

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON VAYESHEV - CHANUKA 1 - 5760

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From: Shlomo Katz [SMTP: [skatz@torah.org](mailto:skatz@torah.org)]  
HAMAAYAN / THE TORAH SPRING EDITED BY SHLOMO KATZ  
Vayeishev-Chanukah

Sponsored by the Rozen and Donowitz families in memory of mother and grandmother,  
Rita Rozen

"And Reuven heard, and he saved him [Yosef] from their hand; he said, 'Let us not strike him mortally . . . Throw him into the pit in the wilderness . . . ' " (37:21-22)

The gemara (Shabbat 24a) states that this pit was home to snakes and scorpions. The halachah is that if a man falls into a pit full of snakes and scorpions, he is deemed dead and his widow may remarry. Yet, the Torah refers to Reuven's act as saving Yosef!

In contrast, Yehuda convinced his brothers to remove Yosef from the pit and to sell him into slavery. Yet, the gemara (Sanhedrin 6a) says that whoever praises Yehuda for this angers Hashem. Why?

R' Chaim of Volozhin z"l (1749-1821) explained: Reuven caused Yosef to be lowered into a pit full of snakes and scorpions, but the pit was in Eretz Yisrael. Yehuda saved Yosef's physical life, but he caused Yosef to be taken out of Eretz Yisrael. It is far better, said R' Chaim, to remain in Eretz Yisrael surrounded by snakes and scorpions than to live outside of Eretz Yisrael. (Quoted in the journal Yeshurun Vol. VI, p. 200)

"And Reuven heard, and he saved him [Yosef] from their hand; he said, 'Let us not strike him mortally . . . Throw him into the pit in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him' - intending to rescue him from their hand, to return him to their father." (37:21-22)

The midrash says (commenting on Shir Hashirim 7:14): "The dudaim/ jasmine flowers yield fragrance" - this refers to Reuven, who saved Yosef; 'and at our door are treats' - this refers to the light of Chanukah." What is the connection between Reuven's saving Yosef and Chanukah?

R' Yissachar Shlomo Teichtel z"l Hy"d (Slovakia; died 1945) explains: Numerous commentaries discuss the following famous question, known as the "Bet Yosef's question": If the Maccabees found a jug with enough oil to last for one day and the oil lasted for eight days, the miracle itself was seven days long. Why then is Chanukah celebrated for eight days?

One answer that is given (by R' David Halevi z"l, the "Taz") is that miracles always involve making something-out-of-something, not something-out-of-nothing. For example, we read in Melachim II (chapter 4) that the prophet Elisha caused a small amount of oil to fill dozens of jugs. He did not cause a miracle involving flour, bread or some other commodity because the widow did not have any of those things. However, because she had a few drops of oil, he could cause the oil to "multiply" miraculously.

Similarly, writes the Taz, in order for the oil to "multiply" and last for eight days, there had to be a drop left at the end of the first day. This means, in turn, that less than one day's supply of oil was consumed during the first day that the menorah burned. Thus, the miracle did last more than seven days.

Of course, continues R' Teichtel, Hashem is capable of bringing about a miracle that involves something-out-of-nothing. However, the Taz's point is that to whatever extent a miracle can be made to appear more natural, Hashem prefers that.

How do we know this? R' Teichtel answers: The gemara says that

B'S'Dhe pit into which Yosef was thrown was home to snakes and scorpions. How then was Reuven saving Yosef by throwing him into this pit? The answer is that Reuven was counting on Hashem to save Yosef. But, if Reuven was counting on Hashem, why did he make any effort to save Yosef? Let Hashem do it! The answer is that Reuven knew that Hashem prefers that miracles be lessened.

Now we see the connection between Reuven's saving Yosef and Chanukah. Why do we observe Chanukah for eight days, not seven? Because, as Reuven taught us, Hashem prefers that miracles be lessened, and from this we know that some oil was left over after the first day. (She'eilot U'teshuvot Mishneh Sachir: Orach Chaim, Mahadura Tinyana No. 24)

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From: [peninim@shemayisrael.com](mailto:peninim@shemayisrael.com) PENINIM ON THE TORAH BY  
RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM Parshas Vayeishev

These are the offspring of Yaakov: Yosef. (37:2)

The introductory sentence of "These are the offspring of Yaakov," suggests that the Torah is about to enumerate a long list of children. The Torah, however, proceeds to mention only one son - Yosef. The commentators offer a number of reasons for this. Rashi posits a reason that is somewhat questionable. He asserts that whatever happened to Yaakov, happened to Yosef. One example that he gives is that both were hated by their brothers - Yaakov by Eisav and Yosef by his brothers. The question that immediately confronts us is: How can we compare the two "hatreds"? Eisav's hatred toward Yaakov was driven by his evil streak, by his innate hatred of everything pure and holy. The tribes were tzaddikim whose "hatred" -- for want of a better term -- was motivated by idealism and grounded in halachah. While his brothers were ostensibly wrong in their assessment of Yosef, this is still no reason to compare their feelings toward Yosef to those of Eisav for Yaakov.

Horav Mordechai Gifter, Shlita, explains that Rashi is not comparing the actual hatreds, but rather the side effects and ultimate consequences of both hatreds. As a result of their brothers' animosity, both Yaakov and Yosef were forced to fend for themselves in such a manner that helped them to develop the strength to attain unimaginable heights. Yaakov was an "ish tam," a wholesome man, "yoshev ohalim," abiding in tents: this means that sitting in the bais ha'medrash, studying Torah, was his way of life. He knew nothing else. Eisav's hatred had forced him out of the study hall to spend twenty-two years with Lavan in an environment clearly antithetical to that of the yeshivah. While Yaakov may truly have possessed the potential to triumph in this challenging situation, only after he was compelled to accept the challenge did this potential achieve fruition. Yaakov was forced to leave home and access those hidden qualities of which he, under normal circumstances, would not have been aware. These qualities became active components in his personality and, subsequently, they appeared in his descendants.

Likewise, Yosef's brothers' hatred towards him effected an incredible change in his personality. He transformed from a sweet, complacent young man to a world leader. He was obliged to develop his hidden strengths and abilities to survive both physically and spiritually, climaxing in his ascension of the throne of Egypt as viceroy to Pharaoh. This ability to lead will be imparted to his descendant, our future leader, Moshiach ben Yosef.

They took Yosef's tunic, slaughtered a goatling, and dipped the tunic in the blood. (37:31)

The brothers' act of dipping the tunic in the blood holds great significance for us. The Ben Ish Chai says that we dip twice during the

Pesach Seder is in commemoration of the "two dippings" associated with the galus, exile. The exile began as a result of sinaas chinam, unwarranted hatred, between Yosef and his brothers. Thus, the dipping of Yosef's tunic in blood marked the first step of the exile. The redemption began when Klal Yisrael was commanded to dip a bundle of hyssop in the blood of the Korban Pesach and touch the lintel and two door posts with it. This dipping in blood, as the Jews were about to leave Egypt, initiated yetzias Mitzrayim, the exodus from Egypt. Horav Chaim Vitzal, zl, explains that the actual decree that Klal Yisrael would be enslaved for four hundred years originated at the Bris bein Ha'besarim, Covenant between the Parts. The fact that Egypt was to be the land of their exile and the extent of the affliction to which they were subjected however, was determined when the hatred of brother to brother caused them to dip the tunic in the blood. When Klal Yisrael together took a bundle of hyssop, symbolizing unity, and dipped it into the blood of the Korban Pesach, they understood that the key to redemption was - togetherness and unity. Unwarranted hatred led to the exile; unwarranted love will end it.

Horav Matisyahu Solomon, Shlita, cites the Meshech Chochmah in his commentary to Parashas Acharei Mos. He explains why when we recite Shemoneh Esrai on Yom Kippur, we close with the brachah, "Ki atah salchan l'Yisrael u'machalan l'shivtei Ye'shurun", "For You are the forgiver of Yisrael and the pardoner of the tribes of Yeshurun." We do not find an allusion to the shevatim, tribes, in any of our other prayers. Why is this connection specified in regard to the tefillah, prayer, of Yom Kippur? He explains that while the sin of the Golden-Calf is the source of Klal Yisrael's transgressions throughout the generations, this only applies to those sins that are "bein adam la'Makom," between man and G-d. Those sins that are "bein adam la'chaveiro," between man and his fellow man, have a different source - mechiras Yosef, the brothers' sale of Yosef. In accordance with the lofty spiritual level of the shevatim, the sale of Yosef indicated a deficiency that reflected itself in sinaas chinam among Jews throughout the generations. He proves that wherever Jews are failing in their brotherly love, Hashem exacts retribution from Klal Yisrael for their ancestors' "sin." Thus, when we supplicate Hashem on Yom Kippur, we ask that He forgive us for two sins - the Golden-Calf and the sale of Yosef. As long as there is unwarranted hatred among Jews, we must answer for the sin of mechiras Yosef. In addressing our persecution visa-vis the various blood libels that were leveled at us throughout history, Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl, suggests that in every bit of sheker, untruth, there is a bit of truth to maintain its credibility. What aspect of the blood libel could possibly be true? Rav Elchanan explains that the dipping of Yosef's tunic in blood is that bit of emes, truth, that has been sufficient to give credence to the blood libels throughout the generations. How incredible it is that after all these generations we still suffer as a result of that lack of brotherly love which destroyed the harmony of Yaakov Avinu's home! What we should ask ourselves is: Have things really changed since that tragic incident? Have we learned our lesson, or do we just pay lip service to the concept of achdus, unity? This may be one question which we just do not want to answer.

