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by Rabbi Mordechai Becher

The Comprehensive Laws of Chanukah

- Chanukah begins on the evening of the 25th of Kislev and continues for eight days.
- For the entire eight days of Chanukah it is forbidden to fast or to eulogize.
- It is permitted to work; however it is customary for women not to work for at least the first half hour of the candles' burning, and some have the custom not to work for the entire time of burning. The types of activities that are forbidden are things like sewing and laundry etc. (Cooking is permitted.)
- There is no obligation to have festive meals; however it is customary to celebrate by eating special meals anyway, because of the fact that the dedication of the Temple and Altar took place during Chanukah.
- It is customary to sing during the meals songs that thank and praise Hashem. To sing and speak about Torah makes the meal into a *seudat mitzvah*, a meal of religious significance.
- It is customary to eat milk foods because Yehudit, daughter of Yochanan the High Priest, was taken to be defiled by the Greek ruler Holofernes. She fed him cheese (to make him thirsty) and wine (to quench his thirst); and after getting him drunk she killed him. This was one of the events that sparked the Maccabean uprising. Food fried in oil is also eaten to commemorate the miracle of the Menorah. Latkes and donuts are the most common foods.
- One should not fast during Chanukah, even on the occasion of a parent's *yarzeit* (anniversary of death).
- The festivities of Chanukah should be combined with study of Torah. Although many people have a custom to play card games on Chanukah, the Mishna Berurah states that, "He who cares for his soul should not involve himself in card games."
- It is obligatory to light candles, and one should even borrow money to fulfill this mitzvah. If a poor person needs money for Chanukah candles the community is obligated to provide for him.
- The minimum obligation is that every household should have one candle burning every night. It is customary to be scrupulous regarding this *mitzvah*: to have one candle on the first night and an additional candle every night (1-8), and for everyone in the house as well.
- Any type of oil is acceptable for use in the *menorah*, however, it is best to use olive oil. The oil should not be made of a forbidden substance, nor should it be something from which it is forbidden to derive benefit.
- The *menorah* should be similar to the *Menorah* in the Temple and hence most authorities forbid using electric lights or gas lamps.
- The light should be clear, and the wicks should not flicker
- Wax candles are also acceptable, providing they have a single wick.
- All wicks are acceptable, but it is best to use cotton. The same wicks may be used over and over again.
- It is correct to have a *Menorah* of glass or metal if one is lighting with oil, since other substances such as clay become disgusting after one use. If one can afford it, it is correct to buy a beautiful *Menorah*.
- If one is using candles a *Menorah* is not necessary.
- If a number of people are lighting in one household they should make a slight separation between their *menorahs* so that there is no confusion to the observer as to the number of candles.
- Ideally, the *Menorah* should be placed outside the house to the left of the entrance. Since anti-Semitism was so common throughout Jewish history it became customary among many communities to place the *Menorah* inside the house, near the entrance or on the table. In many families it is the custom to place the *menorah* in a window facing the public, especially where many people share one entrance (e.g., apartment building). In Israel it is customary to light outside in a special box that prevents the flames from blowing out.
- In most Yeshivot and Seminaries, it is customary for students to place their *menorahs* in the dining room at windows facing the street or public thoroughfare. (Lighting in the dormitories is usually a fire hazard and should therefore be avoided)
- The *menorah* should be no lower than three *tfachim* from the floor (approx. 10.5 inches or 27cm) and should be no higher than 20 *amot* from ground level (35.5 ft or 10.8 m). Ideally, it should be about 10 *tfachim* high (35 inches or 90 cm).
- The *Menorah* should have all the candle or wicks on the same level, none higher or lower than the others.
- It is customary to have an additional candle (the *shamash*) with which to light the other candles and in order to use its light. The *shamash* should be placed in a way that shows that it is not one of the Chanukah candles.
- It is forbidden to derive benefit from the light of the *Menorah* just as it was forbidden to derive benefit from the *Menorah* in the Temple, and also in order to show that its purpose of the *Menorah* is for a *Mitzvah*, not just for illumination.
- It is preferable to have the candles in a straight line, and not in a semi-circle, however it is permitted to have them in a semi-circle providing each candle is clearly separated from the others.
- It is prohibited to light the *shamash* from the Chanukah candles.
- Left over wicks and oils should be destroyed after Chanukah (except for unused oil left in bottle) since they may not be used for anything else. One should not store the used wicks and oil for the next year, since there is a probability that it will be used for profane purposes by accident.
- There are different customs as to the lighting of the *Menorah*. Some light at sunset. Some light about ten minutes

after sunset and some light 1/2 hour after. Some specifically light after the evening service is recited (*Maariv*). Ideally a person should follow the custom of his father. If this is not known or is inapplicable for any reason, one should follow the custom of the local community.

- It is obligatory to put in enough oil, or a long enough candle to burn for at least 1/2 hour after nightfall (i.e. the appearance of three medium size stars).
- In exceptional circumstances one may light one and a quarter hours before sunset with a blessing. (However one should be careful to put in more oil or to use longer candles). If possible it is better to appoint an agent to light candles at the correct time, than to light early. .
- If one forgot or was not able to light at the correct time, one may light as long as people are still awake in the house in which one is lighting.
- One should prepare the wicks and candles etc. before *Maariv* (if you light after) or well before the time of lighting in order to light the *Menorah* at the correct time.
- It is best to light in the presence of many people in order to publicise the miracle.
- On the first night three *brachot*, blessings are recited. "*Lehadlik ner shel Chanukah*", "*She asa nissim*" and "*Shehecheyanu*". .
- On the other nights only the first two blessings are said.
- All the blessings should be recited before actually lighting the candles. First light the *Shamash* before the blessings to avoid delay. It is forbidden to speak between the recitation of the blessings and the completion of candle lighting.
- "*Haneirot Halalu*" is recited either during or after the lighting of the additional candles.
- "*Maoz tsur yeshuaty*" then sung.
- Place first candle on the extreme right of the *Menorah*. On the second night add a candle on the left. Light the newest candle first and proceed to the right.
- There are different customs regarding the placement of the candles, some follow the right and left of the observer from outside, some follow the right and left of the person lighting inside.
- Do not remove the *Shamash* from the wick until the flame catches on most of the wick.
- One does not add candles if they forgot to light on any night..
- The *Menorah* should not be moved after it has been lit.
- If the *Menorah* was lit in accordance with the requirements of Jewish law and it was extinguished, one is not obligated to relight it, but one may relight it without reciting a blessing.
- If the *Menorah* was not lit properly in the first place, or was lit in a windy place and blew out then one is obligated to relight if it went out within 1/2 hour after nightfall.
- On Friday afternoon, the Chanukah candles should be lit before the Shabbat candle-lighting time (if one accepted Shabbat early, it is forbidden to light Chanukah candles). *Mincha* should be said before lighting, if possible.
- Remember to put in more oil or bigger candles on Friday (December 14), so that they burn 1/2 hour after nightfall. Try to light just before the Shabbat candles, (without of course delaying the lighting of the Shabbat candles)
- After Shabbat one should first recite *Havdalah*, then light the Chanukah candles. One may not use the *Menorah* as the candle for *Havdalah*.
- If one is a guest at someone's house (and staying there), one should give the owner a small amount of money to buy a portion in their

candles and one may fulfil the obligation through the owner. Alternatively the guest may light his own *Menorah*.

- If one is eating out then one should light the *Menorah* at their place of residence.
- During morning prayers, *Shacharit*, one should recite the full *Hallel* every day.
- "*Al hanissim*" the special paragraph of prayers for Chanukah is added in the silent prayers, *Shmoneh Esreh* and also in Grace after meals. If one forgot to say this addition, one should not repeat either *Shmoneh Esreh* or Grace.
- It is customary to light a *Menorah* in the Synagogue every evening. It is placed at the southern wall of the Synagogue, in imitation of the *Menorah* in the Temple in Jerusalem.

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from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Thu, Dec 18, 2014 at 10:21 AM subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Miketz

"Your Servant, Our Father"

The Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer says (in Chapter 38): In the dialog between the brothers and Yosef, Yosef heard his brothers utter the phrase "your servant, our father" 10 times and he did not protest even once. They thought they were speaking to the Viceroy of Egypt and everyone is the Viceroy's servant so they referred to Yaakov as "your servant, our father". On the other hand, Yosef knew that they were talking about his father as well, who clearly was NOT his servant. The Medrash comments that "silence is like acquiescence" and therefore for this disrespect to his father, 10 years were deducted from Yosef's lifespan. (He died at age 110 rather than age 120.)

The Vilna Gaon points out that this is an appropriate ("measure for measure") punishment. Inasmuch as the reward for honoring one's parent is "In order that your days be lengthened" [Shmos 20:12] (i.e. – you will have a long life), it makes sense to have one's life shortened for dishonor shown to one's parent.

The problem with this Medrash is that if one listens to the Torah reading this Shabbos, one will discover that we do not find the phrase "your servant, our father" ten times. It only appears 5 times! The Vilna Gaon deals with this problem. He explains that Yosef had to pretend that he did not understand Hebrew so he had an interpreter repeat the remarks of the brothers to him in Egyptian. Thus, he did hear the expression 10 times – 5 times in the original Hebrew spoken by the brothers and five more times in the Egyptian language translation spoken by the interpreter.

However, Yosef could not have objected to the expression "your servant, our father" because that would have blown his cover. He needed to play the charade that he was NOT their brother and that Yaakov was not his father. Had he objected the charade would have been over! How then, can Chazal fault Yosef for keeping quiet?

I saw an answer to this question from Rav Yitzchak Sortzkin which fits in very nicely with the earlier mentioned insight of the Gaon: True, when the brothers were speaking and said "your servant, our father," Yosef could not have objected. However, when the interpreter in Egyptian said "your servant, our father," Yosef could certainly have indicated in Egyptian to the interpreter (who Chazal say was his son Menashe) to not speak like that. When Yosef had the opportunity to object and he did not object, then he was even punished for the brothers' mention of that phrase in the situation where he really was not able to object. There was some kind of a lack of respect for his father by allowing himself to repeatedly hear this phrase in a situation where he could have objected without blowing his charade.

An analogy to this is people who do not have an opportunity to learn as much Torah as they should because of the burden of earning a living and spending long hours on the job in order to support their family. That may be a valid excuse, but then when the opportunity presents itself to find time for learning Torah outside of their working hours and they do not take advantage

of the opportunity, then it shows that they were not totally blameless for their neglect of Torah study even during the time when they supposedly had a "valid excuse".

There are certain individuals who despite working for a living, on December 25 when they have "vacation" from work, spend their time in the Beis Medrash [Study Hall]. This proves that the only reason they did not come to the Beis Medrash to study Torah on a regular day was because they had no choice – they had to be at their job. The same is true for retired people who regularly come to Beis Medrash while drawing their pensions. This proves that all the years when they were not in Beis Medrash, it was only because they needed to make a living.

This helps explain our issue. The fact that Yosef did not object when he heard those words from the interpreter when he could have objected, tells us that he was not totally faultless when he heard those same words from his brothers and could not have objected.

From Dungeon to Palace in the Blink of an Eye

We have all heard stories of individuals who worked their way up the corporate ladder and went from the mailroom to the Boardroom. However, Yosef's story of going from jail to being the second most powerful man in Egypt in one day seems to be virtually without precedent! Yosef went from the dungeon to the palace overnight. This is certainly not your typical "climb up the corporate ladder"!

The events occurred with lightning speed: "And Pharaoh removed his ring from upon his hand and put it on Joseph's hand. He then had him dressed in garments of linen and he placed a gold chain upon his neck. And he had him ride in his second chariot and they proclaimed before him, 'Avrech!' And he appointed him over all the land of Egypt." [Bereshis 41:42-43]

This is an indication of what happens many times in life. Fate can change so quickly. One day, a person can be sitting on top of the world and the next day he can find himself, literally bankrupt. This is a two way street – it works both ways. Sometimes a person thinks a situation is hopeless and then within a matter of days or months, he finds himself on top of the world.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, the late head of the Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem, was both a great Torah scholar and a tremendous master of Mussar [Jewish ethics]. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz would extract great ethical lessons from many seemingly mundane every day events. Once, when Rav Chaim was walking in the streets of Jerusalem, he saw a garbage truck collecting garbage. In earlier times, the way garbage was picked up in Jerusalem was that a garbage man on the ground picked up the can of garbage off the street and handed it to another garbage man who stood atop the truck. The man at the top of the truck would then empty the contents of the can into the garbage truck. The preferred job was to be on top of the truck, rather than running around on the ground picking up the cans and handing them up to the man on top.

The garbage man on the bottom turned to the Rosh Yeshiva and said, "Rebbi, do not worry – in ten minutes I will be on top also! We take turns and switch places every so often." Rav Chaim commented that this is what life is all about. In ten minutes, a person can go from being on bottom to being on top or from being on top to being on bottom. In the blink of an eye, life can change from bad to good, or sometimes the other way around.

The story of Yosef is the story of how in a matter of hours, Yosef went from dungeon to palace. If the Master of the World is on one's side, that can happen at any time.

This write-up was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah series on the weekly Torah portion. A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511.

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By Rabbi Yair Hoffman

To learn or not to learn?

That is the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind of halacha to light the Chanukah light at home thus leaving seder early, or to continue learning in the sea of the Talmud..

