAH FRIDAY AFTERNOON Dec. 10, 27 KISLEV

We light the Chanukah Menorah at home before lighting the Shabbos candles. (One should recite Mincha before lighting the Chanukah lights. However, one must be careful not to delay the welcoming of Shabbos because of this. One may not light neither Chanukah nor Shabbos lights, earlier than Plag HaMincha - one and one-quarter proportionate hours before sunset, (a proportionate hour is one-twelfth of the daylight period). One must be careful to use enough oil (or light a large enough candle) that will remain lit until thirty minutes after the appearance of three stars. We light four candles, beginning with the new addition. We make the Brachos "Lehaklik Ner" and "Sheasah Nisim" (no Shehecheyanu); Haneros Halalu, etc.

WELCOMING THE SHABBOS FRIDAY EVENING, 28 KISLEV MAARIV Al Hanisim etc.

SHABBOS MORNING, Dec. 11 SHACHRIS Al Hanisim in Shemonah Esrei for Shabbos; Chazzan's Repetition; complete Hallel; Kaddish Tiskabel. We take out two Sifrei Torah; in the first Sefer Torah we have seven Aliyahs in the weekly Sidrah (Mikeitz). We place the second Sefer Torah next to the first and a Half-Kaddish is said. We then lift and roll the first Sefer Torah. The Haftir reads in the second Sefer Torah from Parshas Naso (7:30-7:35); the Haftarah is read in Zechariah 2:14-4:7. We bless the new moon of Teves. (no Kel Malei or Av Harachamim); Yehalilu Ashrei MUSSAF Half-Kaddish; Shemonah Esrei of Mussaf for Shabbos with Al Hanisim; Chazzan's Repetition; Kaddish Tiskabel; Ain Kailokanu; Aleinu; Anim Zmiros; Psalm of the Day; (Psalm of the Day); Mizmor Shir Chanukas; Mourner's Kaddish; Adon Olam

MINCHA Three Aliyahs in Parshas Vayigash; Al Hanisim in Shemonah Esrei for Shabbos Mincha. (We do not say Tzidkascha Tzedek).

FIFTH DAY CHANUKAH DEPARTURE OF SHABBOS Weekday Maariv; Atah Chonantanu; and Al Hanisim in Shemonah Esrei; Half-Kaddish; Vihi Noam; Va'atah Kodesh Kaddish Tiskabel; light Chanukah Menorah in Shul; Veyitein Lecha; Havdalah; Aleinu; Mourner's Kaddish.

(Rav Henkin noted that there are various opinions concerning the order of Havdalah and Chanukah Menorah lighting in the home. His recommendation was

to make Havdalah first, and then to light the Chanukah Menorah. His reason was a practical one, intended for the benefit of someone who maintains Shabbos longer than the rest of the household. Such a person can make Havdalah with someone else lighting the Havdalah candle and holding it for him. When he is ready to light his Chanukah lights, he may then do so immediately.)

EREV ROSH CHODESH FIFTH DAY CHANUKAH SUNDAY, Dec. 12, 29 KISLEV Those who say the service of Yom Kippur Koton do not do so today.

ROSH CHODESH 1 TEVES SIXTH DAY CHANUKAH SUNDAY EVENING, Dec. 12 MAARIV Yaaleh Veyavo and Al Hanisim.

MONDAY MORNING, Dec. 13 SHACHRIS Yaaleh Veyavo and Al Hanisim in weekday Shemonah Esrei; Chazzan's Repetition; complete Hallel; Kaddish Tiskabel. We take out two Sifrei Torah; in the first we have three Aliyahs in Parshas Pinchas in the regular Torah Reading for Rosh Chodesh (Numbers 28:1-15); Kohen reads from "Vayedaber" until "Raviis Hahin" Levi reads from the following verse until ;j Vanisach" Yisroel continues until ;"Vanisco" the fourth Aliyah is in the second Sefer Torah in Parshas Naso (Numbers 7:42-47) Uvyom Hashishi Half - Kaddish; (Nusach Ashkenaz.); Yehalilu the Torah is returned to the Aron HaKodesh; Ashrei; Uva Letzion (no Lamenzatayach); Half-Kaddish. MUSSAF We remove our Tefillin; Shemonah Esrei of Mussaf for Rosh Chodesh with Al Hanisim; Chazzan's Repetition; Kaddish Tiskabel; Aleinu; Psalm of the Day; Borchai Nafshi; Mizmor Shir Chanukas; Mourner's Kaddish.

EIGHTH DAY CHANUKAH WEDNESDAY, Dec. 15, 3 TEVES SHACHRIS Shemonah Esrei with Al Hanisim; Chazzan's Repetition; complete Hallel; Half-Kaddish; Torah Reading: three Aliyahs in Parshas Naso and concluding in Parshas B'haalosecha (Numbers 7:54-8:4); Kohen reads (54-56); Levi reads (57-59); Yisroel reads (7:60-8:4); Half-Kaddish; Yehalilu; Ashrei; Uva Letzion; (no Lamenzatayach); Kaddish Tiskabel; Aleinu; Psalm of the Day; Mizmor Shir Chanukas; Mourner's Kaddish.

From: Aish.com [mailto:newsletterserver@aish.com] Sent: Dec. 09, 2004

Subject: Chanukah - Alexander and the Jews
ALEXANDER AND THE JEWS
BY RABBI KEN SPIRO

The one pivotal scene that you won't see in any movie sets the stage for the story of Chanukah.

With two star-studded motion pictures featuring Colin Farrel and Leonardo DiCaprio, Alexander the Great seems to be suddenly all the rage. In keeping with the spirit of Hollywood, the movies will probably focus on Alexander's impressive military career, his colossal battles with the Persian Empire and his sordid personal life. What will be overlooked are the fascinating interactions Alexander had with the Jewish people and the complex relationship that developed between the Greeks and the Jews that set the stage for the story of Chanukah.

A LITTLE BACKGROUND

Alexander, born in 356BCE, was the son of Phillip II (382-336BCE), the King of Macedonia in northern Greece (and considered a barbarian by the southern Greek city states). Phillip created a powerful, professional army which forcibly united the fractious Greek city-states into one empire.

From an early age, Alexander displayed tremendous military talent and was appointed as a commander in his father's army at the age of 18. Having conquered all of Greece, Phillip was about to embark on a campaign to invade Greece's arch-enemy, the Persian Empire. Before he could invade Persia, Phillip was assassinated, possibly by Alexander, who then became king in 336BCE. Two years later in 334 BCE, he crossed the Hellsport (in modern-day Turkey) with 45,000 men and invaded the Persian Empire.

In three colossal battles -- Granicus, Issus and Gaugamela -- that took place between 334 and 331, Alexander brilliantly (and often recklessly) led his army to victory against Persian armies that may have outnumbered his own as much as ten to one. By 331 BCE, the Persian Empire was defeated, the Persian Emperor Darius was dead, and Alexander was the undisputed ruler of the Mediterranean. His military

campaign lasted 12 years and took him and his army 10,000 miles to the Indus River in India.

Only the weariness of his men and Alexander's untimely death in 323BCE at the age of 32 ended the Greek conquest of the known world. It is said that when Alexander looked at his empire, he wept for there was nothing more to conquer. His vast empire did not survive his death, but fragmented into three large chunks centered in Greece, Egypt, and Syria and controlled by his former generals.

At its largest, Alexander's empire stretched from Egypt to India. He built six Greek cities, all named Alexandria. (Only Alexandria in Egypt still survives) These cities, and the Greeks who settled in them, brought Greek culture to the center of the oldest civilizations of Mesopotamia.

The Greeks were not only military imperialists but also cultural imperialists. Greek soldiers and settlers brought their way of life -- their language, art, architecture, literature, and philosophy -- to Middle East. When Greek culture merged with the culture of the Middle East, it created a new cultural hybrid -- Hellenism (Hellas is the Greek word for Greece) -- whose impact would be far greater and last far longer than the brief period of Alexander's empire. Whether through the idea of the pitched battle, art, architecture or philosophy, Hellenism's influence on the Roman Empire, Christianity, and the West was monumental. But it is the interaction between the Jews and the Greeks and the impact of Hellenism on Judaism that we want to take a closer look at.

DETOUR TO ISRAEL

During his military campaign against Persia, Alexander took a detour to the south, conquering Tyre and then Egypt via what is today Israel. There is a fascinating story about Alexander's first encounter with the Jews of Israel, who were subjects of the Persian Empire.

The narrative concerning Alexander's first interaction with the Jews is recorded in both the Talmud (Yoma 69a) and in the Jewish historian Josephus's Book of Antiquities (XI, 321-47). In both accounts the High Priest of the Temple in Jerusalem, fearing that Alexander would destroy the city, went out to meet him before he arrived at the city. The narrative describes how Alexander, upon seeing the High Priest, dismounted and bowed to him. (Alexander rarely, if ever, bowed to anyone). In Josephus's account, when asked by his general, Parmenio, to explain his actions, Alexander answered, "I did not bow before him, but before that G-d who has honored him with the high Priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very apparel."

