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**Halachic Positions of Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik
by R. Aharon Ziegler**

Nov 6, 2015

The Gemara Shabbat (23a) states that women have an obligation to light Chanukah candles because of "af hein hayu b'oto ha-neis" – they were also part of the miracle [meaning, according to Rashi, they were in the same danger as the men were, or according to Rashbam in Tosafot (Megillah 4a), they played a key role in bringing about the Ge'ulah (salvation)]

This phrase finds parallels in the Gemara (Megillah) within the discussions of a woman's obligation to hear the Megillah on Purim and to drink four cups of wine on the night of Pesach. All these are time-bound positive Mitzvot and women should be free from any obligation to fulfill them, however, their historical involvement in the events being commemorated brings them back up to a level of obligation.

In Halacha we even find that a woman can even light for others, and even for men (O"Ch 675: 3, Mishna Berurah : 9), because she is on the same level of obligation as the men. However, a Katan [minor] cannot light for adults. Rav Soloveitchik explained the reason being that the basic Mitzvah is "ner ish u'beito", not a personal obligation on each individual but rather an obligation that each house has a candle lit. Thus, while a Katan cannot make a candle into an object of a Mitzvah ["cheftza shel mitzvah], a woman certainly can do so and thus may light for others.

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**The Rambam's Rescue of the Holiday of Chanukah
by Rabbi Chaim Jachter**

In honor of Chanukah, we will devote the next two issues to Chanukah-related topics and shall return afterwards, IY"H and B"N, to our presentation about why smoking is forbidden.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik writes in his essay entitled Raayanot Al HaTefillah that the Rambam "rescued" or restored the Mitzvah of Tefillah to insure its proper distinction as a Biblical obligation. In this essay, we seek to

demonstrate that in a somewhat similar vein, the Rambam may be described as having rescued or restored the observance of Chanukah to its rightful place.

I am indebted to the TABC's 5765 "Y9" Gemara Shiur for their many contributions to this analysis of this topic. In addition, I wish to thank the people to which that I delivered a Shiur on this topic in West Orange, New Jersey on the Shabbat before the wedding of my brother-in-law Rabbi Etan Tokayer to my sister-in-law Esther (formerly Najar). The group included some prominent educators such as Rabbi Etan as well as Rabbi Jeffrey Saks and Rabbi Marc Smilowitz, and I wish to acknowledge the ideas that this group contributed to this essay.

Chanukah in the Mishnah and Gemara

The Mishnah pays scant attention to the holiday of Chanukah. The author of the Mishnah, Rabi Yehuda HaNassi devotes a full Masechet (tractate) to every holiday except Chanukah. He does acknowledge its existence in passing in two places. It is mentioned in Masechet Bikkurim (1:6) as the latest opportunity to bring Bikkurim (for an interesting explanation of the connection between Chanukah and Bikkurim, see Rav Yoel Bin Nun's essay in Megadim 12:49-97). It is mentioned a second time in passing in Masechet Bava Kamma (6:6), where a Mishnah discusses a case in which flax carried by a camel catches fire from Chanukah candles placed in front of a store.

We see that Rabi Yehuda Hannassi recognizes Chanukah's existence but seems to have deliberately sought to downplay its significance. This point is highlighted by contrasting it with how Rabi Yehuda Hannassi dealt with Purim. I once heard from Rav Hershel Schachter that there is not really sufficient material regarding Purim to fill an entire Masechet. Therefore, Rabi Yehuda Hanassi "padded" Masechet Megillah with important but tangential material in order to dignify Purim by devoting a complete Masechet to the holiday.

It is for this reason, explains Rav Schachter, that Masechet Megillah includes discussions of the Halachot regarding Torah reading and Beit Keneset as well as the series of "Ein Bein" Mishnayot in the first chapter (Mishnayot five-eleven) that have little or no relevance to Purim. The fact that Rabi Yehuda Hanassi chose not to devote an entire Masechet to Chanukah or even a chapter regarding Chanukah is striking evidence of Rabi Yehuda's intention to minimize this holiday. Indeed, there is no systematic discussion of the Halachot of Chanukah in the Mishnah. In addition, Rabbi Saks noted that there is precious little extra-Mishnaic Tannaitic material (such as Braitot or Tosefot) devoted to a discussion of Chanukah. It seems that the other Tannaim shared Rabi Yehuda Hanassi's agenda of minimizing the holiday of Chanukah.

The Gemara does not elaborate on Chanukah, but at least includes a somewhat systematic discussion of its Halachot in Masechet Shabbat (21b-24a) in the chapter that discusses the Halachot regarding Shabbat candles. However, the fact that the Gemara raises such basic questions regarding Chanukah, such as why we celebrate Chanukah at all (Shabbat 21b, as explained by Rashi s.v. Mai) and whether we recite Mussaf on Chanukah, seems to point to the fact that the Tannaim paid scant attention to this holiday.

Chanukah in the Mishneh Torah

In stark contrast, the Rambam devotes an entire section of his Mishneh Torah to the Halachot regarding Chanukah. By doing so, the Rambam places the holiday of Chanukah on par with other holidays such as Purim. In fact, the Rambam seems to greatly emphasize that Chanukah is a holiday just as Purim is a holiday. He couples Hilchot Chanukah with Hilchot Megillah and he compares various aspects of Chanukah to Purim (Hilchot Chanukah 3:3-5). He writes that we may not eulogize or fast on Chanukah just as we may not do so on Purim, and that lighting Neiroi Chanukah is a rabbinically ordained Mitzvah just like reading the Megillah.

Parenthetically, I should note that I heard a differing explanation in the name of Rav Soloveitchik for the Rambam's repeated references in Hilchot Chanukah to Purim. He explains that Purim established a precedent for

Chazal to create a new holiday celebrating the salvation of our nation from its enemies. For an explanation for why Chazal hesitated to establish a new holiday, see Megillah 14a.

The Rambam also seems to “pad” Hilchot Chanukah in order to insure that it can occupy an entire section in his Mishneh Torah. The Rambam includes a full description of the miracle of Chanukah even though he does not include even a minimal description of the miracle of Purim in Hilchot Megillah (for an alternative explanation for this phenomenon, see Rav Soloveitchik’s thoughts cited in Harerei Kedem 1:271). He also includes a full discussion of the Halachot of Hallel in Hilchot Chanukah, despite the fact that it would seem to have been more appropriate to include in Hilchot Tefillah (again we should note that there are other explanations; Rav Soloveitchik explains that the Rambam included the laws of Hallel in Hilchot Chanukah to teach that Hallel is the essence of the holiday of Chanukah).

Rav Soloveitchik (cited in Harerei Kedem 1:272) explains that the Rambam even includes a basis for making a Seudah on Chanukah, as the Rambam describes this holiday as a time for Simcha (Hilchot Chanukah 3:3). Indeed, the Taz (Orach Chaim 670:4) cites the Maharshal who writes, “It is a Mitzvah to rejoice on Chanukah, as the Rambam indicates that these are days of celebration.” It is in fact our custom to make a Seudat Chanukah despite the fact that there is no explicit Talmudic source for such a practice and despite the fact that some Acharonim (see the Levush’s introduction to Hilchot Chanukah) believe it is entirely unnecessary. The Seudat Chanukah is another manner in which we dignify the holiday of Chanukah.

The Rambam, in uncharacteristic style for his Mishneh Torah, waxes eloquently about the importance of Ner Chanukah (Hilchot Chanukah 4:12). He writes, “The Mitzvah of Ner Chanukah is exceedingly beloved and one must scrupulously observe this Mitzvah in order to publicize the miracle and increase praise and expression of gratitude to Hashem for the miracles that He has performed for us.”

Moreover, this eloquent advocacy for the observation of Chanukah is followed by an extraordinary Halacha presented by the Rambam that has no explicit Talmudic source. The Rambam states that if one does not have sufficient funds to purchase Ner Chanukah, he should borrow money or even sell some of his clothes in order to procure the money to buy Neiros Chanukah. The Maggid Mishneh comments that there is no explicit Talmudic source for this assertion, but the Rambam drew an analogy between Neiros Chanukah and the Arba Kosot for Pesach. The Rambam reasoned, writes the Maggid Mishneh, that just as the Halacha requires a poor person to sell his clothes in order to purchase wine for the Arba Kosot (Pesachim 99b and see Rashbam s.v. VeAfilu), so too one must sell his clothes to purchase Neiros Chanukah, as the purpose of both Mitzvot is to publicize miracles that Hashem has performed for us.

Thus, in a dramatic fashion, the Rambam demonstrates for us the importance of observing the holiday of Chanukah. The Rambam (Hilchot Chanukah 4:14) even seems to apologize for ruling that if one can fulfill either Neiros Shabbat or Neiros Chanukah, he should choose Neiros Shabbat. It is possible that the Rambam feels compelled to offer a lengthy explanation for his ruling in order to avoid degrading the holiday of Chanukah.

We should note that the Rambam seems to be following the precedent of the Amoraim who discuss Chanukah in more detail than do the Tannaim, and he merely advances the process one step further. We shall, IY”H and B”N, discuss this matter further next week.

Why Do the Tannaim Minimize Chanukah?