Lakewood has their Kollel members stop learning in order to light the Chanukah candles. Yeshiva University does not. YU has them continue learning until night seder is over. Rav Moshe Feinstein's Yeshiva, (MTJ), tells their Kollel yungeleit to continue learning as well.

In Eretz Yisroel, virtually all Kollel members stop learning and go home. At Torah v'Daas, Beis HaTalmid and Yeshiva Chaim Berlin they all give Kollel members time off to light candles in the proper time at home. Chaim Berlin and Mir Yerushalayim make the Kollel members come in earlier during lunchtime to make up for the lost learning time. In Mir Yerushalayim, those that come back to yeshiva after Chanukah light get donuts. Yeshivas Chaim Berlin doesn't offer donuts to the Kollel members, and very few come back.

Those are the Yeshivos. What about places of work? The Five Towns Jewish Times has their men continue working until the day is over. B & H Photo does not dismiss any earlier on Chanukah either. Suit Central in Cedarhurst switches off, allowing their employees to light at staggered times between ten minutes after sunset until Tzeis HaKochavim. Okay. Enough with the hyperbole and theatrics; let's get down to the halacha. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 672:1) writes "We do not light the Chanukah lamps before the sun sets, rather [we light them] with the end of Shkiyah. We neither delay it nor do it earlier. There is an opinion that if he is "tarud" he may light from Plag Mincha (1 and ¼ hours before sunset), but he must place enough oil in it to remain until there is no longer foot-traffic in the market."

The Chofetz Chaim writes that the halacha is (MB 672:10) that men are forbidden to do malacha (work) or learn within 30 minutes before Chanukah lighting time. This is the ruling of the Mogain Avrohom, the Taz, the Bach and the Machatzis HaShekel. Eating a set meal of more than a k'beya of bread is likewise forbidden as the Shulchan Aruch explains in regard to davening Mincha (See OC Siman 232).

WHAT TYPE OF WORK IS FORBIDDEN?

What type of work or activity is forbidden? It is forbidden to perform the type of work that is liable to continue, such as a haircut or bath, or doing business. Specifically, one may not wash dishes, iron clothing, among other things. Rav Elyashiv explained (Kuntrus Hilchos Chanukah page 6) that even cooking or baking during this time is forbidden for someone who has an actual obligation to light. The reason why this is more stringent than Chol HaMoed is because the reason for this prohibition is on account of Pirsumei Nissa – publicizing the miracle.

According to this, Rav Elyashiv has ruled that a store-owner must literally go home and light when the time for Chanukah candle lighting has arrived. If, however, his living is dependent upon his store being open during those hours, he should leave someone that is not obligated in lighting in the store. If this is not possible, then he may delay going home until 50 minutes after sunset. If this is not possible, then he should appoint a Shliach to light on his behalf.

WHEN THE WIFE IS WORKING

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l writes that if the wife is working, however, the father should not light before she comes home from work on account of Shalom Bayis (Emes L'Yaakov page 254). The rationale is that if one does not have enough money for both Chanukah candles and Shabbos candles, the Chanukah candles are set aside for Shalom Bayis. Rav Yakov zatzal held that there would be a Shalom Bayis element here as well.

WOMEN ARE DIFFERENT THAN MEN

It is also interesting to note that women do refrain from Malacha (work) after the candles are lit. The reason why women have this custom is because a woman – Yehudis, the daughter of Yochanan the Kohain Gadol, brought about a miracle. She was very attractive and told the persecuting king that she would be intimate with him. Yehudis then fed him dairy products so that

the king would be thirsty. He drank wine and got sleepy. She was able to kill him and cut off his head, which caused the general of the army and his soldiers to all run away. This halacha applies to women but not to men.

GATHERING THE FAMILY

It is also appropriate to gather the entire family around to light the menorah, even if in waiting for them there will be somewhat of a delay in lighting (See MB 672:10). If most family members are home, then one or two children who arrive later should light on their own and not delay the rest of the family.

It is interesting to note that the Steipler Gaon (Orchos Chaim p. 17) would even gather his married daughter who would fulfill her Mitzvah later on in her own apartment. Such is the importance of the Pirsumei Nisah of Chanukah.

THE ACTUAL TIME TO LIGHT

The Gemara tells us that we light the candles "from the time the sun sets." There is a debate as to whether this means the beginning of what we call sundown or whether it means when three medium stars appear. Practically speaking, Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, held that we light 13–18 minutes after sunset. Rav Aharon Kotler held that we light 25–30 minutes after sundown.

When one will be unable to light later, one may light as early as plag Minchah which is 1 ¼ halachic hours before sunset. Generally, in New York City, this is sometime between 3:30 PM and 3:37 PM.

CONCLUSIONS

It seems to this author that if the custom of the Yeshiva is to continue to learn, then one should follow the Yeshiva's custom. Many Yeshivos in the United States do not dismiss the married Kollel Yungerleit until well after candle lighting. The rationale for this may be based upon the Meiri (Shabbos 21b) who mentions this Minhag for the Yeshiva students in France during his time.

Otherwise, the Pirsumei Nissah obligation would indicate that one should stop learning. Indeed, Rav Chaim Kanievsky Shlita is also quoted in a new Sefer that a Kollel member should not continue learning and have his wife light but should stop when Chanukah candle lighting time arrives and go home to light.

Regarding work, the frum owners of an establishment should allow the men to go home early to light Chanukah candles on time. A staggered system that is similar tone suggested earlier may be ideal.

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The Beit Yosef's Question on Chanukah - Part 1

by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Introduction

One of the most celebrated questions about Chanukah is "the Beit Yosef's question" regarding the number of days we celebrate. In the following two essays, we shall present the question and discuss seven answers that have been offered. I thank the 5766 Y9 Gemara Shiur for its many wonderful insights that helped me formulate my ideas on this topic.

There are actually many more than seven answers to this question. The proliferation of solutions seems to stem from the fact that virtually no answer that is suggested presents a conclusive solution to the problem, as serious questions are raised against each one.

We should note at the outset that although this problem is commonly referred to as "the Beit Yosef's question", the issue was actually discussed centuries before the Rav Yosef Karo wrote his Beit Yosef commentary to the

Tur. Many of the "Chachmei Provence", the Rishonim of Southern France such as the Meiri and the Ri of Lunel, already grapple with this issue.

The Problem

The Beit Yosef (Orach Chaim 670 s.v. VeHaTaam) wonders why we celebrate Chanukah for eight days if we are celebrating the miracle (as presented in Shabbat 21b) that oil that should have lasted for only one day instead lasted for eight. We should celebrate Chanukah for seven days, since only seven days of the burning of the oil were miraculous!

The answers to this question come in two basic varieties. One strategy is to try to argue that the miracle encompassed all eight days. The other approach is to concede that only seven of the days of the oil burning were miraculous but to find a reason why Chazal nevertheless instituted the celebration of Chanukah for eight days. In this essay, we will present approaches of the first variety, and in our subsequent issue we shall (IY"H and B"N) present approaches of the second variety.

Solution #1 - Splitting the Oil into Eight Parts

The Beit Yosef's first answer to this question is that since the Kohanim knew that they needed oil for eight days (the time it would take to procure more oil), they split the supply they had into eight parts. Thus, on each of the eight days a miracle occurred, since oil that should have lasted for an eighth of a night lasted an entire night. We should note that a number of the Chachmei Provence (cited in the Encyclopedia Talmudit 16:246 note 79) already offered this solution.

Authorities such as the Meiri (Shabbat 21b), Maharal (commentary to Shabbat 21b) and Pri Chadash (O.C. 670) question this answer. They note that Halacha (Menachot 89a) requires that one place enough oil in the Menorah to last for an entire night. It is inconceivable that the Kohanim violated this rule simply due to lack of oil. One cannot respond, they argue, that they relied on a miracle, due to the rule of "Ein Somchin Al HaNeis," we do not rely upon miracles (Pesachim 64b).

The Yereim (in his commentary to the Smag) defends this approach by saying that the obligation to place a full night's supply of oil in the Menorah is merely a Halachic preference (Lechatchilla) but not an absolute requirement. One could suggest that the Kohanim decided to forego the preferred quantity because they were confident (but not reliant upon the fact) that a miracle would occur. This confidence may have stemmed from witnessing the Chashmonaim's miraculous defeat of the Syrian-Greeks. Perhaps they reasoned that just as Hashem performed a miracle on the battlefield, He would perform another miracle in the Beit HaMikdash. The fact that the Menorah's light symbolizes Hashem's presence among the Jewish People (Shabbat 22b) might also have sparked this confidence. Our struggle with the Syrian-Greeks was grounded in an ideological battle, as the Syrian-Greeks sought to erase Torah life and replace it completely with Greek culture.

The Pri Chadash (O.C. 670) suggests a variation of this approach. Perhaps all the oil was placed in on the first night, and the miracle was that it was only reduced by one eighth every evening. The advantage of this approach is that it avoids the problems of the failure to place the required amount of oil into the Menorah and the consequent reliance upon a miracle.

Solutions Two and Three - Replenishment of the Oil

The Beit Yosef offers two alternative solutions to his problem. He first suggests that on each night, when the oil was poured from the container into the Menorah, the jug remained completely full (reminiscent of the miracle performed by Elisha that is recorded in the fourth chapter of Melachim Bet). Another suggestion is that after each evening, all the oil remained in the Menorah (reminiscent of the miracle of the Sneh, the burning bush, recorded in the third chapter of Sefer Shemot). We note again that these two solutions already appear in the Rishonim (see Encyclopedia Talmudit ad. loc. notes 82 and 83).

Two basic questions have been raised regarding these solutions. The Pri Chadash notes that these solutions shift the problem from the first day to the eighth day. He notes that according to these two approaches, there was no

miracle on the eighth day, since there would be no need for the oil to be replaced either in the jug or the Menorah on the last day.

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik (cited in Rav Shlomo Yosef Zevin's *HaMoadim BaHalacha* p. 158) rejects these two answers, arguing that miraculously generated oil is not acceptable for the lighting of the Menorah. He notes that the oil used for the Menorah is described not merely as "Shemen" (oil) but as "Shemen Zayit," oil produced by an olive tree. This implies that it must be produced by an olive tree and not by a miracle. A similar argument is made by the Radak (*Melachim* 2:4:7), who claims that Ovadia's widow was not responsible to tithe the oil miraculously generated by Elisha since the rules of tithing apply to only naturally generated products and not to an item created by a miracle. Rav Chaim therefore concludes that the miracle must lie in the quality of the oil and not in its quantity. In other words, the miracle must be that the naturally generated oil lasted longer than it would have done normally (as in the first solution of the Beit Yosef) as opposed to the oil having been generated miraculously (in the second and third solutions of the Beit Yosef).

Interestingly, the Taz (O.C. 670:1) poses a question on all three answers offered by the Beit Yosef. He asks why, if any of these answers are correct, it is not recorded in any classical source that this is what actually occurred. One might respond that the nature of Biblical and Talmudic writing is not to explicitly state everything but to merely hint at some points for succeeding generations to discover (see *Chullin* 7a).

We should note that the Pri Chadash (ad. loc.) presents a variation on solutions two and three, suggesting that a bit of oil was placed in the Menorah and the Menorah was completely filled (miraculously) with just that bit of oil. The advantage of this variation is that since the miraculously generated oil emerged from already existing oil, it is acceptable for the Menorah. This is because of a Halachic principle of "Yotzi", that something has the same status as that from which it was generated (see *Bechorot* 5b).

Another advantage to this approach (as noted by the Taz) is that the Zohar teaches (also see the Ramban to *Bereishit* 6:19) that Hashem no longer creates anything *ex nihilo* (*Yeish MeiAyin*, from nothing), but rather generates from something that already exists (*Yeish MeiYeish*). Therefore, it is preferable to say that the oil was miraculously generated from preexisting oil as opposed to being regenerated from nothing after all of the previous evening's oil was consumed.

Solution # 4 - The She'iltot's Alternative Text

The standard text of our Gemara states, "There was enough oil for only one day." The *Birkei Yosef* (O.C. 670) notes that the text of the She'iltot (She'ilta 26) states, "There was not sufficient oil even for one day." *Rabbeinu Yerucham* (9:1) also presents this text. The *Birkei Yosef* notes that according to this text, the Beit Yosef's question is solved, because according to the alternative text a miracle occurred even on the first day, since the oil should not have lasted even for one day.

The *Netziv* (in his authoritative commentary to the She'iltot ad. loc.), however, emends the text of the She'iltot to be in accord with the standard text of our Gemara. Indeed, the editors of the *Encyclopedia Talmudit* (ad. loc. note 87) note that the ancient Talmudic manuscripts that they inspected all have the standard text (that there was enough for one day). Accordingly, this alternative text does not adequately solve our problem.

This appears to be an example of a principle of textual criticism that Rav Aharon Lichtenstein told me was stressed when he was studying for his doctorate in English literature at Harvard University: the more difficult text is generally regarded as the more reliable one. It is highly unlikely that someone would emend a text to be more difficult to understand. Instead, it is far more likely that the text that solves a problem is a corrupted text, because someone might have emended the text in order to solve the problem (see *Rabbeinu Tam's* introduction to his *Sefer HaYashar*).

Next week, we shall (IY"Y and B"N) explore solutions that concede that only seven of the days were miraculous but present reasons why Chazal nevertheless instituted eight days of Chanukah.

