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From: **Ira Zlotowitz** <Iraz@klalgovoah.org>
Date: Thu, Dec 2, 2021 at 6:48 PM
Subject: **Tidbits for Parashas Miketz • Shabbos
Chanukah**
Tidbits - The sorts of tidbits my father, **R' MEIR
ZLOTOWITZ ZT"L** made sure his family was up to
date on.

**Parashas Miketz • Shabbos Rosh Chodesh &
Chanukah**

• Friday, December 3rd • 29 Kislev 5782
On Erev Shabbos Chanukah, many Daven Mincha early
in order for Mincha to precede the lighting of the

Menorah (to avoid the appearance of a Tartei d'Sasrei -
an inherent contradiction - of lighting Shabbos' Menorah
lights and then Davening Friday's Mincha). Menorah
lighting may not occur before Plag Hamincha
(approximately 1 hour before Shekiah), and should be
performed immediately before lighting Shabbos candles.
**The Menorah must contain enough oil to burn until a
half hour after Tzeis** (approximately 1 hour and 45
minutes after Candle Lighting; note that many shorter
'colored candles' do not meet this criteria).

**ROSH CHODESH TEVES IS SHABBOS AND
SUNDAY. Remember to include Yaaleh Veyavo along
with v'Al HaNisim.**

Shabbos morning following Hallel, **three Sifrei Torah
are taken out.** Parashas Miketz is Leined in six Aliyos
(with Shishi continuing to the end of the Parasha). The
Kriah of Rosh Chodesh (Bamidbar 28:9-15) is Leined
from the second Sefer as the seventh Aliya. The Kriah of
Chanukah (Bamidbar 7:42-47) is Leined as Maftir from
the third Sefer. The Haftarah of Chanukah follows. Av
Harachamim is omitted. Ata Yatzarta is said in Musaf
Shemoneh Esrei. Borchy Nafshi is added at the end of
Davening (some add Psalm 30 as well). Tzidkas'cha is
omitted at Mincha.

On Motzaei Shabbos, one should return home without
delay and light as soon as possible. There are differing
Minhagim regarding which should come first, Havdalah
or Menorah lighting. If one is away for Shabbos
Chanukah, it may be preferable to light Menorah at one's
host on Motzaei Shabbos before departing, especially if
one will be returning home late. Consult your Rav.

On Sunday, the second day of Rosh Chodesh Teves, full
Hallel is recited. Kerias Hatorah includes two Sifrei
Torah, from the first Sefer the Kriah of Rosh Chodesh is
Leined in three Aliyos (the first two Aliyos are Leined
together), followed by the Chanukah Aliyah from the
second Sefer. Mussaf of Rosh Chodesh follows.
Davening ends with Borchy Nafshi after the Yom; some
congregations say Mizmor Shir (Psalm 30) as well.
After Chanukah, used wicks, cups and oil should be
disposed of in a respectful manner (i.e. by placing them in
a plastic bag before disposing of them). Some have the
Minhag to burn them on the last day of Chanukah; others
do so during Bi'ur Chametz.

THIS MOTZAEI SHABBOS, DECEMBER 4TH AT MAARIV, WE BEGIN SAYING V'SAIN TAL U'MATAR IN BAREICH ALEINU. If one forgets V'sain Tal U'matar, he can make it up by saying it in Shema Koleinu. However, once past Shema Koleinu, one must go back to Bareich Aleinu. If one has already finished Shemoneh Esrei, he must repeat the Tefillah. If one is unsure what he said, until 30 days have passed, we assume that he did not say V'sain Tal U'matar. However, one who says 90 times (ideally 101 times) "V'es Kol...V'sein Tal U'matar" may thereafter be halachically presumed to have said it properly and thus will need not repeat if unsure.

There is a praiseworthy Minhag to give gifts to our children's Melamdin (R' C. Palaggi zt"l). This sets an example of Hakaras Hatov for your child and displays the importance of Chinuch. A gift accompanied with warm words of thanks is a tremendous source of Chizuk for our Rebbeim and teachers.

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levana is Tuesday night, December 7th. The final opportunity is Motzaei Shabbos, December 18th at 12:40am.

Daf Yomi: Shabbos is Taanis 22.

ASARA B'TEVES IS IN ONE WEEK FROM TUESDAY, ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14TH.

Miketz: Pharaoh's dreams • Sar Hamashkim refers Yosef to Pharaoh • Yosef interprets Pharaoh's dreams as predicting 7 years of plenty and 7 years of hunger • Yosef is appointed over Mitzrayim • Yosef marries Osnas • Menashe and Efraim are born • The famine begins • Yaakov sends the brothers to Mitzrayim • Yosef accuses the brothers of spying • Yosef commands them to bring Binyamin • Yosef has their payments returned to their sacks; the brothers fear this is a ploy • Yaakov resists sending Binyamin • The famine worsens • Yehudah accepts responsibility for Binyamin • The brothers set out with gifts and the returned monies • Yosef is overwhelmed upon seeing Binyamin • The brothers are treated royally and sent home with abundance • Binyamin is framed for stealing the goblet and they are returned to Mitzrayim

Parashas Miketz: 146 Pesukim

“Vayehi Miketz Shenasyim Yamim u'Pharaoh Choleim”
“And it was at the end of the two years and Pharaoh dreamt” (Bereishis 41:01)

The Pasuk seems to indicate that the culmination of the two extra years of Yosef's imprisonment resulted in Pharaoh's dreams. How so? The Chofetz Chaim explains with a parable of a man who questions a train conductor extensively about train schedules and operations, believing that the conductor's recognizable presence and actions aboard the train show him to be the boss. While in reality, the commands and directives come from higher up and the conductors are merely following orders. Pharaoh's dream occurred at this time not coincidentally, but only because the One Above destined this to be the time and the mechanism for Yosef to be released.

The Ramban famously writes at the end of Parashas Bo that great miracles, such as Chanukah, occur to awaken one to recognize even the smaller miracles and Hashem's hand in running our lives. Chanukah is utilized to thank Hashem for the great spiritual salvation He granted in those days. We must always seek to recognize the daily miracles we experience and pray for salvations we need from Him, as only the One Above can deliver

from: OU Kosher <noreply@ounetwork.org>

date: Dec 1, 2021, 8:02 AM

**subject: Halacha Yomis - V'sain Tal Umatar
[by Rabbi Yaakov Luban and Rabbi Eli Gersten]
The Gerald & Karin Feldhamer OU Kosher Halacha Yomis**

This column is dedicated in memory of: Rav Chaim Yisroel ben Reb Dov HaLevi Belsky, zt"l
Senior OU Kosher Halachic Consultant from 1987-2016
Q. This Motzei Shabbos, December 4th, we begin reciting V'sain Tal Umatar in the Shmoneh Esrei of Maariv. What happens if one forgot to say V'sain Tal Umatar and what is the halacha if one is uncertain?
A. If a person said “v'sain bracha” instead of “v'sain tal umatar livracha” and he realized his error after ending Shmoneh Esrei, the entire Shmoneh Esrei must be repeated.

If the error was caught while in the middle of Shmoneh Esrei, corrective action may be taken by inserting the phrase of v'sain tal umatar livracha in the bracha of Shema Koleinu, before the words “Ki ata shomeiya”.

However, if the bracha of Shema Koleinu was already completed, the individual must return to the beginning of the bracha of Bareich Aleinu and use the proper phrase of v'sain tal umatar.

What if a person does not remember if he said v'sain bracha or v'sain tal umatar? Since he has no recollection, we assume the bracha was recited without thought, out of habit, in the manner that he was accustomed to saying it. Halacha assumes that habits of davening are established with thirty days of repetition. As such, up until thirty days from December 5th, it can be assumed that the wrong phrase (v'sain bracha) was used, and Shmoneh Esrei must be repeated. After thirty days have elapsed, when in doubt, Shmoneh Esrei need not be repeated. It can be assumed that v'sain tal umatar was said out of habit and second nature.

The Mishna Berura (114:38) qualifies this last halacha and says that if the person intended to say "v'sain tal umatar" in Shmoneh Esrei, and later in the day he cannot remember what he said, he need not repeat Shmoneh Esrei. This is because it can be assumed that he recited the bracha properly, since that was his intent. The fact that he cannot remember is inconsequential because people do not typically remember such details after a significant amount of time has passed. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l (Shmiras Shabbos Kehilchoso 57:17) notes that each person's memory span is different. For someone whose memory is poor, the last halacha would apply even if one cannot remember soon after reciting Shemoneh Esrei.

from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org>
reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org
to: ravfrand@torah.org
date: Dec 2, 2021, 4:34 PM
subject: Rav Frand - It's Not the Lottery Number -- It's the Man

**Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Miketz
It Is Not the Number That Wins the Lottery – It Is the Man That Wins the Lottery**

The pasuk says in Parshas Miketz "And Yehudah said, 'What can we say to my master, what words can we speak and how can we justify ourselves. The L-rd has found the sin of your servants (ha'Elokim matza es avon avadecha)'" (Bereshis 44:16). When the brothers are "caught with the goods", even though we know the viceroy's goblet was

planted in Biynamin's baggage, Yehudah "confessed" and said "Elokim matza es avon avadecha" – the Ribono shel Olam is behind this for we have sinned before Him.

This seems like a strange reaction for Yehudah to respond to Yosef. Remember, they are working under the assumption that Yosef is an Egyptian. Not only is he an Egyptian, he is a dictator. From what they can tell, he is a dictator without compassion. Imagine, for instance, that you are brought in front of Vladimir Putin and the Russian Government has some kind of claim against you. Say Putin accuses you of being a thief, a spy, and of committing all kinds of capital crimes. What do you say to Vladimir Putin? Would you say "Ha'Elokim matza es avon avadecha? Chatasi, aveesi, pa'shati! I have done something against the Master of the Universe!"

Putin would say, "Who is the Master of the Universe?" I don't think Putin believes in a G-d. The brothers assumed they were dealing with an Egyptian idolater. "Elokim" has no currency with him. Is this not a strange thing to say to him – Ha'Elokim matza es avon avadecha? This is not his language. It is one thing to get caught doing something wrong in a Yeshiva, and the when Mashgiach calls you in for a dressing down, you say "Ha'Elokim matza es avon avadecha." That has currency with the Mashgiach. It would not have currency with Putin and it would not have currency with Yosef in his role as the Viceroy of Egypt. That is one observation I would like to put on the table.