An explanation that is often advanced why Chanukah is minimized in the Mishnah is that Rabi Yehuda Hanassi was a descendant of David HaMelech (see Shabbat 33b) and he was upset that the Hasmoneans usurped the Meluchah (kingship) from the descendants of David HaMelech. Indeed, the Rambam (Bereishit 49:10) strongly criticizes the Hasmoneans (who were Kohanim) for assuming political power instead of someone from the tribe of Yehuda. Even during the tumultuous times described in Sefer Melachim Bet (Kings II), when political assassinations were unfortunately quite common

and the spiritual level of the masses was relatively low, they always insured (and sometimes even made extraordinary efforts) that the son of the deposed king was named as the successor in order to preserve the Davidic line.

Moreover, it seems that we accepted Zerubavel as our leader during the early days of Bayit Sheini (the Second Temple) because he was a great grandson of Yechania (Yehoyachin, a king of Davidic descent), as stated in Divrei HaYamim I (3:16-19). Rav Yoel Bin Nun speculates that the descendants of Zerubavel did not continue to serve as the governors of Judea because the Persian government feared that this would spark a Jewish desire for independence and sovereignty. Accordingly, when the Hasmoneans finally restored Jewish sovereignty over parts of Eretz Yisrael, a descendant of Zerubavel or some other descendant of David HaMelech should have been appointed as king. The appointment of Kohanim as the political leader was the first time that Jews voluntarily chose to break the Davidic line.

Therefore, Rabi Yehuda Hanassi decided to leave the Halachot of Chanukah in the domain of Torah SheBe’al Peh (oral law) as an implicit criticism of the Hasmoneans and as a lesson for generations that when Jewish sovereignty is fully restored, a descendant of Beit David should be appointed as king (see Yeshayahu 11:1 and the Rambam Hilchot Melachim chapter eleven). The Rambam, in turn, may have feared that leaving Chanukah’s Halachot in the realm of Torah SheBeAl Peh would cause them to be forgotten entirely, due to the instability of Jewish life of the time (see the Rambam’s introduction to the Mishneh Torah).

Another possibility for the almost complete omission of Chanukah from the Mishnah is the proximity of the writing of the Mishnah (c. 200 C.E.) to the Bar Kochba revolt (135-138 C.E.). The against-all-odds victory of the Hasmoneans against the Syrian-Greeks served as an inspiration for those who wished to revolt against the Roman Empire’s control of Eretz Yisrael. Moreover, Chanukah was established in part to celebrate the restoration of Jewish sovereignty over Eretz Yisrael (see the Rambam Hilchot Chanukah 3:1). Perhaps the Tannaim, who in general were not supportive of the Bar Kochba revolt as stated in the Jerusalem Talmud (Taanit 4:5), wished to cool some of the passion for revolt by relegating the Halachot of Chanukah for the Torah SheBeAl Peh. Indeed, Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch (Devarim 8:10) explains that a message of the fourth Berachah of Birkat HaMazon, which was established after the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt (Berachot 48b), was to avoid repeating the Bar Kochba revolt. The Rambam, however, either feared that Chanukah would be forgotten or realized that by his time (he wrote the Mishneh Torah in the 1180’s) the passion for revolt had cooled. The Rambam had to express great enthusiasm for Chanukah to avoid our concluding from the Mishnah that Chanukah is not an important holiday.

Conclusion

Rabi Yehuda Hanassi and the other Tannaim felt it important to reserve discussion of Chanukah to the Torah SheBeAl Peh. We may speculate as to the reasons for this phenomenon and the lessons that we derive from it, particularly today in a time when Jewish sovereignty has been restored to parts of Eretz Yisrael with some international approval. The Rambam, in turn, rescued the holiday of Chanukah, which would likely have been forgotten had he not so enthusiastically celebrated it in writing.

Next week we shall, IY”H and B”N, we shall discuss the Rambam’s source in the Gemara for stressing the importance of Chanukah.

http://koltorah.org/ravj/15-15_Ravas_Chanukah_Revolution.htm

Rava’s Chanukah Revolution

by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Last week, we presented a reason for why Chanukah’s significance seems to have been implicitly diminished in the Mishnah and even the Gemara until it was “rescued” by the Rambam (last week’s article is archived at www.koltorah.org). We suggested that Chazal did not want to encourage a repeat of the Bar Kochba revolt with its disastrous consequences. We noted how the Rambam seems to make an extraordinary effort to promote the prestige of this holiday.

We did not, however, present a Talmudic precedent for the Rambam's promotion of Chanukah. This week we shall suggest that Rava's statements as recorded on Shabbat 23b serve as a precedent for the Rambam's departure from the Tannaitic approach to Chanukah. A careful analysis of this Sugya (unit of Talmudic discussion) appears to indicate that the Amoraic sage Rava had initiated the departure from the late Tannaitic and early Amoraic downplaying of Chanukah. I specifically thank my current (5766) Y9 Shiur at the Torah Academy of Bergen County for their contributions and joint development of our understanding of this fascinating Sugya.

Shabbat 23b

The Sugya begins with Rava presenting two Halachot that he assumes are obvious ("Peshitah"). The first is that if one is faced with the choice of being able to light only Ner Shabbat (Shabbat lights) or Ner Chanukah (Chanukah lights), one should light Ner Shabbat. A poor individual or a soldier in Tzahal on active duty might actually face such a dilemma. Rava explains that since Shabbat candles are kindled in order to promote Shalom Bayit (domestic harmony), they enjoy priority over Ner Chanukah. Indeed, the Rambam (Hilchot Chanukah 4:14) adds, "Shalom is of such great importance in that the entire Torah was given in order to promote Shalom in the world, as it is written, 'all its ways are pleasant and its paths are peaceful' (Mishlei 3:17)."

We should clarify, though, that although Shalom Bayit is of great importance, it does not justify violating any of the Torah's commands. Shalom Bayit considerations only justify relying on a viable lenient opinion. For example, one may not eat something that might not be kosher in order to preserve Shalom Bayit. The Halacha grants Shalom Bayit a vote but not a veto regarding adherence to Halachic norms.

The second Halacha that Rava presents is that if one is able to purchase either Shabbat lights or wine for Kiddush, he should purchase the Shabbat lights since their purpose is to insure Shalom Bayit. This ruling, though, is not as obvious as it might seem. Lighting Shabbat candles constitutes a rabbinic obligation according to most Rishonim (see Rambam Hilchot Shabbat 5:1), whereas reciting Kiddush is a Torah obligation (see Pesachim 106a and Rambam Hilchot Shabbat 29:1). It would seem that the Torah obligation should enjoy priority over the rabbinic obligation. The resolution to this difficulty seems to be that the wine for Kiddush is actually only a rabbinic requirement according to most Rishonim (see Rambam Hilchot Shabbat 29:6, Rabbeinu Tam cited in Tosafot Nazir 4a s.v. Mai, and Mishnah Berura 271:2) and as such does not enjoy priority over Shabbat lights.

Rava proceeds to present a question that he is at first unable to resolve. He queries whether Chanukah lights or wine for Kiddush enjoys precedence for one who is able to fulfill only one of these two Mitzvot. On the one hand, he notes that Kiddush should enjoy priority since it is practiced more frequently than Chanukah lights. A Halachic principle that is applied in many situations is "Tadir UShe'eino Tadir, Tadir Kodeim," that when faced with a choice of which Mitzvah to fulfill first, one should choose the more frequently fulfilled Mitzvah (Megillah 29a and numerous other places in the Gemara). Examples of this principle abound; we shall suffice with the example of the practice that men first put on their Tallit before they don their Tefillin, because the Tallit is worn more often than Tefillin.

On the other hand, Rava notes that Chanukah lights might enjoy priority since their purpose is to publicize the miracle of Chanukah (Pirsumei Nissa). Rava subsequently concludes that Chanukah lights enjoy priority due to the paramount importance of Pirsumei Nissa.

Tosafot

Most interestingly, Tosafot (ad. loc. s.v. Hadar) present a practical application of Rava's principle to a problem that we shall be facing this year (5766) when Rosh Chodesh Teiveit falls on Shabbat Chanukah. We must choose whether to read the Haftarah for Rosh Chodesh or the Haftarah for Chanuka. The "Tadir UShe'eino Tadir" principle would seem to indicate that the Haftarah for Rosh Chodesh should be recited. On the other hand, the

need for Pirsumei Nissa suggests that the Haftarah for Chanukah be chosen. Tosafot assert that based on our Gemara, the Haftarah for Chanukah should be chosen, as we see that the importance of Pirsumei Nissa of Chanukah outweighs the value of Tadir.

Although most Rishonim agree with Tosafot (see Encyclopedia Talmudit 10:16: footnote 305), a minority of Rishonim disagree (see the Encyclopedia Talmudit ad. loc. footnote 309). They argue that the dilemma regarding Haftarot is not analogous to Rava's dilemma regarding Chanukah lights and wine for Kiddush. In the situation described by Rava the two competing values enjoy equal stature in that they both constitute Rabbinic obligations. In the case of the Haftarot, Rosh Chodesh and Chanukah are not of equal importance since Rosh Chodesh is mentioned explicitly in the Torah whereas Chanukah is not (see Shabbat 24a where this distinction between Chanukah and Rosh Chodesh is drawn).