The Beit Yosef's Question on Chanukah – Part Two - Part 2 by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Introduction Last week, we introduced our presentation of a classic Talmudic discussion. The Gemara (*Shabbat* 21b) states that Chanukah is celebrated because of the miracle of Menorah oil that should have lasted for only one day instead lasting eight. The Beit Yosef, in turn, asks why we celebrate Chanukah for eight days if only seven days were miraculous, since the oil would have lasted for one day without a miracle. We noted that there are two basic strategies for resolving this difficulty. One approach is to try to discover how there was a miracle on all eight days. Others admit that only seven days were miraculous, but search for other reasons why Chazal instituted an eighth day. Last week, we presented four answers based on the first strategy. This week, we shall present three more approaches based on the second strategy. Our discussion has been enriched by the insights of my Talmidim in the 5766 Y9 Gemara Shiur at TABC. Our spirited discussion of this issue greatly enhanced my analysis of this fascinating topic.

Solution #5 – Military Miracle and Oil Miracle The Pri Chadash asserts that the first day of Chanukah would have been instituted even had the miracle of the oil not occurred. He argues that the first day of Chanukah celebrates the miraculous military defeat of the Syrian-Greeks. This is similar to the one day of Purim on which we celebrate our salvation from the decree of Haman. The Pri Chadash explains that other seven days were added due to the extra seven miraculous days of the oil burning. The Meiri (*Shabbat* 21b) presented this approach centuries before the Pri Chadash. He adds that the first day of Chanukah is dedicated to celebrating not only the military miracle but also the miracle that we discovered the one flask of oil that the Syrian-Greeks did not render Tamei. The *Shiltei Gibborim* (to the *Mordechai*, *Shabbat* number 455) adopts the approach that the first day celebrates the rededication of the Beit HaMikdash to the Avodah (service) that had been disrupted by the Syrian-Greeks. The Maharatz Chiyut (*Shabbat* 21b s.v. *Mai Chanukah*) criticizes these approaches, noting that when the Gemara (*Shabbat* 21b) discusses the reason why we observe Chanukah (see, especially Rashi ad. loc. s.v. *Mai Chanukah*), it mentions only the miracle of the oil lasting eight days. This seems to imply that we celebrate only the miracle of the oil and not the military victory or discovery of the Tahor oil (see, however, Rashi to *Shabbat* 23a s.v. *Hayu* which seems to suggest otherwise). The Maharatz Chiyut explains that the fundamental difference between these events is that the oil miracle constitutes an obvious and blatant miracle (*Neis Nigleh*), while the military victory was a hidden miracle (*Neis Nistar*). The Maharatz Chiyut asserts that the Gemara believes that we do not recite Hallel on a *Nes Nistar* (a subtle miracle, such the military victory and discovery of the Tahor oil). The Maharatz Chiyut does note that the Rambam (*Hilchot Chanukah* 3:1) includes the military miracle in his presentation of the reasons for celebrating Chanukah. We may add that the military victory is highlighted in the *Al HaNissim* prayer as well. Thus, the Meiri and Pri Chadash's approach seems to fit with the Rambam and the composers of *Al HaNissim* as opposed to *Shabbat* 21b. The Meiri and Pri Chadash might claim that the Gemara explains why we celebrate Chanukah for eight days instead of merely one day. The Gemara presents only the oil miracle because it is the reason for the seven additional days of celebration. This discussion has serious implications regarding the propriety of reciting Hallel on *Yom HaAtzmaut*, on which we celebrate the *Nes Nistar* of the establishment of *Medinat Yisrael* in the 1948 War of Independence. According to the Meiri and Pri Chadash it is entirely appropriate, and the Maharatz Chiyut might disagree. For a thorough discussion of this issue, see *Teshuvot Yabia Omer* (6: O.C. 41) and my essays on Hallel on *Yom HaAtzmaut* and *Rabi Akiva* as the Inspiration for Religious Zionism available at www.koltorah.org.

Solution #6 - The Eighth Day Added Due to Doubt A number of Rishonim (such as Baal HaIttur and the Avudraham, cited in the Ateret Zekeinim to Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 670) and Acharonim (such as the Pri Chadash, ad. loc. and the Minchat Chinuch, to Mitzvah 301) ask why we do not observe nine days of Chanukah in the exile, just as we celebrate Sukkot-Shmini Atzeret for nine days. The primary answer that is offered is that we do not observe an extra day for a holiday that was instituted by Chazal and does not appear in the Chumash. This answer is based on the Gemara Menachot 68b regarding the observance of the prohibition of Chadash outside of Eretz Yisrael. An intriguing alternative solution to this question is presented by the Arvei Nachal (at the conclusion of his commentary to Sefer Bereishit) and the Toldot Yaakov Yosef (to Parshat Vayeishev). They assert that Chanukah should fundamentally be observed for only seven days because the miracle was only for seven days. The eighth day, they claim, is added as the additional day for those living in the Diaspora (similar to the extra day added to all other Chagim for Diaspora Jewry). Rav Shlomo Yosef Zevin poses an obvious question on this approach. Why is Chanukah observed for eight days even in Eretz Yisrael? We may answer that Chazal wished to institute a uniform practice for both Eretz Yisrael and Chutz LaAretz (outside the land) regarding Chanukah. Thus, we observe eight days of Chanukah in Eretz Yisrael even though it is only necessary to observe seven days. It is unclear, according to this approach, why Chazal did not similarly institute observance of the second day of Yom Tov even in Eretz Yisrael for all other Chagim.

Solution # 7 – Eight Days of Chanukah Commemorating a Variety of Events Another solution (with many varieties) is that Chanukah is observed for eight days for reasons other than the oil miracle. The Baal HaIttim (a Rishon, cited in the Shiltei Gibborim to the Mordechai to Shabbat, number 455) asserts that we observe Chanukah for eight days due to the Syrian-Greeks who banned us from giving a Brit Milah to our male children. Since Brit Milah is normally conducted on the eighth day of a baby boy's life, we observe Chanukah for eight days. meaning for this answer is based on the Maharal's mystical approach to the symbolism of certain numbers. The number seven (and its multiples), explains the Maharal, symbolizes completeness within the natural world. For example, seven days complete the week. The number eight, on the other hand, represents the supernatural. The Brit Milah, according to this approach, is celebrated on the eighth day since it represents how we Jews seek to transcend the natural world (interestingly, Mikveh immersion occurs on the eighth night after the completion of seven clean days). Sukkot is celebrated for seven days on which we offer seventy bulls corresponding to the seventy nations of the world listed in Parashat Noach. On Shemini Atzeret, the eighth day, we offer just one bull, corresponding to Am Yisrael, the nation that aspires to transcend nature and devote at least part of our lives to service of Hashem. Shavuot is celebrated on the fiftieth day after we count seven cycles of seven days, as it is the day on which we received the Torah, our guide to going beyond the natural. Accordingly, Chazal established Chanukah for eight days because it celebrates our supernatural cultural survival despite overwhelming challenges. Our defeat of the Syrian-Greeks certainly was supernatural, which is reflected in the miracle of the oil miraculously lasting for eight days. The miracle of the oil may be seen as a metaphor for the survival of the Jewish People. Furthermore, the fundamental conflict with the Syrian-Greeks was a clash of the Greek culture which exalts the natural and Torah which advocates a life which rises above the natural. Therefore, it is most fitting for Chanukah, which celebrates the survival of Torah, to be celebrated for eight days even though the miracle of the oil lasted only seven days. The Aruch HaShulchan (O.C. 670:5) adds another two reasons for celebrating Chanukah for eight days instead of seven. He notes a Midrash that states that the Mishkan was completed on the twenty fifth day of Kislev and completed on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. The Aruch HaShulchan explains that the rededication ceremony of the Beit HaMikdash by the Chashmonaim was conducted for eight days to

correspond to the eight days devoted to the dedication of the Mishkan in the time of Moshe Rabbeinu. The Aruch HaShulchan adds that Divrei HaYamim (2:7) records that Shlomo HaMelech also devoted eight days to the dedication of the first Beit HaMikdash. Support for this approach may be derived from the Torah reading of Chanukah, where we read about the dedication of the Mishkan (Megillah 31a). The Aruch HaShulchan adds that the Sefer HaChashmonaim (2:1 and 10) records that because of the military hostilities with the Syrian-Greeks the Chashmonaim were unable to observe Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret in the year that they rededicated the Beit Hamikdash (165 B.C.E.). As a correction (Tikkun) of this omission, the Chashmonaim devoted eight days to the rededication of the Beit HaMikdash which corresponded to the eight days of Yom Tov they had missed during the war. The Aruch HaShulchan explains that Chazal viewed the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days as an expression of divine approval of these eight celebratory days. According to this approach, we essentially celebrate Chanukah for eight days as a commemoration of the eight days of rededication of the Beit HaMikdash. We should note, however, that each variation of solution number seven is subject to the Maharatz Chiyut's aforementioned critique of the Pri Chadash's approach. The Gemara (as interpreted by Rashi on Shabbat 21b) might indicate that the sole reason for observing Chanukah is the miracle of the oil lasting eight days and not any other consideration such as those cited by the Baal HaIttim and the Aruch HaShulchan.

Conclusion There are many more approaches that have been offered to resolve the Beit Yosef's question. Indeed, Rav Michael Taubes informs me that a Sefer was recently published that presents no less than five hundred (!) answers to this question (he also informed me that the Rosh already raised this question). Many of the answers provide important insights into our observance of Chanukah. It is no wonder that this intriguing question and the ensuing discussion that it spawned has drawn the attention of Gedolim and lay individuals alike for centuries.

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In My Opinion **CHESS MASTERS** Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog
Rabbi Berel Wein

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, the noted educator, author and Talmudist recently wrote a lengthy article in one of the religiously oriented newspapers here in Israel about the problems of curriculum as it currently exists in Israeli Orthodox Jewish schools - and worldwide. He decried what he considered to be the over-emphasis and even exclusivity of the study of Talmud, to the exception of all other areas of Torah scholarship, that exist in our schools. He compared the study of Talmud to learning how to play chess. Chess in its highest form is a very complicated and exacting mental exercise with relatively simple moves on the chessboard that even young children can master. Yet we all realize that there are relatively few chess masters in the world. Though almost all of us know the simple moves of the game and understand the ultimate purpose of capturing the opponent's king, few of us are really disappointed at not being masters of the game. Rabbi Steinsaltz maintains that this is a just comparison to the study of Talmud. Everyone can learn the simple rules of that study. But, few can rise to the level of master. And everyone understands that the purpose of the study is not only to grant one familiarity with the Oral Law of Sinai but also to facilitate a soulful and emotional connection with Jewish tradition, Torah values and an intimate connection with one's inner self and its Creator. Rabbi Steinsaltz agrees that everyone should learn the rudiments of playing chess. But it is

impractical to create an educational system geared only for chess masters, who realistically will always be only a small minority of the players. By carrying this analogy over to the world of Jewish education and curriculum, in his view, less stress, time and effort should be devoted to the study of Talmud in Jewish schools at the expense of other necessary subjects of Torah and tradition. This issue has long ago festered in the Jewish educational world. On the one hand, it is obvious that the Jewish world will always need masters – people who are great in Torah knowledge and steeped in Talmudic analysis. Without the great scholars in Torah – and this immediately presupposes mastery of Talmud and its layers of commentary and exposition – the great spiritual world of Judaism, and in fact the continuity of the Jewish people, is placed at risk. On the other hand, the vast majority of students attending our religious schools today are not going to be masters, at least as far as Talmud is concerned. In fact, many a promising student has been turned off to Judaism itself by the preponderance of Talmud study in the curriculum of the Jewish school that he attended. The yeshiva world of Eastern Europe – especially in Lithuania in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was composed of prestigious institutions catering to a very elite and relatively small student body. Before World War II there were probably no more than 3500 students in all of the yeshivot of the Eastern Europe combined. In the Diaspora, in spite of the substantial population of Jews, the number of students in yeshivot then was probably even smaller. The yeshivot were the schools of the masters and not of the ordinary. All of this changed after World War II. The destruction of Eastern European Jewry and of almost all of its yeshivot created a black hole in the Jewish world. The great men of Torah, the relatively few who somehow survived the Holocaust, now devoted themselves selflessly and almost exclusively to rebuilding the world of intensive and elite Torah study. They were determined to create new masters, and in order to do so every Jewish student had to at least learn the rudimentary rules and moves of the game. This emphasis slowly but surely came to dominate the curriculum of all Jewish schools, and the goal remained to produce masters, even at the expense of the ordinary players. This was especially true when it became clear that in the modern, secular, assimilationist atmosphere, it was almost impossible to remain an observant and believing traditional Jew without a relatively intense education in Talmud. So, as is always the case in life generally and certainly in Jewish life, the issue now becomes a matter of balance. We cannot educate everyone to become a master. Yet everyone must somehow know the moves of the game and be able to participate. There are now new initiatives and institutions that somehow are trying to square this circle. The full wonder and breadth of Torah and Judaism should be communicated to the next generation of Jews currently populating our schools. How to accomplish this without an unrealistic overemphasis on the exclusivity of the study of Talmud remains one of the core problems faced by Jewish educators in today's world. Shabbat shalom Happy Chanukah Berel Wein

from: **Rabbi Berel Wein** <genesis@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: rabbiwein@torah.org date: Thu, Dec 18, 2014 at 5:05 PM subject: Rabbi Wein - Parshas Miketz

Parshas Miketz Achieving Greatness The astounding and amazing story of Yosef continues in this week's parsha. Through a series of inexplicable events, Yosef finds himself raised from being a kidnapped victim and slave who was thrust into prison and doomed to oblivion, to becoming the chief minister of the Pharaoh and the Egyptian Empire. Yosef takes all of this in stride and certainly sees it as being part of a series of events that had to happen since they were divinely ordained and predicted to him in his youthful dreams.