The other observation is that I think that the contrast between Yehudah's remarks to Yosef here at the end of Parshas Miketz and his remarks a few pesukim later at the beginning of Parshas Vayigash is noteworthy. There, in Vayigash, Yehudah very much changes his tune. In fact, Rashi there says that from the fact that Yehudah had to preface his remarks with the words v'Al Yeechar Apcha b'Avdecha (...And don't get angry at your servant...), we see that Yehuda spoke harshly to Yosef. He is no longer contrite in speaking before the Viceroy, nor does he take responsibility for having done something against the Ribono shel Olam. At that point in time, Yehuda knows what happened. He realizes that the goblet was planted in Binyamin's suitcase and that they are being framed. Obviously, he must have respect for the Egyptian monarch, but he is letting Yosef have it!

What happened between the end of Parshas Miketz and the beginning of Parshas Vayigash? What brought

Yehudah from a state of admission and contrition to now telling Yosef in effect – You are the crook here!?

I saw an explanation regarding this switch in tone in the sefer Nachalas Eliezer from Rav Eliezer Kahan, who was a Mashgiach in Gateshead. There is a theme occurring that runs throughout the whole story of Yosef and his brothers.

Rav Yisrael Salanter mentions a principle: There is something called the Sibah (Cause) and something called the MeSovev (effect). Many times in life, people are blinded as to what really is the cause of something. If a secular person were to look at the situation over here and see that Yosef is in fact framing them, he would say that the reason behind this is because Yosef sees them as potential slaves or as wealthy people, from whom he can eventually obtain a large ransom. Therefore, this is happening to them because Yosef has some ulterior motive to try to get something out of them. Yosef is framing them.

That, however, is not the real reason this is happening. This is merely the MeSovev – the effect. The cause of why this is happening is that the Ribono shel Olam is angry and upset at the brothers. At the end of Parshas Miketz, Yehudah is acknowledging the Sibah – the Cause. The “Cause” goes back years and years. Elokim matzah es avon avadecha – He found the sin we committed against our brother.

That is WHY it is happening. Now, how does it manifest itself? We have this fellow in Egypt who is a tyrannical dictator who is bringing this all about at this particular time and is framing us.

The religious Jew, the honest Jew, the one who looks at life as “The Ribono shel Olam runs the world” is looking at it as HaElokim matzah es avon avodecha. Whenever something upsetting happens to a person – if he gets into an accident, if he loses his job, if he doesn’t get a promotion, whatever it may be – a person needs to have the perspective that “HaElokim matzah es avon avadecha.” This is the Sibah.

This is the difference between Parshas Miketz and Pashas VaYigash. Parshas Miketz is the gut level reaction of an honest Jew who believes in Hashem. His reaction is immediately “I have done something wrong. G-d is punishing me for my sins.” The Ehrliche Yid looks for the Prime Cause – the real Sibah of why something is happening to him, not the superficial cause for the

aggravating situation. The Sibah for everything is the Ribono shel Olam.

In Parshas Vayigash, Yehudah deals with the MeSovev – the effect or secondary cause: I know we’ve done something wrong, but wait a minute, Yosef, you are framing us. That is why the tone changes here. But the gut level action – the way a person needs to look at life – is Yehudah’s reaction at the end of Parshas Miketz. The Torah says that when Pharaoh removed his ring and made Yosef the Viceroy over all of Egypt (Bereshis 41:42), Pharaoh gave Yosef his ring, a chariot, and a gold necklace. Why is Pharaoh doing this to Yosef? Is it a reward for being so smart or so brilliant by coming up with his plan to save Egypt? The Medrash explains that Yosef deserved everything he received from Pharaoh. His mouth that did not kiss in sin (the wife of Potiphar) was rewarded by the statement “Al peecha yeeshak kol ami” (through your mouth all my nation will receive their sustenance) (Bereshis 41:40). His body that did not engage in this sin was rewarded by being clothed in royal clothing (Bereshis 41:42). His neck that did not bow down to the sin was rewarded by a golden necklace being placed upon it (ibid.). His hand that did not participate in touching Potiphar’s wife was rewarded by the King’s ring being placed upon it (ibid.). His feet that did not step forward to do the sin were rewarded by allowing them to ride on the royal chariot (Bereshis 41:43). Etc., etc., etc. The Medrash is teaching exactly this same idea. At a superficial level, all these things happened to Yosef because Pharaoh wanted to express his pleasure with him. However, at a deeper level, they all happened for a spiritual reason. Each of these rewards was given to him by the Ribono shel Olam. Pharaoh was just the MeSovev. However, the Sibah – the real reason was that his mouth did not sin, his legs did not sin, his hand did not sin, his neck did not sin, etc.

There is a famous story with Rav Yisrael Salanter that brings this concept down to something to which we can all relate. There was a lottery for a lot of money. But it was not like today’s lottery where millions of people buy tickets for a dollar each. Years ago, there was something called the Irish Sweepstakes – which had a very big cash prize, but it cost a lot of money to buy each ticket. There are still a few lotteries like that.

This fellow bought a ticket, paying a lot of money for the ticket, more than he could afford. He was waiting for the

drawing. In the meantime, he found himself short on funds for basic daily expenses. He didn't have money for this, he didn't have money for that. So he sold his ticket to his friend. Lo and behold – the number hits! His friend won the lottery!

The original purchaser was devastated. He did teshuvah, he studied mussar books, this and that. He went over to Rav Yisrael Salanter and told him what happened to him and why he was so distressed. Rav Yisrael Salanter told him, “Don't you know it is not the number that wins the lottery – it is the man that wins the lottery.” If you would have kept the ticket, you would not have won, because the Ribono shel Olam does not want you to win. This way, at least you got your money back. Consider yourself lucky! You would have never won! If the Ribono shel Olam does not want a person to win the lottery, he will never win it, no matter what number he has.

Aval Asheimim Anachnu

“The brothers proclaimed one to another ‘We are guilty about our brother, whose suffering we saw when he pleaded to us, and we paid no attention. Therefore, this trouble has come upon us.’” (Bereshis 42:21)

I would like to relate another story, this one involving Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (1848-1932). In 1929, the infamous massacre occurred in Chevron. The Chevron Yeshiva had come from Slabodka in Europe to Chevron. In a premeditated attack, the Arabs attacked the Yeshiva and the Jewish quarter of Chevron and killed 67 students and wounded another 58.

(I once met a Jew in Far Rockaway who was a very heavy fellow. During the massacre, he stood at the door of the Yeshiva trying to block the entrance so the marauding Arabs could not enter. All of his fingers were cut off in that incident because the door was slightly open. He survived but he lost his fingers.)

After this incident in August 1929 the survivors of the Yeshiva moved to Jerusalem. That is why the Chevron Yeshiva today is in Yerushalayim. They left Chevron. After this incident, some people came to Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld and asked why this happened to Chevron. They suggested to him “It happened because in Chevron they play soccer on Shabbos.”

Rav Yosef Chaim, who was no softy, got up from his table. He held onto the table and said “Who are these people who play soccer on Shabbos in Chevron? These are people who came from Russia. They were drafted into

the Czarist army. They were forced to eat treife. They were forced to be Mechalel Shabbos. They had no connection with their parents. They made Aliyah. They don't know any better. So they play soccer on Shabbos. Why would you expect them to know any better with that type of background?”

He said, “The soccer players are not guilty because they don't know any better. AVAL ASHEIMIM ANACHNU! (But it is we who are guilty.) It is our fault because we know better and we are not behaving properly. These were the very words uttered by Yosef's brothers in this week's parsha – AVAL ASHEIMIM ANACHNU.

The Brisker Rav used the same concept. When Yonah was on the boat in the middle of the terrible storm at sea and the boat was about to go under, the Navi relates that everyone took out their idols and began praying to their idols. Yona said “It is because of me that this great storm has come upon you.” (Yona 1:12).

The Brisker Rav asked – what did Yona mean by this?

All the other sailors and passengers were taking out their Avodah Zarah and worshipping their idols, yet Yona, the prophet of G-d was saying “It's my fault!” How are we to understand this?

The answer is, yes. The Ribono shel Olam holds the people who know better, accountable. I am not suggesting anything about any current event. No one knows why a specific tragedy occurs. But when confronted with such questions, our reaction has to be what Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld said back then and what the Brisker Rav said in his time. The answer is AVAL ASHEIMIM ANACHNU. We need to point the finger at ourselves. What exactly we are doing wrong is not for me to say, and I don't know if it is for anybody to say short of a Navi. But we can say one thing: Don't blame “them.” Most of “them” don't know any better. The people who know better are the people that should be held responsible. That is the message of AVAL ASHEIMIM ANACHNU.

A Freileche Chanukah!

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem

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From: Daniel Kaminetsky <danielkam@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Dec 8, 2017

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Rav Moshe Tzvi Weinberg

Chanukah 5771

These notes are an approximate transcript of a recorded shiur given by Rav Moshe Tzvi Weinberg. The shiur is available on YuTorah.org.

Breaking the Cycle

The gemara describes what happened when the Jews entered the Bais Hamikdash after the Greeks had desecrated it. Gemara says when the Greeks entered the Temple, they contaminated all of the pure oil. And when the Chashmonai family fought back, this minority, small handful of individuals who had the courage to stand up to an army of thousands, many times their own size, and somehow miraculously win that victory, they found one little jar of oil sealed with the Kohain Gadol's seal. There is an obvious problem here. Rabbi Akiva Eiger cites a Rambam. The Kohain Gadol's job description does not include sealing the jars of the oil. There was a chamber in the Bais Hamikdash with four separate corners and one of those corners was called Lishkas Bais Hashemanya which was the room where they prepared the oil and the Kohain Gadol never stepped foot in there. Certainly didn't have to. So it is unusual that this pach shemen, this miraculous oil that is going to save the day and set the stage for the entire Chanukah story, is sealed with the seal of the Kohain Gadol. Why did Hashem make it that the Chanukah miracle had to come about in this way? What's the message? That the victory over the Greeks had to somehow be presented through the perspective over the Kohain Gadol? Somehow he represents the

victory over Yavan. Why? What is it about the Kohain Gadol that alludes to this concept?