Pharaoh became angry with his two officers. And they dreamed a dream, both of them. And Yosef said unto them, "Do not interpretations belong to G-d? Tell it to me, I pray you." (40:2,5,8)

The Torah tells us that Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer and chief baker were both punished and incarcerated in the jail at the same time as Yosef. We are not told, however, what their sin was: What did they do that warranted this punishment? Chazal tell us that a fly was found in the goblet of wine that the cup-bearer offered to Pharaoh, and a stone was found in the bread prepared by the chief baker. Yosef interpreted their dreams to mean that the baker would die and the cup-bearer would be reinstated to his previous position. Undoubtedly, Yosef interpreted their

dreams through prophetic perception: Yet, there must have been some indication from their dreams that would have implied a positive direction for rendering an explanation for the cup-bearer's dream and a negative perception for the baker's dream. On the contrary, the cup-bearer's sin was greater than that of the baker. The cup-bearer should have noticed the fly floating on the surface of the wine. The baker could at least have attempted to excuse himself by saying that he could not have seen what was inside the bread.

Horav Yosef Tzvi Dunner, Shlita, comments that when one reads through the text of their dreams, it becomes apparent that Pharaoh's two chamberlains had disparate attitudes towards their positions. Their relative levels of devotion towards their ruler was, likewise, significantly different. People are inclined to dream at night what they think about during the day. When we peruse the cup-bearer's description of his daily endeavor, "And I took the grapes, pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I placed the cup in Pharaoh's palm," we note his total commitment to serving Pharaoh with reverence. His allegiance to Pharaoh was apparent from the way he depicted his work. His job was to bring wine to Pharaoh. Yet, we see the care he applies to its preparation from its very beginning on the vine! That is loyalty; that is devotion. So, he made an error - once; a grave error, but it was a single in the concept of tenure of faithfulness and loyalty. Such a person deserved another chance.

The baker's words also indicate his attitude - one very dissimilar from his counterpart, the cup-bearer. In the baker's dream, he saw "three wicker baskets were on my head." He did not dream about working in the fields, gathering the wheat, preparing the flour, and baking the bread. He saw everything prepared, ready to be served. He saw what he wanted to see. He did not care about the preparation of the bread. He simply wanted to serve the bread and be finished. Is it any wonder that a stone was found in the bread? Moreover, we see that the baskets were on his head - he did not care enough to hold them in his hands. Also, why would someone who is really concerned offer Pharaoh his bread in a wicker basket? Is not a king served on gold and silver? The dreams were the barometer by which Yosef determined each chamberlain's dedication to his position and his loyalty to the king. Only one who literally throws himself into his work, not anticipating special reward -- just simply out of a sense of commitment and work ethic -- will succeed.

Parashas Vayeshev is always read either on Shabbos Chanukah or the week before. There is a relationship between Chanukah and Parashas Vayeshev. We are confronted with the question: How did a small band of Jews triumph over the overwhelming odds that they faced? How did the "me'atim," few, overcome the "rabim," many, who were armed with all types of weaponry? Yet, they lost. How did this happen? Horav Eliyahu Schlesinger, Shlita, applies the above exposition to give greater meaning to the concept of "rabim b'yad me'atim." In the Talmud Chullin 92 Chazal assert that the dream of the vine is an analogy to Am Yisrael; the word "gefen," vine, represents Torah. Its clusters of grapes symbolize the tzaddikim, righteous Jews, of every generation.

The secret of Klal Yisrael's success and survival throughout the millennia has been our mesiras nefesh, total devotion to the point of self-sacrifice, for Torah and mitzvos. We were moser nefesh not to work on Shabbos, to keep kosher; to maintain family purity; and to see to it that our children were accorded a Jewish education. One who has such convictions will triumph over adversity and challenge, because Hashem will support him regardless of who or how powerful his enemy is. Our success is not dependent upon the size or strength of our army; it is consistent with our commitment and loyalty to Hashem. When we realize that our very lives are contingent upon our ability to carry out the ratzon, will, of Hashem, then we will do whatever is necessary to facilitate this success. Thus, the cup-bearer's dream has a far-reaching message.

Sponsored by Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Taragin & Family in memory of David ben Menachem Mendel z"l

From: Rabbi Yissocher Frand[SMTP:ryfrand@torah.org] "RavFrand"  
List - RABBI FRAND ON PARSHAS VAYEISHEV

This week's class is sponsored in part in commemoration of the eleventh Yartzheit of Samuel Rosenfield, Shmuel ben David, Brookline, MA. Dedicated by his family.

#### G-d Measures Out Punishment -- Exactly

The Torah tells us that when Yosef's brothers were about to sell him, they lifted their eyes and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites carrying spices to Egypt [Bereshis 37:25]. Rash"i points out that the reason the Torah went out of its way to tell us the nature of their cargo was to inform us of the reward that G-d prepares for the righteous. Normally, the Ishmaelites would be trafficking in foul smelling commodities, like oil. Why did these Ishmaelites have spices? In order that Yosef need not suffer on the long trip down to Egypt, G-d saw to it that this particular caravan would be carrying spices.

The sefer Zichron Meir raises a simple question on this line of reasoning. After all, where was Yosef headed? Yosef was not going on a vacation or a pleasure trip. Perhaps when on a pleasure trip, one can say that "half the fun is getting there". However, Yosef was going through a major life crisis. Yosef was on his way into slavery! He was on his way to prison! This is not a trip he would be enjoying at any rate. What is the point of going to jail in a "Lincoln Town Car"?

The answer -- and this is sometimes hard for us to accept -- is that when G-d decides that a person deserves a punishment, that punishment is measured down to the dimension of a hair's breadth. The punishment that a person receives -- if he is a righteous person -- will be to the millimeter and to the millisecond of what he needs. He will have no more suffering and no more discomfort than the Master of the World specifically ordains.

A person might have very unfortunate suffering. He might even think that in such a situation, "What difference is there, if he has one more minor ache or pain?" However, that is not the way G-d works.

For whatever reason, Yosef had to go down to Egypt and he had to be sold as a slave. He had to be thrown into jail. This was all terrible. But it was precisely measured out. Travelling in a smelly oil caravan was not part of Yosef's decreed punishment. Therefore Yosef traveled pleasantly.

The Talmud tells us [Chullin 7b] that a person does not even bang his finger unless it is so decreed from Above.

In next week's parsha, the Torah tells us that Yosef was 'rushed' out of the pit [41:14]. What does that mean? Today, when a person is released from prison, he can often remain there for what seems like an eternity until all the paperwork is completed. However, once Yosef's time came to leave the pit 'they hurried him out from the pit' -- not a second longer.

Sometimes it is difficult for us to imagine how a righteous person warrants such terrible suffering. We do not understand it. But the comforting fact is that nothing is just chance. We see from this Rash"i that G-d loves even the righteous person who is destined to suffer.

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Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm)  
THE WEEKLY HAFTORA BY RAV YEHUDA SHAVIV Haftara  
for Shabbat Channuka Zekharia 2:14  $\phi$  4:7

a. The content of the haftara chosen for Shabbat Channuka relates to the festival rather than the parsha. The connection is easily detected in the pasuk which speaks of "the golden menorah... and its

seven lights above it" (3:2)  $\phi$  lights obviously kindled with oil from the olive trees on the right and left of it. And the special mitzva we have on Channuka is none other than the kindling of lights in order to publicize the miracle performed at that time.

b. In the opening pesukim of the haftara the prophet brings the nation two messages: 1. "Behold, I come and I shall dwell among you"; 2. "And many nations shall join themselves to God on that day, and shall be unto Me a people."

Lest Bnei Yisrael fear that their own special status will be lost when the other nations also become a people unto God, the prophet once again declares, "and I shall dwell among you." And lest they fear that when many nations join themselves to God Eretz Yisrael will lose its designation as the land of (the nation) Israel, the prophet declares "God shall inherit Yehuda as His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again."

Channuka, more than any other time of the year, reminds us of the conflict within the nation itself, the civil war between religious loyalists who wished to preserve Judaism in its purity and Hellenists who were drawn to the gentile lifestyle and sought to introduce their foreign culture into Israel.

The spiritual root of this conflict (perhaps not consciously realized) may have lain in a mistaken understanding of the universalist ideal expressed by Zekharia at the time of the establishment of the Second Temple. They may have understood that the idea of many nations joining themselves to God implied a removal of all barriers and an end to a uniquely Jewish identity. The result of this distorted understanding was that the concept of many nations joining themselves to God was replaced with the idea of parts of God's nation joining themselves to the nations and their culture. Thus began the apparently inevitable conflict between the religious loyalists and the Hellenists.

But any conflict causes the opposing stands to become more extreme and for the opposition to become more marked. Such conflict leads to the creation of barriers between Israel and the nations such that no contact is possible, much less any influence. It is perhaps for this reason that during Channuka we read these pesukim which describe a vision of many nations joining themselves to God. This vision requires that some channel of communication and positive influence be kept open - a channel to the outside world, and certainly an internal channel between different sectors of the nation of Israel.