Moreover, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (Kovetz Chiddushei Torah pp. 47-65) demonstrates the Biblical significance of our declaration that the day is Rosh Chodesh. Thus, it would appear that the reading of the Haftarah for Rosh Chodesh is of Biblical importance. In addition, the Gemara's conclusion on Megillah 29b regarding Torah reading on Rosh Chodesh-Chanukah seems to support the minority opinion. The fact that when Rosh Chodesh falls on a weekday we devote the first three of the four Aliyot to Rosh Chodesh appears to demonstrate that Rosh Chodesh enjoys priority over Chanukah. The language of the Gemara also seems to strongly support this contention.

This matter was debated somewhat vigorously during the era of the Rishonim (see Encyclopedia Talmudit ad. loc.). Despite the cogency of the argument in favor of Rosh Chodesh, the Halacha follows the opinion of Tosafot that the Haftarah of Chanukah is read (Shulchan Aruch 684:3). Perhaps an implicit reason for this (besides the reasons stated explicitly in the Rishonim) is the need for the Rishonim to emphasize the importance of Chanukah in light of its being downplayed in the time of the Tannaim, as we discussed last week. Interestingly, though, we read the Torah portion for Rosh Chodesh before we read the Torah portion for Chanukah when Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbat Chanukah. Tosafot feel compelled to offer no less than three reasons for this phenomenon.

Analysis of Rava – A Revolutionary Ruling

My Talmidim posed two questions on Rava's resolution of his quandary regarding Chanukah lights and Kiddush wine. First, considering that Pirsumei Nissa is of paramount importance, it should have been obvious that Chanukah lights enjoy priority over Kiddush wine just as Rava stated that it is obvious that the value of Shalom Bayit causes Ner Shabbat to be preferred over Kiddush wine.

The Talmidim noted that Kiddush is directed only to Jews, whereas Ner Chanukah is directed to both Jews and non-Jews, as indicated in the Al HaNissim prayer which states, "And you made a great name for yourself in your world." (See Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik's ideas regarding this issue cited in Harerei Kedem 1:275:276.) A possible reason for this is that Pirsumei Nissa publicizes a most central idea – that Hashem created the world and remains involved in its functioning (see the Rambam's emphasis of this point in the context of the miracles involved in Yetziat Mitzraim, in his comments at the conclusion of Parashat Bo). Moreover, the message of Kiddush, that Hashem created the world, can be expressed even without wine. Wine merely enhances and dignifies the message (see Tehillim 116:13, "Kos Yeshuot Essa UVsheim Hashem Ekra").

The second problem is that Rava did not present any additional source or reasoning when he concluded that Chanukah lights are preferred due to Pirsumei Nissa. His resolution appears somewhat arbitrary; he does not tell us why he concludes that Pirsumei Nissa outweighs the value of "Tadir."

An answer to these problems might be that it was obvious from the outset that the value of Pirsumei Nissa outweighs the value of wine for Kiddush. Nonetheless, Rava was hesitant to openly state this since the Tannaim sought to downplay Chanukah so as to discourage a repeat of the great revolt against

the Romans in 66 C.E. and the Bar Kochba revolt of 135 C.E. It is possible, though, that Rava (who lived in the mid fourth century) felt that it was time to restore the prestige of Chanukah since approximately two centuries had passed without any revolutionary attempt to reestablish Jewish sovereignty in Eretz Yisrael. As any competent leader does, however, Rava introduced this idea slowly. He first raised the possibility of asserting the importance of Chanukah. After floating the idea and seeing that it was well-received, he felt that the time was ripe to begin to explicitly dignify the holiday of Chanukah after centuries of implicitly downplaying its significance.

Conclusion

We have suggested that the later Tannaim and early Amoraim sought to implicitly downplay the significance of Chanukah in order not to spur a repeat of revolts against the Roman authorities. Chazal were keenly aware of the disastrous results of the rebellions that took place against the Babylonians which led to the destruction of Bayit Rishon, which left little or no Jews in Eretz Yisrael for a few decades in the sixth century B.C.E. However, it seems that Rava saw that it was time to reverse this trend and to dignify the celebration of Chanukah. It seems that the Rambam read this cue and developed it to the fullest extent, as we discussed in last week's essay. Another cue for the Rambam might be the fact that we find the Amoraim mentioning a Bracha to be recited upon seeing Chanukah lights, which expresses a special appreciation of the Mitzva of Chanukah, as explained by Tosafot (Sukkah 46a s.v. HaRo'eh; also see Yaakov Rubin's article in this issue of Kol Torah).

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Explaining the Rocky Road A Baal Teshuva Sometimes Encounters

The great famine has already hit the Land of Canaan. Yaakov, tells his sons to go down to Egypt and procure food for the family. The Torah tells us, "So, Yosef's brothers – ten of them – went down to buy grain from Egypt." [Bereshis 42:3]. Rashi points out that until now, the Torah always referred to the brothers as "Yaakov's sons" (Bnei Yakov). Here, for the first time, the Torah calls them "Yosef's brothers". Rashi elaborates: This teaches us that they regretted his sale and set their heart to act towards him with brotherhood and to ransom him for any price his captors might set.

They had sold him as a slave and they assumed he was still working as a slave. They were prepared to ransom him from slavery, no matter what the cost. They were beginning the first steps of Teshuva.

I saw an interesting question in a sefer called Tiv HaTorah from Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch. We are at the threshold of the greatest calamity that befalls Yosef's brothers. From this point on, they have a horrible existence. We all know the story – Yosef recognizes them, but they do not recognize him. He accuses them of being spies. He makes them jump through hoops. He makes them bring Binyamin down. The remainder of this parsha and the beginning of Parshas Vayigash narrate Yosef putting his brother through "the seven levels of Gehenom".

Is it not ironic, Rav Rabinovitch asks, that their troubles start after they are already doing Teshuva, deciding that they will redeem their brother regardless of what it costs, and regretting their earlier action? Is it not ironic that specifically now, Yosef is making them go through all the difficulties? If they were steadfast in their opinion that Yosef was a murderer and a pursuer – then making them suffer might be poetic justice. However, given the fact that they are already on the road to repentance, why does Yosef put them through the torture?

To answer this question, Rav Rabinovitch cites a very interesting observation of the Sefas Emes. The Sefas Emes points out a similar type of phenomenon. In last week's parsha, Yosef faced a great temptation – that of the attempted seduction by Potiphar's wife. Here you have a young man, separated from his family, alone, and the wife of Potiphar is trying to seduce him. Yosef withstood the test. For this spiritual accomplishment, Yosef earned the title "Yosef HaTzadik" [the righteous Yosef]. Chazal make this point on the pasuk, "the sea saw and it fled" [Tehillim 114:3, by the splitting of the Red Sea] that the sea saw the coffin of Yosef and fled in awe, just as he fled from the pursuit of his master's wife.

What happened to Yosef immediately after he withstood this test? They threw him into the dungeon. "This is Torah and this is its reward"? For this act of piety for which we are still the beneficiaries thereof, Yosef's immediate "reward" is to be thrown into a pit and kept there for years? Where is the justice here?

The Sefas Emes explains the matter: When a person does an act of Tzidkus [righteousness] and when a person initiates the process of repentance, then the Ribono shel Olam knows he is on the path to teshuva – and helps him do a complete teshuva by punishing him for his past deeds. Yosef had to do penance because he did speak lashon harah [slander] to his father about his brothers. Up until this point, Yosef was not ready to endure the punishment that the Ribono shel Olam felt that he needed to endure. Once he achieved this great spiritual level of righteousness – that he withstood this great temptation – then the Almighty said "You have already started the process of Teshuva, now I am going to help you do Teshuva Gemura [complete repentance]. How am I going to do that? I am going to throw you into the dungeon as a kaparah [atonement] for your sin of lashon harah, so that when you come out of that dungeon, you will come out as pure as fresh snow. That is why, specifically after the incident with Potiphar's wife, Yosef was thrown in the dungeon. Therefore, Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch says, the same logic and the same reasoning explain what happened with Yosef's brothers: Precisely because now they started the process of Teshuva, they are now fit to complete the process of Teshuva – by enduring the terrible travails through Yosef. This completed their kaparah.

Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch adds the following interesting idea. (I personally know many cases where I have seen this and it has always been something that is inexplicable to me.) Sometimes a person decides to become a Baal Teshuva. Slowly but surely, he becomes more and more religious. The fellow has a fantastic business and a wonderful family and he decides to do teshuva. He closes his business on Shabbos through great self-sacrifice.

Then what happens? The sky falls in. The business goes down the drain. He has family problems. Half the family does not want to have anything to do with him. They think he is off his rocker. Here the fellow is a sincere Baal Teshuva; he was moser nefesh; he closed his business on Shabbos! What happened after all this? His life goes sour!

What is the theological meaning of this? I have seen this happen too many times for it to be considered a rare coincidence. We would think that since this fellow became a Baal Teshuva, the Almighty should shower him with all types of reward!

Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch says it is this same phenomenon. Until now, he was not up to withstanding these tests. Now, he has begun the teshuva process. He has reached a different level. The Almighty wants him to complete the teshuva process. In order to complete that process, perhaps he must endure yisurim [difficulties] to give penance for his former life. Therefore, rather than immediately reaping the benefits of being a Baal Teshuva, he sometimes must endure hardships. Certainly, the eventual goal of all this is that he will in fact emerge from this ordeal as a much purer person. He is ready to endure it because he has already shown that he has the mettle that it requires to become a Baal Teshuva.

Make A Kiddush Hashem!

We all know the story. Pharaoh has dreams. He does not know what they mean. The seven fat cows, the seven thin cows; the seven fat stalks; the

seven thin stalks. Yosef interprets the dreams. He tells them there are going to be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Yosef not only interprets the dreams but also gives Pharaoh advice: In the seven years of plenty, store the surplus grain so that food will be available during the seven lean years.

The pasuk states: “Pharaoh called Yosef’s name Tzafnas-panayach and he gave him Asnas, daughter of Poti-fera, Chief of On, for a wife; Thus Yosef emerged over the land of Egypt.” [Bereshis 41:45] True to form, there were seven plentiful years — “The land produced by handfuls during the seven years of abundance. He gathered all food of the seven years that came to pass in the land of Egypt, and he placed food in the cities; the food of the field that was around each city he placed within it. Yosef amassed grain like the sand of the sea, very much, until he ceased counting, for there is no number.” [Bereshis 41:47-49] Just as Yosef predicted and advised.

Then the seven years of famine began: “The seven years of abundance that came to pass in the land of Egypt ended. And the seven years of famine began approaching, just as Yosef said; and there was famine in all the lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.” [Bereshis 41:53-54]

Rav Yitzchak Yakov Reines asks why it is that when the seven years of plenty came, the pasuk does not say, “Just as Yosef said”. It is only when the seven years of famine began that scripture writes, “Just as Yosef said”. Why is that? Either say, “As he predicted” both by the good and by the bad years or omit it both by the good and by the bad years! Apparently, Yosef was “blamed” for the bad years that were attributed to his prediction, but he did not get credit for the good years, which he also predicted.

Rav Mordechai Kamenetsky cites an interesting anecdote involving Albert Einstein. When the great physicist developed the theory of relativity, he travelled to the great institutions of higher learning in those days to discuss his discovery. He presented his theory of relativity at the Sorbonne in Paris. He is reported to have quipped that if the theory of relativity will bear out, then the French will say that I am a citizen of the world and the Germans will claim that I am a German. “However,” he continued, “if the theory falls on its face, then the French will say that I am a German and the Germans will say that I am a Jew.”

The point of this story is that success has many fathers but failure is an orphan. In a twist on that, success may have many fathers, but failures are attributed to the Jews. Only when there is something negative to report – that is when we are told if it was a Jew.

Unfortunately, we typically cannot do anything about that. There is only one way to combat Chillul Hashem and that is with Kiddush Hashem. While most of us will not have the opportunity to make a public Kiddush Hashem, in our daily lives each of us has the opportunity to make a Kiddush Hashem on a daily basis. I think this is something we all need to think about – how we can create Kiddush Hashem?

We should never underestimate the ramifications of a small Kiddush Hashem. This week I had the opportunity to sit at the same table with Rav Abish Brodt. He reminded me of a very interesting story that I had actually heard previously. There was a certain reception in honor of Rabbi Berel Wein in Detroit. The person hosting the reception was a big wig in Detroit and he invited many business associates including the editor of the Detroit Free Press to this luncheon.

The editor of the Detroit Free Press asked if he could address the assemblage. This Detroit Free Press and this editor in particular had a history of being very pro-Israel and very pro-Jewish. The editor got up and said the following:

“I want to tell you why I have such warm feelings towards the Jewish people in general and towards Israel in particular. My mother came over from Ireland in the earlier part of the twentieth century. As was common with immigrants in those days, she was a housecleaner. She got a job as a maid in the house of an Orthodox Jew, a prominent member of the Jewish community, who happened to live next to a shul. The family, for whatever

reason, went out of town for a couple of weeks during December and they were scheduled to come home on December 23.”

“My mother thought to herself, ‘This is terrible. They are out of town. When they come back, it will already be December 23rd at night. Where are they going to get a tree for the living room?’ Therefore, she decided, ‘They are such good people to me – I am going to go out and buy a tree.’ She bought a tree and put it in the front window of the living room, right next to the synagogue. She bought the tinsel and she put up the red and the green lights.”

When people came to shul for mincha-ma’ariv, they saw the house all decorated for the Christian holiday and they started wondering – What happened with these people?

When the owner arrived home that night, he looked at his living room window and could not believe his eyes.

There are two ways he could have reacted to this. He could have told the maid to “PLEASE GET THIS THING OUT OF HERE IMMEDIATELY!!!” or he could have spoken to her gently, as he did. He called her into the kitchen and said “I want to tell you – this is one of the nicest, most sensitive, most considerate things that ANYONE has ever done to me in my life. I am so appreciative that I am going to give you a bigger Christmas bonus than I intended.” He handed her a \$50 bill (which in those days was a lot of money). “However”, he continued, “We do not celebrate this holiday and we do not display trees in our houses. So in spite of the fact that it was such a beautiful sentiment on your part, we are going to need to get rid of the tree.” The editor of the Detroit Free Press told the reception of Jewish leaders that his mother used to tell him this story about the tree and the Jew. It created such warm feelings in him towards Jews, Judaism and Israel. Why? It is because one Jew made a Kiddush Hashem that had a wide-ranging impact. One Jew did not just react to the spectacle of a tree sitting in his living room, but rather he thought about what went into it, and what the maid must have been thinking, and how sensitive that was, and he reacted in a sensitive matter. That created a Kiddush Hashem that had ramifications for many years to come.

We cannot erase the effects of some Jews who may unfortunately embarrass themselves and us. However, we can always do our best to make a Kiddush Hashem.

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CHANUKAH

There probably is no other holiday on the Jewish calendar that has had as much material written about it than the Chanukah festival. There are many causes and reasons for this seeming anomaly of a relatively minor rabbinic holiday receiving so much attention. The fact that by the nature of the calendar it falls in the month of December, and especially this year when it actually coincides with the holiday of the majority culture in the Western world, is part of the reason that it has achieved such notoriety and attention.

Jews never want to be left out of a celebration and thus we have created our own – gifts and all – and this allows us some latitude in participating in the general atmosphere of the month. All of this is perhaps true only on the subconscious level, as it is likely that none of the great scholars of Israel would countenance such an approach publicly. But nevertheless, realistically speaking, one cannot help but feel the resonance of the general culture, at least in the Jewish societies of the Western world.

As such, Chanukah been portrayed in a more universal sense than its original commemoration perhaps warranted. In my youth, the general Jewish representation of the holiday was that it was a battle and a triumph for religious freedom. As such, the mainstream Western Jewish society presented it as a victory for democracy over totalitarian rule and completely universal in its message and content.

This was at a period of time when being Jewish, certainly publicly Jewish, was fraught with financial and social pitfalls in the general society. Even observant Jews did not wear distinctive garb or head covering publicly and therefore displaying the lights of Chanukah in our front windows was to convey a universal idea and not merely a Jewish commemoration.

Again, in my youth, no one placed their Chanukah candles outside, near the door to their residence. The admonition of the rabbis of Eastern Europe as recorded in their halachic works, that one should not antagonize the general population by a public display of Jewish commemoration held true even in the land of the free and the home of the brave.

The growing strength and intensity of Orthodox Jewish life in the United States and the great amount of acceptance and tolerance that the Jewish community has achieved over the past half-century has altered this behavior pattern. Most American Jews feel comfortable – except perhaps on the college campuses of the country – in asserting their Jewishness publicly and unabashedly.

Here in Israel, which, all rumors to the contrary notwithstanding, is a very Jewish state, Chanukah mainly has returned to its original format and meaning. It represents the struggle against false gods, Hellenistic misinterpretations of Judaism and a desire to purify the people and the land through our actions and the Divine miracles that are omnipresent in our personal and national lives.

Chanukah here does not stand for pluralistic Judaism, concern for the environment or any of the other new false gods that so invest Western society today, and in parts of the Jewish world as well. The Hasmonians fought against foreign oppression of Israel and paganism and for Jewish sovereign independence and Torah observance. And that battle has not yet ended.

The miracle of Chanukah is an earned miracle, so to speak. There is rabbinic tradition that all of the miracles that appear in the Bible were built into nature, again so to speak, at the inception of the process of creation. Not so the later miracles that have occurred to us after the closing of the canon of the Bible.

Those miracles had to be earned by the sacrifice and actions of the Jews themselves in opposing evil, wrongdoing and paganism. This is an important lesson for us in our times. Though we do not yet have the ability to purify the Temple or light its golden candelabra, the kindling of our small Chanukah lights symbolizes our determination and commitment to be a free, independent and holy people, devoted to our tradition and our Torah.

By doing so publicly, even in a society where the general culture stands against much of what we represent, we renew our purpose and mission in life. It is our actions that will bring about the necessary miracles that will be reflected in the Jewish story throughout the ages. We therefore thank God not only for the past miracles that Chanukah presents and commemorates but also for the current miracles, seen and unseen, known and unknown, that mark our current existence as well.