The Kohain Gadol would bring a unique Korbon every day called the minchas Chevitim. It was a cake offering half brought in the morning and half in the afternoon. What was unusual about the Korbon was that when a Kohain first started working in the Bais Hamikdash, when he would be inaugurated into the service, he would bring a Korbon, called a Minchas Chinuch, an inauguration cake offering, and its very similar to what the Kohain Gadol brings every day. So what is the idea of the Kohain Gadol bringing this inauguration offering every single day? The Sefas Emes in parshas Tzav explains that Kohain Gadol brings this minchas chevitim every day, which is similar to the inaugural minchas chinuch to convey the meassge of hischadshus. Freshness. The ability to start over every day. And maintain the intensity and excitement that a person experiences the first time they do something. The average Kohain worked in the Bais Hamikdash for a long time. Perhaps the excitement wore off. What defined the Kohain Gadol, what he represented, was the ability to start over fresh every day. And therefore, it shouldn't surprise us that the first thing that is done in the Bais Hamikdash every morning involved his Korban. There is a whole set of mishnayos, at the end of Seder Kodshim that describe the daily activities of the Kohain. The Rambam says that these are put at the end of Seder Kadshim because its not really halachik discussions. Its more of a story. Where they slept, how they slept (not in beds so as not to oversleep). How they worked in two groups and split up to make sure nothing was missing, everything in place. They meet up at a certain place and confirm that everything is where it needs to be, and then the Mishna says those who prepare the Minchas Chevitin start to boil the water for that Korban. The Gemara asks, isn't the first Korban of the day the Tamid shel shachar? Pasuk calls it haOlah. The Olah. That which kicks off the day. The Gemara says the Kohain is not bringing the Korban yet. Just boiling the water. But how does this answer the question? If the Tamid shel shachar is supposed to be the first thing, it should be the first thing? Why are we starting the minchas chevitin, even just a little? The answer is, this is the whole definition of what a Kohain Gadol is. Represents newness. Represents the

starting point of everything. Starts fresh every day as if it is the first day of service in the Bais Hamikdash.

With this insight of what the Kohain Gadol represented, we can perhaps now understand why the miracle of Chanukah had to come about with the oil of the Kohain Gadol. Kohain Gadol represents newness, freshness. The Greeks had caused the Jewish people's attitude toward Torah to become stale, old and complacent. It threatened the existence of Torah itself. The Netziv, Rosh HaYeshiva in Volozhin was once asked the following question: Volozhin was a town where there was so much Torah life, yet the simple townspeople never got turned on to it. Never developed a passion for learning. There was a Yeshiva, arguably the greatest of its time, which was the center of the town life, and yet, people just were not taken by it. How could that be? The Netziv answered by telling a story he once heard from a chazzan. One time on Simchas Torah, it was time for hakafos, and the Chazzan was carrying one of the Torahs and a group of children came running towards the Torah. They were pushing; they each wanted to kiss the Torah. It was a remarkable sight. Chazzan was proud to see their fervor and enthusiasm. But he noticed one girl on the side. Not only was she not attempting to get near the Torah, but she was telling all the other children to go ahead of her. She had no interest. Other kids were dying for the opportunity to just kiss the Torah. Chazzan was very troubled by this. Went over to this girl. He said, I don't understand. It is Simchas Torah. You don't want to kiss the Torah? Not really. It is not really anything so special.

If I had to kiss the Torah every time I saw it, I would be kissing it all the time. In the morning, at night. He asked her, I am not sure I understand. Who are you? My father is so and so, the Sofer. Then he understood. She was so used to seeing the Torah, that it did not make a roshem on her any more. Doesn't impact her the same way as the other children. How when the Aron opens they come running and jumping. The Netziv said that's what happened to the people of Volozhin. It was a fabulous town of Torah but were so used to it that they lost their passion for Torah. Took it for granted. This is life. There are people who are very committed to Torah. But it had become just the way of the land. This mentality can kill people. In the times of Noach, this killed them. Noach says there is a flood coming. When? 120 years from now. Ok. Shkoyach. Let's talk in 75 years. 80

years. 100 years. And when they saw this old man building his boat, year after year, saying the flood is coming, do teshuva! they were like don't bother us. Even when there were 7 days left. At that point they were completely numb to it. This is how Rav Shalom Schwaradron explains this in his sefer. And he says a beaver also gets very set on its path and plows straight ahead. Those who trap beavers, all they have to do is see the line the beaver is going in and set up a trap in its path and it will literally walk right into the trap. Can't think outside of the box. This is danger of person who locks himself into a certain way of thinking. Either because he is just used to something or because the freshness has been lost. This was what the Kohain Gadol represented.

Ability to conquer that staleness. Start new every day. A minchas chinuch just like the beginner Kohain. What was remarkable was that during the time of the Chanukah story, this attitude of staleness and lack of freshness in avodas Hashem had reached the highest ranks of society. Can we imagine what it must have been like to be a Kohain in the Bais Hamikdash? Didn't have to work every day. Worked two weeks a year as part of this very large rotation. And during those two weeks you worked maybe one day a week. A little bit more on shalosh regalim. But it's not like every day it was busy in the Bais Hamikdash. It was a unique opportunity. And yet the Bach, the Bayis Chadash, Rav Yoel Sirkis, famous commentator of the Tur, said that Hashem sent the Greeks to stop the Avoda of the Bais Hamikdash because the Jewish people had lost interest in the Avoda. Can we imagine this? Kohanim in the Bais Hamikdash being bored? Is there a more direct opportunity to connect with Hashem than being in the Bais Hamikdash? But it was getting old. So Hashem said fine. You don't appreciate the freshest place in the world, the most exciting place in the world? This is boring to you? I'll take it away from you. As time went on they realized what they lost and it took a few righteous Jews to fight for it and get it back. But the foundation of the Chanukah story is that the atmosphere of the Yevanim was a response to our attitude. We had lost our passion. And until this day, we are still suffering at the hands of Yavan. Yavan, one would think, represents freshness and hischadshus. Renewal. They were very progressive. Medrash calls them chosech but if anything they were the opposite. Took us out of the dark ages. Progressive in science,

music and art. Literature. Poetry. All aspects of advanced education, so to speak, has its roots in the world of Yavan. And yet, a lot of that progress hasn't really done much good for us. Because even though the Yevanim were destroyed, Western Culture today is entirely rooted in the Yevani way of thinking. More progressive. Faster and better technology. Has it really brought us hishadshus? Is that really new? We get excited about updating our online farms. Instead of actually getting up early and starting new and going out to the chickens, you can do it all online. Or people updating their Facebook pages and twitter accounts. I moved from my living room to my dining room. Hishadshus! Wow! That's a renewal that is so stale. Doesn't get you anywhere. All the advances in technology have allowed us to create bigger weapons with which we can destroy ourselves physically and spiritually. Need a flatter screen on the wall? Television wasn't flat enough? This is advancement? This is where we are going? What have these advancements done to shape the way people interact with each other? As much as we are advancing on some levels, much of the advancement really just lead to boredom. An English actor once said "Entertainment is in fact the biggest cause of boredom in the modern world. The more man is entertained, the more bored he grows." That was the world of Yavan. We offer more and more and more. But it becomes an endless cycle. Need to go from one high to the next. Need to get that next excitement. And they presented the Torah as being the opposite. This old book? You are going to tell me it is fresh? Alive? Exciting? Is there anything real in it to offer to the modern man? And yet, the reality was, that it is really the exact opposite. The Torah is life itself, the freshest thing in the world and it just takes our perspective to ensure that we keep it fresh in that way. The Torah teaches us how to see things in a fresh way. It's the opposite of what people think. People wonder, you are still reading that same book? Can't you find something else? There are new books out on the market. But we go back to the same book. Every Shabbos we gather and re-read the parsha again and we are supposed to read it in a fresh way. Because Torah gives us the ability to see the world in a fresh way. Rav Eliyahu Dischnitzer, a talmid of the Chofetz Chaim, said that the Chofetz Chaim once told him about an irreligious pharmacist that he knew. One time the Chofetz Chaim

walked into the pharmacy and gave the man a hug. He said I am jealous of you. Rabbi, you are jealous of me? I am not such a religious man. The Chofetz Chaim said, you have the opportunity every day to dispense medicine to people. You are saving lives. Our sages teach us that if you save one life its like saving the entire world. You have a tremendous opportunity. The pharmacist said I never thought of it that way. And he went on to be chozer beteshuva and Rav Eliyahu Dischnitzer said I believe he is one the lamed vav tzadikim that keeps the world spinning. That's how much he turned his life around. It was a fresh Torah perspective that caused him to realize this. You're not just selling medicine to make a living. You are giving someone life. This is the attitude that Torah helps us to live with. We say in Shema "asher anochi metzavcha hayom". That which I am commanding you today. Says Rashi, Torah should not be like an age old edict. Torah, mitzvos should not be like a "deyotkema yeshanah". An age old edict. That a person can't bear it. It's enough. This doesn't offer me anything. It's old. Get with the times. It should be fresh. Like you are running after it. Torah should be in a constant state of renewal. Rashi uses the lashon of deyotkema and then elaborates: "a command of a king that comes in writing". Why did Rashi choose this word? Deyotkema? It's a Greek word. Rashi davka uses a Greek word to describe what is the opposite of how Torah should be because Torah is exactly the opposite of the Greek mentality. The Greek mentality is something that leads to staleness. Oldness. Something that leads to the Bais Hamikdash being shut down because it's boring. Torah is the opposite. And we see that Rashi explains the word deyotkema as the command of a king that comes in writing. The Yevanim were against Torah She Baal peh. They accepted the concept of Torah Shebichtav. You want to tell me that Hashem came down and gave the Torah, fine. We are willing to work with that. Maybe. But the real fight the Yevanim had was with Torah shebaal peh, which represents man's ability to interact with Hashem and to continue to add on to His word. When a person comes up with an insight into Torah, he is adding to the word of Hashem. That becomes Torah shebaal peh. The Greeks had no issue with the concept that there are 304,805 letters in the Torah. Not to be changed, not to be touched. Fine. We'll accept that. You're going to tell me man has the