On the other hand, these pesukim also remind those with a universalist view that even when the vision is realized and many nations indeed join themselves to God, still the national uniqueness of Israel will remain and the nation will still dwell in the holy land.

c. Two leaders are mentioned in the course of this prophecy: one is Yehoshua, the Kohen Gadol  $\phi$  the religious- spiritual leader; the other is Zerubavel, the political- social leader. While the soiled clothes of the former are removed and he is dressed in festive garments, receiving a promise of Divine assistance if he fulfills his priestly duty in the Temple service and in the administration of justice, the latter is told that his leadership will be built and based not on might and not on power but by God's spirit. This presents us with a model of leadership: spiritual leadership alongside social leadership; the former by the Leviim and the latter by the sons of Yehuda.

But the days of Channuka are reminiscent of a different leadership model. At that time the leadership was not divided. Matityahu the Kohen was, by force of circumstance, both the social leader and the leader of the religious uprising. And this combination of priesthood and royalty continued among his descendants even when the circumstances no longer required it. And lest we think that this might represent the proper model, the prophet describes the model of divided leadership, teaching that this is in fact preferable.

In this context we are reminded of Ramban's harsh criticism in

his commentary on the pasuk, "the sceptre shall not depart from Yehuda" (Bereishit 49:6), finding two faults with the example set by the Chashmonaim: "And this was the punishment of the Chashmonaim who ruled during the Second Temple period, for they were supremely righteous and were it not for them, Torah and mitzvot would have been forgotten. But nevertheless a most serious punishment was meted out to them, for the four sons of the elder Chashmonai, the righteous ones who ruled one after the other, with all their bravery and their success, fell to their enemy by the sword... because they ruled despite not being from the seed of Yehuda and the house of David, and they did away with the legislative tribe altogether... They may also have sinned in ruling because they were kohanim and as such were commanded 'Guard your priesthood'... They should not have ruled, but should rather have kept to performing the Divine service."

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From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@virtual.co.il] \* TORAH WEEKLY \* Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshat Vayeshev

Residential Property

"And Yaakov dwelled (vayeshev) in the land of his father's residing (m'gurei aviv)." (37:1)

There's a big difference between renting an apartment and buying it. When you buy, you think in terms of permanent and sometimes expensive re-modeling -- the best carpets and furnishings you can afford. A fitted kitchen with black marble work surfaces. But when you rent, you reckon you could get by with a lick of paint.

When you buy, you dwell. When you rent, you reside.

If you want to make money writing a thesaurus for the Holy Tongue, I'd advise you to keep your day job. There are no synonyms in the Hebrew. If you look in an English thesaurus, you'll probably find dwelling and residing listed as synonyms. In Hebrew, however, every word has a unique meaning.

The name of this week's Parsha is "Vaye-shev" -- "and he dwelled." The verb lay-shev connotes permanence. "La-gur" -- to reside -- means a temporary stay.

"And Yaakov dwelled (vayeshev) in the land of his father's residing (m'gurei aviv)."

Yaakov dwelled where his father had merely resided. Yitzchak recognized, as no one else, that this world is no more than a corridor, that we're all just passing through on the way to the palace.

This is not to say, G-d forbid, that Yaakov was overly enamored of this world, but that his lack of attachment to this world did not compare to that of his father. That minute bias has been amplified down the generations. Yaakov wanted to dwell in tranquility where his father Yitzchak had only resided. As a result, Yaakov is subjected to the heart-wrenching loss of his favorite son, Yosef.

Yosef started off his career as a dreamer on a grand scale: He saw the sun and the moon and the stars bowing to him. Later he is reduced to interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh's chief wine chamberlain -- who forgets Yosef as soon as he is released from prison.

Just as it was in Egypt, so it has been throughout Jewish history in exile. The great-great grandchildren of Israel dream their dreams, be it in Russia, Germany or America. We want to change the world. We attach ourselves to every new "ism" that comes along. Show me any idealistic movement in the last two hundred years, and I'll show you a Jew, or many Jews, behind it -- and in the forefront of it.

How is it that we Jews allow ourselves to dream these dreams? Because we start to feel ourselves very comfortable in our alien surroundings. We start to see ourselves as dwellers where our parents

only saw themselves as residents. Look at every one of these movements, from the Bolshevik revolution in Russia to the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties in the United States. From the Hippies to the Yippies. They all have one thing strangely in common -- the "wine-chamberlain" forgets us. The movement has sudden and total amnesia as to who it was that started the whole thing. That same movement turns around and accuses the Jews of being the very enemy they are trying to eradicate.

A Jew prays three times a day. Probably the most difficult of those prayers is Mincha, the afternoon prayer. In the morning, the day is just beginning. Before the world fills with noise and bustle, we have space in our minds to contemplate the Eternal and the Unchanging. At night, the world is winding down and we can catch our breath and talk to G-d in peace and tranquility. But in the middle of the afternoon, when we are engrossed in worldly affairs, it takes a real wrench to step out of this world and speak to G-d.

Maybe that's one of the reasons we start off the Mincha prayer service -- the service that Yitzchak instituted -- with the words "Happy are those who dwell in Your House." Happy is the person who knows that his permanent residence is G-d's house, in the spiritual world, and that this world is no more than a rented apartment.

Sources: \*Kli Yakar, Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin

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From: Kenneth Block[SMTP:kenblock@worldnet.att.net] Subject: NCYI WEEKLY DIVREI TORAH - Vayeshev

Parshat Vayeshev Shabbat Chanukah

RABBI MOSHE GORELIK Young Israel of North Bellmore, NY

A nineteenth century writer encapsulated the distinction between the Judaic and Greek cultures with the following observation. The Greek idolized the holiness of beauty whereas the Jew delighted in the beauty of holiness.

To the Greek mind the material substance acquires a supreme value. The artistic beauty of a material object evokes an aesthetic appreciation and a mundane, hedonistic experience. The Greek contribution to philosophic thought is majestic. Such names as Plato and Aristotle are historically acclaimed. Their works are intellectual oracles whose impact on subsequent history of thought whether among Jewish or non-Jewish philosophers is immeasurable. At the same time, the aesthetic value of life predominated as is evidenced by their artistic endeavors and literary achievements.

The Greek poet, Pindar summarized the Greek view as follows: Beauty, who creates all sweet delights for men brings honour at will, and makes the false, also, seem true time and time again

On the other hand, the Jew focused on the spiritual and moral essence of life. It is a fact that the Jewish tradition did not negate the aesthetic experience. On the contrary, there is much material in Tanach, Talmud and other religious tracts that highlight the love of beauty. The Jew, however, envisioned primarily the beauty in the spiritual experience. Judaism is the great romance of the Jew with HaShem. The Jew is captivated by the beauty of this holy vision. For example, the mitzva is not a ritual or a ceremonial rite. It is a religious event radiating a holy beauty.

The Chanuka lights are reminders of the clash between the two cultures. Attempts had been made to modify the values and to merge the two cultures into one cultural entity. The experiment failed. Consequently, a bitter conflict ensued between the Syrians and the Judeans. The cultural red line had to be drawn where upon a life and death struggle followed. The non culturally assimilated Jew was compelled to preserve the integrity of Israel's legacy.

A Jew may adopt and adapt the wisdom of the world at large in a manner that would not lead to the dissolution of the essential character of Judaic values. Seemingly contradictory passages in traditional texts support this view. In one passage the Greek translation of the Torah was glorified. Greek was deemed as a language of extraordinary beauty. In another instance the Sages looked upon the translation as a calamity similar to the event of the Golden Calf. These passages essentially are not contradictory.

The Jew may enjoy the aesthetic experiences and adopt the truths of others. Conflict arises, however, when the fundamental value system is compromised. For many Jews the Septuagint became the mainstay of their faith. It was a Judaism in translation. A translation cannot convey the nuances and shades of meaning associated with the original text. For instance, an English translation of the Chumash or of the Talmud fails to transmit the inner spirit of the original text. A translation is useful in that it assists the student in defining words and guides him or her in reading that text correctly. It must not, however, supplant the source. A language possesses cultural associations. Thus a translation is a culturally colored lens that fails to convey the essence of the subject matter. Consequently, the boundary between sets of values become blurred.

To avert this pitfall the Chanuka lights proclaim an important message. That message is Torah. The symbolism of light is knowledge and in a specific sense it refers to Torah. The source for this symbolism is the pasuk in Sefer Mishlei 6:23 (Book of Proverbs) "For the commandment is a lamp, the teaching (Torah) is the light." The halacha underscores the significance of the lights by suggesting there are three dimensions of the Chanuka mitzva. The third dimension is called mehadrin min hamehadrin. The populace generally assume that this is a gastronomical guideline. This is not so. Mehadrin min hamehadrin is a value applicable solely to Torah learning. What antidote other than Torah can there be to neutralize the effects of cultural values antithetical to Torah? This message is proclaimed clearly by the Chanuka lights.

To illustrate the supremacy of Torah learning one should turn to the second chapter of the creation story. "... with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and bad." (Breishit 2:9) How few have grasped the true meaning of this simple description. Chazal saw deeply in these words. "Where was the tree of knowledge" they asked. In fact when Chava (Eve) addressed the serpent she said "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden HaShem has said you shall not eat of it" (Ibid 3:3). Evidently that, too, was in the midst of the garden. How can both be in the same place? Chazal gave an intriguing answer. "The tree of life was inside of the tree of knowledge." Chazal went to the heart of the issue. For the Jew the tree of life is within the tree of knowledge. When the tree of knowledge is cultivated and nurtured the tree of life, too, will thrive and bear fruits of enduring value. When the tree of Jewish knowledge shrivels the tree of Jewish life will wither and dry up. Torah learning, however, must not be conceived merely as an intellectual exercise. It is the centrality of the Jewish religious experience in that it is the substratum of emuna, faith. The words of Maran HaRav Joseph B. Soloveitchik, z"tl underscore this point.