Happy Chanukah
Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

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MIKETZ

It is obvious from the biblical narrative of this week's Torah reading that the brothers of Yoseph were determined not to see his dreams of dominance and greatness fulfilled. Even when they stood before him and faced him directly, they did not recognize him. They were committed not to recognize him as the prince of Egypt.

It is extremely difficult to change the perspective and previous held opinions of people, no matter how great those people may be. Having committed

themselves to destroying Yoseph's dreams, his brothers were blinded to the reality that it was their brother before whom they were bowing. So often in life our preconceived ideas and beliefs are challenged by the reality of what we see before our eyes.

It is very difficult to admit that one was wrong regarding important issues and ideas, be they of family or nation. Yet, the future of the Jewish people was entirely dependent on the brothers of Yoseph repenting of their previous attitude and actions and acknowledging that the dreams of Yoseph had validity and actually translated themselves into reality.

I think that as difficult as it is for us ordinary people to give up on ideas and beliefs that we cherished in the past, it is even more difficult when superior people – such as the brothers of Yoseph - are called upon to do so. Much thought and soul-searching must have gone into their original decision to attempt to eliminate Yoseph, perceiving him as being an existential threat to their survival and mission in life. So, after such a momentous decision was made and acted upon, it became unlikely that they would recognize that they were standing before their condemned brother Yoseph.

One of the great problems that I feel is present in our society is the inability to review and rethink past positions in light of present reality and current situations, when these positions were once endorsed by great and holy scholars and leaders. Many opinions of the great people of the past two centuries in Jewish life are quoted in support of positions and attitudes which fly in the face of the reality of the Jewish world in which we currently live.

I know what the great men said regarding certain issues in the Jewish world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in which they lived. But I am not quite certain as to what their opinions would be today in dealing with the realities of the Jewish world as they now exist. It is difficult to have to change one's mind regarding basic issues in Jewish society when it means reversing a certain traditional way of thinking about those issues.

Nevertheless, without such a rebooting, so to speak, of attitudes towards large sections of the Jewish people, the state of Israel as it now exists and towards the societal challenges that beset Jewish life from all sides, it will prove to be well nigh impossible to guarantee our future success and survival. We should all attempt to see that it is our brother Yoseph who stands before us.

Shabbat shalom
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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva

Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

Rav Aviner

Why Did They Even Bother to Light the Menorah?

Question: What is the Mitzvah of the lights of Chanukah – lighting them or placing them in the correct place?

Answer: It is well-known that this is a dispute in the Gemara (Shabbat 22-23) as to whether the Mitzvah is the lighting of the Chanukah lights, or whether the Mitzvah is that the lights be placed in the proper spot, i.e. lit for a certain period of time. What is the difference? One example is in a case where someone who is not obligated in the Mitzvah, like a non-Jew, kindles the lights and then a Jew, who is obligated, picks them up and puts them down. If the Mitzvah is the actual lighting, since the lights were kindled by someone who is not obligated, the Jew cannot not fulfill his obligation with them. If, however, the Mitzvah is placing the lights, even though the lights were kindled by someone who is not obligated, since they were put down by the Jew, he does fulfill his obligation. The Halachah is that the actual lighting is the Mitzvah (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 675:1). This is also verified by the blessing itself: "Who has made us holy with His Mitzvot and commands us to light...".

Based on this discussion, we can ask: What exactly was the miracle of Chanukah? Was the miracle the actual lighting of the Menorah in the Temple or was the miracle that they were lit for a certain period of time? The miracle seems to be that they were lit for a certain period of time, since there was no problem lighting the Menorah – there was enough oil for one day! If we say that the miracle was the actual lighting of the Menorah, what was the miracle? Answer: The miracle was that it took great strength to be bold enough to even light the Menorah in the first place. They could have said: "Why should we light it? It needs to be lit for eight days before new oil will be ready. It isn't worth it to light it for one day." But they did not say this. They said: "Hashem commanded us to light. We will light. What will be tomorrow? We don't know. Hashem will decide." The same is true of the revolt. "You are going to rebel against the Greeks?! You think you can win?! Sure you can begin a battle, but how are you going to win? Why even start then?" "We were commanded by Hashem, so we will begin. After that Hashem will decide." There was a great miracle, but they didn't know that this was going to occur when they began. This is "Mesirat Nefesh" – true self-sacrifice. There are many example of great self-sacrifice in our tradition, but the miracle of Chanukah is unique. Up to this point, there were always prophets. Here, however, there were no prophets to give direction. They acted because they understood what Hashem commanded them to do. This is similar to the question of why Yom Ha-Atzmaut was established on the 5th of Iyar in particular, since on that day no miracle occurred. The Jewish State was declared, and with it a life-threatening situation began (Chanukah and Purim were established on the day after the "war" ended). Our Rabbi, Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook, explained that the courage to declare the State is the miracle of miracles, the soul and root of all of the miracles and wonders (Le-Netivot Yisrael vol. 1, p. 179). The Talmud discusses a shepherd who abandoned his flock, leaving it prey to either a wolf or a lion who came and tore it to pieces. The Rabbis established that his responsibility for the slaughter depends on whether or not he would have been able to save the animals. If he would not have been able to overcome the attacking animal, he is exempt from all payment. The Talmud asks: Why is this so? Perhaps it would have happened as for David: "Your servant slew both the lion and the bear" (Shmuel I 17:36)? Perhaps a minor miracle would have occurred (Baba Metzia 106a)? The Tosafot described the miracle: "A spirit of courage and the knowledge to wage war" (Tosafot ibid.). So too in the matter of the declaration of the State: "The awakening, the exerting of effort, the philosophizing and the strengthening for the drive to rescue and revive," is a miracle from the Heavens, "with a supreme and inner stimulus of power." The fact that the Nation of Israel was filled with the spirit to fight and the knowledge to wage war is the foundation of all miracles (Le-Netivot Yisrael ibid.). From this act flowed all of the miracles which led to establishment and strengthening of the State of Israel.

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By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Flying High – A Traveler's Guide to Kindling the Menorah

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: "Rabbi..." I recognize Shlomo Rabinowitz's voice on the phone. "My company is sending me to Japan next week, right in the middle of Chanukah," he continues, "and to top it off, one of my flights has me on the plane the entire candle lighting time. How do I fulfill the mitzvah of kindling Chanukah lights five miles above earth? Furthermore, in Japan I will be busy at conferences all day long. Where and when will I light my menorah there? Can I kindle in a corner of the conference room?"

Question #2: Rav Mordechai, a fundraiser acquaintance of mine, asked me how to fulfill the mitzvah of hadlakas Ner Chanukah when he is out of town soliciting tzedakah until late in the evening.

Question #3: The Schwartz family is spending Shabbos Chanukah with friends on the other side of town. May they kindle the menorah at their friends' home on motzei Shabbos, or must they wait until they return home? (Although all names have been changed, each of these cases reflects an actual shaylah people asked me.)

True, most of us will not be collecting funds all of Chanukah or flying to Japan. However, resolving these shaylos provides a good opportunity to explain the mitzvah of Ner Chanukah in greater depth. First, we will go through the basics of the mitzvah, and then we will examine the details that apply to travelers.

Every Jew must light Chanukah lights or have an agent kindle for him (see Rambam, Hilchos Chanukah 3:4). Many people do not know that the basic mitzvah requires kindling only one flame, whether oil or candle, for the entire household on each night of Chanukah, regardless of which night of Chanukah it is, and regardless of how many people live in one's house (Shabbos 21b). Kindling the additional lights is in order to observe the mitzvah according to the exemplary standard that the Gemara terms *mehadrin min hamehadrin*.

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. Even in places where the custom is that each individual kindles his own menorah, as is the common Ashkenazic practice, married women do not usually light (Elyah Rabbah 671:3; Mishnah Berurah 671:9), and most people have the custom that single girls do not either (Shu't Shaar Efrayim #42; see Chasam Sofer, Shabbos 21b s.v. *vehamihadrin* and Mikra'ei Kodesh #14 who explain reasons for this practice). According to both the Ashkenazic and the Sefardic approach, the head of the household fulfills the mitzvah for those family members who do not light for themselves. In fact, he is their agent not only for the kindling, but also for the brachos he recites before lighting. (The difference between the Ashkenazic and the Sefardic custom reflects different interpretations of *mehadrin min hamehadrin*.)

WHAT ABOUT A GUEST?

So far, we discussed how the regular household members fulfill their mitzvah of Ner Chanukah. However, what about a guest who is not a regular member of the household? Does he have his own obligation to kindle Ner Chanukah or does the head of household's kindling exempt him as it does the regular household residents? If he has his own obligation, how does he fulfill this mitzvah? The Gemara (Shabbos 23a) discusses this question in the following passage:

"Rav Sheishes said, 'A guest is obligated in Ner Chanukah.' Rav Zeira said, 'Initially, when I was in Yeshiva, I paid my host a coin to include myself in his Ner Chanukah. Now that I am married but am still occasionally away in Yeshiva for Chanukah, I do not need to pay my host where I am staying because my wife kindles on my behalf in my house.'"