ability to influence the Divine? So deytokema he says is a command of a king that comes in writing. The Greeks will accept the written Torah. That doesn't bother them. That doesn't strike them the wrong way. But you want to tell me man has the ability to be mechadesh, to interact with the Divine? Why do we think they hated the Bais Hamikdash so much? According to the Gemara, the Bais Hamikdash was the meeting point between heaven and earth. Where heaven and earth kiss. Why did they hate that so much? Because again, if you want to tell me there is an abstract gd who created the world but left it to operate al pi teva, by the natural order, the cycles of life, fine. We'll accept that. But you are going to tell me that Hashem is going to listen to you and you're going to decide things like Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, the ability of man to declare when the holidays are [These were the things the Greeks were against]. That's absurd. What right do you have to interact with the Divine? Man is man and gd is gd. That's what they were against and that's what Rashi is hinting to here. Don't let Torah be something like an old Greek edict. Don't let it be something that's just written. Have to allow for man to add to the Torah, continue to interact with the Torah. That's what the Menorah represents. Two things in the Bais Hamikdash that represent Torah. The Luchos, the Aron, which represents Torah shebichtav, the written law, and the Monorah which represents Torah shebaalpeh. The Netziv says that when Moshe got stuck on something, could not figure something out, he would go into the Mishkon and stare at the lights of the Menorah? And that would help him to figure things out. That was the ability for man to keep going with Torah. To on the one hand, take the word of Hashem, but to be able to renew it in our own way. That's why on Chanukah we are constantly being challenged to refresh and renew. First night light one candle. Second night two. Third night three, etc. We even take a test on Chanukah. The lighting of each day sounds exactly the same. We read about the Nesiim. Parshas Naso, perek 7. Over and over. The only thing that changes in the Nasi's name. They all brought the same korban. Just list the Nissim and tell us what they brought one time! Why on Chanukah do we read the same set of pesukim again and again? It's a test for man. Can we read the same thing over and over and read it in a fresh way? Can we see it with a fresh perspective? That perek 7 in Bamidbar is one of the

longest perakim in the Torah. [might even be the longest]. 89 pesukim. 89 is Gematriya Chanukah. That is essence of Chanukah. Can I do the same thing over and over but still do it in a fresh way? That is what the Jewish experience is supposed to be. Supposed to be a life that offers us something new. I will daven the same thing every day, but in a fresh way. I will keep the same Shabbos every week, but I will do it in a fresh way. I will do chesed every day, but I will try to constantly renew and refresh. This is what the Yevanim tried to conquer.

In Emunas Itecha, Rav Moshe Wolfson brings the Medrash that Yavan is compared to Choshech. The beginning of the Torah describes all the darkness that preceded the world. Torah says the world was Tohu vavohu choshech. Medrash says Choshech corresponds to Yavan. It's funny because we would think they are so bright. So expansive. They are looking to advance the world. And yet Chazal, so many years ago, were ahead of the game and said this is going to bring a lot more choshech than light. On Chanukah, the light of Torah which burned so bright was able to drive out that darkness of Yavan. Therefore we find that on Chanukah we have an expansion of Torah Shebaalpeh perhaps more than any other area. There is a famous question asked by the Rishonim. We should really only light seven nights because there was oil for the first night. We had one pach shemen. There were really only seven nights of miracles.

This is a famous question with many, many answers. Can buy an entire sefer of answers to that question. It's one question. Over 500 answers. Why did this question become the focus of so many commentators? There are many other big questions out there in Judaism. But this question became the question. Perhaps the answer is because this is what Chanukah is. It's about chidush. I can look at the same question 500 different ways and there are still people giving new explanations. Rav Wolfson says Choshech is Gematriya chiddush. We know from Newton's law, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. For all the choshech that they are bringing, we have to counter it with newness, chidush. The Gematriyas line up because those are the front lines of the battle. We have to try and constantly renew ourselves and not to slip into that world of complacency.

Bikurim is the ultimate in renewal. Here I am working in my field day in and day out. I am working day in and day

out. I finally have my first fruits. You would think that you could say Hashem, the first \$5 that comes in, I'm hanging that up on the wall. And from the rest can take for Tzedaka. What do we do? A remarkable thing. We take our first fruits and say, this is for you Hashem. And every time they come back, we renew our commitment to Hashem. We say, You're in charge here. It's not me. And Bikurim has a strong connection to Chanukah. The Rambam brings lehalacha, one can't bring Bikurim before Shavuos, representing Mattan Torah, Torah Shebichtav, and not after Chanukah. So the end of the renewal process in Chanukah. So the bookends of the Mitzva of renewal, bikurim, are from the starting point of Torah, Shavuos, to Torah shebaalpeh, the renewal, man's ability to carry that Torah further which is symbolized by Chanukah. The idea is that when I bring those first fruits, I stop for a second to acknowledge that Hashem is mechadesh the world every second of every day. With every breath I take, Hashem is pumping new life into me.

This is what bikurim represents. What about the Yevanim? Opposite. They say no active force in the world. No gd who is renewing the world. Maybe was a gd who set the world into motion. But once it's in motion, keeps rolling. Everything in natural world is round. Even a Gemara that says there is nothing in the world that is perfectly square. Everything rolls. There is cause and effect. Things just roll. There is a teva. A natural order to things. A very anti-Jewish concept. This was part of where struggle between Greek philosophy and Jewish philosophy come head to head on Chanukah.

R Nachum of Chernobyl, the Chernobyl Rebbe, quotes the Gemara that says one who is diligent with Ner Chanukah will have sons that are Torah scholars. How do we see this? The word Elokim is the same Gematriya as Hateva, the natural order. This is the struggle. Do I see gds hand in everything or do I put gd aside and say, this is natural. This is just how it is. If I do this, this is what's going to happen. That's where the struggle is. The challenge for man in this world is to not lose ourselves in the teva. To not just get swept up by the way of the world. The teva is nothing more than the circle of life that surrounds all of existence. And there is a natural order but it's for us to believe that the circle is being spun by an active Creator, a gd. Who is actively involved. Didn't just set it into motion and allow it to spin. The Jew is the center of creation and the rest of the world is

surrounding us, whether it's intentionally to harm us or not, we are surrounded on all sides, we are a small minority, we're that central point and it's our job to not to get lost in that spin. To not just become part of that cycle of life that often leads us to a state of staleness. Our very name Yisrael represents our ability to break out of the cycle, that circle. Yisrael means Yashar Lakeil. Instead of being trapped in that spin, we choose the straight path, break out of that cycle and go straight to Hashem. This is why we say one who is diligent, ragil, in the mitzvos of ner Chanukah will have children that are talmidai chachamim. Ragil means accustomed. If a person wants to break of his regilus, his routine, and start fresh, perfect time to do it is on Chanukah. Way to break cycle and shatter that spin of life is to connect ourselves to Chanukah. Therefore should not surprise us that the very name of the enemy we are going up against, Yavan, is Gematria galgal, circle. This word, galgal is also in the word legalot, gilui, which means revelation. Because they only believe what they see. I see a natural order. I can prove it to you. Show it to you. But not able to look beyond the mask of creation, so to speak, and see that there is a gd behind it.

We know that for havdala we use an avuka, a torch, multiple wicks. In the Olympis, they also use a torch. What is the Olympic symbol? 5 interlocked rings. The modern Olympic movement that we have today was founded by a man named Pierre De Coubertin. Picked that symbol based on an artifact that he found which came from ancient Greece. So it has its roots from a long time ago. The interlocked circles represent being trapped, locked in to the teva, the natural order. That was Yavan. Why 5? We know Chanukah is all about lehodos and lehallel. Praising Hashem. We know there are 10 Sefiros of interaction between Hashem and this world. Chachmah Binah and Daas (chabad) are upper three. And then the 7 lower attributes of Hashem that we try to mirror. All the sefarim, the Arizal say that Chanukah is a tikun of the midah of Hod. Chesed Gevurah Netzach, Tiferes, hod. 5th one down. Sefarim talk about how Lehodos ulehallel is a tikun for that. That 5th dimension known as hod is very much connected to Chanukah. The antithesis of that is going to be 5 interlocked rings. 5 circles that say the guf is what its all about. Reject gd. Forget about the ability to connect the spiritual and the physical. The guf is the guf and gd is out there. The Bais

Hamikdash, the Menorah, Torah shebaalpeh represents that bridge where man and G-d can interact. I can elevate the physical. The body doesn't have to be used to only serve itself, as the Olympics would suggest, can use it in a holy and spiritual way.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, in his Likutai Sichos writes: "In recent years Rambam's handwritten sketch of the Menorah has been discovered. The branches of the Menorah are straight. [as Rashi already said] unlike the popular misconception that the branches are curved as depicted on the arch of Titus. [which has the famous picture of the Keilim being taken from the Bais Hamikdash]." Why was it drawn this way? Incorrectly? "A. Perhaps the artist did not intend to make a precise image. B. Titus may never have discovered the Menorah as many of the holy vessels were hidden [Jews put out a fake to protect the real keilim.] C. The artist may have attempted to depict a different candelabra altogether. Whatever the reason may be, the drawing is inaccurate and should not be copied in publications or in Chanukah Menoras." That's why the Chabad Menoras we see on the top of cars have straight arms. Seven branch menorah. Ours have 8. Chabad very makpid about this. On a deeper level, as expressed by one of the Breslov sefarim, Yavan represents that circle, and they believe even the Menorah which represents, renewal, a circle will get stale at some point. Enters into that circle of life, so to speak, that stale, monotonous attitude towards Hashem. We remind ourselves, through the Menorah itself, that we are Yisrael. Yashar Keil. We go straight to Hashem. Interesting to note that the letter for the month of Kislev is samech. Circle. First word of Torah that uses Samech is saviv. The lesson of samech is this concept of the circle. In the month of Kislev we challenge ourselves to break out of that circle and go Yashar Keil. To renew ourselves in the renewal that's true to the Torah.