Alexander interpreted the vision of the High Priest as a good omen and thus spared Jerusalem, peacefully absorbing the Land of Israel into his growing empire. As tribute to his benign conquest, the Sages decreed that the Jewish firstborn of that time be named Alexander -- which remains a Jewish name to this very day. And the date of their encounter, the 25th of Tevet, was declared a minor holiday.

JEWS AND GREEKS

Thus began one of the most interesting and complex cultural relationships in the ancient world. The Greeks had never met anyone like the Jews, and the Jews had never met anyone like the Greeks. The initial interaction seemed to be very positive. To the Jews, the Greeks were a new and exotic culture from the West. They had a profound intellectual tradition that produced philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (who was Alexander's tutor for two years). Their love of wisdom, science, art, and architecture set them apart from other cultures the Jews had interacted with. The Greek language was considered so beautiful that the Talmud called it in some ways the most beautiful of all languages and the Rabbis decreed that a Torah scroll could even be written in Greek.

The Greeks had never met anyone like the Jews -- the world's only monotheistic nation who had a unique concept of a loving, infinite G-d who cares about creation and acts in history. The Jews had incredibly profound and complex legal and philosophical traditions. They had literacy rates and a social welfare infrastructure unheard of in the ancient

world. So fascinated were the Greeks with the Jews that they became the first people to translate the Bible into another language when King Ptolemy II (c. 250 BCE) forced 70 Rabbis to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek (known as the Septuagint, which means "70" in Greek).

Two Greek Empires emerged in the Middle East after the death of Alexander: The Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria. The Land of Israel was the border between these two warring Empires. Initially, the Jews were under the control of the Ptolemies, but after the Battle of Panias in 198BCE, Israel found herself in the domain of the Seleucids and their king, Antiochus.

While much of the upper crust of Jewish society, along with the rest of the population of the Mediterranean world, readily embraced Hellenistic culture (some to the point of denouncing their Jewish identity), the vast majority of the Jews remained loyal to Judaism. This "rejection" of the Hellenistic lifestyle was viewed with great hostility by many Greeks and seen as a form of rebellion. The exotic differences that had once served as the source of attraction between the two cultures now created the flashpoint for a cultural war. To make matters worse, Israel was the border state between these two rival Greek Empires, and the Jews, who refused to assimilate, were viewed as a disloyal population in strategically vital part of the Seleucid Empire.

It would be wrong to view the conflict as purely Greece versus the Jews. Internal tension within the Jewish community contributed significantly to the conflict. Many of the Hellenized Jews took it upon themselves to "help" their more traditional brethren by "dragging" them away from what they perceived was their primitive beliefs into the "modern" world of Greek culture. (This pattern has repeated itself many times in Jewish history -- in Russia in the 19th century and in Germany, to name just a few examples.) To aid them in their endeavor, these Hellenized Jews enlisted the help of their Greek allies, ultimately bringing the king himself, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, into the conflict.

THE MIRACLE OF CHANUKAH

In the mid-second century BCE, Antiochus issued a decree which until that time was unheard of in the multicultural and religiously tolerant ancient world: He outlawed another people's religion. He banned the teaching and practice of Judaism. The book of the Maccabees (probably written by a Jewish chronicler in the early first century BCE) describes it as follows: "Not long after this, the king sent an Athenian senator to compel the Jews to forsake the laws of their fathers and cease to live by the laws of God, and also to pollute the Temple in Jerusalem and call it the Temple of Olympian Zeus." (II Maccabees 6:1-2).

Brutal Greek persecutions of the Jews triggered the first religious/ideological war in history -- the Maccabean revolt. The revolt was led by the priestly family of Matithias and his five sons, the most famous of whom was Judah. Against all odds, the outnumbered guerilla army of the Maccabees beat the much larger, better equipped, professional Greek armies. After three years of fighting, Jerusalem was liberated. The Temple which had been desecrated was cleaned and rededicated to God. It was during this period of cleansing and rededication of the Temple that the miracle of Chanukah happened. One small flask of oil used by the High Priest to light the menorah in the Temple, that should have been sufficient for only one day, miraculously burned for eight.

The conflict dragged on for many more years and cost the lives of many Jews, including Judah Maccabee and several of his brothers. Ultimately, the Greeks were defeated and Judaism survived.

Arguably, a far greater miracle than the oil lasting for eight days was the military victory of the Jews over the Greek Empire. But the light of Chanukah is symbolic of the real victory -- the survival of the spiritual light of Judaism. Judaism's miraculous survival enabled the Jews to have a monumental impact on the world that has far exceeded the miniscule size of the Jewish people, giving the world the concept of one G-d and

the values of the sanctity of life, justice, peace and social responsibility that are the moral/spiritual foundations of Western civilization.

This article can also be read at:

http://www.aish.com/chanukahbasics/chanukahbasicsdefault/Alexander_and_the_Jews.asp



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Dec. 08, 2004 To:

Subject: Rabbi Wein - Miketz

Happy Chanukah! Sale Items....!

Jerusalem Post Dec. 10, 2004 www.rabbiwein.com/jpost-index.html

LASTING HEROES <http://rabbiwein.com/column-851.html>

One of the tendencies of modern historiography is to debunk past heroes. Revisionist historians have blackened the name of some of the great people of the past by dwelling extensively on their human foibles and personal difficulties. Not only does this attitude reinforce the false idea that there are no real heroes in the world, it indirectly absolves all of us from ever attempting to be a hero to one's family, community or nation. One of the sources of this problem is the confusion of true heroism with infallibility. The Torah taught us that there are no perfect people. Only G-d is perfection incarnate. Heroes, as the Bible points out to us regarding the greatest people of our nation, may have faults and can make errors in judgment. Nevertheless, they remain heroes due to their accomplishments in life and their leadership of the Jewish people. It is essential beyond words to preserve the concept of human heroism in our age. It has been cheapened by the elevation of celebrities and sports figures as heroes. There is a great difference between being well known and being heroic. The currently well known are soon forgotten as they are replaced by another generation's well-known celebrities and sports figures. True heroes weather the ravages of time and are exemplary and inspiring for generations after their actual departure from this world.

All of this is to point out that this year the Jewish people commemorate the passing of two of the greatest heroes of our history: Rashi - Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak of Troyes, France - and Rambam/Maimonides - Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon of Spanish Cordoba, Moroccan Fez and Egyptian Fostat (Old Cairo.) It is nine hundred years since the passing of Rashi and eight hundred years since the death of Rambam. Both of these great heroes of Judaism have stood the test of time well. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that they are probably known to more people in our generation than they were known to in their own generations. The Talmud teaches us that there were two main pillars that were the mainstays and support of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. The pillars were named Yachin and Boaz. Well, there are two main pillars that support the Jewish world of Torah and tradition and provide now as before the necessary basis for Jewish continuity. These pillars are named Rashi and Rambam. It is difficult to imagine the Jewish world without these two great heroes. How would we be able to study Torah and Talmud without the serene guidance of Rashi's commentaries? Rashi is the master of concise language, deep insight, clarity and sensitivity to the text and the reader of the text. He anticipates the problems and difficulties, clears away the stumbling blocks and effortlessly guides the scholar and the novice alike unto the open plain of understanding and deep appreciation of the wonders of the Torah and the Talmud. Nine hundred years after his passing, Rashi remains fresh and alive - the teacher of Israel, the eternal hero of the Jewish people.

Rambam took the entire compendium of Jewish thought and scholarship that existed until his time and organized it so that its transmission to all future generations of Jews became easier and clearer. The Rambam codified all of Jewish law in his magnum opus, Mishna Torah; he clarified and explained the Mishna in his Perush Mishnayot; he blazed a path for Jewish philosophy in Moreh Nevuchim; he laid down the guidelines for living as a Jew under times of persecution and forced conversion in Iggeret Teiman and Iggeret HaShmad; and he postulated for all time the basic beliefs of Judaism in his thirteen principles of faith. It is not for naught that the Jewish people say of him: "From Moshe to Moshe there arose no one as great as Moshe." He is the great eagle of the Jewish people, the person whose works are studied and commented upon more than any other works extant in the Jewish field. There are more scholarly books dealing with the works and books of Rambam than there are books commenting on the Bible itself! No major work written after his death fails to discuss his opinions and all rely upon him as the basis for all further Torah scholarship and creativity. Together with Rashi, he is the other pillar of Jewish heroism. They are the people who remain heroes to us for all seasons and all times.