One who expects miracles to happen apparently is not overly impressed when they actually do occur. Yosef's inner voice had long ago told him that he was destined for power and greatness and so the unusual events that befall him are unable to destabilize him. He somehow knows that he will be a ruler of men and the leader of his brothers.

There are many instances in human and Jewish history where people, early on in their lives, realize they were born to greatness and enormous potential achievement. The prophet Yirmiyahu is told in his initial vision of prophecy that he was already ordained, in his mother's womb, to become the prophet of Israel. All men may be created equal but we are well aware that not everyone comes into this world with equal talents and opportunities.

Achieving greatness is not preordained, though the circumstances that may allow one to rise to greatness apparently are. The dreams that guided Yosef in his youth and that brought him to initial travail and later to unbelievable triumph told him of opportunity but provided no guarantee of fulfillment. Only Yosef himself, through his own actions and ingenuity, could bring the promise of those dreams to fruition.

So, too, is it with all of us. One of the central issues and questions of life deals with the fulfillment of one's potential and the positive exploitation of the circumstances of life that are dealt to us. Yosef's words to the butler/officer of Pharaoh while in prison – "I was stolen from the land of the Hebrews and I have done nothing wrong here and now I find myself imprisoned" – is not to be read as being solely a lament over the circumstances of life that have overtaken him. Rather, it was a statement of fact upon which Yosef built his hopes for the future. He implored the butler/officer of Pharaoh to remember him to the king and set him free.

Yosef sees in this seemingly chance encounter in prison with the butler/officer, the opportunity to pursue his goal and rise to greatness. Yosef will not squander that opportunity nor will he wallow in despair or rail against the fate that has treated him so cruelly. He will not allow events and circumstances to deter him from the realization and actualization of his dreams and visions.

Rather, he will attempt to use and exploit all of those circumstances to make his dreams reality and to achieve the greatness that he believes he is entitled to and has been promised to him. This lesson of human fortitude has guided the Jewish people throughout the long night of our exile and dispersion. We are currently faced with difficult circumstances and troublesome events. We should, somehow, attempt to turn them to our advantage and realize our age-old dream of Zion and Jerusalem.

Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org> date: Thu, Dec 18, 2014 at 4:47 PM OU Shabbat Shalom Weekly

Appearance and Reality

Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Finally after twenty-two years and many twists and turns, Joseph and his brothers meet. We sense the drama of the moment. The last time they had been together, the brothers planned to kill Joseph and eventually sold him as a slave. One of the reasons they did so is that they were angry at his reports about his dreams. He twice dreamed that his brothers would bow down to him. To them that sounded like hubris, excessive confidence and conceit.

Hubris is usually punished by nemesis and so it was in Joseph's case. Far from being a ruler, his brothers turned him into a slave. That, however, turned out not to be the end of the story but only the beginning. Unexpectedly, now in this week's parsha, the dream has just come true. The brothers do bow down to him, "their faces to the ground" (Gen. 42: 6). Now, we feel, the story has reached its end. Instead it turns out only to be the beginning of another story altogether, about sin, repentance and forgiveness. Biblical stories tend to defy narrative conventions.

The reason, though, that the story does not end with the brothers' meeting is that only one person present at the scene, Joseph himself, knew that it was a meeting. "As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognised them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them ... Joseph recognised his brothers, but they did not recognise him."

There were many reasons they did not recognise him. They did not know he was in Egypt. They believed he was still a slave while the man before whom

they bowed was a viceroy. Besides which, he looked like an Egyptian, spoke Egyptian and had an Egyptian name, Tsofenat Paneakh. Most importantly, though, he was wearing the uniform of an Egyptian of high rank. That had been the sign of Joseph's elevation at the hand of Pharaoh when he interpreted his dreams:

"So Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.' Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain round his neck. He made him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, 'Make way.' Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. (Gen. 41: 41-43) We know from Egyptian wall paintings and from archeological discoveries like Tutankhamen's tomb, how stylised and elaborate were Egyptian robes of office. Different ranks wore different clothes. Early pharaohs had two headdresses, a white one to mark the fact that they were kings of upper Egypt, and a red one to signal that they were kings of lower Egypt. Like all uniforms, clothes told a story, or as we say nowadays, "made a statement." They proclaimed a person's status. Someone dressed like the Egyptian before whom the brothers had just bowed could not possibly be their long lost brother Joseph. Except that it was.

This seems like a minor matter. I want in this essay to argue the opposite. It turns out to be a very major matter indeed. The first thing we need to note is that the Torah as a whole, and Genesis in particular, has a way of focusing our attention on a major theme: it presents us with recurring episodes. Robert Alter calls them "type scenes." [1] There is, for example, the theme of sibling rivalry that appears four times in Genesis: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau and Joseph and his brothers. There is the theme that occurs three times of the patriarch forced to leave home because of famine, and then realising that he will have to ask his wife to pretend she is his sister for fear that he will be murdered so that she can be taken into the royal harem. And there is the theme of finding-future-wife-at-well, which also occurs three times: Rebecca, Rachel and Jethro's daughter Zipporah.

The encounter between Joseph and his brothers is the fifth in a series of stories in which clothes play a key role. The first is Jacob who dresses in Esau's clothes while bringing his father a meal so that he can take his brother's blessing. Second is Joseph's finely embroidered robe or "coat of many colours," which the brothers bring back to their father stained in blood, saying that a wild animal must have seized him.

Third is the story of Tamar taking off her widow's dress, covering herself with a veil, and making herself look as if she were a prostitute. Fourth is the robe Joseph leaves in the hands of Potiphar's wife while escaping her attempt to seduce him. The fifth is the one in today's parsha in which Pharaoh dresses Joseph as a high-ranking Egyptian, with clothes of linen, a gold chain and the royal signet ring.

What all five cases have in common is that they facilitate deception. In each case, they bring about a situation in which things are not as they seem. Jacob wears Esau's clothes because he is worried that his blind father will feel him and realise that the smooth skin does not belong to Esau but to his younger brother. In the end it is not only the texture but also the smell of the clothes that deceives Isaac: "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field the Lord has blessed" (Gen. 27: 27).

Joseph's stained robe was produced by the brothers to disguise the fact that they were responsible for Joseph's disappearance. Jacob "recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! A wild animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces." (Gen. 37: 33).

Tamar's appearance dressed as a veiled prostitute was intended to deceive Judah into sleeping with her since she wanted to have a child to "raise up the name" of her dead husband Er. It seems that in the pre-mosaic law of levirate marriage, other close relatives like a father-in-law, not just a brother-in-law, could fulfil the duty. Judah was duly deceived, and only realised what had happened when, three months later, Tamar produced the cord and staff she had taken from him as a pledge.

Potiphar's wife used the evidence of Joseph's robe to substantiate her claim that he had tried to rape her, a crime of which he was wholly innocent.

Lastly, Joseph used the fact that his brothers did not recognise him to set in motion a series of staged events to test whether they were still capable of selling a brother as a slave or whether they had changed.

So the five stories about garments tell a single story: things are not necessarily as they seem. Appearances deceive. It is therefore with a frisson of discovery that we realise that the Hebrew word for garment, b-g-d, is also the Hebrew word for "betrayal," as in the confession formula, Ashamnu, bagadnu, "We have been guilty, we have betrayed."

Is this a mere literary conceit, a way of linking a series of otherwise unconnected stories? Or is there something more fundamental at stake?

It was the nineteenth century Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz who pointed out a fundamental difference between other ancient cultures and Judaism: "The pagan perceives the Divine in nature through the medium of the eye, and he becomes conscious of it as something to be looked at. On the other hand, to the Jew who conceives God as being outside of nature and prior to it, the Divine manifests itself through the will and through the medium of the ear . . . The pagan beholds his god, the Jew hears Him; that is, apprehends His will." [2]

In the twentieth century, literary theorist Erich Auerbach contrasted the literary style of Homer with that of the Hebrew Bible. [3] In Homer's prose we see the play of light on surfaces. The *Odyssey* and *Iliad* are full of visual descriptions. By contrast, biblical narrative has very few such descriptions. We do not know how tall Abraham was, the colour of Isaac's hair, or what Moses looked like. Visual details are minimal, and are present only when necessary to understand what follows. We are told for example that Joseph was good-looking (Gen. 39: 6) only to explain why Potiphar's wife conceived a desire for him.

The key to the five stories occurs later on in Tanakh, in the biblical account of Israel's first two kings. Saul looked like royalty. He was "head and shoulders above" everyone else (1 Sam. 9: 2). He was tall. He had presence. He had the bearing of a king. But he lacked self confidence. He followed the people rather than leading them. Samuel had to rebuke him with the words, "You may be small in your own eyes but you are head of the tribes of Israel." Appearance and reality were opposites. Saul had physical but not moral stature.

The contrast with David was total. When God told Samuel to go to the family of Yishai to find Israel's next king, no one even thought of David, the youngest of the family. Samuel's first instinct was to choose Eliav who, like Saul, looked the part. But God told him, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16: 7).

Only when we have read all these stories are we able to return to the first story of all in which clothes play a part: the story of Adam and Eve and the forbidden fruit, after eating which they see they are naked. They are ashamed and they make clothes for themselves. That is a story for another occasion but its theme should now be clear. It is about eyes and ears, seeing and listening. Adam and Eve's sin had little to do with fruit, or sex, and everything to do with the fact that they let what they saw override what they had heard.

"Joseph recognised his brothers, but they did not recognise him." The reason they did not recognise him is that, from the start, they allowed their feelings to be guided by what they saw, the "coat of many colours" that inflamed their envy of their younger brother. Judge by appearances and you will miss the deeper truth about situations and people. You will even miss God Himself, for God cannot be seen, only heard. That is why the primary imperative in Judaism is Shema Yisrael, "Listen, O Israel," and why, when we say the first line of the Shema, we place our hand over our eyes so that we cannot see.

Appearances deceive. Clothes betray. Deep understanding, whether of God or of human beings, needs the ability to listen.

[1] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, New York, Basic Books, 1981, 55-78.

[2] Heinrich Graetz, *The structure of Jewish history, and other essays*, New York, Ktav Publishing House, 1975, 68.

[3] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957, 3-23.

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> to: Potpourri <parshapotpourri@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Dec 18, 2014 at 7:42 PM subject: [Parshapotpourri] **Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport - Parshas Mikeitz**

Vayomer Paroh el Yosef acharei hodi'ah Elokem es kol zos ein navon v'chochom kamocha (41:39) After Yosef was freed from prison to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, he explained that they foretold seven years of abundance to be followed by seven years of famine. Therefore, he recommended the appointment of a wise advisor to oversee the project of storing for the famine during the years of plenty. Upon hearing this proposal, Pharaoh responded that there was nobody more fitting for the role than Yosef himself, who demonstrated great insight by suggesting this idea.

Rav Elyahu Lopian asks an obvious question: what intelligence do we see on the part of Yosef? Any rational person should realize that if one anticipates good years followed by bad years, the obvious solution is to save for the future during the good years. Rav Lopian explains that from the fact that Yosef is praised for his wisdom, the Torah is revealing to us a deep insight into human nature: the prevalence of short-sightedness. Even though our minds recognize the need to prepare for the future, we have great difficulty looking past the affluent present. Therefore, Chazal tell us (Tamid 32a), "Eizehu chochom ha'roeh es ha'nolad" - a wise person is one who sees the future - and plans for it accordingly.

The time we have in this world is analogous to the years of plenty. When we are young, the time we have left in this world seems abundant, almost infinite, and it is quite easy and natural to let it go to waste. Americans even have a concept called "killing time." However, there inevitably comes a time when we must leave this world and enter the next. In that world, we won't have any more time available to perform mitzvos and continue our spiritual growth. Let us learn from Yosef what it means to be wise and "save" by studying Torah and doing mitzvos during our time in this world so that we will have them to take with us when we pass on to the next world.

B'nei binah y'mei shemona kav'u shir u'renanim (Ma'oz Tzur) Historians refer to the period of the Greek Empire as the Enlightenment, as the Greeks were on the cutting edge of new insights and understanding of the natural world. Studying science and revealing the depth and intricacy of Hashem's magnificent Creation often brings people to believe in Hashem as they marvel at the impossibility of it all occurring by chance. Why is it that rather than being inspired to recognize Hashem's hand in the Creation, the Greeks heretically espoused a belief in a static universe?

This question may be answered with a parable. There were two families who performed acts of chesed (kindness). The first family invited a poor homeless beggar to their home and provided him with a warm supper, a shower, a change of clothes, and a good night's sleep. The second family heard of the tragic plight of an orphaned child and with great mercy adopted him and raised him as their very own. While both acts are admirable and praiseworthy, the latter clearly far outweighs the former, as it is an obligation for life versus a commitment of one night.