"However, talmud Torah is more than an intellectual performance. It is a total, all-encompassing and all embracing involvement - mind and heart. Will and feeling, the center of the human personality, emotional man, logical man, volunteristic man - all of them are involved in the study of Torah. Talmud Torah is basically for me an ecstatic experience, in which one meets G-d. And again I want to say that whatever I told you now is not just mysticism or due to my mystical inclinations; it isn't so. The Gemara says so. Chazal have equated talmud Torah with revelation and the great event, the drama of Jewish living is reenacted, restaged and relived every time a Jew opens up a Gemara..."

Baruch HaShem, a renaissance of Jewish learning is taking place. Daf Yomi programs, and proliferation of shiurim on a vast array of topics and issues are manifestations of a profounder respect for and commitment to Torah learning. Men and women are participating in numbers unimagined just decades ago. Torah learning girds the individual to cope with the challenges of the day. One need not shy away from the outside world including the university arena, business world or professional sphere of activity. There are hosts of moral religious and ethical challenges. Torah learning coupled with Torah behavior invigorates Jewish self esteem and enriches the spiritual make up. When one is thusly energized he or she is able to respond to the challenges and, yet, not blur the moral boundaries.

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From:jschwartz@yml.yu.edu Subject: INTERNET CHABURAH -- Parshas Vayeshev/chanukah 1 (fwd) [RABBI JONATHAN SCHWARTZ]

Prologue: The youngest often appears most loved. Part may be due to the pleasure of seeing the end to Tzaar Gidul Banim, part coming from parental recognition that they can handle the child and part due to the fact that the child may help the parent remain feeling young. Any way you choose to look, it is normal for a parent to appear to favor the youngest.

If Yosef had been the absolute youngest, perhaps his brothers would not have been as jealous as they appear to be at the beginning of this week's Parsha. Perhaps they would not have sold him. But Binyamin was the youngest and not Yosef. How then, did the brothers see Yaakov offering more to Yosef as a youngest and got jealous ("Ki Ben Zekunim Hu Lo")?

Rashi cites Onkolos who notes that the brothers' jealousy stemmed from the fact that Yosef was gaining learning from his father (Ben Zekunim equals Ben she'lomad Mi'Zekanim). Rashi notes that Yaakov shared the Torah that he learned with Shem V'Ever with Yosef to which the brothers got jealous. Leaving the brothers' jealousy for a moment, how could Yaakov elect to share the Torah with one child and not the others? Were they no less obligated? Also, Yaakov learned Torah from many other places (The Avos and Imahos for starters). Did he only share Toras Shem V'Ever with Yosef? Was he presenting a fragmented picture Chalilah?

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky ztl. (Emes L'Yaakov) notes that our two questions answer each other. Yaakov clearly recognized that he had an obligation to teach all his children all of the Torah. However, each Helek of Torah had to be taught to each child in its proper time. Yaakov saw the Torah he gleaned from Shem V'Ever as relating to the Jew in exile. When Yaakov was on his way to travel to Lavan, he first studied this part of Torah with Shem V'Ever. His studies served him well as he was properly prepared to deal with the responsibilities of the Galus, of the challenges of Lavan and of raising a family in the light of the foreign culture. He saw that Yosef was going to be in the situation of needing to know Toras HaGalus long before the other children were going to need it. Therefore, Yaakov instructed Yosef in this section of Torah while Yosef continued to receive regular instruction, like all of his brothers, in the Torah they were learning. The brothers, seeing Yosef gaining extra learning time, feared that he might be chosen to continue the Mesorah alone, and were jealous - not of his favor or his young status but of the Torah he was learning and would need to utilize long before the others would.

When we are among the nations of the world, internal strength is needed to remain close to Hashem. With the proper training in Toras HaGalus we need not succumb to the foreign culture and exchange our religious values for it. The Nes of Chanukah reminds us of the needs to remain faithful even in the face of external threat. The true miracle affected all Jews, seemingly requiring them all to give praise to Hashem. This week's Chaburah looks at the issues surrounding the praise of the Chanukah miracle. It is entitled:

Hallel on Chanukah: Who Sings the Praise?

The Mishna (Sukka 38a) teaches that one who is unable to read Hallel can have his servant or his wife or a youngster read the words before him and he can repeat it after them in order to fulfill his Hallel obligations. Rashi there explains that the Minhag of the people was to have one individual read the Hallel and be Motzee the others. The people enumerated in the Mishna are not obligated in the reading of Hallel and as such cannot be Motzee the man. Based upon this Gemara we see that women are not obligated to recite Hallel on Yomim Tovim like Sukkos and Pesach.

This Gemara would explain the Hallel obligation on Yomim Tovim and would excuse women during those times. However, what would be the Halacha concerning the recitation of Hallel on Chanukah? Rav Yerucham Perlow (Sefer Hamitzvos L'RaSag, Aseh 59-60) quotes Rav Saadia Gaon as being of the position that the recitation of Hallel on Chanukah is a DeOrisa obligation. As such, it would be no different than the obligation to recite Hallel during Sukkos or Pesach and women would be exempt from that Mitzva as well. Rav Avraham Ben harambam disagrees (See Ma'asei Nissim Shoresh Alef).

However, one could ask why we do not obligate the women to recite Hallel for they too, were saved by the miracle of Chanukah (Af Hein HaYu B'oso HaNes)? The answer, says Tosfos, stems from the fact that the requirements of Af Hein, apply only to obligate women in Mitzvos that are Drabbonon like the 4 cups or Megilla (See Pesachim 108b). Mitzvos that are Deoirsa, that affected women too, they remain exempt from (like eating in a Sukka even though the Jewish women also benefitted from the clouds of glory - See Sukka 28b). Hence, if we assume that the requirement to recite Hallel on Chanukah is biblical in nature, women's obligation in the recitation is none.

The problem begins when we recognize that Hallel MAY BE Rabbinically required. The Gemara in Berachos (14a) suggests that the entire Mitzva of Hallel recitation is only Mi'drabbanon. Certainly on Chanukah, where the whole Yom Tov is derived Rabbinically, the Hallel cannot be more than Rabbinic in nature. The Ramban (Hasagos to Sefer Hamitzvos Shoresh 1, 10b) agrees that Hallel on Chanukah is D'rabbanon. Rashi (Ta'anis 28b), the Meiri, Tashbatz, Chasam Sofer (Yoreh Deah Teshuvah, 233), and Sha'agas Aryeh (49) agree. That being the case, perhaps women ARE obligated to recite candles on Chanukah in the same manner that they are obligated to light candles - Af Hein hayu B'oso HaNes.

Still, the Rambam ( Hil. Chanukah 3:14) concludes that the recitation of Hallel by women on Chanukah is clearly not required. Tosfos (Sukkah, 38a) implies that if the Hallel is recited as a result of being a part of a Nes, women too, are obligated to recite it. Rav Refael of Volozhin (Shut Toras Refael, 75) notes the seeming disagreement between Rambam and Tosfos. Based upon this argument, Rav Ovadiah Yosef (Shut Yichaveh Daas, I, 78) determines that the Halacha follows the Rambam. Yet one could ask why the Rambam requires women to light the candles on Chanukah but exempts them from Hallel recitation? To that, Rav Ovadiah suggests the answer lies within an understanding of the two obligations. The requirement of lighting candles has a component of Pirsumei Nissa involved in it. (It is this Pirsumei Nissa that Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach [Minchas Shlomo II, p. 214] states allows us to light candles in Shul with a Beracha). This component of Pirsumei nissa requires one to publically declare and be involved in the Nes. The obligation of Hallel, which also has a component of Pirsumei Nissa (see Berachos 14a), is a declaration of thanks that is primarily between man and Hashem. This declaration even when required on a DeOraisa level (like Sukkos) exempts the women so the Rabbinic enactment must be like the Biblical precedent (see Pesachim 116b).

L'halacha, Rav Ovadiah paskins like the Rambam. Therefore he notes that even sephardic women who wish to recite Hallel during Shachris should do so only without a Beracha. He adds that Ashkenazic women would recite Hallel with a Beracha as their male counterparts do on Rosh Chodesh, but that they remain unobligated in Chanukah Hallel recitation. Rav Wozner (Shut Shevet haLevi, I, P. 280, Siman 683) notes that he too, recognizes that the issue boils down to the aforementioned Machlokes between the Rambam and Tosfos. As a precaution he advises that there is place to obligate women to recite Hallel on Chanuka. (for further analysis, see Minchas Shlomo II, p. 214).

Battala News Mazal Tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Akiva Resnick upon their recent marriage.