We live in a time where undoubtedly it's truly difficult to stay fresh in avodas Hashem. The world, to the natural eye, looks very appealing at times. Often what the world has to offer in terms of hishadshus, in what they consider renewal, whether its new methodology or technology in whatever, whatever the world has to offer, as much as we want to take it, we have to guard ourselves and remind ourselves that what we have is truly the newest thing in the world. This is a challenge at the end of days more so

than ever before. As the world gets more and more advanced, we have to remind ourselves that the Torah is really where we turn to for renewal. There is a Medrash that highlights this idea. We know that Adam Harishon was the all encompassing man. Every one of our neshamos are connected to Adam Harishon. He is called Ha'adam. The man. All encompassing. All women rooted in Chavah, but in those moments even before there was a Chavah, all men rooted in Ha'adam. If you look at the structure of man, different generations represent different parts of Adam Harishon's body. So there were generations that were the head, so to speak, the leaders of Jewish history. Arms, legs. Our generation is the ikvisa demishicha as there is a tradition that Moshiach is coming by the year 6,000. We are the generation of the footsteps of Moshiach. We correspond to Adam Harishon's heel. The lowest part of man. The Medrash says the heel of Adam Harishon was so magnificent, it could block out the circle of the sun. What this means on a pashut pshat level is unclear, was he physically so big that his heel blocked out the sun, but on a deeper level, the heel of Adam Harishon represents our generation, that has to face the greatest advancements in technology and everything the world has to offer, we have the greatest risk of falling into that cycle, entering into the natural order of the galgal hachamah, the circle of the sun, and yet we are told by our great sages that even the heel has the ability to block out the sun. We take the good, but don't have to enter that world where I need faster and better. Need the newest iPhone. Become addicted to culture of wonderful country we live in. Appreciate it. Are thankful for it and take the good. But have to guard ourselves that we don't fall into the downward spiral, to that spin which is antithesis of what Torah represents.

In Shmuel alef, Davod Hamelech is MIA at the Rosh Chodesh feast and Shaul Hamelech turns to Yehonasan and asks him, "madua lo ba ben yishai gam temol gam hayom el halechem?" Why hasn't ben yishai come today to the bread, the feast? Obviously, there was some tension between family of Shaul and Dovid. But it is brought in one of the Seforim, that this question is actually a question we ask ourselves every day. Why hasn't Moshiach come yet? What are we waiting for? Where is ben yishai? Where is Dovid Hamelech? The malka demashicha? What is taking him so long? The answer is in this pasuk. Why hasn't Moshiach come?

Madua lo ba ben yishai? Because gam temol gam hayom. Because yesterday was the same as today. And its our job to renew, not just ourselves but the entire world, to present to the world a value system that as much as its ancient, is really so fresh and progressive, the most progressive of all.

IYH, we should all strive as Chanukah is here, to break out of that cycle, that spin, of the galgal that Yavan represents and to recommit ourselves, like the pash shemen of the Kohain Gadol that was found with the seal of the Kohain Gaol who represents hischadshus, we should all strive to tap into that and IYH renew ourselves to bring Moshiach bemihaira beyamainu.

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2060070/jewish/Why-Is-the-Prayer-for-Rain-Based-on-the-Civil-Calendar.htm

Why Is the Prayer for Rain Based on the Civil Calendar?

The connection between [Night Preceding] Dec. 5 or 6 and Vetein Tal Umatar Livrachah

By Rabbi Yehuda Shurpin

Question: My siddur tells me to start saying the prayer for rain in the Amidah on the night preceding December 5 or 6. Why does it use a secular date rather than a Jewish one?

Answer: That's right. From now until the year 2100, in a regular year we start saying the prayer for rain on the night of December 4, and in the year before a (civil) leap year (2023, 2027, 2031, 2035, 2039), on the night of December 5.

How did this come to be? Let's start at the beginning. As a rule of thumb, Jewish holidays and customs always follow the Jewish calendar, which is linked to the phases of the moon. One exception to this rule is the special prayer requesting rain, which Jews in the Diaspora begin saying on the night preceding December 5 (or 6).

To understand why, let's take a look at the history and significance of this small but important prayer.

Praying for Rain

Jews have been praying for rain for millennia. In the ancient land of Israel, rain was a life-and-death concern. A good rainy season meant a good harvest and ample drinking water, while a drought could be fatal to livestock and cripple the economy.

So when the Men of the Great Assembly set out to codify the prayers, they made sure to add a prayer for rain to the daily Amidah (silent prayer).

In fact, rain appears twice in the Amidah.

It is first mentioned in the second blessing, as one of a string of natural and supernatural wonders that G-d performs. Not least among them is that "He causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall."

Here we are praising G-d, who brings rain, but we are not actually asking for rain. It is only later, in the blessing requesting a bountiful year, that we ask G-d to "bestow dew and rain for blessing upon the face of the earth . . ."

In both instances, the rain-related phrase is said only during the winter (Israel's rainy season). However, the two prayers follow slightly different schedules. We begin to say "He causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall" on Shemini Atzeret. But, as you point out, we start saying the second prayer, the actual request for rain, only at the beginning of December.

Why the differing start dates? It's an interesting story . . . In Israel

The Jews of ancient Israel made three pilgrimages to Jerusalem each year, for the holidays of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. Now, the official rainy season begins on Shemini Atzeret,¹ when the Jews were about to start their journey back home after the festival of Sukkot. As much as they wanted the rain, they chose to delay their supplications in the interests of a safer and easier trip. That is how the practice of delaying the prayer for rain began. In Israel, the prayer was begun only 15 days after Shemini Atzeret (the 7th of Cheshvan), allowing enough time for even the Jews living near the Euphrates to return home.² This custom is followed by Jews living in Israel until today.

Outside of Israel, however, a more complicated calculation became necessary.

In the Diaspora

For much of our history, the primary Jewish community in the Diaspora was in Babylonia (modern-day Iraq), where the terrain is on a lower altitude than Israel's, and they do not need rain until much later. Therefore, the sages instituted that Jews living in the Diaspora should start praying for rain only 60 days after the start of the halachic autumn, which is known as tekufat Tishrei.³ (This should not be confused with the autumn equinox,

which is usually September 22 or 23.) I will explain soon when exactly that is.

Nowadays very few Jews live in Babylonia, and the Jews of North America need rain at a different time than the Jews of Singapore. Nevertheless, we all start asking for rain on the day established for the Jews in Babylonia, regardless of when rains are actually needed in our respective locales.⁴

The Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, Of Blessed Memory, explains that even Jews living in the Southern Hemisphere, where the seasons are reversed, should follow the schedule established for the Jews of Babylonia, because we pray for the needs of the Jewish people as a whole, most of whom reside in the Northern Hemisphere.⁵

Obviously, this does not preclude us from praying for rain at other times. An individual or community that needs rain at a different time may add a personal prayer into the sixteenth blessing of the Amidah, “Shomei’a Tefillah,” where we add our unique requests.⁶

Now Some Math

We now know that the custom of Jews in the Diaspora is to start praying for rain 60 days after the onset of tekufat Tishrei. But when exactly is that?

In the third century, the Talmudic sage Shmuel calculated the length of the solar year as 365 days and 6 hours. Since the year is subdivided into four seasons, or tekufot in Hebrew, it follows that each tekufah is 91 days and 7½ hours ($365.25 \div 4 = 91.3125$).⁷

This calculation happens to correspond with the Julian calendar, which was widely used from the year 45 BCE until the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in 1582 CE.

Based on this, tekufat Tishrei always began on September 24 on the Julian calendar,⁸ and 60 days into tekufat Tishrei was November 22.⁹

Calendar Issues

It eventually became clear that the solar year is actually 11 minutes and 14 seconds shorter than previously calculated, and that the calendar was slowly but surely drifting ahead. In the year 1582, the spring (vernal) equinox—which had been on March 25 at the introduction of the Julian calendar—actually occurred on March 11. This was about 10 days earlier than March 21, which is the day that had been “fixed” as the vernal equinox in the year 325.

To remedy this, Gregory XIII made two changes: He shifted the calendar back by removing 10 days in October, making October 5 of the year 1582 into October 15. This restored the spring equinox to March 21.

To ensure that the calendar would not shift again, Gregory implemented that every 128 years (or, more roughly, three times every 400 years), one day would be removed from the calendar. (This is because the discrepancy of 11 minutes and 14 seconds accumulates into a whole extra day every 128 years.)

The extra day normally appended to the month of February every four years (causing a leap year)¹⁰ would not be added to all century years, except for those years which are multiples of 400. (Thus, it was not added in the years 1700, 1800 and 1900. However, it was added to the years 1600 and 2000.)

If you’re still following me, it should be clear that the old calendars (Jewish and Julian) drift away from the new (Gregorian) calendar at a rate of three days every 400 years.

It’s important to note that the Jewish sages were well aware that this calculation was not completely accurate. In fact, for most purposes the Jewish calendar follows the more accurate calculations of Rabbi Adda bar Ahavah, who gives the length of the solar year as 365 days, 5 hours, 55 minutes and 25.4 seconds. However, the sages of the Talmud chose to calculate the length of a solar year as 365.25 days for the prayer for rain and for Birchat Hachamah (the blessing of the sun), because it made the calculations much simpler for the average person to perform.¹¹

What to Do?

We know that the prayer for rain should be said 60 days after the beginning of halachic autumn. Since this date is based on the calculation of Shmuel (and the Julian calendar), and not the Gregorian calendar, we now have to translate this date into our Gregorian calendars.

Here’s our final calculation: As mentioned earlier, in the Julian calendar, the sixtieth day after the tekufah is November 22. Now, keeping in mind that the Gregorian calendar chopped off 10 days from the Julian calendar, we have to add them back. Thus, the sixtieth day would be—in the year 1582—on December 2.

Additionally, every centurial year (except for the years divisible by 400) the Gregorian calendar loses one day not dropped from the older calendar. Thus, from the year

1700 and onward, the sixtieth day of the tekufah moved one day every 100 years. In 1700 it was on December 3, in 1800 it moved to December 4, and in 1900 to December 5. However, since the year 2000 is divisible by 400, and the Gregorian calendar did not drop the leap day, the day that is considered the sixtieth day of the tekufah did not move, and remains December 5 until the year 2100, in which it will move to December 6.