Parsha Dec. 10, 2004 <http://www.rabbiwein.com/parsha-index.html>
 MIKETZ <http://rabbiwein.com/column-852.html>

Joseph's first dream comes to realization in this week's parsha. His brothers come down to Egypt and prostrate themselves before him. The dream of the sheaves of the brothers bowing to Joseph's sheaf is at last fulfilled. But strangely, Joseph does not feel himself satisfied. It is human nature that the expectation of the realization of events is always greater and more exciting than the fulfillment of the realization itself. No vacation or event that we plan for ourselves can live up to our imagination and expectation regarding it. And Joseph is further burdened by the enormity of what has transpired. He has the brothers, who sold him as a slave and were deaf to his shouts and tears and pleas for mercy, in his hands. But what is he to do with them now? And what of his beloved father, the old man, broken in grief, whom he has not seen or communicated with for twenty-two years? Are the brothers telling him the truth about his father's condition? And what about Benjamin, his younger brother? Is he like the other brothers in attitude and belief or is he different? Does he mourn for his lost brother Joseph or is he sanguine about his fate, as his ten older brothers seem to be? All of these questions plague Joseph at the moment of his seemingly great triumph when his brothers are in his power and abjectly bow before him. His triumph therefore seems somewhat hollow to him at that moment.

Joseph comes to the great realization that his ultimate triumph over his brothers lies not in punishing them - though he will certainly cause them great anguish on their road of repentance - but rather to eventually conciliate them. Vengeance is momentarily more satisfying than is conciliation. But in the long run, vengeance lies not in human hands. And it will only continue to widen the rift within Jacob's family. Joseph's greatness and heroism lies in the fact that he chose the road of healing and conciliation rather than that of punishment and vengeance. Joseph, out of all of the avot and the brothers is called tzadik - righteous and holy. This is certainly due to his behavior in escaping from the clutches of Potiphar's wife. But Joseph's righteousness and piety is exhibited not only in that incident. It is apparent in his treatment of his brothers after his dream of their bowing down to him has been realized. He will protect his brothers from the Pharaoh and the ravages of Egyptian society. He will support them physically, financially and spiritually for the rest of his life. He still weeps at the gulf of suspicion that yet exists between him and the brothers. Conciliation is a long and difficult road to traverse. But Joseph realizes that it is the only hope for his family's continuity and purpose.

In the rough and tumble of Jewish and Israeli politics, organizational life and competitive societal forces, the temptation for excluding others and even punishing them is very strong. But the lesson of Joseph should remain instructional to all of us today as well. A Jewish society that can cast away old hatreds and feuds and truly attempt to be conciliatory one to another will certainly be stronger and holier in purpose and action. In this respect, we should all profit from and attempt to emulate Joseph's wisdom and course of behavior.

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Selected Laws of Chanukah

Adapted from the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch by the Cong. Beth Abraham Adult Education Committee

Reviewed by Rav Yaakov Neuburger

Mai Chanukah?

- These days are referred to as "Chanukah" - which can be divided into "chanu" "chof-hay," "they rested ("chanu") from their enemies on the 25th (the numerical value of the letters "chof hay"). Also, the word "Chanukah" means "dedication," for it was at this time that the Jews rededicated the Beis HaMikdash after their enemies had defiled it.

- Another reason for celebration is that the work of building the different parts of the Mishkan in the desert was completed during these days although the Mishkan was not actually dedicated until the month of Nissan.

For this reason, some authorities say that it is a mitzvah to feast slightly more than usual on Chanukah. Nevertheless, these feasts cannot be considered to be "feasts associated with a mitzvah" unless songs of praise are also recited.

Tzedakah -

There are those who are accustomed to increase their acts of Tzedakah during Chanukah. Mystical traditions attribute lofty values to marking Chanukah with Tzedakah. In particular, this charity should be directed to the support of poor Torah scholars.

Working

Tough work ("melacha") is permitted on Chanukah. Women, follow the custom of refraining from work during the time the Chanukah candles are burning at home. The custom is to refrain from work only for the minimum amount of time that the candles must burn, which is approximately 30 minutes.

This is primarily to set aside the candles for their ceremonial purpose.

Why Women Where Chosen?

The reason why women must observe greater stringency than men is that the Greek's decrees were harsher for the women. They had decreed that any Jewish virgin who is getting married must first be violated by the Greek governor.

Yehudis, the daughter of Yochanan, the Kohen Gadol, was very beautiful. The enemy ruler proposed that she cohabit with him. She told him that she would accede to his wish. When she came to him, she fed

him dishes of cheese so that he would become very thirsty and would desire to drink much wine; she hoped that he would become intoxicated and sleep soundly. Her plan worked and while he was asleep, she cut off his head and brought it to Jerusalem.

When the leader of the Greek army saw that their ruler had been slain, he and his army fled. To commemorate this miracle, there are some who follow the custom of eating dairy dishes on Chanukah.

The Menorah

It is universally accepted ("minhag pashut") to light the Chanukah candles according to the custom of those who the Talmud refers to as "mehadrin min hamehadrin". Meaning, each person in the household (if one does not have an established custom, a married women should not light) lights their own one candle on the first night, two on the second, and adding one daily until the eighth night when he will light eight.

Care must be taken that each person places his candles in such a manner that it will be obvious how many candles each person lit.

For this reason the Chanukah candles should be in a single row of equal height; one should not be lower or higher than another. If the candles do not have separate holders, they should be at least one fingerbreadth away from each other. There should be a space between the candles so that the flame of one does not approach the other thereby giving the appearance of a torch ("medurah").

Lighting the Menorah

The time to kindle the Chanukah lights is immediately after the appearance of three stars (this year 5:10 PM). It is forbidden to engage in any activity, even Torah study, before kindling them

Before kindling the lights, one should gather all the members of one's family so that they become aware of the kindling ("pirsumei milсах"). Enough oil should be placed in the menorah so that the lights will burn for at least half an hour (5:40 PM), however the longer the better.

If one did not light immediately, one may light with a blessing throughout the entire night as long as the members of one's household are awake. It is highly preferable to have at least one person join the lighting (1).

A person, who will not have the opportunity to kindle the Chanukah lights at night, may do so beforehand, kindling them any time after "plag haminchah" (this year 3:30 PM).

When kindling the Chanukah lights before nightfall, one must be careful to place enough oil in the menorah for them to burn until a half hour after the appearance of the stars (5:40 PM). If they are not fit to burn that long, one has not fulfilled the mitzvah.

On the first night, one should light the candle on the far right. On the second night, one should add another candle to the left of the previous night's candle. Similarly, each night, one should add a candle on the left side. Each night, one should begin by lighting the candle one has added, and then continue lighting towards the right.

We follow the principle that it is the act of kindling that fulfills the mitzvah ("Hadlakah oseh mitzvah"). Therefore, at the time the Chanukah candles are being kindled, they must be in their correct location and contain sufficient oil to burn for the requisite time. In contrast, if the candles were lit in a place that is not a valid location for lighting and then moved to a valid location while they were burning, they are not valid.

Similarly, if at the time of kindling there was not enough oil in the menorah to burn for the required time, it does not help to add more after they are lit. Based on the same principle, if one positioned the Chanukah lights in a windy place, where it is likely that they will be extinguished, one has not fulfilled the mitzvah and is required to light again. One should not, however, recite a blessing when lighting the second time.

Conversely, if one put the candles in their correct place, and unexpectedly they were extinguished, one is considered to have fulfilled the mitzvah (2). Nevertheless, it is customary that one lights them again.

It is customary not to light one Chanukah candle with another, but rather to use the "shamash" or another ordinary candle. The shamash or the room light can serve to set aside the Menorah light for their ceremonial purpose.

Erev Shabbos:

On Friday afternoon, one should light the Chanukah candles before the Shabbos candles. One must kindle the Chanukah candles after "Plag Haminchah" (this year 3:30). There is a preference to daven Mincha before lighting candles. Additionally, we will light in the Shul before Mincha to be sure that we can fulfill Tosefas Shabbos and postponing saying Maoz'szur until after Mincha.

One must place enough oil in the menorah so that the candles will burn for half an hour after the appearance of the stars (5:40 PM). If one has not done so, the blessings recited are considered to be blessings recited with no value ("bracha le'vatalah")

Motzei Shabbos

On Saturday night, Havdallah is recited first (after praying "Maariv"), and then the Chanukah lights are kindled (3). In the synagogue, the Chanukah lights should be kindled before reciting the passage "V'yiten Lecho."

FOOTNOTES: (1) If one adult male or female, or even a child with some understanding is awake, one may light with a blessing. The blessing is recited only when the mitzvah is being performed in the way it was intended by the Sages. Since the entire purpose of the mitzvah to light Chanukah candles is to publicize the miracle that occurred, if one is not lighting outside or at a window where the public can see it, or inside the house at a time when the household members will see it, then one is not fulfilling the mitzvah completely in the way it was intended, and therefore there are those who question reciting the blessing. (2) In other words, if one lit them according to all the halachic criteria, and they were extinguished before the requisite half hour, one is not obligated to relight them (although the custom is to do so). There are authorities who rule that even when the menorah was lit in the correct location, it should not be moved even to another valid location until after the candles had burned at least a half hour. Others are more stringent, maintaining that the menorah should not be moved at all while it is burning. (3) Many authorities rule to the contrary, that is, on Motzei Shabbos, the Chanukah lights are kindled first and then Havdallah is recited. They provide two reasons for this ruling: a) Doing so will delay the act of parting from Shabbos, which Havdallah signifies (It is important to note that even after the appearance of three stars after Shabbos, one may not perform an activity which is prohibited on Shabbos, until after one has recited the prayer "Ata Chonantanu" in the Maariv Sh'mone Esrei, or until one has said the words "Baruch HaMavdil Bein Kodesh Le'Chol"). b) The act of publicizing the miracle of Chanukah ("pirsumei nisah") should come before saying Havdallah. Those who rule that Havdallah comes first hold that the mitzvah which is performed more frequently always takes precedence ("Todir Ve'eino Todir, Todir Kodem"). In Shul, the custom is to light the Chanukah candles before Havdalah. When at home, one should conduct oneself according to one's own minhag. If one doesn't have a minhag, one should perform Havdalah first and then kindle the Chanukah lights.