Nevertheless, upon speaking with the homeless man and the adopted child and measuring their levels of gratitude, one will paradoxically find the homeless man gushing with effusive praise for his compassionate hosts, while the child will be far less enthusiastic. The explanation for this phenomenon is that because the child was adopted at such a young age, he has grown accustomed to the myriad acts of kindness to the point of taking them for granted, whereas the homeless man is able to recognize the magnitude of the unexpected thoughtfulness from which he benefited.

Similarly, the ancient Greeks were leaders in furthering their understanding and awareness of the natural world, but they were led astray by the very fact that the focus of their inquiries - nature - is by definition constant and self-perpetuating. Just like the adopted child, this led them to take nature for granted and to view it as an independent power unto itself.

This insight provides a deeper understanding of the victory of the Chashmonaim over the Greeks. The struggle wasn't merely military in nature, as it also represented a triumph over the mistaken worldview of the Greeks. The Chashmonaim realized that everything in the world comes from Hashem, and everything - including nature itself - is in reality a miracle. The Ramban writes (Shemos 13:16) that clear and open miracles should lead a person to the recognition that even the mundane things that he takes for granted are also miraculous, albeit in a "hidden" form. This concept is so fundamental

to Jewish belief that the Ramban writes that a person who denies it has no portion in the Torah.

With this introduction, we can now appreciate the answer given by the Alter of Kelm to the well-known question attributed to the Beis Yosef: Since enough oil was found to burn on the first day, no miracle occurred on that day, in which case Chanuka should only be celebrated only for the seven days that the oil burned miraculously. The Alter of Kelm answers that the miracle of the first day is that oil burns at all! Although we view oil burning as the mere functioning of the laws of nature and not miraculous in any way, this is precisely the point: The first day of Chanuka commemorates the recognition that nature itself is a creation of Hashem, and just because we are accustomed to it on a daily basis, it is no less miraculous than the subsequent miracle that the oil burned for longer than it was supposed to.

The Gemora in Taanis (25a) relates that one Friday, the daughter of Rav Chanina ben Dosa accidentally put vinegar into her Shabbos candles instead of oil. When she reported her mistake to her father, he was unfazed and unequivocally declared, "He Who told oil to burn can also tell vinegar to burn." Rav Chanina ben Dosa recognized clearly that the laws of nature are essentially arbitrary; if Hashem willed them to be another way, they could just as easily be different. He understood that there is nothing intrinsically more miraculous in the burning of oil than that of vinegar, as nature is just another, more hidden, form of a miracle. The Gemora concludes that for somebody on such a lofty spiritual level, an open miracle occurred and he lit his Havdalah candle on Saturday night from the vinegar candles which were still burning strong.

Rav Moshe Feinstein uses this idea to resolve a difficulty with the text of the Al HaNissim prayer which is added to the Shemoneh Esrei prayers and to Birkas HaMazon, in which we thank Hashem for the miracles that He performed for us on Chanuka: Why is no mention made in this paragraph of the most well-known miracle associated with Chanuka, the fact that the oil burned for eight days? Rav Moshe suggests that the miracle of the oil is indeed mentioned, in the words v'hidliku neiros b'chatzros kadshecha - they lit candles in Your Holy Temple, as the fact that the oil burned at all was no less miraculous than that which occurred on the remaining seven days.

With this understanding, we can appreciate the explanation given by Rav Shmuel Rozovsky for the fact that in the song Maoz Tzur which is sung after lighting the menorah, we refer to the sages who established Chanuka for singing and rejoicing as b'nei binah, as opposed to b'nei de'ah or b'nei chochmah, which are synonymous terms that also connote wisdom. Rashi writes (Devorim 1:13) that binah is used to connote the wisdom of being meivin Davar mi'toch davar - extrapolating from one concept to understand something else. This is the precise description of the Chashmonaim, who witnessed the open miracle of the oil burning for seven additional days, and inferred that the lighting of the first day was just as miraculous.

The Gemora in Berachos (7b) teaches that in naming her fourth son Yehuda to express her gratitude to Hashem (Bereishis 29:35), Leah became the first person in history to thank Hashem. How can it be that the righteous Avos and Imahos who preceded her never once thanked Hashem? The K'sav Sofer answers that they thanked Hashem repeatedly, but only for open miracles. Leah was the first person in history to thank Hashem for something which could be classified as "natural," the birth of four children. Leah recognized that nature is also a miracle and requires just as much gratitude as open miracles.

The Bach writes (Orach Chaim 670) that the Greeks were able to persecute the Jews at the time of the Chanuka miracle because the Jewish people weakened themselves in their Divine Service. The Shem MiShmuel clarifies that the Bach doesn't say that they weren't observing the mitzvos. They were doing everything required by Jewish law, but they were doing it k'mitzvas anashim melumada - from rote and habit.

In discussing how long the menorah should burn, the Gemora (Shabbos 21b) doesn't give a precise amount of time as we would expect, but rather an unusual measurement: ad she'tichleh ha'regel min ha'shuk, until people are no longer walking around outside in the marketplace where they will be able to see the menorah, at which point there is no purpose in publicizing the miracle. Why did the Gemora use this nebulous and potentially misleading expression instead of explicitly stating for how long the menorah must burn? The Chiddushei HaRim points out that the word "ha'regel" (the foot) can also be read "hergel" (habit), and the Gemora can be re-read to require "ad she'tich'leh hergel," meaning that on Chanuka a person must serve Hashem in a thought-out and premeditated manner in order to rectify the original cause of the Greeks' decrees.

This insight can help us answer a question raised by Rav Eliezer Waldenberg (Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer 18:42), who points out that in the Al HaNissim prayer for Chanuka, after describing all of the miracles that Hashem performed for our ancestors, we conclude v'kav'u shemonas y'mei Chanuka eilu l'hodos u'lehailel l'shimcha hagadol - and they (the sages) established the eight days of Chanuka to give thanks and praise to Your Holy name. In the Al HaNissim prayer for Purim, no analogous mention is made of the mitzvos we perform, such as reading the Megillah and dispensing charity to the poor, to

commemorate the miracles that Hashem performed for Mordechai and Esther. Further, when mentioning our obligations on Chanuka at the end of Al HaNissim, why is no mention made of the requirement to light the menorah, which is the primary mitzvah that is associated with our observance of Chanuka?

Rabbi Yosef Sonnenschein of Waterbury suggests that because the goal of Chanuka is to overcome the power of habit, thanking Hashem is an integral part of the holiday. He explains that if most mitzvos are performed without proper intent, such as lighting the menorah without intending to publicize the Chanuka miracles, it certainly detracts from the value of the mitzvah, but nevertheless, the mitzvah was ultimately done. The burning menorah publicizes the miracle to all who see it regardless of the concentration, or lack thereof, of the person who lit it.

On the other hand, there are other mitzvos, such as expressing gratitude and praise, which are completely dependent upon the concentration and meaning of the person saying the words. If he insincerely says "thank you" or robotically gives a compliment as if he is being compelled to do so and he does not really mean it, it's not considered that he expressed gratitude or praise, albeit somewhat deficiently. His words are completely meaningless, as if they weren't said at all. Because gratitude and praise can only be properly expressed through focus and concentration, they are therefore mentioned at the end of the Al HaNissim prayer for Chanuka, which is a time that we are required to serve Hashem with thought and intention.

Although it is difficult to reflect upon all of the kindness that Hashem does for each of us at every moment of our lives, Rav Nosson Wachtfogel points out that the days of Chanuka are a time of being above the laws of nature. Let us use this precious opportunity to recognize that even what is cloaked in the guise of nature is indeed miraculous, and to reflect upon the numerous miracles that Hashem performs for us every second of every day, and to thank Him with hearts full of appropriate gratitude.

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from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Dec 18, 2014 at 4:00 AM subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas Mikeitz PARSHAS MIKEITZ

And it was at the end of two years. (41:1) Yosef was only supposed to be in prison for ten years, because he had spoken lashon hora, slander, against his ten brothers. Why did he stay for two more years? Chazal explain that his reliance on the sar ha'mashkin, chamberlain, bespoke a failing in his level of bitachon, trust in Hashem. An individual of Yosef's spiritual level knows better than to rely on people. It is all up to Hashem - or nothing. Only the Almighty has the power to save. Indeed, whatever a man catalyzes requires Hashem's complete assistance.

In his sefer Yado Bakol, Horav Eliyahu m'Izmir, raises a question concerning the application of middah k'neged middah, measure for measure, regarding the ten-year punishment meted out to Yosef. He spoke lashon hora against his ten brothers. His punishment should consist of some sort of pain or humiliation. How is lashon hora related to Yosef being subjected to a restricted environment?

The author explains that, when one slanders another person, he causes him shame, which results in his attempt to "bury himself" from the stares of people who have just discovered his "secret." A baal lashon hora, slanderer, causes the subject of his slander to feel ill at ease in the public sector. He hides from people in such a manner that he ends up living in a self-imposed prison, in order to avoid the stares, the whispers and other innuendo that are endemic to the public reaction to a scandal.

Yosef caused his brothers to feel shame and seek isolation. As a result, he was incarcerated. Perhaps the next time we are about to "save the world" by slandering those who have probably "earned" it, we should consider the repercussions to ourselves.

Now let Pharaoh seek out a discerning and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt. (41:33)

Yosef was asked to interpret Pharaoh's dream - not to add his personal opinion concerning its implementation. Yet, when he rendered the interpretation, he rendered free, unrequested advice. Why did he do this? Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita, explains that, actually, the advice was part of the dream's interpretation. He quotes a vignette which he heard from his father concerning the Chofetz Chaim, zl. A man came to the venerable sage, complaining bitterly that, at one point in his life, parnassah, earning a livelihood, had been no problem for him. He did well, and he had money to spare. Now, regrettably, he was barely eking out a living, and he was often subject to counting pennies for his Shabbos preparations.

The Chafetz Chaim explained to him that his lot in life had not really changed. It is just that a person must realize that Hashem sends us His gift in various ways. Some receive a steady income; it might be a lower lump sum, but it is steady and timely. Others receive a one-time lump sum, and it is up to them to be astute in its

management. If they spend it all immediately upon receipt, they will be left penniless down the road of life. The Chafetz Chaim explained, "You, my friend, received one large gift from the Almighty. Sadly, you spent it all in a short amount of time. Now, you are complaining that Hashem is not good to you. He was very good to you; you, however, squandered your gift by spending it all right away."

In a similar vein, Yosef explained to Pharaoh that, indeed, he was receiving a wonderful gift - seven years of plenty. He must, however, be aware that this is a one-time gift. If he were to spend it all in "one place," he would starve during the years of hunger. Thus, Yosef was not really rendering advice; he was explaining the dream.

This idea applies likewise to us. We rarely look back in time when we "had it all." Little did we realize then that we were supposed to apportion it in such a manner that it would last. Some are fortunate to receive a large bulk, which replaces the usual steady income. Others are provided with sustenance on a regular basis. In any event, we see that it is not always the size of the gift, but how one uses it, that counts. A large gift, over a long period of time, may not be that large, while a smaller gift, which is consistent and timely, can make all of the difference in the world.

And without you, no man may lift up his hand. (41:44)

Thirty years of servitude is a harsh sentence for a young man in the prime of his life. Yosef knew it was not going to be easy, and he was prepared to live with the consequences of his sale to the Yishmaelim. When it was decreed by Heaven that it was time for Yosef to be released, it came all of a sudden. Yosef had no warning that he was leaving. He never despaired of being released one day. The last thing on his radar was being released, and - almost overnight - the slave becoming the Egyptian Viceroy. This teaches us that one should never lose heart, despair of hope, because Hashem's salvation can come at any time.

Chazal stress that Yosef's release from prison took place on Rosh Hashanah. They intimate a parallel between Yosef's release and the pending decision concerning our own future. What relationship exists between Yosef's release on Rosh Hashanah and our prayers for a happy and healthy new year? Horav Mordechai Eliyahu, zl, explains that, throughout the year, man incarcerates himself in a self-imposed makeshift prison under the control of the yetzer hora, his evil-inclination. As long as the yetzer hora rules over him, enticing him to sin, man remains in prison. If he is able to break free of the yetzer hora's hold over him, he liberates himself from the prison.

On Rosh Hashanah, man is reminded that Yosef had also been in prison and was released. He eventually went on to become the Egyptian leader, controlling the lives of every man, woman and child in that country. As Yosef arose from the abyss of prison on Rosh Hashanah, so, too, do we escape from the grip of the yetzer hora. Man, however, has a way of justifying his weakness in succumbing to the yetzer hora by saying that, after all, "I am only human. The evil inclination is stronger than I am." To him, Hashem replies, "You begin. You make the attempt at breaking the grip the yetzer hora holds on your life." Once you start the process, Hashem will do the rest. We must begin the motions down here; Hashem will complete the process.

On Rosh Hashanah, we tell man that he must break out of prison. Otherwise, he remains a prisoner to his inclinations. When the yetzer hora sees him breaking free of his ties, he leaves him alone. The yetzer hora is not interested in wasting its time. Only someone who manifests a sense of servitude to the yetzer hora will be its focus. If he sees a person attempting to repent, to rise out of the morass of sin, he will move on to someone else. Man must have control over his destiny. Som tasim alecha melech, "Place upon yourself a king" (Devarim 17:15), is the injunction for the nation to select a proper leader. It may also be used as a personal exhortation for one to reign over himself. Hashem helps those who exhibit strength - not cowardice. To declare that one has erred and wants to return takes incredible strength. It is but the first step. Hashem will lend a hand to he who is sincere.