The reason that we begin saying the prayer on December 6 in the year before a (civil) leap year is that although the Gregorian calendar adds a day to the month of February every four years for a leap year, the extra day has essentially really been accumulated at the start of the winter season. Therefore, every December preceding a leap year, the sixtieth day is adjusted to December 6. Also bear in mind that since the halachic day starts on the preceding night, we start reciting the prayer for rain during the Maariv Amidah on the night preceding the dates given above.

So, after all that, what you really need to know is that until the year 2100, in a regular year we start saying the prayer for rain on the night of December 4, and in the year before a (civil) leap year, on the night of December 5.12

As we begin to recite the prayers for rain this winter, let us have in mind that we are joining Jews all over the world—especially those in our Holy Land, where every drop of water is precious—united in our request for bounty and blessing for all of humanity.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Talmud (Taanit 1:1) explains that in truth, even this mention of rain should have theoretically started earlier, at the beginning of the festival of Sukkot. However, it was deemed inappropriate to mention rain during Sukkot, when we are obligated to eat in the sukkah.
2. Ibid. 1:3.
3. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 117:1.
4. Shulchan Aruch *ibid.*; Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav 117:2; Responsa of Rabbi Asher bar Yechiel (Rosh) 4:10. See also Shaarei Halachah u-Minhag, vol. 1, pp. 159–163 for an extensive list of halachic authorities who discuss this.
5. See Torat Menachem 5742, vol. 4, p. 2119, and Torat Menachem 5743, vol. 1, p. 387.
6. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 117:2.
7. See Talmud, Eruvin 56a.
8. Currently October 7 on the Gregorian calendar.
9. See, for example, Beit Yosef to Orach Chaim 117, where Rabbi Yosef Caro, who lived before the introduction of the

Gregorian calendar, gives November 22 as the day we start praying for rain.

10. The leap year is in both calendars to compensate for the fact that a solar year is approximately 365.25 days; thus, every four years there is an extra day.

11. For more on the accuracy of the calculations, and the reasons why they chose inexact ones, see *But the Sun Is in the Wrong Place!*

12. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 117:1.

A noted scholar and researcher, Rabbi Yehuda Shurpin serves as content editor at Chabad.org, and writes the popular weekly Ask Rabbi Y column. Rabbi Shurpin is the rabbi of the Chabad Shul in St. Louis Park, Minn., where he resides with his wife, Ester, and their children.

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Dovid Travers Melbourne, AUS December 7, 2020 article misses a central point. The reason this practice is based upon the Julian calendar is because that was the calendar in use when Shmuel instituted his rule and it was still in use when the Shulchan Aruch was published. The Shulchan Aruch was published in 1563, the Gregorian calendar, which is in use today in most countries, was not introduced until 1582. Many countries adopted it later on. For instance Great Britain 1752, Russia 1918 (after the Great October Revolution which now occurs in November!) Had the Gregorian calendar been in use prior to Shulchan Aruch being published it is quite possible that we would follow what is stated there... 60 days after the Tekufah = Autumnal Equinox = 22 Sept +60 = Nov 22. This would make sense. For some reason we use reverse logic and revert to the 'old' Julian calendar. Which by the time of the adoption of the 'new' Gregorian calendar was off by some 10 days! In all likelihood being exact was not important and so we do what we do.

Yehoshua Friedman DN Mizrach Binyamin .. the Mishnah Brurah in the Biur Halacha on Hilchos Rosh Chodesh Siman 427 points out a discrepancy in the Jewish calendar but tells us not to worry because long before it gets to be a practical problem Moshiach will have come and we will be calculating the months by witnessing the new moon as it was originally. David Travers St Kilda East October 10, 2019 in response to Steve E Abraham I fully concur with this sentiment. The halacha as brought down by Shmuel simply says "60 days after Tekufat Tishrei." Nothing about a specific calendar system. We now have a calendar which no longer allows the equinoxes to drift we should use it and update our system to a more accurate system employed by the rest of the world.

BTW there is nothing specific occurring on the date celestially, it was just an arbitrary date chosen, so what could be so wrong reverting to the original date of 22 November, which would then be fixed and not open to change?

Avraham Rosen Jerusalem December 2, 2013 Many thanks. But why link the change in prayer to the civil rather than (as is done in Israel) the Jewish calendar?

Dovid Travers Melbourne, AUS December 8, 2020 in response to Avraham Rosen: Two separate reasons. In Eretz Yisroel when during Temple times when people made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Oleh haregel) though the request for rain was made on Shmini Atzeres, the actual imploring in the ninth brocha of the Amidah was not instituted until the majority of the furthest wayfarers had reached the river Euphrates about a two-week journey, hence recitation commences on 7 Marcheshvan.

However, in Bavel (Babylon - Lower Mesopotamia) when the rains were seasonally later this was estimated as being 60 days after the Tekufah = Autumnal Equinox). Thus this is fixed by the seasons, hence the civil or solar calendar. Our Hebrew Moon-based calendar does not follow the seasons but varies over the years. Hence the need for our intercalation process with the solar-based secular calendar. One could ask why 7 Marcheshvan has remained since we no longer have a Temple theoretically the request and the commencement for imploring HKBH for rain could coincide and be on Shemini Atzeres.

from: The **Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust** <info@rabbisacks.org>
date: Dec 1, 2021, 2:15 PM

Appearance and Reality (Mikketz)

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Zt"l

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

Hubris is usually punished by nemesis and so it was in Joseph's case. Far from being a ruler, his brothers turned him into a slave. Now, unexpectedly, in this week's parsha, the dreams become reality. The brothers do bow down to him, "their faces to the ground" (Gen. 42:6). It may feel as though the story has reached its end. Instead it turns out to be only the beginning of another story altogether, a tale of sin, repentance and forgiveness. Biblical stories tend to defy narrative conventions. The reason, though, that the story does not end with the brothers' meeting is that only one person present at the scene, Joseph himself, knows that it is a reunion.

"As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognised them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them ... Joseph recognised his brothers, but they did not recognise him" (Gen. 42:7-8).

There were many reasons they did not recognise him. Many years had passed. They did not know he was in Egypt. They

believed he was still a slave, whereas this man was a viceroy. Besides which, he looked like an Egyptian, spoke Egyptian, and had an Egyptian name, Tsofnat Paaneach. Most importantly, though, he was wearing the uniform of an Egyptian of high rank. That had been the sign of Joseph's elevation at the hand of Pharaoh when he interpreted his dreams:

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.' Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain round his neck. He made him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, "Make way." Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. (Gen. 41:41-43)

We know from Egyptian wall paintings and from archaeological discoveries like Tutankhamen's tomb, how stylised and elaborate were Egyptian robes of office. Different ranks wore different clothes. Early Pharaohs had two headdresses, a white one to mark the fact that they were kings of upper Egypt, and a red one to signal that they were kings of lower Egypt. Like all uniforms, clothes told a story, or as we say nowadays, "made a statement." They proclaimed a person's status. Someone dressed like this Egyptian before whom the brothers had just bowed could not possibly be their long-lost brother Joseph. Except that he was.

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

The encounter between Joseph and his brothers is the fifth in a series of stories in which clothes play a key role. The first is Jacob who dresses in Esau's clothes while bringing his father a meal so that he can take his brother's blessing in disguise. Second is Joseph's finely embroidered robe or "coat of many colours," which the brothers bring back to their father stained in blood, saying that a wild animal must have seized him. Third is the story of Tamar taking off her widow's dress, covering herself with a veil, and making herself look as if she were a prostitute. Fourth is the robe Joseph leaves in the hands of Potiphar's wife while escaping her attempt to seduce him. The

fifth is the one in today's parsha in which Pharaoh dresses Joseph as a high-ranking Egyptian, with clothes of linen, a gold chain, and the royal signet ring.

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

"Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field the Lord has blessed" (Gen. 27:27).

Joseph's stained robe was produced by the brothers to conceal the fact that they were responsible for Joseph's disappearance.

Jacob "recognised it and said, "It is my son's robe! A wild animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces" (Gen. 37:33).

Tamar's façade as a veiled prostitute was intended to deceive Judah into sleeping with her since she wanted to have a child to "raise up the name" of her dead husband Er. Potiphar's wife used the evidence of Joseph's torn robe to substantiate her claim that he had tried to rape her, a crime of which he was wholly innocent. Lastly, Joseph used the fact that his brothers did not recognise him to set in motion a series of staged events to test whether they were still capable of selling a brother as a slave or whether they had changed.

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

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

It was the nineteenth century Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz who pointed out a fundamental difference between other ancient cultures and Judaism:

"The pagan perceives the Divine in nature through the medium of the eye, and he becomes conscious of it as something to be looked at. On the other hand, to the Jew who conceives God as being outside of nature and prior to it, the Divine manifests itself through the will and through the medium of the ear . . . The pagan beholds his god, the Jew hears Him; that is, apprehends His will."^[2]

In the twentieth century, literary theorist Erich Auerbach contrasted the literary style of Homer with that of the Hebrew Bible.^[3] In Homer's prose we see the play of light on surfaces. The Odyssey and The Iliad are full of visual descriptions. By contrast, biblical narrative has very few such descriptions. We do not know how tall Abraham was, the colour of Miriam's

hair, or anything about Moses' appearance. Visual details are minimal, and are present only when necessary to understand what follows. We are told for example that Joseph was good-looking (Gen. 39:6) only to explain why Potiphar's wife desired him.

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

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

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

"Joseph recognised his brothers, but they did not recognise him."

The reason they did not recognise him is that, from the start, they allowed their feelings to be guided by what they saw, the "coat of many colours" that inflamed their envy of their younger brother. Judge by appearances and you will miss the deeper truth about situations and people. You will even miss God Himself, for God cannot be seen, only heard. That is why the primary imperative in Judaism is Shema Yisrael, "Listen, O Israel," and why, when we say the first line of the Shema, we place our hand over our eyes so that we cannot see. Appearances deceive. Clothes betray. Deeper understanding, whether of God or of human beings, cannot come from appearances. In order to choose between right and wrong, between good and bad – in order to live the moral life – we must make sure not only to look, but also to listen.

from: Esplanade Capital <jeisenstadt@esplanadecap.com>

date: Dec 2, 2021, 11:26 PM

subject: **Rabbi Yisroel Reisman's** Chumash Shiur
Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Mikeitz – Shabbos Chanukah – Shabbos Rosh Chodesh 5782

1 – Topic – A Thought on the Parsha

As we celebrate Chanukah and of course Parshas Mikeitz which after a one year hiatus has once again resumed its place as Shabbos Chanukah. Let me share with you a thought for Parshas Mikeitz and a thought for Chanukah. First we will start with the Parsha.