From the Rav's Study [RAV YAAKOV NEUBURGER] POINTS TO PONDER ABOUT THE MENORAH

Safety: The first and foremost concern is placing the menorah(s) in a position that is a safe one, far away from the reach of infants and young children.

Which Way is Right? When placing the Menorah on a windowsill, the principle mitzvah is for those in the home to see it and one should light the menorah accordingly – i.e. the people in the home should see the candles on the right.

Who Should Be There? Ideally all who are living at home and certainly children still in high school should get together to light the Menorah(s) as close to tzeis hakochavim (5:10 PM) as possible.

Working Late: When this family gathering is delayed, and will not happen before the children go to sleep, I think that is preferable to have them light on their own with their mother watching them.

Business Trip/Going Away: If one is away on a night of Chanukah, then one lights wherever one sleeps - e.g. hotel, hospital. One's wife should light as well at home

Away From Home on Shabbos: When you are a guest for Shabbos, one should light the Menorah at the home of one's host. If one has several hosts - one for sleeping and one for eating, one should light at the home where one is eating. However, if one is eating a meal and spending most of one's time at the host where one is sleeping that becomes the main residence for Shabbos and one should light there. Furthermore, if one is eating in an area where many families are eating, for example in a hotel dining room, then one should view the place of sleeping as the quarters for that Shabbos.

Traveling Home on Motzai Shabbos: If one is away when the obligation to light begins, for example, on Motzai Shabbos when one is still at one's hosts - yet one is planning to return home that evening - one should light the Menorah when they get home.



<http://www.chief Rabbi.org/tt-index.html>
Covenant & Conversation - Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

RABBI DR. JONATHAN SACKS
Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew
Congregations of the British Commonwealth
[from 2 years ago?]

HANUKKAH: WAR AND PEACE

There is a law in relation to Hanukkah which, more than most, tells us about the hierarchy of Jewish values - about what was remarkable about Judaism in ancient times and remains so today.

The festival of Hanukkah commemorates an extraordinary victory - of the Maccabees, a relatively small and dedicated force of fighters against one of the great imperial powers of classical antiquity, the Seleucid branch of the Alexandrian empire.

Ancient Greece is sometimes cited as the precursor of certain modern values such as democracy, citizenship and liberty. Its idea of liberty was, however, circumscribed. The Greeks had little regard for cultures other than their own, and when Antiochus IV came to power (calling himself Epiphanes, meaning 'a god made manifest'), he began to force the pace of Hellenization, forcing Greek culture on the people of Israel. Sadly, he was helped in this endeavour by two Jewish high priests, Jason and Menelaus, who assisted in banning the practice of Judaism and turning the Temple into an interdenominational house of worship on Greek lines.

When a statue of the Greek god Zeus was erected in the Temple precincts (Jews at the time called it 'the abomination of desolation'), a group of Jews led by the elderly priest Matityahu and his sons, rebelled. They fought a brilliant campaign, and within three years they had recaptured Jerusalem, removed sacrilegious objects from the Temple, and restored Jewish autonomy. It was, as we say in the Al haNissim prayer, a victory for 'the weak against the strong, and the few against the many.'

Not only was it an extraordinary triumph. Two other features make it different from other moments in ancient Jewish history. The first is that Hanukkah is the only Jewish victory to be recorded in non-Jewish sources that have survived to this day. There is no mention of the Exodus in the annals known to us of ancient Egypt. Nor have we yet found reference in 'the chronicles of the Medes and Persians' of the events recorded in the book of Esther. The defeat of Antiochus' forces is, however, well documented in the histories of the time - not least because of the second fact, namely that the events recalled on Hanukkah changed the course of European history. They marked the beginning of the end of Greece and the start of the rise of Rome.

We can therefore understand the importance halakhah attaches to 'publicising the miracle' of Hanukkah. This is how Maimonides codifies the law:

The commandment to light the Hanukkah lamp is an exceedingly precious one, and one should be particularly careful to fulfil it, in order to make known the miracle, and to offer additional praise and thanksgiving to G-d for the wonders He wrought for us. Even if one has no food to eat except what he receives from charity, one should beg, or sell one's clothes, to buy oil and lamps, and light them. (Mishneh Torah, Hanukkah 4:12)

A question arises, however, in the case where someone finds themselves, on Friday afternoon, with only enough oil to kindle one light. Should it be used to fulfil the mitzvah of Hanukkah or that of lighting a Shabbat light? (The question arises because, as far as the essential law is concerned, one need light only one light for each night of Hanukkah. Our custom - to light one light on the first night, two on the second, and so on - is what the Talmud calls mehadrin min hamehadrin, fulfilling the mitzvah in the most beautiful way possible).

Our first instinct would surely be to favour Hanukkah. The Hanukkah light fulfils the mitzvah of *pirsum ha-nes*, 'publicizing the miracle,' and is essential to our celebration of the festival. The Shabbat lights, by contrast, are incidental to the sanctity of Shabbat - unlike the wine (over which we 'sanctify the day'). The law, however, is otherwise. Faced with a choice between dedicating the light to Hanukkah or Shabbat, Shabbat takes precedence. Why so? Maimonides' statement of the law and its logic is stunning in its beauty:

If a poor person needs oil for both a Sabbath lamp and a Hanukkah lamp . . . the Sabbath lamp takes priority for the sake of peace in the home, seeing that even the Divine name may be erased to make peace between husband and wife [the reference is to the case of the *sotah*, the woman suspected by her husband of adultery. A curse containing the Divine name was dissolved in water and then drunk by the woman. Normally it is forbidden to erase the Divine name, but in the case, said the sages, G-d Himself forewent the honour due to His name in order to restore peace in the marriage.] Great is peace, for the whole Torah was given to make peace in the world, as it is said, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace' (Prov. 3:17). (Hanukkah 4: 14)

The implication is simple: even the smallest peace (between husband and wife) takes priority over the greatest victory in war. Sir Henry Sumner Maine was wrong when he said that peace is a modern invention while war is as old as mankind. Almost two thousand years ago the sages - following the teachings of the great prophets - made peace their ideal, in an age in which virtually every other culture made war the test of the honour of a nation, and epic achievements on the battlefield the mark of a hero. That was still the mood in most of Europe in 1914, and it took the millions of deaths in the trenches of the First World War to teach people otherwise.

At this distance of time it is sometimes hard to understand how revolutionary was the Jewish attitude to war. The Israelites fought wars because they had to (Maimonides rules that even in the days of Joshua, no war was to be fought unless an enemy had first declined an offer of peace [Melakhim 6: 1,5]), but they did not glorify war as the proving ground of virtue. According to the Book of Chronicles (I Chron. 28:3) David was denied permission to build the Temple because "you are a warrior and have shed blood". This very fact would have qualified a David in any other civilization. It was precisely their success in the battlefield that made the leaders of other nations heroes and figures of adulation, even worship.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that in the long term, this was the greater victory of Jews against the Greeks: not just that they won the military battle over Jerusalem, but that they won the far more significant ethical battle between the value-systems of ancient Greece and Israel. A military victory, however great, is short-lived. A moral victory endures.

The lasting message of Hanukkah is not just that the Maccabees won the war, but that war itself has a lesser value than the cultivation of the arts of peace. What a remarkable fact it is that two thousand years ago, our sages already understood that shalom bayit, 'peace in the home', is not a small thing in comparison with armies, international politics and military might. It is one of the most important things of all - for in the long run the fate of the family - the love and loyalty between husband and wife, and the way parents hand on to children the values for which they live - that determines the survival of a civilization. Israel, then and now, became the nation that wins wars but never loses its love for and pursuit of peace.

From: office@etzion.org.il Sent: Dec. 08, 2004 To: yhe-parsha@etzion.org.il
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This shiur is in memory of Israel Koschitzky z"l, whose yearzeit falls on the 19th of Kislev. May the world-wide dissemination of Torah through the VBM be a fitting tribute to a man whose lifetime achievements exemplified the love of Eretz Yisrael and Torat Yisrael. This shiur is dedicated in memory of Hillel ben Yechezkel Reiter z"l, whose yearzeit will be observed on the 24th of Kislev. May his soul be among the Righteous in Gan Eden. This shiur is dedicated in memory of Lena (Leah bat Yitzchak) Fuchs z"l, whose yearzeit will be observed on bet Tevet. Please pray for a refuah sheleimah for Chaya Chanina bat Marcel.