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[www.jpost.com/1999/Supplements/Shabbat/shabbat.xcgi](http://www.jpost.com/1999/Supplements/Shabbat/shabbat.xcgi)  
Shabbat Shalom By SHLOMO RISKIN

"And Judah said unto his brethren: 'What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?' " (Gen. 37:26)

A Jew's identity - at least as far as the word "Jew" is concerned - arises from the fact that many of us are descended from the tribe of Judah. To understand what it is that allows a Jew to survive despite all the forces against him, we ought to turn to the founder of this line, Judah himself. Father Jacob-Israel identified his uniqueness, granting him - and not his brother Reuven - the right of leadership: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah... and unto him will gather the community of nations." (Gen. 49:10) Yet at the moment of truth, when the jealous brothers attack Joseph, Reuven's words appear to be the more courageous. Reuven steps into his role as firstborn and aborts the brothers' evil design: "Let us not kill him... Shed no blood... Cast him into this pit... but lay no hand upon him..." (37:21) Reuven's intention was to return afterwards and personally restore Joseph to their father. But the text records that Judah sights a caravan of Ishmaelite traders, and suggests that there is no point in murdering Joseph when they could just as easily earn money from his sale: "What profit (ma betza) is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh..." (37:26) We then read how Reuven returns, finds an empty pit, and rents his garments, crying "The child is not, and I, whither shall I go?" If we compare the responses of Reuven and Judah, it is Reuven who risks his brothers' wrath when he stops them from committing murder, and devises an alternative plan which - albeit dangerous - might allow him to effect a rescue. Judah, on the other hand, speaks like a cool opportunist. Nevertheless, Father Jacob chooses Judah as the recipient of the birthright, rejecting Reuven: "...unstable as water, you will no longer be first..." (49:4) Our question is, why Judah and not Reuven? Let's examine Judah from two perspectives. One way of interpreting the text is that Judah was wrong in citing the profit motive, and had Jacob's blessings been given the following week, Reuven would have received the birthright. But Judah continued to grow and evolve. He is the archetypal baal-tshuva, a classic penitent. With Tamar we see the

greatness of a person able to admit his mistake, despite the shame involved in revealing that he had gotten his daughter-in-law pregnant. And when he offers himself as a slave to the Vizier of Egypt in exchange for Benjamin's release, we see just how far Judah has travelled. Jacob's words regarding his fourth son, "...from the prey, my son, you have gone up..." (49:9) confirms the ascent of Judah from a jealous venality to altruistic heroism. And perhaps it is just this ability to redeem one's past, not to be victimized by fate but to rise above it, which made Judah the most worthy namesake for his descendants. But there is a second way to view Judah. Perhaps he is not so much a penitent as a shrewd realist who understands the art of compromise. As far as Judah is concerned, leaving Joseph in the pit is tantamount to sentencing him to death. When Judah sees the Ishmaelites, he seizes the opportunity to save his brother. In order to be heard by his angry brothers, he conceals his pure-hearted motivation under the guise of a profit-making venture. Reuven may have had the best intentions, but intentions alone are not enough. Judah understood that his brothers had murder in their hearts, and therefore couched his plea in accordance with the politicians' "art of the possible." Since Judah was effective in this first test of leadership, he becomes worthy of receiving the birthright. These opposite interpretations of Judah are echoed in a later talmudic debate surrounding the attitude of our sages towards arbitration, using a cognate term for compromise - botzea - which is derived from betza (profit). R. Meir insists that it is forbidden to compromise, that the law must express absolute purity. Indeed, he who blesses the compromiser - Judah, who used the word betza - is to be scorned by God (Psalms 10:3). Clearly, these sages are telling us that Judah's statements in our Torah portion are duplicitous, a comparison being made between his speech and a man pronouncing a blessing over stolen cake. How can Judah have declared "he is our brother, our flesh" and then turn around and sell him?! Judah the crook is attempting to whitewash his crime with a blessing?! But we go on to learn R. Judah b. Korcha's definitive statement, "Settlement by arbitration is a meritorious act (mitzva livtzo'a)..." From this perspective, Judah must be praised for his wisdom and even granted the birthright. We even find halachic decisors taking two views regarding the question of making a blessing over "forbidden" food. After all, one ought at least thank the Almighty for one's pleasure, even though Jewish law forbids us to eat the cheeseburger in the first place! I remember how, many years ago, a 14-year-old girl told me that she was the opposite of most Jews she knew: in those days many Jews kept kosher at home and ate non-kosher food on the outside. However, she ate only kosher outside the home, but had to make certain compromises when she ate at her parents, who were not willing to keep a kosher kitchen. I ruled that she ought to make the proper blessings even when eating at home. Today she is one of the most effective "rebbezins" in North America. The truth is that you have to do the best you can, and half a loaf is better than none. As the Kotzker Rebbe taught, the greatest enemy of the good is perfection.

Shabbat Shalom

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From: Calendar[SMTP:Calendar@Aish.edu] <http://www.aish.edu/calendar/chanukah>  
"CHANUKAH RECIPES"

POTATO LATKES INGREDIENTS: 5 large potatoes, peeled 1 large onion 3 eggs 1/3 cup flour 1 tsp. salt 1/4 tsp. pepper 3/4 cup oil for frying

DIRECTIONS: Grate potatoes and onion on the fine side of the grater (or in a food processor, or in a blender with a little water). Strain grated potatoes and onion through a colander, pressing out excess water. Add eggs, flour, and seasoning. Mix well. Heat 1/2 cup oil in 10-inch skillet. Lower flame and place 1 large tablespoon of batter at a time into hot sizzling oil, and fry on one side for approximately 5 minutes until golden brown. Turn over and fry on other side for 2-3 minutes. Remove from pan, and place on paper towels to drain excess oil. Continue with remaining batter until used up, adding more oil when necessary. Serve with applesauce, sour creme or sugar. (From: "Spice and Spirit," by Lubavitch Women's Cookbook Publications)

DOUGHNUTS ("SUFGANIYOT") INGREDIENTS: 2 oz yeast 1 cup warm water 1/2 cup sugar 1 tsp. vanilla 1/2 cup margarine, melted 3 eggs 5 cups flour jelly for filling powdered sugar DIRECTIONS: Mix all ingredients into a soft dough. Let rise for 2 hours. Punch down

and roll out. Cut into 3-inch rounds. Fill half the rounds with jelly, and wet the edges. Top with another circle and seal well. Let rise at least 20 minutes. Fry in very hot oil. Lift out with a slotted spoon and drain. Dust with powdered sugar. (From "Adventures in Bubby Irma's Kitchen," by Irma Charles, Targum Press)

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From: RABBI NOSON WEISZ [SMTP:NWeisz@aish.edu] Subject: MAYANOT - Vayeshev - What's In A Dream? PARSHAT VAYESHEV "And he settled ."

"What's in a Dream?" by Rabbi Nason Weisz

One of the best known and most moving parts of the Yom Kippur liturgy recounts the story of the Ten Martyrs:

The Roman conqueror, presumably Titus, summoned the most prominent rabbis of the generation and asked them to answer a question in accordance with Jewish law, namely: "What is the proper punishment for someone who kidnaps a Jew and sells him into slavery?"

Of course, they ruled that such a person was liable to suffer the death penalty according to the rules of the Torah.

Titus then informed them that he would execute them all to expiate for the sale of Joseph by his ten brothers.

According to the story, the rabbis were not shaken by this edict. They politely informed him that they would give him their response in a few days, and they sent one of their number, R'Ishmael, the High Priest, up to heaven to ask if it was indeed decreed by God that they should give their lives to atone for the sale of Joseph. Up in heaven, Elijah informed R'Ishmael that this truly was heaven's decree. And so, they duly submitted to martyrdom.

Titus later explained his rationale for why he chose these ten -- there was no one to equal them as a group throughout Jewish history in spiritual merit except the brothers of Joseph themselves. They were thus deemed the most suitable candidates to suffer execution in their place.

This week's Torah portion relates that seemingly inexplicable event -- the sale into slavery of Joseph by his brothers -- leading us to ask: How could ten people on such a lofty spiritual plane have been guilty of kidnapping a brother and selling him into slavery?

The key to understanding what happened is to be found in the realm of dreams.

The jealousy between the brothers hits the boiling point when Joseph recounts a dream of his in which sheaves of wheat belonging to his eleven brothers bow to the sheaf of wheat belonging to him. Nachmanides points out that Joseph believed that his dream was prophetic. Twenty-two years after recounting it, he forced his brothers to go home and bring Benjamin back with them to Egypt to make sure that the dream of the sheaves was fulfilled to the last letter. Eleven sheaves had to bow to his one sheaf, and that meant that Benjamin had to bow as well.

But when he first told them his dream, the brothers didn't buy that it was Divinely-inspired. All they saw was an obnoxious teenager with visions of grandeur. To them it seemed that the Esau-Jacob story was repeating itself. Just like his father before him, the aging patriarch was focusing his affection on the wrong son, the one who only desired to rule and would not cooperate. In their eyes, Joseph posed a threat to the budding nation of Israel that they were meant to jointly bring into being.

As far as the brothers were concerned, Joseph was deluded. A person who thinks that his dreams are Divinely-inspired can be a truly dangerous man -- a person who believes he represents God is capable of the greatest acts of cruelty; indeed, the greatest crimes of history were committed in the name of God. They had to do something about that:

"Look! That dreamer is coming! So now, come and let us kill him, and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, "A wild beast devoured him." Then we shall see what will become of his dreams.' [Genesis 37:19]

Obviously, Joseph was a very intelligent person who was quite capable of appreciating the potential animosity that would result from

relating his dreams to his brothers, yet Joseph felt duty bound to recount them. As he believed his dreams to be prophetic, he felt obliged to share the message they contained with his brothers, regardless of the cost. A prophet is not allowed to suppress his prophecy. (See Talmud, Sanhedrin, 89a.) And of course, Joseph was right -- his dreams were indeed prophetic.