In the Parsha I had a Kasha and I don't know why it never bothered me before. The Kasha is this. It says when the Shevatim came to Yosef as is found in 43:33 (וַיִּשְׁבוּ לְפָנָיו--הַבָּכָר (פְּבַרְתוּ, וְהַצְעִיר פָּצְעָרוּהוּ). That Yosef sat them down by age order. It was a Pele in their eyes. How did he know? Rashi says that he pretended to be doing magic. (מכה בגביע). He would bang on his goblet which he told them he does magic with it and he said (ראובן שמעון לוי ויהודה יששכר וזבולון, בני אם אחת). That is what he did and in that way he showed them that he is a sorcerer and he is like all the people in Mitzrayim.

It bothered me because Kishuf is Assur and the Avos kept all of the Mitzvos in the Torah. He is Over on (Devarim 18:13) (תָּמִים), he is Over on doing Kishuf. Certainly according to the Rambam who holds that all Kishuf is fake the whole thing is a bluff. Certainly he is Over on (תָּמִים תְּהִיָה, עִם) (יָרַר אֶלְרִיד). He is Over on a Mitzvas Asei. He is Over on Vayikra 19:26 (לֹא תִגְזֹלוּ) a Lo Sasei. How could Yosef do it?

I know that you are going to tell me that the Ramban says that in Chutz L'aretz the Avos didn't necessarily keep Kol Hatorah Kulah as Yaakov married sisters. I understand, however, of course they kept Kol Hatorah Kulo. In Chutz L'aretz if there is a Tzorech, if they had some reason then they didn't but Mistama they kept Kol Hatorah Kulah. It definitely needs a Hesber and it sounds like a great Kasha.

At the end of the Parsha when the Gevia is supposedly stolen from Yosef, and Yosef's servants come and chase after the Shevatim, and they find the Gevia in Binyamin's package. So it is interesting that we find in Chazal that the Shevatim said to him you are a Ganef the son of a Ganef. Your mother stole the Terafim and here you are a Ganef also. It means that they were really Choshed him of doing it. It is a Davar Pele.

It could be that Davka Yosef treated this Gevia as a magical tool and Binyamin was Tak'e the son of Rochel and Rochel Tak'e kept such a Chumra that she stole people's Avodah Zorah to prevent them from doing Avodah Zorah. So it may be that that is why they were Choshed Binyamin not that Stam he was a Ganef, but that he kept his mother's Middah L'sheim Shamayim of stealing people's things that they shouldn't do Aveiros.

Maybe that was Yosef's plan. Yosef's plan was to do it. We asked how could he be Over am Aveira without a Tzorech. Maybe he did it for a Tzorech and the whole Tzorech was that

when they catch Binyamin it should be at least a little believable that they will come and we will see what will happen. It could be. Who knows? Maybe it was for that reason. I don't know. Ulai.

2 – Topic – A Thought on Chanukah

What is Chanukah all about? As you know, there are two miracles. The miracle of the Pach Shemen and the miracle of the Nitzachin Hamilchama. We celebrate them. The miracle of the Pach Shemen we commemorate by lighting the Menorah and singing Maoz Tzur, and the miracle of Nitzachin Hamilchama we say Al Hanisim. Those are the two faces to the Pirsumai Nisa of Chanukah.

The Rama in Siman Taf Reish Ayin says that it is a Mitzva L'harbos Seudos K'tzas. It is a Mitzva to add to the Seudos. Why? Because of Chanukas Hamizbai'ach. Because there is a third aspect of Chanukah the Chanukas Hamizbai'ach. Three questions:

1. Where did the Rama get this third reason of Chanukah? We have the Neis of the Pach Shemen and we have the Nitzachin Hamilchama where did he get this third reason about Chanukas Hamizbach?
2. What is Chanukas Hamizbaiach? Chanukas Hamishkan. Chanukas Habeis Hamikdash. What is Chanukas Hamizbaiach? Chanukas Hamizbaiach is one of the Klei Shareis in the Beis Hamikdash. What is Chanukas Hamizbaiach? (אָז אָגמור קָשִׁיר) (מְזַמֵּר תְּנַכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ). What is Chanukas Hamizbaiach? It should be Chanukas Hamishkan? What is the Inyan of Chanukas Hamizbaiach?
3. On the 25th of Kisleiv the Chashmonaim did not do a Chanukas Hamizbai'ach. Chanukas Beis Hamikdash perhaps, but not Chanukas Hamizbai'ach. The Gemara says in Maseches Avodah Zorah 52b (וּבְאוּ בֵּה פְרִיצִים וְחִלּוּהָ). The Yevonim were Mechaleil. The Baal Hamaor says on this Gemara that they were Mechaleil all of the Keilim of the Beis Hamidash. As a matter of fact the stones of the Mizbai'ach were stored forever in one of the Lishchos of the Beis Hamidash. They had to put together a new Mizbai'ach. The Rambam says that on the 25th of Kisleiv that they were still fighting the war. They won the war that day. There was no Chanukas Hamizbai'ach that day. This whole thing is such a Pele!

To answer it let me tell you something that I heard from Rav Pam.

Rav Pam gave Shiur in Yor'e Dai'a and I attended his Shiur for two years. Rav Pam's Shmuz was his Shmuz and his Shiur was his Shiur. During the Yor'e Dai'a Shiur he did not speak Mussar except for once according to my recollection. Once there were two sentences. We were learning Hilchos Shechita and the Halachos of whether the Shochet makes a Shehechyanu the first time he Shechts. Rav Pam stopped and looked at us and said when a person gets married why doesn't

he make a Shehecheyanu at his Chasunah? He paused for a moment and then he said when a person gets married he doesn't know what it is. It is what you make of it. He doesn't know if it is good. It is what you make of it. Then he went back to learning Yor'e Dai'a. When something happens to a person it is what you make of it.

It reminds me of something that Rav Moshe said. Rav Moshe said that Moshe Rabbeinu had two children the first he named Gershom as it says in 18:3 (גֵרְשֹׁם--כִּי אָמַר, גַּר הָיִיתִי בְּאֶרֶץ נִכְרִיָּה). I was a stranger in a distant land. The second one he named Eliezer (כִּי-אֶלְרִי אָבִי בְּעֶזְרִי, וַיִּצְלַנִי מִחֶרֶב פְּרַעֲוִה). That HKB"Y saved me from Pharaoh's sword. So Rav Moshe asked the order is backwards. First he was saved from Pharaoh's sword and only subsequently was he a Ger B'erezt Rechoka. So the children should have been named Eliezer the Bechor and Gershom the second one?

Rav Moshe answered when a miracle happens to you, is it good or bad? It depends what you make of it, it depends what you do with it. He was saved from Pharaoh's hand and he ran away. If he would have run away and assimilate that would be a terrible thing that happened to him. He ran away (גַּר הָיִיתִי בְּאֶרֶץ נִכְרִיָּה). I did not assimilate in this strange land. Now you can thank Hashem for saving you because something good came of it.

Ocasionally I have people who tell me you will never believe what happened to me a mirale and they tell me that they were diagnosed with an illness and it went away, it disappeared. Or something happened and there was a big Tzar in the family and there was a Yeshua. I say to them NU? What is the end of the story? The beginning of the story is that something miraculous happened to you. Nu? What is the end of the story? Tell me what you did with it? You didn't do anything with it so what is the big deal that a miracle happened to you. It is a story. It is only worth something if something good and something positive comes from it.

Back to our Kasha. What happened on Chanukah? Miracles, Nitzachin Hamilchama and the Neis of the Pach Hashemen. Klal Yisrael what are you going to do with it? On that day there was a Chanukas Ha'Beis Hamikdash, of course they came to the Beis Hamikdash. Klal Yisrael what are you going to do with it? Klal Yisrael went (אָז אֶגְמֹר בְּשִׁיר מִזְמֹר הַגְּבוּת הַמְּזֻבָּח). The Mizbai'ach was Posul and they went and they built a Mizbai'ach, they celebrated a Mizbai'ach, they put into it the Kochos that were befitting. Once that happened then it is worth celebrating. The celebration is not on the miracles alone. It is what happens afterwards. After the miracles take place. What happens next? (אָז אֶגְמֹר בְּשִׁיר מִזְמֹר הַגְּבוּת הַמְּזֻבָּח). After they did a Chanukas Hamizbai'ach. Now we see from the behavior afterwards. On that day of course they were moved, but

subsequently they got to work and did things in a Lechatchila way. Now it is a time to celebrate.

It is an important lesson. Something good happens to you make something of it. Do something with it. Rav Pam used to tell the story of once when he went on vacation in a city in Massachusetts in the summer, and he had a kidney stone or something similar and he had to be helicoptered to a hospital in NYC in order to save his life. After that, he didn't gon vacation again. From then on his vacation was that he would stay at home and sit and learn. He didn't go on vacation again.

Now my lesson is not that you should never go on a vacation again, my lesson is if something happens to you Nu? Where is the rest of the story? The Ribbono Shel Olam did something for you or he did something to you. Nu where is the rest of the story? There has to be a cause and an affect. Chanukah there was a Neis, Klal Yisrael did something. Purim there was a Neis and Kimu V'kiblu Hayehudim so then Leshana Haba they made it a Yom Tov. When the Neis happened they didn't make it a Yom Tov. They waited. What are you going to do with it? Klal Yisrael did something with it. Kimu V'kiblu, so then we are going to make it into a Yom Tov. It is what you do with it. Marriage is what you make of it. Miracles are what you make of it. Nisyonos, illness what do you make of it? Let's make good things out of it.