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THE MEANING OF YOSEF'S ESTRANGEMENT BY RAV YAAKOV MEDAN

The Ramban (42:9), as well as several other commentators who adopt his approach, discusses Yosef's estrangement from his brothers and the great severity with which he treats them up until the moment when he reveals his identity. This issue leads naturally to another question: why did Yosef not send word to his father, the moment that he rose to his elevated position in Egypt, telling him that he was still alive? Why did he allow his father to suffer such profound anguish and mourning for his son for an additional nine years? Ramban explains:

"The text is telling us that when Yosef saw his brothers bowing down before him, he remembered all the dreams that he had dreamed about them, and knew that not a single one of them had been fulfilled on this occasion. For he knew their interpretation: from the first dream, he knew that all his brothers would bow down to him - 'Behold, we were gathering sheaves,' with 'we' hinting at all eleven of his brothers - and in the second dream both the sun and moon and eleven stars would bow before him. Since he did not see Binyamin among them, he thought up this plan as a ruse to cause them to bring Binyamin, his brother, to him, in order to fulfill the first dream first. Therefore, he did not wish to tell them, 'I am Yosef, your brother,' and to say, 'Hurry and bring up my father,' and to send the wagons, as he did after their second encounter, for his father would undoubtedly have come right away. After the first dream was fulfilled, he told them to fulfill the second one.

If this (i.e. bringing about the fulfillment of the dreams) had not been his motivation, Yosef would have committed a very grave sin: to cause his father anguish and to leave him for so many years mourning over Shimon and over him. Even if he wished to cause his brothers some anguish, how could he not have mercy on his grieving father? But in fact he did everything properly, at the proper time, in order to fulfill his dreams, for he knew that they would truly be realized...

I maintain that all of these matters pertaining to Yosef arose from his wisdom in interpreting dreams. For we must ask: after Yosef had been in Egypt for many years, and was the head of the household of a great minister in Egypt, how is it that he did not send a single letter to his father, to tell him [that he was still alive] and to comfort him? For Egypt is approximately a six-day journey from Chevron, but even if the distance would take a year - it would be proper to send word out of honor to his father, who would surely pay a king's ransom to free him.

But [Yosef] saw that [the scene of] his brothers bowing down to him, as well as his father and all his progeny, could never take place in their country; he hoped that it could take place there, in Egypt, when they saw his great success there. And especially after he heard Pharaoh's dream, when it became clear to him that all of them would come there, and all of his dreams would be fulfilled."

Ramban views Yosef's actions and failures in the parasha as the result of a determined effort to bring about the fulfillment of his dreams. In his view, it was not sufficient that ten of his brothers bowed before him; he wanted Yaakov and Binyamin to come and bow too, as foretold in the details of the dream.

R. Yitzchak Arama, author of the commentary Akeidah Yitzchak, raises the following difficulty:

"The One Who gives dreams will arrange for their fulfillment. Yet we see the great foolishness of a person attempting to bring about the fulfillment of dreams, for they are things that come about without the intention of the dreamers."

What gives a person license to transgress the honoring of his father and the prohibition against revenge and grudge-bearing just in order to realize some dreams?

The Ba'al ha-Akeida and Abarbanel explain that Yosef's estrangement from his brothers arose from his desire to test their relationship towards Binyamin. His aim was to cause his brothers to repent for what they had done to him. He meant to lead them into circumstances that were similar - as far as possible - to those that prevailed at his sale, by demanding of them that they leave Binyamin to his fate as a slave in Egypt. I shall adopt their approach in this shiur, combining it with the Ramban's interpretation above. Nechama Leibowitz explains these approaches in her usual insightful way in her book. I shall explore a different path, particularly in the interpretation of the Ramban, and the reader is left to choose.

A. DREAMS

Our parasha presents three pairs of dreams: the pair dreamed by Yosef, the two dreams of Pharaoh's two servants, and Pharaoh's own pair of dreams. The consistent structure of the dreams would seem to hint at a connection between them.

Let us first address the last two pairs. An obvious question arises from the dreams of Pharaoh's servants, and particularly from the dream of the butler, as to the wisdom involved in their interpretation. Why did these men need Yosef's assistance in understanding their dreams, and why were the butler and Pharaoh so excited about Yosef's interpretations? After all, the butler dreamed about pressing grapes into Pharaoh's goblet and serving it to him, and this is word for word what Yosef told him would happen. The baker's dream is a little less obvious, but the fact that the basket is not offered by his hand to Pharaoh, but rather the birds eat of the baked goods from atop his head, leaves little room for doubt as to the man's fate.

The same would seem to apply to Pharaoh's own dreams. The possible interpretations offered in the Midrash - that he would conquer seven provinces while seven others would rebel, or that seven daughters would be born to him while seven others would die, sound highly unlikely; it is no wonder that Pharaoh rejects them. The seven healthy cows and the seven full ears of wheat upon the banks of the river symbolize very clearly years of plenty, while the thin cows and the blasted ears of wheat unquestionably represent years of famine. Not every dream requires interpretation, and the proof for this lies in Yosef's dreams, whose significance was immediately understood by Yaakov and his sons.

Another question regarding Yosef's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream: After the news of the imminent abundance of food to be followed by the famine, Yosef continues and says:

"Now let Pharaoh seek out a man who is wise and knowing, and give him charge of the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh act to appoint officers over the land, and to divide the land of Egypt into five parts during the seven years of plenty, so that they will gather all the food of these imminent years of abundance, and collect corn under Pharaoh's hand, to store food in the cities. Then the food will be a store for the land for the seven years of famine that shall be in the land of Egypt, and the land shall not perish from the famine." (41:33-36) Ramban is astounded: who appointed Yosef as advisor to the king? What has his speech here to do with the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams?

He answers that the advice that Yosef gives Pharaoh is part of the interpretation. In the dream, the thin cows devour the healthy cows; in the interpretation - the years of famine devour the food from the years of plenty. But Ramban's explanation ignores the clear parallel between Pharaoh's pair of dreams and the two dreams of his servants. There, too, Yosef added details that appear unrelated to the dream:

"But remember me when things will be good for you, and please perform this kindness for me: mention me to Pharaoh and bring me out of this house, for I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and I have done nothing to cause them to put me in the dungeon." (40:14-15)

What is common to the conclusion of both interpretations is Yosef's concern for his own fate: even in his advice to Pharaoh, we cannot ignore the possibility that in mentioning a "wise and knowing man," Yosef is referring to himself. Moreover, in his words to the butler, too, it appears that Yosef means not only that justice should be sought from Pharaoh because Yosef is innocent - since there is no special reason why Pharaoh, king of the entire land, should take the trouble to get involved in the affairs of a slave who has been imprisoned. It seems, then, that what Yosef was asking from the butler was that he would tell Pharaoh how Yosef interpreted his dreams, so that Pharaoh would appoint him to sit among his chief advisors. For this reason, Yosef explains that he is neither a slave nor a criminal, and that he is worthy - in terms of his status - of such an elevated post.

From what we have said above, it turns out that Yosef does not merely solve the straightforward dreams of Pharaoh and his servants. In his words to them, Yosef is actually interpreting his own dreams - about the sheaves bowing down before his sheaf, and the sun, moon and stars bowing before him. Let me explain my view of the ability to dream and to interpret dreams. Chazal teach that dreams contain one-sixtieth of prophecy. But the dream itself is not prophecy, and the prophet Yirmiyahu draws a clear distinction between the two:

"The prophet who has a dream - let him tell his dream, and one whom My word is with him - let him speak My word faithfully; what is chaff to the wheat, says God. Is not My word like fire, says God, and like a hammer, shattering the rock?" (Yirmiyahu 23:28-29)

At the same time, a dream and its interpretation certainly contain an element of Divine inspiration. The proof: Daniel, who dreams and interprets, is not a prophet, but his Book was included in the Tanakh.

The forefathers were prophets. When Yaakov dreams, this is prophecy, for G-d speaks to him in his dream. But G-d never spoke with Yaakov's sons, and they were not prophets. Yosef - whose level is somewhere between that of the forefathers and that of his brothers (since Yosef's sons, like Yaakov's sons, founded tribes) - is not a prophet, but he is certainly the recipient of Divine inspiration.

It seems, then, that Divine inspiration lacks the power to interpret a dream in all its details, and this is not its function. But when Yosef dreams about his brothers' sheaves bowing down to his own, he feels within himself a sense of mission and a consequent grant of authority. He will be responsible for sustaining his brothers; they will recognize his responsibility for them and will acknowledge his authority over them as arising from this responsibility. Where did this dream come from?