We see here that a guest must observe the mitzvah of Ner Chanukah himself and not through the head of household's lighting. Rav Zeira described two methods whereby the guest can fulfill his requirement without actually kindling his own menorah. The first method is to become a partner in the candles or oil of his host, which he does by purchasing ownership in them. (An alternative way of fulfilling this approach is for the guest to acquire a portion in the items by picking them up with his host's permission.) The second method Rav Zeira suggests is when the guest is a member of his own household, although he is not with them for Chanukah. In this case, he is automatically included when his family kindles, even though he is not home.

By the way, the guest can fulfill his mitzvah in a third way -- by kindling his own menorah in his host's house. However, in this instance, if he wants to recite a bracha on his own kindling, he should decide that he is following this approach before his wife kindles (Mishnah Berurah 677:15). Otherwise, since he has already fulfilled his responsibility to perform the mitzvah

through his wife's kindling in his house, his own kindling is unnecessary and a bracha recited before kindling them is levatalah, in vain.

WHAT ABOUT TIME ZONES?

What happens if the guest is in a different time zone from his family? Can the guest fulfill his mitzvah with his family's kindling even though he is in a different time zone?

The poskim who discuss this shaylah dispute whether one fulfills the mitzvah with his family's lighting if their lighting takes place at a time when there is no mitzvah to kindle Ner Chanukah in his time zone. According to many, an Israeli resident visiting the United States will not fulfill the mitzvah through his family's kindling and vice versa (Shu't Minchas Yitzchak 7:46; however, see Halichos Shelomoh Volume 2 pg. 261, that Rav Shelomoh Zalman Auerbach disagrees). Minchas Shelomoh II:56:2 s.v. מ"מ (red edition) contends that you fulfill the mitzvah with your household; a guest has no household and therefore has his own mitzvah. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Rav Shelomoh Zalman held that you fulfill the mitzvah with your household when you are east of your family – it could be that he held this way only when you are west of the family, and thus they have fulfilled their chiyuv already and you never become chayov in the mitzvah. But where the individual is east of his family, and thus becomes chayov earlier, it could be that the halacha is different.

Nevertheless, someone traveling within the United States might fulfill his or her mitzvah through the kindling at home if the family kindles when people are still frequenting the streets in the city that he/she is visiting.

According to our analysis, if Shlomo Rabinowitz was flying from Chicago to New York instead of Japan, he could rely on the candle lighting in his house since the candles will be kindled at a time that he is obligated in Ner Chanukah. (We will discuss shortly whether he recites the bracha she'asah nissim upon arrival in New York.) However, if he is in Asia, it is unclear whether he can rely on his family's menorah since his family will kindle the lights at a time when he cannot perform the mitzvah.

WHAT IF SOMEONE HAS NO REAL RESIDENCE ON CHANUKAH?

Rashi (Shabbos 23a) cites the following case: Someone traveling by boat who is unable to light a menorah should recite the brachos of she'asah nissim and shehechyanu (on the first night of Chanukah) when he sees a kindled menorah, even though he is not kindling himself. In other words, one recites the bracha of she'asah nissim in commemoration of the miracle of the lights and not for the actual mitzvah of kindling. Similarly, we recite the bracha shehechyanu for seeing the lights of the menorah, not for fulfilling the mitzvah of kindling. However, in both instances one recites the bracha only on a menorah that fulfills the mitzvah, and not on a menorah lit in a shul or other public place. Kindling menorah in a shul or other public place is only a custom and does not fulfill the mitzvah (Shu't Rivosh #111). However, we still need to explore whether an airplane has the same halacha as the boat discussed by Rashi. To explain the possible difference, we will first discuss a teshuvah authored by Rav Shalom Mordechai Shvadron, the famous Maharsham of Brezan, the posek of his generation (late 19th century - early 20th century Galicia) about kindling menorah while riding a train.

RIDING THE TRAIN

Rav Shimon Valtuch, the Rav of Leipzig, Germany, sent a shaylah to the Maharsham asking whether someone traveling by train should light his Chanukah menorah on board. The Maharsham ruled that since he has paid for the entire night, it is as if he rented a house to eat and sleep, and the obligations of Ner Chanukah apply on the train.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BOAT AND THE TRAIN?

But if so, why does Rashi rule that someone traveling by boat cannot fulfill the mitzvah of kindling Chanukah lights and instead recites the brachos of she'asah nissim and shehechyanu on the lights he sees on shore. Why does the Maharsham give a different ruling concerning a train than Rashi ruled concerning someone traveling by boat? The Maharsham explains that Rashi's case involved an unroofed boat which cannot qualify as a house since it does not provide adequate shelter. This implies that someone

spending Chanukah on a cruise ship or even on a yacht would have a mitzvah of kindling menorah on board.

The Maharsham considers whether the train is the same as a house even though it is constantly moving, and rules that this makes no difference. Thus, someone in a house trailer should kindle a menorah in its window, even if the trailer is on the move. However, it is unclear whether someone spending Chanukah night traveling in a car or truck should kindle Ner Chanukah there, since he has nowhere to sleep properly. Therefore, it might not be considered as lodging.

In addition, we should note that there is evidence that other authorities contemporaneous to the Maharsham did not accept his opinion, but felt that one fulfills the mitzvah only in a proper residence.

TRAVELING IN STYLE

There are two common ways of traveling by train – either in a private compartment, or, more commonly, on a seat in a public compartment. Since the Maharsham seems to consider even the second case enough of a lodging to light, this implies that one's seat on a plane is also considered sufficient "lodging" to require kindling Chanukah lights on board.

Because of safety considerations, no one will permit you to kindle a menorah on an airplane. However, according to those opinions that one may fulfill the mitzvah of kindling Chanukah lights with a flashlight or an electric light (a subject we will iy"H discuss a different time), Shlomo Rabinowitz traveling to Japan in the middle of Chanukah has an interesting solution to his predicament. He can take a flashlight or other battery operated light onto the plane with him, turn it on for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvah of Ner Chanukah, and leave it burning for half an hour. Although this is only one light, I noted above that one fulfills the mitzvah of Ner Chanukah by kindling only one light. (If practical, he could bring along a few flashlights and fulfill the mitzvah mehadrin min hamehadrin.) For those interested in following this approach, Rav Shelomoh Zalman Auerbach contends that it is preferable to fulfill the mitzvah of Ner Chanukah with a battery-operated light over other electric lights (Halichos Shelomoh Volume 2, pg. 283).

CAN HE KINDLE IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM?

Although kindling in the conference room may inform everyone that it is Chanukah, one does not fulfill the mitzvah with these lights, because one fulfills the mitzvah only in one's residence.

LIGHTING IN A HOTEL

Does Shlomo Rabinowitz fulfill the mitzvah by kindling in his hotel room? Yes, because the mitzvah of Ner Chanukah is fulfilled even in a place that is his home for only one night (Chovas Hadar, Ner Chanukah 2:9).

SHOULD ONE PLACE THE MENORAH IN THE WINDOW OF HIS HOTEL ROOM?

If people can see the lit menorah from outside, it is preferable to light in a window. If no one can see the menorah from outside, he should simply kindle the menorah on a table in his room.

WHEN MUST HE KINDLE THE MENORAH?

Ideally, he should kindle the menorah around nightfall wherever he is. However, if this is not practical, he may fulfill the mitzvah at any time that it is common to find people in the streets of the town that he is visiting. If he cannot return to his room until even later than this time, he should kindle the menorah without reciting the brachos. This is assuming he is traveling alone. If he is traveling with someone else who is Jewish, he can recite the brachos even late at night, provided that both of them are awake to witness the kindling (Teshuvos V'Hanhagos 2:215).

What about Rav Mordechai, our fund raiser? How does he fulfill the mitzvah of hadlakas Ner Chanukah while he solicits tzedakah the entire evening?

I suggested that he appoint an agent (a shaliach) at the place where he is sleeping to kindle the menorah on his behalf. Alternatively, he could acquire partial ownership in the oil of his host's menorah by paying him a token sum of money.

VISITING DURING CHANUKAH

Where do I light menorah if I visit a friend for Chanukah dinner and I am not staying overnight?

Many people mistakenly 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 is that one is required to kindle Chanukah lights at one's own house, and kindling at the friend's house does not fulfill the mitzvah. Therefore, the guest must kindle the Chanukah lights at his own house and then leave to join the festive meal (Taz 677:2; Mishnah Berurah 677:12).

WHAT ABOUT THE SCHWARTZES?

Remember the Schwartz family that is spending Shabbos Chanukah with friends on the other side of town? Must they come home to kindle on motzei Shabbos, or can they kindle at the home where they were Shabbos guests? If one spends Shabbos at someone's house, he may kindle the menorah there on Motzaei Shabbos (Tshuvos V'Hanhagos 1:391). Some poskim suggest that one remain near the menorah until it has burned for a half-hour (see Tshuvos V'Hanhagos 1:394).

The Gemara teaches that someone who kindles Ner Shabbos and Ner Chanukah will merit to have sons who are Talmidei Chachomim (Shabbos 23b, see Rashi). This is puzzling -- since all observant Jews kindle these lights, why are there not many more Talmidei Chachomim? The Rishonim explain that this promise only applies to someone who observes the mitzvah carefully in all its details (Sod Hadlakas Ner Chanukah, authored by Rabbi Yitzchok, the son of the Raavad). So it is certainly worthwhile to thoroughly review the halachos of Chanuka lights before the wonderful days of Chanuka catch up with us.