This was not the only aspect of dreams where Joseph demonstrated his expertise. Joseph was also unparalleled in his ability to interpret the dreams of others. First he interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's two ministers, and finally Pharaoh's own dreams and thus he attained greatness in Egypt.

Dreams occur in a part of the mind known in Hebrew as the *koach hadimyon* or "imagination." We human beings are generally not in control of this faculty. The subject of our imaginings usually represent our subconscious desires, the expression of which must be suppressed in everyday behavior and only allowed the freedom to roam in the world of our fantasies. Dreams, movies, novels and plays are the venues for these fantasies, and they are a very important part of modern culture.

Joseph's brothers did not regard his dreams as prophecies. As far as they knew it, Joseph merely had a dream, an expression of his subconscious desire for superiority. But Joseph contended that he was in perfect control of his imagination, and that this was totally dedicated to Divine service. If he had a dream it was a message from God and not a fantasy projected by his subconscious.

In this regard Joseph was highly unusual, because generally speaking man lost the power to direct his imagination at the time Adam committed the first sin. The physical symbol of this loss is the lack of conscious control over the sexual organs. These organs are a constant reminder of man's descent, and a constant source of embarrassment. That is why they are invariably concealed except in the most primitive cultures. As we learned earlier:

"And the woman . took of its fruit and ate; and she gave to her husband with her and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked; and they sewed together a fig leaf and made themselves aprons. [Genesis 3:6]

Why were they suddenly embarrassed after eating the fruit when they had not been before? Before the sin, the entire human body was transparent to the soul, but all that changed when death came into the world. Death is a phenomenon of the body, not of the soul. Only the body, which lost its soulful quality, perishes. By virtue of the sin, the body became opaque to the inner spirit, leaving only the face as a gateway to what is within.

But while the body no longer reflects the soul, it does not embarrass man *per se*. Only the sexual organs embarrass man, because they are the only part of the human anatomy that slipped out of man's control. The sexual organs behave with total autonomy from man's intelligence, reacting against his will, and without the slightest regard to the appropriateness of the moment or the relationship. They are directed by man's fantasy and imagination which are beyond man's conscious control.

Jacob corrected the sin of Adam and regained control over his imagination. The beauty of Jacob was the beauty of Adam before his sin. (See Talmud Bava Mezia 84a.) Joseph inherited this attribute of Jacob.

Joseph's control over his imagination turned him into the master of dreams. His dreams did not reflect uncontrollable fantasies, because his imagination was in his rational control, just like his intelligence. He was able to tell, through the power of his reason, whether the projections of the imagination were in tune with outside reality. Thus, he totally understood the dreams of others and could accurately state what portion of a dream reflected reality and what part was pure fantasy.

The power to subdue his imagination to follow the dictates of reason also gave him control over his primal urge. One of the famous stories of Genesis is Joseph's successful resistance of the advances of his master's

wife -- a Biblical example of sexual abuse -- which landed him in prison, and made her the eternal model for the spitefulness of "the woman scorned."

As we learn in this week's Torah portion:

Then there was an opportune day when he (Joseph) entered the house to do his work . [Genesis 39:11]

According to one view in the Talmud (Sotah 36b) Joseph's resistance had cracked and the "work" he came to do was to yield to the woman's advances. But then the visage of his father appeared to him, saying that if he consorted with her, his name would not be worthy to appear with those of his brothers on the High Priest's breastplate. When Joseph heard that he would be forfeiting his standing as a building block of the Jewish people, he strengthened his resolve and resisted her importunities. (See Rashi.)

Joseph's imagination reminded him in time who he was by drawing his father's picture in his mind's eye at the crucial moment.

Most of us tend to get carried away by the attractive image that others present, and associate ourselves with it. This mistaken identification allows us to do things that do not square with our real selves. The performance of such deeds leads to further confusion, until our sense of self becomes too fuzzy to provide us with clear guidance away from other things that are inconsistent with our deepest aims. But Joseph did not make this mistake.

Rabbi Hutner Zt'l, a famous Jewish scholar who was a Holocaust survivor and who passed away a few years back, used to say that it was from this aspect that Joseph was considered a patriarch of the Jewish people. A young man all alone in a foreign culture, he nevertheless successfully resisted the temptation of mingling with outsiders, even in the face of cruel rejection by his own Jewish family. Joseph is the Jewish bulwark against intermarriage. The Jewish people spent 210 years in Egypt. They had no Torah, no commandments. All they had was their sense of being descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who left them with a tradition that God had promised to deliver them from Egypt and send them a leader who would take them back to Israel. Yet through their entire sojourn, there was only a single case of intermarriage. (See Shmos Raba, 1:28.)

This unbelievable strength was the legacy of Joseph. It is the very heart of Jewish nationhood, and how we survived all our exiles, especially the first one in Egypt. It was Joseph who prepared the way for us in Egypt, it is he who set up our living arrangements there. This is why Israel is called "Joseph's remnant." (See Amos 5:15.)

Many centuries later, facing the millennia of Roman exile, in desperate need of the bulwark against intermarriage and assimilation that the power of Joseph provides, Israel had to atone for the mistake of this tragic incident, and reawaken Joseph's genius among the Jewish people. Hence the story of the Ten martyrs we read on the Day of Atonement. It is ironic that the agent for bringing about the martyrdom that would arouse the sleeping spirit of Joseph was the Roman conqueror himself.

Today, pretty much all segments of the Jewish people are in agreement that the primary threat to Jewish survival facing our people is intermarriage and assimilation. We need to reawaken Joseph's spirit once again. We need to rededicate our imagination to God. We need Jewish fantasies.

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From: Yated USA[SMTP:yated-usa@ttec.com]

HALACHA DISCUSSION: SHABOS CHANUKAH BY RABBI DANIEL NEUSTADT

Lighting Chanukah candles on erev Shabbos and on motzaei Shabbos entails halachos that do not apply on weekday nights. The following is a summary of the special halachos that apply to Shabbos Chanukah. Preparations: If possible, Friday's Minchah should be davened before

lighting Chanukah candles(1). There are two reasons for davening Minchah first: 1) The afternoon Tamid sacrifice, which corresponds to our Minchah service, was always brought before the lighting of the Menorah in the Beis ha-Mikdash(2); 2) Davening Minchah after lighting Chanukah candles appears contradictory, since Minchah "belongs" to Friday, while the Chanukah candles "belong" to Shabbos(3). But if no early minyan is available, then it is better to light first and daven with a minyan afterwards(4). The oil or candles should be able to burn for at least one hour and forty-five minutes(5). If the oil and candles cannot possibly burn that long, one does not fulfill the mitzvah even b'dieved, according to some opinions. Enough oil (or long enough candles) to burn for at least one hour and forty-five minutes must be placed in the menorah before it is lit. If one neglected to put in enough oil and realized his error only after lighting the menorah, he may not add more oil. He must rather extinguish the flame, add oil, and then re-kindle the wick. The blessings, however, are not repeated(6). One who does not have enough oil for all the wicks to burn for an hour and forty-five minutes must make sure that at least one light has enough oil to burn that long(7). [If there is enough oil for only five lights to burn for the required length of time instead of the six that are required on Friday night this year, for example, some poskim maintain that only one should be lit, while others hold that five should be lit(8).] Since it is customary in most homes that children under bar-mitzvah light Chanukah candles, too, this custom should be observed on erev Shabbos as well. Preferably, the child's menorah should also have enough oil (or long enough candles) to burn an hour and forty-five minutes. If, however, it is difficult or impractical to do so, a child may light with the blessings even though his lights will not last for the full length of time(9). The menorah should be placed in a spot where opening or closing a door [or window] will not fan or extinguish the flame(10). A guest who is eating and sleeping over, lights at the home of his host even if his own home is in the same city. Preferably, he should leave his home before plag ha-Minchah(11). The time of lighting on Erev Shabbos: All preparations for Shabbos should be completed before Chanukah candles are lit so that all members of the household - including women and children - are present at the lighting(12). There are two points to remember about lighting Chanukah candles on Friday afternoon: 1) Chanukah candles are always lit before Shabbos candles; 2) Chanukah candles are lit as close as possible to Shabbos. The procedure, therefore, is as follows: L'chatchillah, Chanukah candles are lit immediately before lighting Shabbos candles. B'dieved, or under extenuating circumstances, they may be lit at any time after plag ha-Minchah(13). Depending on individual localities, plag ha-Minchah on Erev Shabbos Chanukah is generally a few minutes less or few minutes more than an hour before sunset(14). In most homes, where the husband lights Chanukah candles and the wife lights Shabbos candles, the correct procedure is to light Chanukah candles five minutes or so(15) (depending on the number of people in the house who are lighting Chanukah candles) before lighting Shabbos candles. As soon as Chanukah candles have been lit, the wife lights the Shabbos candles. If many people are lighting and time is running short, a wife does not need to wait for everyone to finish lighting Chanukah candles; rather, she should light her Shabbos candles immediately(16). [If sunset is fast approaching, the wife should light Shabbos candles regardless of whether or not the Chanukah candles have been lit by her husband. If she sees that her husband will not light his menorah on time, she should light Chanukah candles herself, followed by Shabbos candles.] In a home where the man lights both the Chanukah and the Shabbos candles [e.g., the man lives alone; the wife is away for Shabbos] the same procedure is followed. If, by mistake, he lit Shabbos candles before Chanukah candles, he should light his Chanukah candles anyway [as long as he did not have in mind to accept the Shabbos]. In a home where the woman lights both Chanukah and Shabbos candles [e.g., the woman lives alone; the husband is away for Shabbos], she must light Chanukah candles first. If, by mistake, she lit Shabbos candles first, she may no longer light Chanukah candles. She must ask another person - a man or a woman - who has not yet accepted the Shabbos to light for her. The other person must recite the blessing of lehadlik, but she can recite the blessing of She'asah nissim [and shehecheyanu if it is the first night](17). A person (or a family) who is very embarrassed because he has failed to light Chanukah candles by sunset, may ask a non-Jew to light the Chanukah candles for him(18). This may be done until 30-40 minutes past sunset(19). No blessings are recited(20). If, after lighting the candles but before the onset of Shabbos, the candles blew out, one must rekindle them. One who has already accepted the Shabbos should ask another person who has not yet accepted the Shabbos to do so(21). On Shabbos: The menorah may not be moved with one's hands for any reason, neither while the lights are burning nor after they are extinguished(22). When necessary, the menorah may be moved with one's foot, body or elbow(23) after the lights have burned out. If the place where the menorah is standing is needed for another purpose, a non-Jew may be asked to move the menorah after the lights have burned out(24). If Al hanisim is mistakenly omitted, the Shemoneh Esrei or Birkas ha-Mazon is not repeated. Children should be discouraged from playing dreidel games on Shabbos, even when playing with candy, etc.(25). A dreidel, however, is not muktzeh(26). Oil may be squeezed out of latkes on Shabbos, either by hand or with a utensil(27). Chanukah gifts may not be given or received, unless they are needed for Shabbos use(28). In the opinion of some poskim, women are obligated to recite Hallel on Chanukah. On Motzaei Shabbos: Candle lighting must take place as close as possible to the end of Shabbos(29). Indeed, some have the custom of lighting Chanukah candles even before havdalah, while others light them immediately after havdalah. All agree that any further delay in lighting Chanukah candles is prohibited. Therefore, one should hurry home from shul and immediately recite havdalah or light Chanukah candles. A Shabbos guest who lives nearby and must go home immediately after Shabbos is over, should light in his home(30). If, however, he does not leave immediately after Shabbos, he should light at the home of his host(31). Preferably he should also eat melaveh malkah there. 1Mishnah Berurah 679:2. Many working people, though, are not particular about this practice, since it is difficult to arrange for a minyan on such a short day. 2Sha'arei Teshuvah 679:1 quoting Birkei Yosef. 3Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 679:7 quoting Pri Megadim. 4Birkei Yosef 679:2; Yechaveh Da'as 1:74. 5See Beur Halachah 672:1. The breakdown [in this case] is as follows: 20 minutes before sunset, 50 minutes till the stars are out, and an additional half hour for the candles to burn at night. Those who wait 72 minutes between sunset and tzeis ha-kochavim, should put in oil to last for an additional 22 minutes at least. 6O.C.