For some time, Yaakov's household had been pervaded with a sense that Yaakov - the patriarch and head of the household - was gradually losing his leadership ability. It is unclear where this feeling began. Perhaps it was his numerous - perhaps too numerous - bowings before Esav; Yaakov may have lost his authority in the eyes of his own household at that time. Faced with the atrocity of Shekhem, he remained silent until his sons returned; they spoke in his place and Shimon and Levi then went out and acted without asking his permission. Reuven, too - in his act concerning Bilha - rebelled against his father's authority, like Avshalom with his father's concubines. In the story of the sale of Yosef and the taking of Binyamin to Egypt, Yehuda leads the family while Yaakov is dragged along, almost unwillingly. Yosef is himself one of the competitors for leadership. He is younger than his brothers and he is their half-brother, hence his leadership over his brothers remains a dream. But the dream is a powerful one, and the fire of its truth burns within him. Yosef believes in it with all his might; he knows that the dream will eventually be fulfilled in reality. His certainty of the truth of his dream, filling all of his being, is the expression of the Divine inspiration that breathes within him.

The dream of the sheaves is related to the family's livelihood, but Yosef dreams not only of sheaves. The dream of the sun, moon and stars bowing to him expresses rulership in the spiritual realm, as well. The sense of mission that fills Yosef is related not only to supporting the family, as Nechama Leibowitz explains, but also to spiritual leadership and spiritual responsibility.

When Yosef is sold as a slave, his world collapses around him. Certainly his physical world collapses, owing to his humiliation and exile from his father's house and from his land. However, it is important to note that his spiritual world also collapses - for all of his educational efforts, all the criticism that he brought to his father concerning his brothers, have brought disaster instead of blessing. His brothers have sinned, and their crime is unbearable. Perhaps he was mistaken in his dreams; perhaps it is not he who is meant to lead the brothers? Perhaps there is no hope for them, spiritually, following their sin, and they should not be led but rather rejected and banished from the world of sanctity - in which

case he too will not be a leader, but rather a fourth founding father of the chosen nation?

If Yosef had some lurking doubt as to having been mistaken in his dreams, his speedy climb up the ladder of success in his master's house comes and confirms his dreams, verifying that he is destined for greatness. G-d is with him; he senses this. His sense of being the chosen one among the brothers is only strengthened through the test of exile.

Yosef develops his budding leadership ability in his management of Potifar's household, but again he is stripped of his garb and cast into a dungeon - this time because of his master's wife. According to Chazal's calculations, Yosef remained in the dungeon, not seeing the light of day, for a full ten years! Throughout his twenties - years that a person usually devotes to molding his personality as an adult and creating a family - Yosef spent in the dungeon of the king's prisoners. Could there be any better reason for despair to consume his heart and his body?

In the situation in which Yosef now found himself, regular dreams of greatness and rulership would dissolve and disappear. But the moment that Yosef hears about two of Pharaoh's servants, both of whom have experienced dreams on the same night, he is immediately reminded of his own dreams. It is clear to him that the dreams of the two men are not God's way of telling them what is destined to happen to them: for what reason would G-d reveal the future to these two idolators, servants in Pharaoh's kitchen? He understands immediately that these dreams are actually a sign from G-d to him concerning his own dreams, which are about to begin their fulfillment. And so he addresses the two men resolutely:

"Yosef said to them: Do solutions then not belong to God? Tell me, I pray you." (40:8)

As we have said, the crux of the interpretation lies not in the understanding that the royal butler will be restored to his previous position while the royal baker will be punished - for these scenarios are described almost explicitly in the dreams. The crux of the interpretation, to Yosef's view, lies in the continuation:

"But remember me when things are good for you, and do this kindness for me, I pray you: mention me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house, for I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, nor have I done anything here for which they have put me in the dungeon." (40:14-15)

The butler is convinced by Yosef's simple solution, for two reasons. Firstly, we may assume that the nervousness of the royal servants and their sullen expressions, following their dreams, did not arise from the opaque meaning of the dreams, but rather from the doubt gnawing at them as to whether they were true or just vanity. Yosef, convinced of the truth of his own dreams and certain that it is G-d Whose hand is now guiding everything that happens to him towards his destined mission, manages to transmit his conviction in his dream to Pharaoh's servants, such that they are likewise convinced of the truth of their dreams. Secondly, the only detail in the butler's dream that is ambiguous is the three branches. There is no hint in the dream that could possibly decipher them as symbolizing three days, three weeks, three years or any other units of time. Yosef declares decisively that the time frame concerns days, just as he will later tell Pharaoh:

"And concerning the fact that Pharaoh's dream occurred twice - [it is] because the thing has been decided by God, and G-d will soon perform it." (41:32)

His conviction as to the veracity of the dream is also a conviction that G-d will not tarry; the events will occur in the shortest possible time. Indeed, what he says is what comes about: the three branches are indeed three days, not three years.

Likewise Pharaoh's dreams: according to both Chazal and Rashi, the Egyptian sorcerers preferred to propose interpretations that did not reflect the details of the dreams - the birth of seven daughters or the conquest of seven provinces - since these did not require them to note any specific time-frame. They proposed these interpretations because they were not certain of the seriousness of the dream, and hence they could not be certain of any interpretation that might come about.

Yosef's interpretation supplies a precise and immediate date. If Yosef had entertained the slightest doubt, he would not have dared to utter such a decisive interpretation, for which - if proved wrong - he will be executed. His interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, too, contains the dream's true significance - Yosef's advice that he be appointed ruler over Egypt - since it is thus that he now understands his own dreams. Without this profound sense of mission, based on Divine inspiration, Yosef would not dare to interpret his dreams with such unshakable confidence and with such daring. Yosef knew that, as the ruler, he would be responsible for providing sustenance to his brothers during the years of famine, and he saw this as his opportunity to realize the dream of the sheaves. At the same time, he knew that the spiritual mission of molding the future of the Nation of Israel, the nation that would emerge from himself and his brothers, was

also part of his responsibility. What is the spiritual and educational mission that Yosef must mold? This is the subject of section B.

B. THE WAYS OF REPENTANCE

At the outset, I mentioned that both Abarbanel and the Ba'al ha-Akeida explain Yosef's estrangement from his brothers as arising from his desire to test their repentance for the sin of having sold him. In this section, I shall adopt this approach, combining it with what we saw above concerning the fundamental perception of the Ramban.

I shall divide the discussion of repentance into two sections. In the first, I shall demonstrate that the main theme of the story of Yosef and his brothers is the process of repentance; in the second, I shall depict - in light of this repentance - Yosef's meeting with his brothers in Egypt. THE REPENTANCE OF YEHUDA AND REUVEN

The sin of Yosef's brothers in selling him is not one of the milder misdeeds of Sefer Bereishit. This sin - selling a free man into slavery - is considered in the Torah and Prophets (Shemot 21:16; 20:13; Devarim 27:7; Yoel 4; Amos 2:6-10; and many more) as one of the most severe sins that can be committed. It is comparable to the sin of Kayin and the sins of the generation of the Flood, the generation of the Tower of Bavel, and the people of Sedom. It is only natural that the punishments meted out to Kayin, to the generation of the Flood and to the people of Sedom should be replaced here by the repentance of Yosef's brothers.

This repentance is one of the foundations upon which all of Sefer Bereishit rests - together with the punishment of sinners - and it should not be presented as an insignificant detail related only in connection with Yosef's mistake. The story of the brothers' repentance is equal in weight and importance to the story of the Flood and the overturning of Sedom - if not greater than them.

The story of the sale of Yosef begins, according to Chazal (Bereishit Rabba 64, 19) with the description of Reuven dressed in sackcloth and fasting over his sin with Bilha, with G-d praising him for this repentance. Adjacent to the sale, we read the story of Yehuda and Tamar, with Yehuda ultimately admitting his wrongdoing, and Yaakov praising him for this (Rashi, 49:9).

Reuven and Yehuda are both contenders for the leadership of the family, after Yaakov ceases to function as the leader and after Shimon and Levi are removed from the leadership race. The rivalry between Reuven and Yehuda finds expression in the argument over Yosef's fate (37:22, 26-27), in the recognition of the sin of selling him (42:22 as opposed to 44:16), in assuming responsibility for Binyamin in Egypt (42:37 as opposed to 43:8-55), and in Yaakov's blessings to them, as well as in other places further on in the Torah. It seems clear that the process of repentance undertaken by Reuven and Yehuda concurrently is part of the rivalry for leadership. This understanding is supported by a comparison between the two sins: Reuven wears sackcloth and fasts over having cohabited with his father's concubine (as the literal text describes it), while Yehuda admits to having cohabited with his son's wife.

At first glance, these two sins appear to have no connection with the sale of Yosef. But upon closer examination, we discover that this is not the case. Chazal, in the midrash quoted above, connect Reuven's sackcloth and fasting with the episode of the sale of Yosef. In the deed concerning Bilha - both according to the literal text, according to which Reuven meant to take over his father's hegemony while he was still alive, and according to the Midrash (Shabbat 55b) - Reuven, the firstborn of the less-loved Leah, meant to emerge the chosen son, rather than Yosef - firstborn of the beloved Rachel. The attempt to save Yosef, with his dreams of rulership (37:20), was part of Reuven's repentance for what he did with Bilha. Similarly, the story of Tamar is also linked to the sale of Yosef, through the juxtaposition of the two episodes in the text. The chain of tragedies that befall Yehuda - the loss of his wife and two sons - is undoubtedly a punishment for the sale of Yosef.