<http://www.benaiaasher.org/announcements-2/>

[Rabbi David Bibi and Rabbi Michael Wagner ?]

Chanukah

In 1944, the first night of Chanukah fell on December 10. Several days beforehand, in Nieder-Orschel, part of the Buchenwald concentration camp complex, seventeen-year-old Simche Unsorfer decided to light a Chanukah candle to restore the desperate morale in the camp. He confided in friends who agreed to help, but besides the danger it would put their lives in if caught, they needed a way to obtain the oil and a place where the lighted wick would not be seen and discovered.

The small group of friends drew lots. The first name drawn would have to steal the oil from the factory in which they worked, the third name would be responsible to hide the oil until the first night of Chanukah, and the fifth name drawn, which turned out to be Simche himself, would have to light it under his bunk in the barrack. The first boy convinced the Nazi factory foreman that the machines would work better if oiled regularly each morning, and this could be best arranged if a small can of fine machine oil was allotted to them. The third boy kept some of this oil hidden until Chanukah eve.

The boys knew that Jewish law did not compel them to risk their lives for the sake of fulfilling one commandment, and a rabbinical one at that. Yet, they had an urge "to reveal the spirit of sacrifice implanted in our ancestors throughout the ages". Under indescribable physical and spiritual distress, they "felt that a little Chanukah light would warm our starving souls and inspire us with hope, faith, and courage to keep us going through this long, grim, and icy winter".

Finally, the first night of Chanukah arrived, and Simche put the oil in the empty half of a shoe polish tin, took a few threads from his blanket and rolled them into a wick, made the three benedictions, and lit the little Chanukah light which flickered slowly under his bunk. Everyone in the room, not just the religious ones, hummed together the traditional Chanukah songs.

The Nazi untersturmfuhrer smelled the burning oil and was about to barge in and discover it when an air-raid warning sounded. The search was called off and the boys' lives were spared. Simche grabbed his little Menorah, and

with the heavy drone of the Allied bombers overhead, kept on muttering the blessing to the G-d who performed miracles for His people in past days and in our own time.

Tiferes Shlomo says that even more than the miracles of Chanukah that are well known, an even greater miracle is that after all that the Jews at that time suffered, they still had the strength and holiness for the High Priest to continue his duties, inspire good, and be a light unto the people. Seventy years after the Shoah, how great is the continuous miracle in which we live? After so much destruction and despair, after a third of our nation was slaughtered, where did we get the strength to build a state, spread Torah study to the masses while we continuously fight off our enemies, and be a world leader in medicine, armaments, and technology while Torah observance grows? This is truly a miracle of miracles.

Shabbat Shalom v'Chanukah Sameach!

Kibbutz Lavi, 23 Kislev 5777

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Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Eilu V'Eilu

The gemara (Shabbos 21b) quotes the story of Chanukah from Megillas Taanis (Rashi, Shabbos 13b, explains that this work is referred to as a megillah because it was already written down at the time that the mishnayos were still being learned orally.) The Yevonim were metamei all the oil in the Beis Hamikdash and the Chashmona'im only found one small container of pure oil that should have only lasted for one night. Rav Yaakov Emden (Mor U'Ketzia #670)[1] raises the following major issue: the mishna tells us that liquids in the Beis Hamikdash are not mekabel tummah>[2] so the whole story does not make any sense! The olive oil was a liquid and could not become tameh, so why was there a need for a miracle if there is no such thing as shemen tameh in the Beis Hamikdash?

Some suggest the following answer. The psak of a talmid chochom is binding because he probably had divine assistance in developing his position[3]. And even when there is a machlokes in halacha each yeshiva is obligated to follow its own rebbe, and we assume that this is so because each rebbe was given the divine assistance to formulate his position. The story of Chanukah occurred in the middle of the period of the second Beis Hamikdash over two hundred years before its destruction. In that generation, the accepted psak was that even liquids in the Beis Hamikdash are also mekabel tumah. It was only several generations later, during the period of the zugos, that R' Yosi ben Yoezer's position that liquids in the Beis Hamikdash are tahor was adopted l'halacha. How can it possibly be that Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel each had a divine assistance to come to differing conclusions? The answer is: the gemara says that sometimes when there is a machlokes in halacha we assume eilu v'eilu divrei Elokim chaim[4]. The Ritvah[5] explains that when Moshe Rabbeinu was on Har Sinai and Hashem was teaching him the entire Torah, and Moshe Rabbeinu posed questions to Hashem regarding what the din is in various cases and under various circumstances. In some cases Hashem told him that the din is mutar; in other cases Hashem told him the din is assur; and in other cases Hashem told him that this is a grey area of halacha, with both elements of heter and of issur, and He leaves it up to the judgment of the chachmei ha'dor in each generation to decide based on their perspective of kol haTorah kulla whether the elements of heter outweigh the elements of issur or the reverse. Every so often in the gemara we find that in different generations the consensus amongst the rabbonim shifted and the psak was changed. The two positions are often referred to mishna rishonah and mishna acharona. The gemara tells us[6] that for the four hundred and ten years of the first Beis

Hamikdash the Kohanim fulfilled the mitzvah of nisuch hayayin in one fashion. When the second Beis Hamikdash was built (after the seventy years of galus Bavel), the chachomim of that generation decided to do the nisuch hayayin in a different fashion. The Sfas Emes in his commentary on that gemara raises a question, does that mean that during for all of the four hundred and ten years of the first Beis Hamikdash they were never properly yotzei the mitzvah of nisuch hayayin?! The simple answer is that eilu v'eilu divrei Elokim chaim. Since both groups of chachomim were knowledgeable in kol haTorah Kulah and both were working within the framework of the middos sheHaTorah nidreshes bohem, both positions were considered correct. During the Bayis Rishon period the correct halachic position was in accordance with the consensus of that time and during the Bayis Sheini period the correct halachic position was in accordance with the consensus of that era.

Similarly, if the story of chanukah would have occurred a few generations later, Hashem would not have caused any miracle to occur because the accepted psak was like R. Yosi ben Yoezer that the olive oil cannot become tameh. But in the generation of the Chasmona'im the Ribbono Shel Olam went along with the psak of the consensus of that generation and caused the nes to occur.

[1] See also *She'eilos U'Teshuvos Beis Yitzchok, Orach Chaim #110* [2] See *Pesachim 16a* [3] See *Sotah 4b* [4] *Eruvin 13b* [5] *Eruvin ibid* [6] *Zevachim 61b* Copyright © 2016 by *TorahWeb.org*

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Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Mikeitz

For the week ending 31 December 2016 / 2 Tevet 5777

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

Insights

Sevens and Eights

"Out of the river emerged seven cows...." (41:2)

The Torah portion Miketz almost always falls during the week of Chanuka. This year it is read on the next-to-last day of the festival. There is obviously a very strong link between the portion of Miketz and Chanuka.

At the beginning of this week's reading Pharaoh has a dream about seven cows coming up from the river. These cows were healthy looking, robust, full of flesh. After them emerged seven other cows. These cows were gaunt and ugly. The gaunt, ugly cows ate the fleshy cows and left no trace of them. Egyptian life was dominated by the Nile. To the extent that the Nile overflowed its banks, to that same degree would there be prosperity and food in Egypt. For this reason the Egyptians worshipped the Nile. On its vagaries depended life and death.

Seven cows emerged from the Nile. Seven is the number that connotes this-worldliness. There are seven colors in the rainbow, seven notes in the diatonic scale and seven days in the week.

Chanuka is the festival where we celebrate eight. It is a time when we connect to that which is beyond this world. Chanuka is where we take one step beyond. The one flask of pure oil that was found in the Holy Temple could only burn for one day, but it burned for eight whole days. It was not just a miracle, but a "miracle of eight".

The idolatry of Egypt was to take the natural world, the Nile, the world of seven, and worship it — to take nature and make into a god. Pharaoh said to Moshe, "Who is Hashem? I do not know Hashem..." (Ex. 5:2) Pharaoh recognized that there was a "god" in the world, but he only recognized a god of nature. In Hebrew the word "Elokim" (a Name of G-d) has the same gematria (numerical equivalent) as the word "hateva", which means "nature." When we make nature into supernatural force we take the world of seven and make that into eight.

In a year when Miketz occurs during Chanuka, the haftara read is Zechariah 2:14-4:7. Zechariah is shown a vision of a Menorah made entirely of gold,

complete with a reservoir, tubes to bring it oil and two olive trees to bear olives.

A complete self-supporting system.

The symbolism is that G-d provides a system which supports us continuously. However, we have to open our eyes to see where that support is coming from.

To remind ourselves that "Mother Nature" has a Father.

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Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

OU Torah

Rabbi Weinreb on Parsha

Mikeitz: The First Job Interview

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

I have a vivid memory of my first job interview. It was for a position as a counselor in a summer camp. The only preparation that I can now recall took the form of words of encouragement from my mother, of blessed memory.

She told me not to be nervous, to be polite, modest, and respectful, and to be sure to be well-groomed and well-spoken.