Yosef called the firstborn Menashe, for "G-d has made me forget all my hardship and my entire father's household. (41:51)

Unquestionably, Yosef's home life was difficult. Being reviled and shunned by his brothers, regardless of its appropriateness or misguided nature, did not provide the setting for a happy home life. He had every reason to want to forget the hardships that he had endured in his father's home. Yet, he did not remonstrate over it, because he understood that it had been Hashem's will, as part of a larger Divine Plan. He bore his brothers no ill will and carried no grudge. As the Baal Akeidah explains, he thanked Hashem for enlightening him concerning his difficult past. Now, it all made sense. How could he place blame on anyone if, in fact, they had all been pawns carrying out the will of the Almighty?

Yet, Yosef did carry an emotional burden. He was acutely aware of his Father's pain. To lose a child that was so dear to him, so much a part of his life, was, for Yaakov Avinu, an unbearable tragedy - one that continued to haunt him during this entire time. Surely, Yosef was not belittling his father's pain when he offered his gratitude to Hashem for allowing him to forget his past. No, Yosef carried the emotional burden

throughout his exile from his father, because of the ban his brothers had imposed on him, preventing him from informing Yaakov. Hashem helped him to forget the pain by giving him other things to think about. Otherwise, Yosef would have literally broken down from emotion, out of empathy for his father's pain.

Horav Eliyahu Baruch Finkel, zl, quotes Horav Raphael Soloveitchik, zl, who heard from the Brisker Rav, zl, that Yosef was grateful to Hashem for allowing him to forget his home. If Yosef would have remembered Yaakov's home, he could never have survived Egypt. The culture - with its moral depravity, its paganism and licentiousness - was in stark contrast to the idyllic spiritual utopia that permeated Yaakov's home. When one remembers the spiritual beauty and refinement of character that characterized Yaakov's home, confronting the Egyptian lifestyle could cause one to snap! Imagine taking someone who had been raised in a delicate, spiritually and morally pristine environment and placing him in contact with the lowest of the low, making him spend a week with a biker group during one of their periods of cultural depravity, when they do whatever pleases them - without shame, no holds barred. The person would literally go out of his mind. This is what would have happened to Yosef if he would have faithfully remembered his father's home. This is why Hashem allowed him to forget. For this, he was grateful. Sometimes, what we do not know cannot hurt us.

But Binyamin, Yosef's brother, Yaakov did not send... for he said, "Lest disaster befall him." (42:4)

The words yikranu, spelled with an aleph, is related to kara, to call, to designate. When Yehudah repeats (to Yosef) his father's fear concerning Binyamin's safety, he says, Ulekachtem gam es zeh me'im panai v'karahu ason, "So you should take this one, too, from my presence, and disaster will befall him" (44:29). In this instance v'karahu is spelled with a hay, related to karah, denotes an unrelated occurrence by chance. Thus, we have two words which sound the same: with an aleph, it implies deliberation, designation, calling with a purpose; with a hay, it denotes a chance meeting, an unrelated occurrence which just happens. Why is there a change in the wording when referring to Yaakov Avinu and Yehudah?

Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, explains that Yaakov was implying a powerful lesson concerning Hashgachah Pratis, Divine Providence. Chance is not a real category, and the word coincidence should not be in the believing Jew's lexicon. Every occurrence is orchestrated by Hashem for a reason and a purpose. Nothing "just happens." Every creature is Hashem's agent, deliberately placed in a designated place at a specific time, to carry out Hashem's will. To send Binyamin on a journey meant subjecting him to a sakanah, danger. Travel in those days was not like it is today. We have a rule that Satan mekatreig b'shaas ha'sakanah, "Satan prosecutes during a time of danger." When one is in a dangerous position, he is subject to Satan's negative denunciations, which can have an adverse effect on his safety. Yaakov Avinu knew this. Yehudah also knew and believed this. When Yehudah spoke with the Egyptian viceroy, he had to talk a language that a pagan understood. The pagan does not understand the concept of Providence; he is clueless to the dangers which result from the Satan's negative manipulation. To him, it is all coincidence and chance. Thus, Yehudah said karahu with a hay. Otherwise, the pagan would not have understood.

In his commentary to the beginning of Sefer Vayikra, Rashi distinguishes between the manner in which Hashem spoke with Moshe Rabbeinu and the manner in which he spoke to the pagan prophet, Bilaam. The word vayikra, with an aleph, is used when Hashem summoned Moshe. It is premeditated and purposeful. Hashem wished to speak with Moshe. Hashem's prophecy to Bilaam, however, is introduced with vayikar, lacking the aleph, implying mikreh, chance. While Hashem did want to speak to Bilaam, He did not do so with great love. It was almost as if he were speaking to him by chance.

Bilaam's philosophy is one of chance. Nothing in this world is deliberate. It is all random occurrence, often without rhyme or reason. Concerning Amalek's attack against the Jewish People, the Torah writes, Asher karcha baderech, "That he happened upon you" (Devarim 25:18). To Amalek, it is all occurrences, isolated happenings which have no source. Pharaoh thought he could prevail over Moshe's plagues by calling out his magicians. He foolishly thought that he had the power to prevail over Hashem. The frogs, lice - even the splitting of the Red Sea - were all chance occurrences. He could deal with it. How wrong he was.

Indeed, the Ramban writes that the primary lesson of the exodus from Egypt was to open up our eyes, to teach us that every occurrence has a reason and a purpose. In his famous commentary (Shemos 13:16), he writes, "From the great and awesome miracles, man learns to concede in the hidden miracles." The overt miracles teach us that everything - regardless of its overt nature - is a miracle. Nothing just happens!

As Yaakov Avinu was about to take leave of this world, he gathered together his family, and said, "Heiasfu v'agidah lachem eis asher yikra eschem b'acharis ha'yamim, "Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the End of Days" (Bereishis 49:1). Here, too, Yaakov uses yikra with an aleph, because he sought to

ingrain in the Jewish psyche the principle that whatever will happen (in the End of Days) will not "just happen," but will be a purposeful and providential message. What will "happen" will actually be Hashem sending a summons.

Rav Galinsky quotes Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, who observed that people stop their conversation to listen to an announcement. For example, a group of people are gathered together engrossed in conversation when they hear an announcement over the loudspeaker, informing them about a funeral that is about to take place. Immediately, the conversation stops, so that they can find out who has passed away.

Why do we not listen to our messages? Hashem is constantly talking to us. The messages come in various forms. At times, something happens to a friend or acquaintance, and we are supposed to derive a lesson from it. It would be a grave mistake to ignore the subtle and not-so-subtle hints that are occurring around us.

He took Shimon from them and imprisoned him before their eyes. (42:24)

Yosef took Shimon as a hostage until the brothers would return with Binyamin. Rashi explains that it was Shimon who had thrown Yosef into the well, and he was the one who had contemptuously referred to Yosef as the baal ha'chalomos, "the dreamer." Alternatively, Rashi explains that allowing Shimon and Levi to be together could have been dangerous. As the ones who slew the entire city of Shechem, he feared that their companionship could lead to a lethal conspiracy against him. In any event, Yosef felt he had reason to fear Shimon. In his inimitable manner, Horav Aryeh Leib Heyman, zl, draws on his encyclopedic knowledge to weave a historical tapestry concerning Shimon and none other than the holy Tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, author of the Zohar Hakadosh.

Veritably, Hashem's hanhagah, manner of dealing, with a tzaddik of the caliber of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai is one of great ambiguity and incredulity. While we are not able to understand, it is not even our place to question it. Rav Heyman feels that some form of elucidation may be suggested and could very well be illuminating and inspirational. The first question concerning Rabbi Shimon is about the need for him and his son to be hidden for twelve years in a cave; and then, after they came out, he had to return for another year.

Rav Heyman quotes the Midrash Mishlei that states: "The execution of the Ten Holy Martyrs, the Tannaim who were brutally murdered by the Roman government, was in direct punishment for the sin of selling Yosef. Indeed, the effects of this sin prevail in every generation." We have just quoted Rashi who teaches that Shimon was the driving force behind the mechiras Yosef, sale of Yosef. Thus, Shimon's descendants have a greater responsibility to "repay" the debt of mechiras Yosef. They - the collective family - more than anyone else, carry the greatest onus of guilt for this familial tragedy, in which brother sold brother.

Indeed, we find a parallel in Pinchas' slaying of Zimri, the Prince of Shimon. Pinchas was chosen to lead the Jewish People in their battle against Midyan. In one of his explanations, Rashi says that Pinchas' mother was a descendant of Yosef - who had originally been sold to the Midyanim. This was payback time; therefore, he was the general of the army. Rav Heyman adds that, if Pinchas had led the battle against Midyan because of revenge, he likewise had killed Zimri out of a sense of revenge stemming from righteous indignation. Yosef, who had been sold through the efforts of Shimon, maintained his elevated level of moral purity and did not fall prey to cohabiting with Potifar's wife - a pagan; yet, Zimri, scion of Shimon, publicly sinned with the pagan Kosbi!

Alternatively, since in every generation, the sin of mechiras Yosef comes to the fore and "someone" must answer for it, who better than Zimri, descendant of Shimon, primary motivator of mechiras Yosef?

Interestingly, the first two Tannaim to be murdered were Rabbi Yishmael Kohan Gadol, who could be held responsible for the sin of selling Yosef to the "Yishmaelim," followed by Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, namesake of Shimon, who stood at the helm of the sale.

The Rav now suggests that perhaps Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was in some way paying for Yosef's twelve-year incarceration in the Egyptian prison - the result of Shimon's advocating the sale of Yosef. Add the one year that he spent in the home of Potifar, we have thirteen years during which Yosef suffered imprisonment. Hashem chose this great tzaddik and his son to be their generation's representatives in repairing the sin of mechiras Yosef.

In Memory of Florence Goldberg Levine Beloved Mother, Grandmother and Great Grandmother Monmouth County, New Jersey

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Some Light Chanukah Questions By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: My sister invited our family for Shabbos Chanukah, and we will be sleeping at her neighbor's house. Where do we set up the menorahs, particularly since I do not even know the neighbor? Question #2: My husband has a late meeting at work

tonight and will not be home until very late. What should we do about kindling Chanukah lights? Question #3: I will be attending a wedding during Chanukah that requires me to leave my house well before lighting time, and I will not return until very late. Can I kindle at the wedding, just like the lighting that takes place in shul? Question #4: I will be spending part of Chanukah in a hotel. Where should I kindle my menorah?

SOME BASICS Each individual has a requirement to light Chanukah lights, or to have an agent kindle the lights for him (see Rambam, Hilchos Chanukah 3:4). In places where the custom is that the entire household lights only one menorah, which is the predominant practice among Sefardim, the person who kindles functions as an agent for the rest of the family and the guests. (However, cf. Minchas Shelomoh 2:58:41 and 42, who understands this halacha differently.) Even in places where the custom is that each individual kindles his own menorah, as is common Ashkenazic practice, married women do not usually light, and most people have the custom that single girls do not, either (see Chasam Sofer, Shabbos 21b s.v. v'ehamehadrin, Elyah Rabbah 671:3, and Mikra'ei Kodesh #14 who explain reasons for this practice). In these instances, the male head of household kindles on behalf of his wife and daughters. A guest visiting a family for Chanukah can fulfill his or her obligation by contributing a token amount to purchase part of the candles or oil. By doing this, the guest becomes a partner in the Chanukah lights and now fulfills his mitzvah when the host kindles them. An alternative way to become a partial owner of the Chanukah lights is for the host to direct the guest to pick up some of the oil or candles and thereby become a partial owner.

GUEST WHO IS EATING IN ONE HOUSE AND SLEEPING IN ANOTHER If someone is a guest and is eating at one house during Chanukah, but sleeping in a different house, where should he light the menorah? One should kindle where he is eating (Rema 677:1). Therefore, in this situation, the place where one eats his meals is his primary "home." Many poskim contend that in Eretz Yisroel, the answer to this question depends on additional factors, including whether anyone else is staying in the house where the guest is sleeping. In their opinion, if no one else is kindling a menorah where the guest is sleeping, he should kindle the menorah there. Otherwise, he should kindle where he is eating. The reason for this difference is that, in Eretz Yisroel, where the custom is to light outdoors when practical, someone walking through the street expects to find a menorah lit at every house. Thus, there is a responsibility to be certain that a menorah is kindled in every house that is occupied. In chutz la'arezt, since the menorah does not need to be visible outdoors to fulfill the mitzvah, someone walking outside the house and not seeing a lit menorah will simply assume that someone kindled indoors. Therefore, one does not need to make sure that every house has a lit menorah. Similarly, if one is using two houses, in Eretz Yisroel he should light a menorah in each of them, although he should recite only one bracha; in chutz la'arezt he does not need to kindle a menorah in each house. I can now answer the first question I asked above: If someone will be eating at one house and sleeping in another, where should he kindle the menorah? The answer is that in chutz la'arezt, he should kindle where he will be eating. In Eretz Yisroel, other factors may be involved, and one should ask a shaylah. If a person spends Shabbos at someone else's home, many poskim contend that one may kindle the menorah there on Motza'ei Shabbos before leaving (Teshuvos Vehanhagos 1:391). Some poskim suggest that if one does this, he should not leave immediately after lighting, but should spend some time, preferably a half-hour, appreciating the lights before leaving (see Teshuvos Vehanhagos 1:394). Question #2: My husband has a late meeting at work tonight and will not be home until very late. What should we do about kindling Chanukah lights? To answer this question, we need to discuss two issues. The first is:

WHEN IS THE OPTIMAL TIME TO KINDLE THE MENORAH? Early poskim have a dispute concerning when is the optimal time to kindle the Chanukah lights. According to the Gra, the best time is immediately after sunset, whereas most Rishonim rule that it is preferable to kindle at nightfall, or shortly before. The usually accepted approaches are to kindle sometime after sunset but before it is fully dark. Thus, Rav Moshe Feinstein kindled the menorah ten minutes after sunset, the Chazon Ish lit his menorah twenty minutes after sunset, while others contend that the optimal time to light the menorah is twenty-five minutes after sunset.