Reuven, who will one day make the peculiar offer of allowing Yaakov to put his (Reuven's) two sons to death if he fails to bring Binyamin back from Egypt (42:37), apparently draws this idea from Yehuda's punishment for the sale of Yosef into Egyptian slavery - the death of his two sons. This terrible punishment for that dreadful sin is engraved deeply in the brothers' consciousness, and Reuven accepts it upon himself if he should abandon Binyamin in Egypt. But at the beginning of the story, Yehuda never imagines that his sons have died because of his sin. The Midrash describes how Yehuda declares that Tamar "is known to be one whose husbands die" (Rashi 38:11). Only after he is forced to recognize her innocence does he admit, "She has been more righteous than I" (38:26). Only then does he realize that it is not she who is responsible for the death of her two successive husbands, but rather Yehuda himself who is responsible for the death of his two sons, for the sin is his. With this admission, he begins rebuilding his shattered household.

The process of repentance continues to accompany the brothers later on. The decree by the Egyptian viceroy that Rachel's second son,

Binyamin, must be brought to Egypt is an instant reminder to them of the sale of Yosef to Egypt. Once again, the two contenders - Reuven and Yehuda - react, and once again, in a similar way to the previous story. Reuven sees only the punishment for their sin; he makes no attempt to suggest any repair:

"Reuven answered them, saying: Did I not tell you, saying, 'Do not sin against the child' - and you did not listen, and behold, now his blood is required." (42:22)

Yehuda, in contrast, admits the sin, and also proposes a positive path of repentance: a corresponding sacrifice, rather than "sackcloth and fasting" which represent only mourning and acceptance of the Divine decree:

"They tore their garments... Yehuda said: 'What shall we say to my lord; what can we speak and what justification can we offer? G-d has found the sin of your servants; behold, we are servants to my master...'" (44:13-16).

And later on:

"Now, let your servant remain instead of the boy as a servant to my master; let the boy go up with his brothers." (44:33) From Yehuda's words, we see that he did not admit to Binyamin having stolen the royal goblet; he treats the story as a plot against them. For if this were not so, there would be no significance to the story of bringing Binyamin down to Egypt, nor to the proposed exchange of Binyamin for Yehuda. This being the case, Yehuda's words, "G-d has found the sin of your servants," can refer only to the sale of Yosef (and not the "sin" of Binyamin's theft). "I AM YOSEF, YOUR BROTHER"

We have attempted, then, to prove that all of the brothers' actions - and particularly those of the two leaders, Reuven and Yehuda - are influenced and dictated by the sin of selling Yosef and the need to atone for it. Our impression is that the ultimate structure of the family and the fate of the brothers depends on their repentance being accepted. Yosef knows this, and regards himself as a partner in this process - both because of his close (passive) connection with the sin, and because of his constant feeling, especially because of his dreams, that he is responsible for the future of Yaakov's family.

Perhaps Yosef was troubled by the brothers' terrible sin and the prospects for the future of Yaakov's household no less than he was concerned for his own personal fate. From the time he is sold, he begins to build - along with his own personal life - the process of reunification of the family. It is preferable that this reunification not be forced upon the brothers, but rather that it be brought about through good will and love. If Yosef would send a messenger to his father, letting him know that he was still alive, Yaakov would admittedly have redeemed him from Egypt and restored him to the family as a free person, but he would still be hated by his brothers, the sons of Leah, and there would be no guarantee that they would not make further attempts to rid themselves of him. Yosef did not want such a situation; he wanted a reunification based on the brothers' regret for their sin and arising from their complete repentance.

In my view, Yosef believed in his ability to create such a process - or at least to test whether it existed. When his dreams would be realized, and his brothers would come and bow before him as a lord and ruler, he would have the power to create almost any process he chose; no one could stand against him. Having witnessed his speedy promotion to head of Potifar's household, and later to head of all the prisoners in the jail, he knows that G-d is with him. I shall now address the question of how Yosef led the brothers to admit to their sin against him and to repent for it. First, concerning Yosef's priorities, let us address a question raised by many commentators, following the Ramban's line: was it really moral of Yosef to prolong the many years of his father's anguish just in order to cause his brothers to admit to their sin?

In my view, this claim is difficult to understand. Should Yosef then have left his brothers with their sin and perpetuated for all eternity the spiritual division of Yaakov's household, just in order to save Yaakov anguish? Should Yaakov's anguish not be viewed as pain for the purpose of healing? Is it not preferable that Yosef save Yaakov the pain of discovering, at the end of his life, that his children were not what he thought they were? Was R. Eliezer ben Horkenus wrong for going to study Torah against the wishes of his father, instead of plowing his father's field? Was Rachel, the daughter of Kalba Savu'a, wrong for marrying the shepherd Akiva ben Yosef (Ketubot 62b) against the wishes of her father?

C. THE PLAN

How did Yosef intend to redirect his brothers from the sinful path of hatred, selling their brother and lying to their father, to the path of repair and repentance? Before addressing this question, let us first address a puzzling element in the story of the meeting between Yosef and his brothers when the latter come to receive grain. The Torah elaborates at length on how Yosef accuses his brothers of spying and how they attempt to justify themselves and prove that this accusation is unfounded. Could this dialogue actually have taken place in reality as it is described? How could it be that not a single one of the brothers sensed that perhaps this was a pre-planned, staged performance, whose

purpose was not to arrest spies? As mentioned, my assumption is that Yosef began to plan the encounter with his brothers already when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream and understood that, as viceroy, his brothers' sheaves would come to bow before his own sheaf, to eat from his table.

INVESTIGATION OF YOSEF'S BROTHERS

Yosef's plan was aimed at saving Egypt during the years of famine, but at the same time he was also planning a way to bring his dreams to realization. The Divine spirit within him goaded him to plan a way of leading the brothers to correct their ways, and a way of testing whether they had indeed done this.

Yosef knew that sooner or later his brothers would arrive, seeking food, and thus the dream of the sheaves would be fulfilled. The second dream - with the stars bowing before him - would be realized only when he would be able to bring about the hoped-for spiritual process of saving the brothers from the abyss of their sin; only thus would the family be able to be reunited in the proper way (not artificially), so that Yaakov would die knowing that all his children were worthy heirs of his heritage.

Perhaps this is how Yosef prepared his trap. Many citizens must have been questioned during the first few years of the famine, while Yosef was busy nationalizing all property, for fear of an uprising against the regime. It seems that the suspicions were more serious concerning foreigners, who may have arrived in some or other disguise. Perhaps Yaakov's sons - particularly Shimon and Levi - were naturally regarded with caution in foreign lands after what they had cunningly perpetrated in Shekhem. Their entry into Egypt through - according to Chazal - different entry points, was also not counted in their favor as soon as they were identified as brothers. As if this were not enough, the brothers were also found to be expressing particular interest in the fate of a slave who had been brought to Egypt some twenty-two years previously. From the perspective of the Egyptian security services, these men were trying to glean details about the Egyptian viceroy - the king's second-in-command. For this reason, they were clearly suspicious, and there was no difficulty in having them imprisoned without Yosef having to disclose his true intentions.

We may assume that the brothers were separated from one another and placed in different cells, so that their testimonies could be compared against each other. In their interrogation, they were questioned as to every possible aspect concerning their family and their aims. Perhaps they underwent torture and were forced to tell every detail. Because of their inability to coordinate their testimonies, they had no choice but to tell the truth. It quickly became apparent that, in addition to the ten "suspects" that the security services were holding, there were another two suspects that had not yet been caught. The entire security system (directed and staged by Yosef, of course) was put on alert in order to arrest the two missing "prime suspects," whom the brothers were stubbornly protecting, denying that they had come with them to Egypt. In their interrogation, it was discovered that all the brothers gave the same story about Binyamin, but perhaps there were contradictions as to the fate of Yosef. The brothers must certainly have mumbled and stammered, ashamed to admit that they had sold him into slavery. The interrogators noted the discrepancies in the different versions of what they said, and their suspicions deepened. Each of the brothers was taken to his cell and beaten severely, with the demand that he answer the question, "Where is Yosef?" By the time the brothers met again, three days later, they understood very well the reason for the punishment that had befallen them:

"They said to each other: But we are guilty on account of our brother, for we saw his distress when he pleaded to us but we did not listen; therefore this trouble has come upon us." (42:21)

Yosef demonstrates generosity towards them and does not demand that they bring their lost brother. However, he is insistent that they bring the remaining brother - Binyamin - to ensure that there are no other spies roaming around in Egypt. **THE PLAN IS UPSET**

Yosef's strategy is well-thought out, but it is upset. Yosef is deeply moved by Reuven's words to his brothers: "Reuven answered them and said: Did I not tell you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy' - but you did not listen; now behold, his blood is required." (42:22)

When Yosef hears this, his goes off to a quiet corner and WEEPS FOR THE FIRST TIME. But he knows that this is not enough. Reuven's reaction, and the reaction of the rest of the brothers, is an acceptance of their punishment for their sin, but this falls short of representing true 'tikkun' (repair). Yosef leads the brothers into a test concerning Binyamin. In my view, his intention was not to cause Binyamin to be brought to Egypt, but rather the exact opposite! Yosef demonstrates to them, by means of his whole carefully staged performance, that the purpose of bringing Binyamin is so that he can be interrogated in the Egyptian dungeon, on suspicion of spying. It is clear to everyone that if Binyamin is brought to him, it may not be possible to get him out of there and

return him to his father. It is for this reason that Yaakov is so reluctant to send Binyamin (who is already past the age of thirty, and is father to ten sons), and it is for this reason that Reuven and Yehuda must offer such great commitments to guard him.