I recently had the occasion to contrast my mother's advice with that received by a granddaughter of mine. Like many of her peers, she consulted a "career coach" before interviewing for her first job. My granddaughter was given a long list of rules to follow. She was told to practice thoroughly, and to "dress for success." She was cautioned to be sure to proudly convey all that she had to offer. Under no circumstances was she to be afraid of boasting about her qualifications for the position.

I had two distinct reactions to my granddaughter's report to me about her coach's advice. One was to note the difference between my mother's advice, which emphasized respect and modesty, and that of her coach, who urged her to assert herself confidently, with even a measure of braggadocio.

My second reaction prompted me to ask myself the following questions: What was the first job interview in Jewish history? Was it successful? What was the secret of its success?

Those questions brought to mind an episode in this week's Torah portion, Parashat Mikeitz (Genesis 41:1-44:17). It is in this parasha that we read of Joseph's appearance before Pharaoh for what I maintain is the first job interview in the entire Torah.

The job in question was a fascinating one. Pharaoh had a dream which disturbed him greatly. "All the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men" sought to calm his agitated spirit. But none were successful. In contemporary terms, the royal house of Pharaoh was forced to advertise for applicants to fill the position of interpreter of dreams, a role not likely to appear on any of today's lists of employment openings.

Joseph was recommended for the position by the cup bearer of whom we read in last week's Torah portion. The cup bearer volunteered that he knew of a possible candidate for the position and that he himself had experienced that candidate's prowess at the task of dream interpretation.

But his recommendation was not entirely positive. The cup bearer didn't even mention Joseph's name. Indeed, he made it a point to list several factors in Joseph's resume that would disqualify him for such a distinguished position in the royal household. For one thing, Joseph was a Jew, who presumably could not even speak Pharaoh's language. Secondly, he was a youth; intellectually immature and by no means fit for such an exalted position. Finally, Joseph was a slave, and the far-from-democratic Egyptian constitution explicitly forbade former slaves from ascending to positions of power, even denying them the right to wear royal garments.

Joseph's letter of recommendation was far from favorable. It did attest to his skills in the field of dream interpretation, but it also contained three formidable strikes against his candidacy for the position. Nevertheless, "Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was rushed from the dungeon." Joseph clearly had very little time, if any at all, to prepare for this crucial interview. Pharaoh did allow him time, however, to have his hair cut and to change his clothing. After all, Pharaoh could not allow an unkempt accused criminal to sully the royal palace with his ragged prison uniform. Thus, at least one of my mother's recommendations was fulfilled. Joseph was well groomed,

Pharaoh then relates his dream to Joseph and gives him an opening that would delight today's job applicant: "I have heard it said that for you to hear a dream is to tell its meaning." Not only does Joseph not use that opening to his own advantage, but the first words out of Joseph's mouth would seem to ruin every chance of his success. He violates the advice of my granddaughter's well-meaning coach to exude self-confidence. Instead, Joseph disclaims his worthiness and exclaims, "Not I! God will see to Pharaoh's welfare."

The coach would have expressed her disappointment. I can just hear her saying, "Joseph, you just blew your interview!"

Pharaoh is not fazed by Joseph's modest disclaimer. Rather, he proceeds to tell Joseph every detail of this puzzling dream. Joseph responds with consistent modesty, repeatedly attributing his ability to interpret the dream to the Almighty. He insists that the dream is a message from God Himself, giving Pharaoh a heads up: "Immediately ahead lie seven years of great abundance in all the land of Egypt. After them will come seven years of famine, and all the abundance in the land of Egypt will be forgotten."

Wonder of wonders, Pharaoh buys it. He affirms Joseph's interpretation as accurate, although far from soothing. Joseph then violates yet another one of the norms of today's job interview. He offers advice to Pharaoh! He suggests that Pharaoh advertise for a new open position, this time not of a dream interpreter, but of a capable administrator to deal effectively with the impending famine.

Again, Pharaoh not only buys it, but he selects Joseph to be that administrator and elevates him to a royal rank second only to Pharaoh himself.

What did Joseph do right? What earned him the trust and confidence of this powerful Pharaoh?

We are all familiar with the cruel and hard-hearted Pharaoh of the Book of Exodus, who turned a deaf ear to the inspired pleas of Moses and to the eloquent demands of Aaron. Our Sages are open to the possibility that the Pharaoh who so readily accepted Joseph's words in this week's parasha was the very same Pharaoh who obstinately refuses to accept Moses' plea for freedom for the Israelites. What was it about Joseph's behavior that convinced Pharaoh to respect Joseph's message and to trust him so profoundly?

I think I know the answer. Pharaoh was no dummy. He knew that Joseph had just been imprisoned in a dark dungeon with absolutely no prospects of freedom. He knew that other people in Joseph's situation would have done everything possible to make an impression upon Pharaoh. After all, this was not just an interview for a job. This was an opportunity to escape lifelong imprisonment and to perhaps gain access to Pharaoh's inner circle.

Pharaoh was impressed by the fact that Joseph made no such effort. In no way did he attempt to convince Pharaoh that he had any special skills or powers. He emphatically attributed his abilities to the Almighty. Again and again Joseph belittled his own talents, eliminating every chance that his appearance before Pharaoh would grant him the freedom he so desperately willed.

It was Joseph's admission that he was not personally qualified for the job that won him not only Pharaoh's acceptance of his dream interpretation, but achieved for him a leadership role in which he ensured survival of the Egyptian nation and rescued the entire world from famine.

Every contemporary job seeker is well advised to learn the lessons of Joseph's honesty and humility. The pretense of self-confidence does not impress others. Sham appearances do not long delude men of discernment. The contrary is true. No less than in ancient Egypt, authenticity and sincerity ultimately prevail, even in our own imperfect world.

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Rav Kook Torah

Mikeitz: Interpreting Dreams

The Sages made a remarkable claim regarding dreams and their interpretation: "Dreams are fulfilled according to the interpretation" (Berachot 55b). The interpreter has a key function in the realization of a dream: his analysis can determine how the dream will come to pass. The Talmud substantiated this statement with the words of the chief wine-butler: "Just as he interpreted, so [my dream] came to be" (Gen. 41:13).

Do dreams foretell the future? Does the interpreter really have the power to determine the meaning of a dream and alter the future accordingly?

The Purpose of Dreams

Clearly, not all of our dreams are prophetic. Originally, in humanity's pristine state, every dream was a true dream. But with the fall of Adam, mankind left the path of integrity. Our minds became filled with wanton desires and pointless thoughts, and our dreams became more chaff than truth. Why did God give us the ability to dream? A true dream is a wake-up call, warning us to correct our life's direction. Our eyes are opened to a vivid vision of our future, should we not take heed to mend our ways.

To properly understand the function of dreams, we must first delve into the inner workings of divine providence in the world. How are we punished or rewarded in accordance to our actions?

The Zohar (Bo 33a) gives the following explanation for the mechanics of providence. The soul has an inner quality that naturally brings about those situations and events that correspond to our moral level. Should we change our ways, this inner quality will reflect that change, and will lead us towards a different set of circumstances.

Dreams are part of this system of providence. They are one of the methods utilized by the soul's inner quality to bring about the appropriate outcome. The Function of the Interpreter

But the true power of a dream is only realized once it has been interpreted. The interpretation intensifies the dream's impact. As the Sages taught, "A dream not interpreted is like a letter left unread" (Berachot 55b). When a dream is explained, its images become more intense and vivid. The impact on the soul is stronger, and the dreamer is more primed for the consequential outcome.

Of course, the interpreter must be insightful and perceptive. He needs to penetrate the inner message of the dream and detect the potential influences of the soul's inner qualities that are reflected in the dream.

Multiple Messages

All souls contain a mixture of good and bad traits. A dream is the nascent development of the soul's hidden traits, as they are beginning to be realized. A single dream may contain multiple meanings, since it reflects contradictory qualities within the soul.

When the interpreter gives a positive interpretation to a dream, he helps develop and realize positive traits hidden in the soul of the dreamer. A negative interpretation, on the other hand, will promote negative traits. As the Zohar (Mikeitz 199b) admonishes:

"A good dream should be kept in mind and not forgotten, so that it will be fulfilled.... Therefore Joseph mentioned his dream [to his family], so that it would come to pass. He would always anticipate its fulfillment."

It is even possible to interpret multiple aspects of a dream, all of which are potentially true. Even if they are contradictory, all may still be realized.

Rabbi Bena'a related that, in his days, there were 24 dream-interpreters in

Jerusalem. “Once I had a dream,” he said, “and I went to all of them. No two interpretations were the same, but they all came to pass” (Berachot 55b).

Dreams of the Nation

These concepts are also valid on the national level. Deliverance of the Jewish people often takes place through the medium of dreams. Both Joseph and Daniel achieved power and influence through the dreams of gentile rulers.

The Jewish people have a hidden inner potential for greatness and leadership. As long as this quality is unrealized, it naturally tries to bring about its own fulfillment — sometimes, by way of dreams.

When a person is brought before the Heavenly court, he is questioned, “Did you yearn for redemption?” (Shabbat 31a). Why is this important?

By anticipating and praying for the redemption, we help develop the inner quality of the nation’s soul, thus furthering its advance and the actualization of its destined mission.

(Gold from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Midbar Shur, pp. 222- 227)

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