UNTIL WHAT TIME CAN ONE KINDLE THE MENORAH? At the time of the Gemara, one fulfilled the mitzvah of lighting menorah only if one lit within a half-hour of the earliest time for lighting (Shabbos 21b; Shulchan Aruch 672:2). This was because the focus of lighting the menorah was to publicize the miracle to people in the street. Since, in the days of Chazal, the streets were empty shortly after dark, there was no longer any mitzvah of kindling Chanukah lights half an hour later. Today, the pirsumei nisa (publicizing the miracle) is primarily for the members of the household, and therefore many poskim hold that it is not essential to kindle the menorah immediately when it begins to get dark, and one may kindle later (see Tosafos, Shabbos 21b s.v. de'ei). Nevertheless, because this halacha is disputed, one should strive to kindle at the optimal time, which is close to twilight, as we mentioned above. In addition, there is also a halachic problem with working before one performs the mitzvah, similar to other

mitzvos, such as bedikas chometz or hearing megillah, where it is prohibited to work or eat before fulfilling the mitzvah (Shu't Maharshal #85; Mishnah Berurah 672:10; Teshuvos Vehanhagos 1:395:4). Someone who missed lighting menorah at the proper time because of extenuating circumstances should kindle his menorah as soon as his family is assembled at home (Rema 672:2 and Mishnah Berurah ad loc.). An alternative method can be followed when a husband is delayed. The husband can arrange to have a member of the household, such as his wife, light at the optimal time as his agent (Mishnah Berurah 675:9; Teshuvos Vehanhagos 4:170). If he follows this approach, he does not need to light when he arrives home later, and if he does light, he should not recite the bracha of lehadlik ner shel Chanuka. Alternatively, the wife can light at the proper time without the husband being present, and the husband can light when he gets home. If one follows the latter approach, the husband and wife are no longer functioning as agents for one another, as they usually do germane to mitzvos such as ner Chanukah and ner Shabbos. Rather, each is fulfilling the mitzvah of ner Chanukah separately. Whether to follow this approach depends on the sensitivities of the people involved. My Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Y. Ruderman zt"l, often lectured us on the importance of being concerned about others' feelings. He often repeated the story of the Chofetz Chayim's rebbe, Rav Nachumke, who waited several hours until his rebbetzin returned home before lighting the Chanukah lights. Therefore, if kindling the menorah early via an agent will create friction between family members, one should wait and kindle at a time that creates more shalom bayis (see Shabbos 23b). It is important to discuss the matter in advance and decide on an approach that keeps everyone happy. Question #3: I will be attending a wedding during Chanukah that requires me to leave my house well before lighting time, and I will not return until very late. Can I kindle at the wedding, just like the lighting that takes place in shul? Answer: Let us ask this question about the baalei simcha themselves! If a wedding takes place during Chanukah, where should the baalei simcha light the menorah? I have attended weddings during Chanukah where the baalei simcha brought their menorahs to the hall and kindled them there. However, this seems incorrect, because the baalei simcha are required to kindle Chanukah lights at their own homes (Teshuvos Vehanhagos 1:398). Therefore, they should light the menorah at their homes sometime during the evening. If this is not convenient, they should arrange for someone to kindle their menorah for them at their house, as their agent (see Mishnah Berurah 677:12). Guests attending the wedding who cannot kindle their menorah at home should also arrange for someone to light their menorah at their house. If they are concerned about leaving unattended lights burning, they should have someone remain with the lights for half an hour, and then the "menorah sitter" may extinguish the lights if he chooses. If someone wishes to light an additional menorah at the hall without a bracha to make pirsumei nisa, he may do so. However, this lighting does not fulfill the mitzvah (Teshuvos Vehanhagos 1:398).

WHY IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM LIGHTING IN SHUL? Since one fulfills the mitzvah only by kindling the menorah in or near one's residence, why do we kindle a menorah in shul? Lighting the Chanukah menorah in shul does not fulfill the mitzvah of kindling Chanukah lights, but is a centuries-old minhag that we perform to make pirsumei nisa. This practice prompts an interesting question. If lighting a menorah in shul is only a minhag, why do we recite a bracha on it? Do we ever recite brachos on minhagim? The poskim explain that we recite a bracha because it is an accepted minhag, just as we recite a bracha on Hallel on Rosh Chodesh even though Chazal did not obligate this recital of Hallel and it, too, is technically a minhag (Shu't Rivash #111; for other reasons see Beis Yosef, Orach Chayim 671, s.v. uma shekasav shemeinichin). Actually, even those opinions who contend that one does not recite a bracha on Hallel on Rosh Chodesh agree that one does recite brachos when lighting a menorah in shul (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 671:7; Shu't Yabia Omer 7:Orach Chayim:57; cf. Shu't Chacham Tzvi #88).

THERE IS A CONCERT IN SCHOOL ON CHANUKAH. SHOULD WE LIGHT THE MENORAH WITH A BRACHA TO PERFORM PIRSUMEI NISA? Although lighting a menorah at the assembly will also be an act of pirsumei nisa, one fulfills no mitzvah or minhag by doing so. Therefore, one should not recite a bracha on this lighting (Teshuvos Vehanhagos 1:398).

WHY IS THE CONCERT DIFFERENT FROM LIGHTING IN SHUL? Lighting in shul is a specific, established minhag. We cannot randomly extend this minhag to other situations and permit making a bracha (Teshuvos Vehanhagos 1:398).

LIGHTING IN A HOTEL Question #4: I will be spending part of Chanukah in a hotel. Where should I kindle my menorah? Answer: One should light the menorah in one's room (Chovas Ha'dar, Ner Chanukah 2:9; see Shu't Maharsham 4:146, who requires one to kindle Chanukah lights while riding the train). If there is concern about a fire hazard, one should remain with the menorah until a half-hour after nightfall, or at least for a half-hour after kindling, and then extinguish the lights. On Shabbos, place only enough oil to burn the required amount of time, which is until a half-hour after nightfall.

SHOULD ONE PLACE THE MENORAH IN THE WINDOW OF HIS HOTEL ROOM? If someone will be able to see the lit menorah from outside, then it is preferable to light in a window. If no one will be able to see the menorah from outside, he should simply kindle the menorah on a table in his room. If the hotel forbids lighting flames in its bedrooms, and one is eating regularly in the hotel's dining room, one may light in the hotel dining room. Although we decided earlier that it is preferable to light where one is eating rather than where one is sleeping, in this instance, the hotel room is a better choice, since it is more one's living area than is the dining room. Although many hotels often set up menorahs in the hotel lobby, many poskim contend that one does not fulfill the mitzvah by placing a menorah there, since one is required to kindle Chanukah lights at one's "home," which is where one regularly eats or sleeps, and not in a lobby. Other poskim are lenient, and contend that the entire hotel lobby is considered one's living area -- just as one's entire house is considered one's living area. Therefore, according to these authorities, one may fulfill the mitzvah by lighting in the hotel lobby.

VISITING DURING CHANUKAH Where do I light menorah if I visit a friend for Chanukah dinner, but I am not staying overnight? Many people err and think that one may fulfill the mitzvah by kindling the menorah at someone else's house while visiting. I know of people who invite guests to their house for menorah kindling and dinner. The problem with this is that one is required to kindle Chanukah lights at one's own house. Therefore, the guest must kindle the Chanukah lights at his own house and then go to his friend's house for the festive meal (Taz 677:2; Mishnah Berurah 677:12).

WHERE DOES A YESHIVAH BACHUR LIGHT HIS MENORAH? This is a dispute among contemporary poskim. Some contend that he should light in the yeshivah dining room, since it is preferable to kindle where one eats, as we mentioned above. Others contend that his dormitory room is considered more his "dwelling" than the dining room, and that he should light there (Shu't Igros Moshe Yoreh Deah III 14:5; Shu't Minchas Yitzchok 7:48; Chovas Hador pg. 106). To resolve this issue, some bachurim have the practice of eating one meal each day of Chanukah in their dormitory room and kindling the menorah there. What about a yeshivah bachur who spends his entire day in yeshivah, but sleeps at home? It is unclear whether his main obligation to light is at home or in yeshivah. Some poskim suggest he can fulfill the mitzvah by relying on the people kindling at each place -- his family lighting at his home and his fellow students lighting in the yeshivah. Alternatively, he can have in mind not to fulfill the mitzvah in either place and light wherever it is more convenient (Shu't Minchas Yitzchok 7:48; Chovas Hador pg. 106).

REWARD FOR LIGHTING NER CHANUKAH The Gemara teaches that someone who kindles Ner Chanukah will merit having sons who are talmidei chachomim (Shabbos 23b, see Rashi). This is puzzling; since all observant Jews kindle Ner Chanukah, why aren't all our sons talmidei chachomim? The Rishonim explain that this bracha applies only to someone who observes the mitzvah carefully, in all its details (Sod Hadlakas Ner Chanukah, authored by Rabbi Yitzchok, the son of the Raavad). It is, therefore, in our best interest to be thoroughly familiar with all the halachos of kindling the Chanukah lights. May we all be blessed with a happy and healthy Chanukah!!

**THE TANACH STUDY CENTER www.tanach.org
In Memory of Rabbi Abraham Leibtag
Shiurim in Chumash & Navi by Menachem Leibtag
PARSHAT MIKETZ**

Does Yosef have a plan?

He was certainly planning [a way out of jail] when he interpreted the dream of the "sar ha'Mashkim" (see 40:13-15).

He was definitely planning [his own 'political appointment'] when he interpreted Pharaoh's dreams (see 41:33-36!).

Clearly, Yosef was not only a dreamer; he was also a 'master planner'. But what was his plan when he: accused his brothers of being spies, returned their money, and hid his cup in Binyamin's bag, etc.? Was he simply 'teasing' his brothers - in revenge; or did he have a more altruistic motive?

As the Torah never reveals that motive, answering this question requires a lot of detective work.

In the following shiur, we attempt to piece this puzzle together by weaving together some of the theories presented by earlier commentators (then adding a little touch of our own).

INTRODUCTION

Before we begin our study, a point of methodology in regard to what allows us to search for an underlying motive behind Yosef's behavior.

As Chumash is a book of "nevuah" [prophecy], and not simply an historical chronicle, we assume that its stories carry a prophetic message. Certainly, commentators can argue in regard to the precise message that should be derived from each story, and how

to arrive [and who can arrive] at any conclusion. Nonetheless, all concur that Chumash should be studied in search for its prophetic lesson(s).

This does not imply that we must assume that every action taken by our forefathers was altruistic. However, it does imply that if the Torah records a certain set of events, that they were written for the purpose that we study its detail in search of a significant message.

With this in mind, we begin our study of the famous story of Yosef and his brothers.

WHY YOSEF DOESN'T WRITE HOME

Considering Yosef's very close relationship with his father [recall how the Torah described him as Yaakov's "ben zekunim" - see 37:3], one would have expected that he make every possible attempt to contact his father. Yet, even after his appointment as head servant of the House of Potiphar, and later as the Commissioner of Egypt, (second only to Pharaoh /see 41:44), Yosef makes no effort to inform his father that he is alive and well.

Does Yosef no longer care for his father who loved him so dearly and now grieves for his lost son? Has he wiped his past from his memory?

To answer this question, Ramban (see his commentary to 42:9) suggests that Yosef's actions were motivated by his aspiration to ensure the fulfillment of his dreams. According to Ramban, Yosef understood that his slavery, and his entire predicament in Egypt, was part of a Divine plan to ensure that his childhood dreams would come true. He also understood (for some reason) that for this to happen, he could not contact his family. And when necessary, he would even 'plan ahead' to help his dreams along.

Ramban's interpretation beautifully explains Yosef's first plan [i.e. accusing his brothers as spies] - as its goal was to force the brothers to bring Binyamin, so that ALL the brothers would bow down to him. This would enable the fulfillment of his first dream - of the sheaves bowing down to him in the field. His second plan [i.e. hiding his cup in Binyamin's bag] was to force them to bring his father as well - to fulfill his second dream - i.e. the sun and moon and stars bowing down - while protecting Binyamin in the interim (from potential injury by his brothers). In this manner, Ramban explains why Yosef did not write home:

"For had it not been for this (need to fulfill his dreams), Yosef would have committed a terrible sin to cause his father such grief and make him spend so many years in sorrow..."

[See Ramban on 42:9, read carefully.]

According to Ramban, the need to fulfill his dreams 'allowed' Yosef to treat his father and brothers in such a cruel manner.

FULFILLING 'DREAMS' OR KEEPING 'HALACHA'?