Despite all of this, will the brothers bring Binyamin to Egypt? Yosef expects that the brothers will protect Binyamin and not lead him into the danger awaiting him in Egypt at the hands of the viceroy. He expects that they will prefer to remain hungry in Canaan, even leaving Shimon in the Egyptian jail, so long as Binyamin will not be in danger. Yosef is prepared to regard this as repentance and 'tikkun' for what the brothers had done to him.

Indeed, for a long while the brothers do not return with Binyamin in tow. Perhaps Yosef is already on the point of revealing his identity to Shimon and telling him about the test that he had set up for the brothers. Perhaps he is on the point of sending for his father and brothers, calling them to come and make peace. One could ask: what proof has he as to any 'tikkun' on the part of the brothers? After all, it is quite likely that it is their father who is refusing to allow them to take Binyamin. But Yosef knows well that Yaakov is no longer the real leader of the family. Just as they had deceived him as to the sale of Yosef, so they could find a way to bring Binyamin to Egypt, if they so chose.

But then the brothers return, and Binyamin is with them! At first, Yosef believes that they are repeating the sin of his sale; he expresses his disappointment in **WEEPING FOR A SECOND TIME**: "Yosef hurried - for his mercy was aroused towards his brother - and he sought to weep; he came into the chamber and wept there." (43:30)

Why was Yosef's mercy aroused towards Binyamin? Binyamin had grown up with his father, had established a large family, and was living well. It was Yosef himself who was deserving of pity: why is he, who was taken from his father's home and thrown into a pit in the valley of Dotan, and then into the dungeon in the house of the captain of the guard, now crying for Binyamin?

In my view, when Binyamin was brought to Egypt, this signaled to Yosef that Binyamin, too, was still not loved by his half-brothers. He deduces that Binyamin, too, is persecuted and hated. He concludes that the hand of Yehuda - who wanted to sell him - prevailed over the hand of Reuven - who wanted to save him. He has no knowledge of the terrible guarantee that Yehuda supplied in order to take Binyamin.

Nevertheless, Yosef's caution prevents him from drawing conclusions too hastily. He decides to test the brothers once more - through the plot of the goblet. Stealing the goblet used by the ruler for divining would clearly verify the suspicion of spying. He causes Binyamin to be "caught," and has him returned to the viceroy's palace.

This time, Yosef presents the brothers with a more difficult test. He causes the brothers to envy Binyamin, just as they once envied Yosef himself. He demonstrates greater affection for Binyamin than for them, allotting him a five-fold ration (43:34). He even gives them reason to hate Binyamin - "thief of the divining goblet" - for embroiling them once again in the suspicion of espionage. Finally, he tests their reaction to his desire to make Binyamin an eternal slave in Egypt.

The similarity to the story of Yosef's sale is as close as it could possibly be. The brothers tear their garments, just as they once stripped Yosef of his coat, and Yehuda joins Reuven in accepting their punishment: "Yehuda said: What shall we say to my lord; how shall we speak and how shall we justify ourselves? G-d has found the sin of your servants; behold, we are slaves to your master - both we and he in whose hands the goblet was found." (49:16)

Even this is not enough - until Yehuda's emotional speech. In this speech, Yosef suddenly learns of Yehuda's guarantee for Binyamin's safety. Suddenly he understands: they have not brought him down to Egypt with a view to abandoning him. Yehuda is prepared to be enslaved for the rest of his life in place of Binyamin. He is ready to give up his life for his half-brother, and to spare his father anguish. He is prepared to accept full justice - measure for measure - for selling Yosef to Egypt, and to become - in place of Yosef and Binyamin - a slave there forever. **NOW YOSEF WEEPS FOR THE THIRD TIME**. This weeping - the hardest and the longest - is where he reveals his identity to his brothers. Here, finally, it is not only "sheaves" that are bowing before him - men seeking food - but shining stars, brothers who have taken the path of "tikkun."

Translated by Kaeren Fish

This shiur is abridged from the Hebrew original. The full shiur can be accessed in the original at: <http://www.etzion.org.il/vbm/parsha.php> YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH ALON SHEVUT, GUSH ETZION 90433 E-MAIL: YHE@ETZION.ORG.IL or OFFICE@ETZION.ORG.IL Copyright (c) 2004 Yeshivat Har Etzion. All rights reserved.



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Kol Yaakov
By RABBI BARUCH LEFF
Parsha Insights based on and inspired by the teachings of Rav Yaakov Weinberg of blessed memory

This article can also be read at: http://www.aish.com/torahportion/kolyaakov/The_Strong_into_the_Hands_of_the_Weak.asp

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memory

The Strong into the Hands of the Weak

Purchase "Forever His Students" by Rabbi Baruch Leff.

During most years, the Shabbat of Parshat Mikeitz coincides with the festival of Chanukah. Hence, tens and tens of commentaries have established links and hints between Mikeitz and Chanukah. But there seems to be a more simple connection as well -- Joseph's attitude toward his success.

We read happily of Joseph's release from jail for a crime he did not commit (allegedly seducing Potifar's wife). Joseph was called out of jail to interpret Pharaoh's dream after having a good track record in interpreting dreams for Pharaoh's butler and baker. The narrative continues:

Pharaoh says to Joseph, "I dreamt a dream, but there is no one who can interpret it. Now I heard it said of you that you hear a dream to interpret it." Joseph answered Pharaoh saying, "That is beyond me! G-d will respond to Pharaoh's welfare." (Genesis 41:15-16)

Truly amazing! Here, Joseph has his shot at real power. He is standing before the King of Egypt, the world's superpower at the time. And this superpower King needs him! Joseph would be able to request virtually anything he would want. Yet, Joseph risks it all by failing to hide the truth of God's support and guidance. Pharaoh could have easily reacted to Joseph by saying, 'Oh, if indeed it is not you, but God, that has the dream interpretation, then you shall return to jail.' True, Pharaoh did not react this way but Joseph could not have known this in advance. Joseph wanted to give G-d His credit, especially before the world's superpower, in order to publicize God's power and wisdom -- even if this meant the personal risk of being sent back to jail without receiving any recognition or benefits from Pharaoh.

This attitude of Joseph was exactly the attitude of Mattisyahu and the Chashmonaim, otherwise known as the Maccabees, during the time of the Chanukah victory. They could have easily looked at their stunning and unlikely military victory over the Greeks as a reflection of their prowess and brilliant strategy. Didn't a great U.S. army lose a guerilla war in Vietnam?

But the Maccabees understood the true source of their strength and military successes. They didn't react by establishing an annual victory parade, in which they would display their latest technology in weapons. Rather, they reacted by establishing the holiday of Chanukah. They lit the Menorah which publicized God's control over the world (in making the miracle of the oil lasting 8 days) and that only He could allow them to defeat the Greeks in battle.

This is reflected throughout the 'Al Hanissim' prayer that we insert in the thrice daily 'Shemoneh Esrai,' during Chanukah. The prayer describes the miracles of war against the Greeks. It does not discuss our strength and power but describes us as weak against a powerful army -- G-d delivered 'giborim beyad chalashim' (the strong in the hands of the weak). We end this prayer stating that the entire purpose of Chanukah is that we express thanks and praise to the Almighty -- 'Jehodos u'lehalel LiShimcha Hagadol' -- "to express thanks and praise to Your great Name."

We not only defeated the Greeks in the physical battle of Chanukah but we defeated them spiritually as well. The Greek philosophy was to stress the power and wisdom of man. This is why they wanted so much to defeat the Jew. Everywhere else, when the Greek invaded, he was known as kind to his new citizens. He wanted to show his new advances and preach his ideas of the supreme man with science, sports, and statues. Yet, in the Jew, the Greek saw a people who were not interested in attributing their success to themselves, nor worshipping man, but they wished only to worship and thank God.

The Greeks could not tolerate this approach to life. It threatened their whole philosophy of existence. So, they were determined to wipe out the Jew and his belief system.

Chanukah, therefore, celebrates, not the courage of those who resisted tyrants and not the power of the Jewish army. It celebrates G-d and His dedication to helping the Jewish People against her enemies. It celebrates the defeat of the Greek civilization that wished to wipe the word G-d out of all dictionaries in the world.

Let us not forget that during our current national crisis, against suicide bombers and terrorists, we must once again pray to and rely on the Almighty. We need a victory over our enemies speedily so that there will be no more cries of orphans and no more blood spilled.

G-d can help us now as He did at the time of Chanukah. We must continuously cry out and beseech Him to send us His help and protection.