675:2 and Mishnah Berurah 8. 7Mishnah Berurah 679:2. 8See Mishnah Berurah 671:5 [based on Chayei Adam and Ksav Sofer] and Beis Halevi, Chanukah who maintain that when the "correct" number of candles is not available, only one candle should be lit. Harav E.M. Shach (Avi Ezri, Chanukah), however, strongly disagrees with that ruling. 9Based on Igros Moshe O.C. 3:95, Y.D. 1:24 and Y.D. 3:52-2. See also Eishel Avraham (Tanina) O.C. 679 who permits this. 10O.C. 680:1. 11See Chovas ha-Dar 1:12. 12Mishnah Berurah 672:10. See also Chovas ha-Dar 1:10. 13See Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62. 14Note that only on Erev Shabbos is it permitted to light this early. During the week, plag ha-Minchah should be figured at about an hour before tzeis ha-kochavim; see Mishnah Berurah 672:3 and 679:2 as explained by Harav M. Feinstein in Sefer Hilchos Chanukah pg. 21 and pg. 41. See also basic explanation in Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62. See also Mor u'Ketziyah 672:1 and Moadim u'Zemanim 2:152. 15For one half hour before this time, it is not permitted to learn or eat. 16Ben Ish Chai, Vayeishev 20. 17Mishnah Berurah 679:1. 18See Mishnah Berurah 261:16. [See also Da'as Torah 673:2 that one can fulfill his obligation through the lighting of a non-Jew. See Har Tzvi O.C. 2, pg. 258.] 19See Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62 and 74 (hatmanah 1). 20See Rambam (Chanukah 4: 9) and Ohr Gadol (Mishnayos Megilah 2:4). 21Mishnah Berurah 673:26, 27. 22O.C. 279:1. 23Mishnah Berurah 308:13; 311:30. Igros Moshe O.C. 5:22-6. Chazon Ish O.C. 47:13, however, does not agree with this leniency. 24Mishnah Berurah 279:14. 25See Mishnah Berurah 322:22. 26See Igros Moshe O.C. 5:22-10. 27Mishnah Berurah 320:24,25. 28Mishnah Berurah 306:33. 29Those who wait 72 minutes to end Shabbos all year round, should do so today as well - Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62. But those who wait 72 minutes only on occasion but at other times they do not, should not wait 72 minutes on this night - Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Shevus Yitzchak, pg. 75). 30Chovas ha-Dar 1 note 65. 31Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Piskei Teshuvos, pg. 498).

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion's Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash yhe@vbm-torah.org  
Talmudic Methodology BY RAV MOSHE TARAGIN  
NER CHANUKA AS AN OBLIGATION OF THE HOUSE

The gemara on Shabbat 21b articulates the basic mitzva of "neirot Chanuka" (the Chanuka lights) in a very provocative language. The gemara asserts that the mitzva takes the form of "ner ish u-beito." This language connotes that each household must light one candle or wick each evening, regardless of the day and regardless of how many family members belong to that household. This basic level represents the essential obligation of ner Chanuka. Those who seek to perform a higher grade of the mitzva add lights based upon the amount of family members and the ascending day of Chanuka. The term "ner ish u-beito" is an intriguing phrase. What does the gemara intend by using the term "beito"? Does the word merely imply that each "household" is obligated to light one ner? Or does the gemara suggest that the mitzva of the Chanuka lights is somehow closely identified with the Jewish home?

In general, mitzvot apply to individuals and can be conditioned by certain geographical or temporal factors. For example, a person must eat matza on the 15th of Nissan. The mitzva devolves upon each person on that day. Similarly a person must, under certain circumstances, offer a sacrifice in the Beit Ha-mikdash, the Temple. Though the mitzva cannot be performed outside of the Mikdash, the mitzva still applies to the person; the holy precinct is merely the site of the execution of the mitzva.

One notable exception is the mitzva of mezuzah, which applies to the house. A person is not obligated to live in a house with a mezuzah; rather, if a Jew owns a house, he or she then must convert it into a house with mezuzot. In this instance, the mitzva which a person must perform relates directly to the house. The classic language employed to describe this condition is that mezuzah is a "chovat ha-bayit" (an obligation pertaining to the house) rather than a "chovat gavra" (an obligation pertaining to the person). Does the gemara, by employing the language "ner ish u-beito," suggest that ner Chanuka should be analogous to mezuzah? How seriously or literally should we take this language? Must a person light ner Chanuka, within the selected site for execution of this mitzva being the house, or is the mitzva defined as turning a house into one which contains ner Chanuka?

Two sources which study the relationship between ner Chanuka and mezuzah must first be inspected. Tosafot on Sukka 46a question why, of all mitzvot, ner Chanuka features a unique berakha for someone who witnesses the performance of the mitzva but does not perform it himself. The gemara on Shabbat 24a claims that, under certain conditions, a person who gazes upon a lit menorah should recite the berakha 'she-asa nissim la'avoteinu,' "Who performed miracles for our ancestors." Why does someone who witnesses a sukka not recite a similar berakha? Tosafot's first answer analyzes the role of ner Chanuka in celebrating and publicizing a miracle; this special function mandates a berakha even for a witness who is not actually performing the mitzva. Tosafot consider a second reason for ner Chanuka's privileged status: since many people do not own houses (and would not otherwise fulfill any element of the mitzva), a special berakha was instituted for spectators.

Tosafot then question this last answer: if the concern for homeless people were so dominant, we would establish a similar berakha in the case of mezuzah, which also cannot be fulfilled without a house. Do Tosafot mean to equate mezuzah and ner Chanuka at a structural level? Just as mezuzah is a chovat ha-bayit and does not enjoy a special berakha, similarly ner Chanuka, which is also a chovat ha-bayit, should not be granted this berakha. Or, alternatively, do Tosafot merely suggest that, as these two mitzvot are only performed in the context of a house, they should exhibit similar properties regarding berakhot for spectators. It is somewhat difficult to assess the basis of Tosafot's analogy.