In case you found something 'bothersome' about Ramban's approach, don't feel bad. Later commentators take issue with this conclusion that it would be permissible to cause other people terrible grief, just to make sure a 'dream comes true'.

[See Nechama Leibowitz on Sefer Breishit who quotes various sources in this regard and deals with this issue in depth.]

This question leads Avramel to suggest a very different approach. He agrees (like Ramban) that Yosef had a 'master plan', however, he disagrees as to its goal.

Avramel contends that Yosef's goal was to bring his brothers towards repentance for their terrible deeds. Although he planned to ultimately 'reveal' himself; before doing so, he wanted to make sure that they had first performed proper "teshuvah".

Avramel's approach neatly explains just about all of Yosef's actions - which certainly caused his brothers to repent (see 42:21 & 44:16). However, it is not so clear why the goal of 'helping' his brothers to perform "teshuvah" would allow Yosef to cause his father continued grief. [We'll return to this question later in our shiur.]

Furthermore, Avramel's interpretation only explains Yosef's behavior after his brothers arrived to buy food; but it does not explain why Yosef did not contact his father for some twenty years beforehand!

DREAMS REMEMBERED, OR FORGOTTEN?

One could suggest an approach exactly the opposite of Ramban's - i.e. that Yosef had 'forgotten' his dreams (after he was sold)! It is only after his brothers bowed down some twenty years later (when they came to buy food) - that he suddenly 'remembered' his childhood dreams.

To verify this, simply review 42:9 in its context, noting how it seems to imply that it was at this point when Yosef remembered his dreams, and not earlier! [Note Rashi on 42:9 as well!]

In other words, we posit that Yosef's behavior before his brothers arrived stems from the fact that he had 'given up' on his childhood dreams, while his behavior (and 'master plan') after they arrive stems from his renewed understanding of their significance.

Let's begin by explaining why he didn't contact home, by considering his predicament in Egypt.

In regard to his brothers, why would Yosef want to contact (or ever see) them again? After all, they had thrown him into a pit and then sold him into slavery (or at least he thought they were behind the sale/ see last week's shiur)!

Furthermore, considering how Egyptian society 'looked down' at the "Ivrim" (see 43:32), contacting his brothers could have endangered his reputable position in Egyptian society.

Nonetheless, even though Yosef had ample reason for not contacting his brothers, it remains difficult to understand why he didn't contact his father (and let's not forget his full brother Binyamin). Could it be that his despise for the rest of his family was greater than his love for his father and brother?

One could suggest that by the time that Yosef had reached a position of power, he was quite sure that his father had already died. Recall that Yaakov was about 110 years old when Yosef was sold, so it would only be logical for him to assume that his father had died (or soon would / note 43:7 & 45:3!).

Hence, the slight chance that his father was still alive was simply not worth the price of returning to deal with his brothers. [

YOSEF 'HAD' A DREAM

A more sophisticated approach to explain why Yosef didn't write home, is presented by Rav Yoel Bin Nun [in an article in Megadim Vol. I/a publication of the Herzog Teachers Institute].

In that article, Rav Yoel posits that Yosef had no idea that his father believed he was dead. Quite the opposite - Yosef assumed that his father would find out that he was sold (i.e. someone would 'snitch'), and hence expected that his father would demand that the brothers trace his whereabouts and come to his rescue! After all, the Yishmaelim [distant "mishpacha"] were international traders who traveled quite often between Eretz Canaan and Egypt. Surely, Yosef hoped, his family would come to his rescue.

Recall as well that Yosef was unaware of how the brothers tricked their father to believe he was dead (with the blood-stained coat). Therefore, Yosef assumes is sure that everyone knows that he is alive, and that he was sold as a slave in Egypt. During his first year or so of slavery, he is 'sure' that in a short time, someone in his family will come to his rescue.

However, many months pass and no one shows. Yosef's hopes are replaced with feelings of rejection. After several months (or years), he may have reached the conclusion that his family doesn't want him to return; but there had to have been a reason.

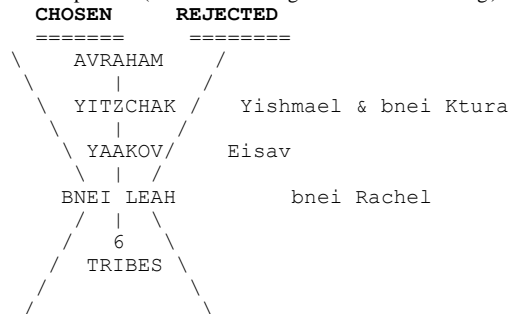
REJECTED FROM THE BECHIRA PROCESS

Rav Yoel posits that Yosef reaches the conclusion that there must have been some divine decree that he was 'rejected' from the family, i.e. from the entire "bechira" process - in manner similar to the rejection of his Uncle Esav or great Uncle Yishmael. It may have appeared to him that only the children of Leah were chosen, while the children of Rachel were rejected, as reflected in Rachel's premature death, and the fact that she was buried on the 'roadside' (while Leah was later to be buried in the Tomb of the Patriarchs).

His childhood dreams are now forgotten, and reluctantly, he accepted his new fate.

Yosef, convinced that his family has abandoned him, accepts this fate and decides to lead his own life. Just as Eisav established himself in Edom, Yosef will make a name for himself in Egypt. He can even bring the name of God into society in his own way, despite not being part of the Chosen Nation.

The following chart reflects what may have been Yosef's perception of the outcome of the "bechira" process (based on this original 'misunderstanding'):



In summary, we posit that Yosef never contacted his family during those twenty years, as he mistakenly assumed that they did not want to contact him, as there had been a divine decision that he was 'rejected' from the 'chosen family'. This tragic misunderstanding can explain why Yosef, even after rising to power, never contacted his father as well.

Now we must consider the second stage, i.e. an explanation for Yosef's behavior after his brothers arrive to buy food.

YOSEF HAS A PLAN

After spending years under the assumption that he has been 'rejected' - everything changes when Yosef sees his brothers among the many who came down to Egypt to buy grain. As they bow down before him, Yosef suddenly 'remembers' his long forgotten dreams (see 42:9), for they just appeared to come true!

Should Yosef dismiss this as pure coincidence, or should this partial fulfillment of his childhood dreams lead him to reconsider his earlier conclusions?

It is understandable why Yosef doesn't immediately reveal himself. He needs some time. But, if he simply wanted to hide his identity from them, he could have just ignored them. [Surely, Yosef did not entertain every foreigner who came to purchase food.]

But why does Yosef accuse his brothers of being spies? Why does he return their money? Later, when they come back, why does he plant his special cup in Binyamin's bag?

Certainly, we would not expect that Yosef was just 'teasing' his brothers - to 'get back' at them. Rather, it would make more sense to assume that Yosef has a plan - and his actions suggest that he has strategy; but it is not so clear what that master plan is.

In his article, Rav Bin Nun explains Yosef's 'plan' as an attempt to determine what had happened to Binyamin. The fact that Binyamin was not with the brothers the first time they came to Egypt supports his suspicion that Bnei Rachel had been rejected. Therefore, his primary goal is to find out if Binyamin is still alive.

If Binyamin is indeed alive, then Yosef could question him concerning what 'really' happened in the family, and afterward possibly re-unite with his family. On the other hand, if Binyamin never shows (and hence probably not alive), Yosef would remain incognito - preferring never to reunite with his brothers.

[This can explain why Yosef accuses his brothers of being spies. The 'spy accusation' allows Yosef to question them concerning their family roots etc., without raising their suspicion that he may be their brother.]

Although Rav Yoel's explanation flows nicely from the above presentation, it does not explain every detail of Yosef's behavior once Binyamin does arrive. After all, once Binyamin comes, why doesn't Yosef simply take him aside and question him. If Yosef only needs to determine what really happened in the "bechira" process, what point is there in planting his cup in Binyamin's bag?

Surely, one cannot remain oblivious to Yosef's obvious attempt to create a situation that prompts the brothers to repent (as Abravanel explains so beautifully).

On the other hand, one must also explain why Yosef returns their money, and why he seats them in order of their birth, etc. These acts seem to be more of a 'tease' than an impetus for them to do "teshuva" (repentance). What is Yosef's intention in all of this?

Furthermore, if his goal, as Abravanel explains, is only to cause his brothers to repent, then his 'second' plan seems unnecessary - after all, they had already shown remorse for their sin at their first encounter. Recall their initial remorse, that Yosef himself overheard, when they stated:

"Alas we are GUILTY, for we heard his crying out [when he was thrown in the pit], but we did not listen ... therefore this fate has befallen us..." (See 42:21-23)

And if that was not enough, then Yehuda's plea and admission of guilt (see 44:16) certainly would have sufficed

Finally, even if Abravanel's contention is correct, who gives Yosef the right to 'test' his brothers to see if they have repented? Is Yosef allowed to play God? Is he permitted to tease, trick, and confuse others - in order to awaken their soul? And even if so, does this justify causing his father further aggravation?

PLAYING 'GOD' OR PLAYING 'LEADER'

One could suggest the following explanation for Yosef's behavior (once the brothers arrived) - which is quite similar to Abravanel's approach, but from a very different angle. Let's explain:

Even though Yosef may have forgotten his dreams for some twenty years, when his brothers arrive in Egypt and bow down to him - everything changes! Totally shocked by what happened, it suddenly dawns upon him that his childhood dreams may actually be coming true after all. Maybe he wasn't rejected? Maybe, his conclusions regarding his family were all wrong?

On the other hand, Binyamin is not with them. But, if Binyamin is still alive and part of the family (as his brothers now claim), then maybe the children of Rachel are indeed included in the "bechira" process!

But now that Yosef had become an 'expert' at dream interpretation, he not only 'remember his dreams', but he now begins to understand their purpose! These dreams were not merely 'predictions' of future events - but rather could serve as guide - to inspire appropriate behavior!

Because of his dreams, Yosef now understands that his 'brothers bowing down' means that he is not only included in the "bechira" process - but he is destined to assume family leadership.

If so what should he do at this point in time?

First, let's explain what he **cannot** do!

Imagine what would have happened had Yosef revealed his identity immediately, as soon as he recognized his brothers! They would have 'melted' on the spot. How could they have faced him, talk to him? The shame of their relationship would have created an eternal barrier. They would never be able to speak to him, let alone work together as a family.

As family 'leader' - Yosef now recognizes his responsibility to keep the 'chosen' family united and cohesive. Yosef's plan is simple -he must plan a strategy that would reunite the family - to bond them in a manner that could continue to achieve together.

Yosef does not need to play GOD, to ensure that his brothers repent - that would be their own responsibility. Yosef, however, does have a new responsibility to play LEADER.

Hence, Yosef conceives a plan that will rehabilitate the family unity - he needs to enable his brothers with a way by which they can 'redeem themselves'! But, to accomplish this, he must put them through a difficult test:

After procuring the minimal information that he needs by his 'spies' accusation (see 42:7-10 AND 43:7!), he decides to create a situation where the brothers must choose if they are willing to forfeit their own freedom - in order to save Binyamin. Should they 'pass this test', it will be much easier for them to work with Yosef in the future.

Indeed, this plan may cause his father a few extra weeks of suffering. But Yosef must restrain his emotions, for he hopes that it will unfold quickly.

[Yosef probably expected that the brothers would bring Binyamin down immediately. He did not expect that Yaakov would be so reluctant to send Binyamin away.]

Therefore, Yosef's keeps Shimon in jail, to ensure that his brothers will bring Binyamin. Once Binyamin will come, Yosef plans the big 'set up' - where he will plant his cup in Binyamin's bag, thus giving a chance for his brothers to 'prove themselves' (as they so well do).

While doing so, Yosef does many other things to make the brothers wonder and think - to shake them up a bit [what we call "cheshbon ha'nefesh".] But by planting his cup in Binyamin's bag, Yosef provides his brothers with an opportunity to prove to themselves that they have done "teshuvah"! Only after they demonstrate their willingness to give up their own lives for Binyamin, will they be able to face themselves, and Yosef - and unite as a cohesive family - to take on the challenges that lay in the future.

Once Yehuda, on behalf of his brothers, admits their guilt and makes his noble offer to become his servants (instead of Binyamin/ see 44:16 & 44:33-34), that might have been enough - but Yosef may have wanted to 'push' his brothers even a bit farther.

But when he hears Yehuda's petition concerning the fate of his father (at the beginning of Parshat Vayigash), Yosef can not hold back any more' - he 'breaks down' and reveals himself.

To support our thesis, note how Yosef (after revealing his identify and his instinctive opening question regarding the health of his father) immediately emphasizes his assurance that he is not angry with his brothers, and implores them to recognize the Hand of God behind these events.

By doing so, Yosef also alludes to his brothers that they too should look to the future, instead of dwelling on the past (see 45:1-8).

MAASE AVOT SIMAN LA'BANIM

By the end of this entire episode, God had created a situation that would guarantee the physical survival of Am Yisrael during the famine, while setting the stage for their future redemption. Yosef, in the meantime, had created a situation that would keep Am Yisrael united during this formative stage in land of Egypt

Throughout the generations, God oversees our history, while creating opportunities for our redemption. However, as we enjoy His providence, it remains OUR OWN responsibility to make sure that we remain united as our destiny unfolds. Although quite difficult, it remains an eternal challenge for Jewish leadership.

shabbat shalom, menachem