From the Rambam's view in Hilchos Berakhot 11:2, however we might receive a less ambiguous understanding of ner Chanuka. The Rambam (in his catalogue of various mitzvot and their respective berakhot) suggests that there are two types of mitzvot: a "chova," an absolute obligation, and a "reshut," a command which must be fulfilled only if certain preconditions exist. Of course, the two classic examples of biblical mitzvot of

the latter category are mezuzah and tzitzit. Without a four-cornered garment, a person has absolutely no obligation to purchase one in order to fulfill the mitzva of tzitzit; similarly, one has no obligation to buy a house in order to fulfill the mitzva of mezuzah. Moreover, just as these two categories of mitzvot exist on the de'oraita plane, they appear on the rabbinical one as well. Examples of rabbinical reshut include "eiruvei chatzeirot," the extension of one's domain to permit carrying outside on Shabbat, and "netilat yadayim," the obligation to wash one's hand before eating bread. Examples of rabbinical chova include reading the megilla on Purim and lighting neirot on Chanuka. Unequivocally, the Rambam defines ner Chanuka as a chovat gavra; regardless of whether he owns a house, a person is obligated in the mitzva but from a technical standpoint, without a house, once cannot execute the mitzva.

This question regarding the fundamental nature of ner Chanuka expresses itself in several halakhic manifestations. The most glaring might just be the case of "akhsenai" debated by the gemara on Shabbat 23a. If someone is a guest at another's house during Chanuka, how might he fulfill the mitzva of ner Chanuka? The Gemara first quotes Rav Sheishet, who declares that a guest is obligated to fulfill the mitzva. By not specifying any special mode of executing the mitzva, Rav Sheishet suggests the guest performs it in the exact same manner as the host, by lighting his own menorah. The Ran, in his commentary to the Rif's rulings, concludes from this halakha that ner Chanuka should not be confused with mezuzah; whereas the latter is only obligatory if one owns a house, the obligation of ner Chanuka applies even if one does not. By announcing the obligation and manner of performance of the akhsenai, the gemara preempts any thoughts of comparing ner Chanuka to mezuzah. After Rav Sheishet, the gemara cites Rav Zeira, who suggests a different manner by which the guest performs the mitzva: the visitor pays a peruta's worth of money to his or her host. This new manner of performing the mitzva support the notion that ner Chanuka is indeed a chovat ha-bayit, thus forcing the akhsenai to adjust his performance. The guest cannot just light his or her own menorah because the akhsenai is not lighting in his own house. By paying money, the akhsenai is asking the homeowner to perform the mitzva on the guest's behalf. Some have even suggested that this payment turns the akhsenai, having paid a symbolic rent, into a temporary member of the household, and allows the guest to perform the mitzva of ner Chanuka in a context approximating his or her residence. Regardless, either explanation assumes that an akhsenai cannot merely replicate the behavior of a homeowner, confirming that indeed the mitzva of ner Chanuka is a chovat ha-bayit according to the view of Rav Zeira. Indeed, our question may form the basis of his argument with Rav Sheishet.

A second consequence of this question deals with the exact placement of the menorah. Though the aforementioned gemara suggested that it must be lit in the house, that passage does not specify the exact location within the house. A subsequent gemara (21b) claims that the menorah is placed in the entrance to the house, on the outside. This statement seems to imply that the menorah is to be set in the entrance from the reshut ha-rabim (street) to the house. Such a reading would actually place the menorah in reshut ha-rabim. Rashi argues with this idea and claims that the menorah should be placed in the entrance from the courtyard to the house. (In Mishnaic and Talmudic times, a common courtyard was shared and utilized by the inhabitants of a number of private houses.) What forced Rashi to relocate the menorah from the reshut ha-rabim to the courtyard? Could Rashi have opposed placing a menorah in the public area because he viewed the mitzva as one OF THE HOUSE and not merely as one performed IN THE HOUSE. If the house is merely the site of the mitzva, then the part of reshut ha-rabim adjacent to the house suffices; if, however, we must convert the house into one which is lit by ner Chanuka, we might insist that the menorah be located within the four walls and the domain of the house. It should be noted that not only do many authorities dispute Rashi's ruling, but Rashi himself (on Shabbat 22 and Bava Kama 22) seems to allow a menorah in reshut ha-rabim under certain conditions. The context of this shiur does not allow a fuller explication of Rashi's position, but his comments on Shabbat 21b do indeed evoke an image of chovat ha-bayit.

A second issue relating to placement of the menorah relates to the height. The gemara disqualifies a menorah which is placed above 20 amot, or 30-40 feet (in those pre-apartment building days); since people generally did not look above 20 amot, the publicizing of the miracle, the primary aim of lighting ner Chanuka, would have been severely compromised. Subsequently, the gemara debates whether we should impose an even stricter height limit of ten tefachim (30-40 inches). The source of the ten-tefach limit, however, is not clear. The Ritva comments that halakha often recognizes a height of ten tefachim as a separate legal domain. For example if a podium of ten tefachim height is placed in reshut ha-rabim, that area is deemed a private domain for Shabbat purposes (i.e., a person may freely carry on the podium). As the space above ten tefachim is a different domain, the menorah must be placed beneath ten tefachim, so that a person and his or her menorah will remain in the same domain. Though the Ritva's interpretation of the ten-tefach space is somewhat provocative, his conclusion that a person and the menorah should occupy the same space might corroborate our earlier view. Since ner Chanuka is a mitzva OF THE HOUSE, we must situate the menorah firmly within the house. Just as Rashi disallows dislocating the menorah from the house into the reshut ha-rabim, the Ritva insists that the menorah be tethered to the actual zone within the house that its lighters occupy. Rashi's limitation and the Ritva's explanation are derived from the same logical concept.

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From: ZOMET INSTITUT E[SMTP:zomet@virtual.co.il] Subject: SHABBAT-B'SHABBATO: Vayeishev (Chanukah) 5760  
A Mitzva in the Torah Portion:  
"YIBUM" BEFORE THE TORAH WAS GIVEN

## BY RABBI BINYAMIN TABORY

The term "yibum" refers to family members marrying a childless widow. According to our sages, Yehuda was the first one who was given the command of yibum, and he was the first to perform this mitzva. He started by telling his son to marry his brother's widow, and Yehuda himself later performed the act. This corresponds to the explanation of the Ramban, that in earlier times yibum could be performed by other relatives and not only by a brother-in-law (this is also implied in the book of Ruth). It was only after the Torah was given, and the wives of relatives were forbidden, that yibum was transferred exclusively to a brother-in-law.

The Rambam also wrote that yibum was a custom before the Torah was given, and that the Torah did not prohibit it (Moreh Nevuchim 3:49). Thus, according to both the Ramban and the Rambam, it may be that Yehuda was not given a specific command but simply acted in accordance with existing norms, similar to the same way that our forefathers performed the mitzvot before they were formally commanded. The Ritva also implies that there was no formal command of yibum before the Torah was given. He explains that Yehuda was able to marry his daughter-in-law, an act which is forbidden by halacha, since Bnei Noach were only forbidden to have relations with direct relatives (or married women), but not with women related by marriage. If Yehuda had acted in response to a direct command from G-d, this explanation would not have been necessary, just as a brother-in-law performs yibum in spite of the fact that in general such a relationship is forbidden.

On the other hand, according to the Rashba, the fact that Yehuda was able to marry Tamar is only because of the mitzva of yibum. Thus, he implies that before the Torah was given all relatives could perform the mitzva, and this was later restricted to a brother-in-law. It may be that the Rashba understood from the words of the sages quoted above that Yehuda was given a direct command, while according to the other commentators yibum was a custom and not a command.

Early commentators have asked why "Seder Nashim" in the Talmud starts with Yevamot (which deals with the unfortunate occurrence of a husband who dies without children) and not with the Kidushin, which refers to marriage (which occurs before the tragedy of yibum). The Tosafot answered that Yevamot was put first, because this is the first mitzva with active participation of women. While the mitzva of reproduction appeared before this in the Torah, and women participated in its observance, the story of Tamar in this week's Torah portion is the first time that a woman performed an explicit mitzva. It may be that the Tosafot feel that women are obligated to perform yibum, even though they are not obligated by the mitzva of reproduction.

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From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@virtual.co.il] The Weekly Daf #302  
Parshat Vayeshev By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Dean, Ohr Somayach  
Institutions

### The Table as Altar

In the days of the Beit Hamikdash, say Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish, it was the altar upon which a person achieved atonement; but now it is a person's table that atones for him.

This is derived from a passage in the prophecy of Yechezkel (41:22) regarding the Beit Hamikdash of the future; the prophecy begins by describing the dimensions of the altar and concludes with the words "this is the table before Hashem."

What is it that transforms a table upon which we eat into a virtual altar and places it in the exalted position of being "before Hashem?"

Rashi's explanation is that the table is where one shows hospitality to needy guests. Tosafot refers us to the statement of the very same Rabbi Yochanan (Sanhedrin 103b) about the power of dining together to bring people closer to each other.

Variations on this theme are found in other places. Rabbi Yehuda

(Berachot 55a) states that one who spends a long time at his table so that there will be a possibility to offer food to a poor, hungry person will be rewarded with long life. In Pirkei Avot (3:4) Rabbi Shimon declares that a table at which words of Torah are said becomes "a table before Hashem" and those who dine there are considered as if they are eating from the Divine table.

The theme of the table as an instrument of hospitality and charity finds poetic expression in a custom cited by one of the early commentaries on Chumash, Rabbeinu Bachaye.

"It is the custom of the very pious Jews of France," he writes in Parshat Terumah, "to use the wood from their tables to make the coffins in which they are buried. This is to demonstrate that a man takes nothing with him and that nothing of all his labors will accompany him, except for the charity that he performed in his lifetime and the kindness that he dispensed at his table. This is what the Sages meant when they said that one who spends a long time at his table (in order to have the opportunity of offering food to a poor person who may come along) will be blessed with long life."

Chagiga 27a

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