Wishing everyone a meaningful Chanukah, a wonderful Shabbos and the great joy of celebrating the Am Yisrael that HKB"Y watches wherever we are, whenever we are as we resist the Yevonim. Good Shabbos to all!

from: Rabbi Chanan Morrison

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date: Nov 29, 2021, 1:07 AM

subject: **Rav Kook on Chanukah: Flickering Lights in Dark Times**

Rav Kook Torah

Chanukah: Flickering Lights in Dark Times

Rabbi Chanan Morrison

Suitable Wicks and Oils

The Mishnah (Shabbat, chapter two) discusses which wicks and oils are suitable for Sabbath lights. Certain materials may not be used for wicks since they make "the flame sputter" and fail to burn evenly; and certain oils may not be used because "they do not flow freely to the wick." With regard to Chanukah, however, the Talmud (Shabbat 21b) rules that these restrictions do not apply. Even wicks and oil that do not burn smoothly may be used for Chanukah lights. Why are all oils permitted for use on Chanukah, even when lit on Friday evening? Why this distinction between Sabbath and Chanukah lights?

The Sages required that Sabbath lights be lit from high-quality oils and wicks in order to prevent situations where one might be tempted to relight or adjust sputtering lights (and thus desecrate the Sabbath). They were more lenient, however, regarding Chanukah, since Chanukah lights need not be re-lit should the flame go out. Also, since it is forbidden to use their light for reading or other purposes, the Sages were less concerned that one would attempt to relight a poorly-lit Chanukah light.

The Lights of Chanukah

Rav Kook explained that the special rules of Chanukah lights reflect the nature of the Maccabean struggle against Greek dominance, in both political and cultural spheres. The authentic heritage of Israel is Torah. The Torah's eternal wisdom is symbolized by the Sabbath lights — lights that require a pure oil that burns clearly and brightly.

However, there have been many times during their long history when the Jewish people have been attracted to the wisdom and beliefs of other nations. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent when the Jewish people are ruled by other nations or exiled from their land. During these times of national vulnerability, many are drawn to the ideologies of powerful and successful nations, even if these beliefs are not thoroughly considered and may be based only on theories and speculations.

For such times, Divine providence provided the Jewish people with gifted scholars who were able to defend the Torah by utilizing these foreign ideas. One example is Maimonides, who attempted where possible to reconcile Aristotelian philosophy with the Torah.

Short-Lived Flame

However, these foreign philosophies lack the eternal truth of Torah. They are like flickering flames that illuminate only for a short time. After a generation or two, the assumptions upon which these ideas are based are often refuted. Utilizing foreign philosophies to bolster the Torah may be compared to lighting Chanukah lights with oils that fail to produce a bright and even light.

Nonetheless, when these beliefs are popular and widely-held, the generation is strongly drawn to them. If it were not possible to find some measure of agreement with the Torah, many would be tempted to reject the Torah altogether. In order to protect the nation, Divine providence allowed the possibility of aligning these fashionable ideas with the Torah's wisdom. They do not

always match neatly with practical mitzvot and Halachic rulings — in the words of the Talmud, 'they do not flow freely to the wick' — but with a little effort, they can be made to at least partially correspond.

We should be aware that such philosophies are not eternal truths and we are not responsible for their accuracy.

“When their light goes out, they need not be re-lit.”

Certainly we should not make practical changes to Torah observance based on these ideas — “it is forbidden to make use of its light.” They are useful only to put troubled minds to rest, not as a true foundation with practical implications. Thus the special rules of Chanukah lights aptly parallel the Maccabean struggle against the Greeks, at a time when Hellenism and Greek wisdom dominated the world with its new ideas.

Jewish Nationalism

There was a second arena in which the Maccabees contested the Greek empire: the military-political one.

Here too, the Hasmonean rule did not follow the eternal path of Israel, which designated the monarchy to the descendants of David for all generations. The throne of David is compared to an eternal flame — “You promised him that his candle will never be extinguished” (from the Sabbath prayers). But the hour was not ripe for a Davidic king, and the temporary rule of the Hasmoneans provided stability and independence for many years.

The Davidic dynasty combined both Torah scholarship and political leadership. David studied Torah assiduously day and night (Berachot 3b), and at the same time was energetic and decisive in establishing a secure reign. Authentic Jewish nationalism must be based on the light of Torah — “From Zion, Torah will come forth” (Isaiah 2:3).

In summary, the laws of Chanukah lights reflect the transient quality of the Hasmonean victory, both spiritually and materially. Spiritually — the accommodation of foreign philosophies that may be partially reconciled with the Torah's teachings, as represented by oils that do not burn well. And materially — a political rule not of the Davidic dynasty. This corresponds to the wicks (the more material side of the lights) that fail to hold a constant flame. These achievements provided light, albeit a weak and unsteady one, for a people lacking true independence. They are only fit for Chanukah lights, commemorating a holiday that was not inscribed for all generations in the Biblical

canon (Yoma 29a). Yet even though they are not the ideal, unlike the pure lights of the Sabbath, we need these lights during the precarious times of foreign occupation and exile.

Kodesh Heim

Despite their shortcomings, these transient lights are holy — kodesh heim. We should recognize in them the hand of God, that God prepared a path so that those attracted to the prevalent culture should not be lost. And the very fact that foreign ideas may be accommodated within the Torah is an indication that these ideas contain a kernel of eternal truth — a small cruse of pure oil, sealed with the stamp of High Priest.

(Silver from the Land of Israel, pp. 112-115. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. III on Shabbat 21b (2:5).)

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subject: Torah MiTzion by **Rabbi Ben Zion Sobel**
Chanukah - Self-Sacrifice

The Bach explains that because the Jews, at the time of the Second Temple, were lax in performing the service, therefore Hashem punished them by inspiring the Syrian Greeks to abolish the service completely. When the Maccabees showed self-sacrifice in order to continue the service, Hashem abolished the decree.

The Torah true leaders of Israel, in all generations, exhibit tremendous self-sacrifice for the benefit of the Nation.

Therefore, they received siyata diShemaya (Heavenly assistance) and they were successful in their endeavors.

In our generation, we were privileged to see the unbelievable self-sacrifice of the Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva, the Tzaddik **HaRav Nosson Tzvi Finkel** ztvk"l. Although suffering for many years from severe Parkinson's Disease R"l, nevertheless, he never let it prevent him from teaching in yeshiva daily and traveling abroad to raise the tremendous funds necessary to uphold the yeshiva which he had built into the largest in the world; serving over 6,000 students.

But the self-sacrifice in his family did not begin with him.

It is well known that many, if not most, of the greatest Roshei Yeshiva of this generation have their roots in Slabodka. The Alter of Slabodka, HaRav HaTzaddik Reb Nosson Tzvi Finkel ztvk"l was an expert pedagogue who molded each of his students according to his own strengths and weaknesses. By doing so, he fulfilled the dictate of Shlomo HaMelech, "Chanoch lana'ar al pi darko - Train the child according to his

way." The Alter is justly credited with the honor of being the one who provided most of the Torah being taught and learned in the Torah World today, after the Holocaust.

But recently, I achieved a remarkable realization; which most people are not aware of.

Many years ago, I asked my mentor, HaGaon HaRav Ya'akov Kaminetsky zt"l whether an askan (one who is dedicated to helping the Jewish People in the way that he is able) should care for Klal Yisroel even at the expense of his own children. I was sure that he would answer me that the Rambam rules (Hilchos Talmud Torah 1:2) that teaching one's son precedes teaching his grandson, and that teaching his grandson precedes teaching someone else's son. How surprised was I when he told me the following story.

The Alter of Slabodka had several sons (Reb Ya'akov was a student and a ben bayis [a member of the family] of the Alter for 15 years). One of them, Reb Lezer Yudel zt"l, established the yeshiva in Mir. Another one became a railroad engineer! One of the Alter's closest students once asked him, "Rebby, what's the story with that son of yours?" The Alter responded, "Do you see the Yeshiva of Slabodka? Do you see its many talmidim? If I were to think about that son, all this would not exist!"

But the student persisted and asked again, "But what about him?" The Alter answered once more, "Do you see the yeshiva? Do you realize all that will come out of it for the benefit of Klal Yisroel? I tell you again that if I were to concern myself with him, then none of this would ever be."

(I assume that the Alter understood the Rambam to apply only when it is a choice between one's son vs. the individual son of another. But when the choice is either one's son or Klal Yisroel, then Klal Yisroel takes precedence.)

Years later, HaRav Elya Svei z"l was sitting shiv'ah in Eretz Yisroel and was visited by a faculty member of the Jerusalem Mirrer Yeshiva. I repeated the story to them and they both commented, "Oh, yes. That was the son of the Alter who was problematic. Eventually, his father sent him away to America!" Now that, very unfortunately, we lost the great Rosh Yeshiva of Jerusalem Mir, HaTzaddik Reb Nosson Tzvi Finkel ztvk"l, we are learning about his fascinating life. We always knew that he was the son-in-law of HaRav Beinish Finkel zt"l, and that when his father-in-law passed away, he became the head of the yeshiva; as often is the case. But his name was Finkel too; and he bore the name of the Alter of Slabodka! How did this happen?

We were amazed as we read that "Natie" Finkel came from Chicago where he studied in a modern Orthodox co-ed yeshiva, currently known as the Ida Crown Jewish Academy, where he was president of the student council and starting centerfielder for the school's baseball team. He came to visit Israel when he was eighteen, after graduation, and planned on being here for a

short time only. However, his great uncle, Reb Lezer Yudel Finkel, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir at the time, took him under his wings and steered him towards a life totally dedicated to learning and teaching Torah. Following in the footsteps of his great-grandfather, The Alter of Slabodka, after whom he had been named, he became one of the greatest Roshei Yeshiva in our generation.

I spoke with the family and learned that Reb Nosson Tvi's grandfather's name was Avraham Shemuel; son of the Alter of Slabodka, who eventually moved to the USA. So, apparently, Hashem saw to it that because the Alter sacrificed his beloved child for the sake of Klal Yisroel, and sent him to the USA; davka (specifically) from there came a child who enlightened the entire Torah World.

Hashgacha Peratis at its best!

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Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Mikeitz

פרשת מקץ תשפ"ב

וידי מקץ שנתים ימים

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

Chazal (Midrash Rabbah 89:3) quote a pasuk in Sefer Tehillim (40:5) which they feel relates to Yosef's still being incarcerated two years after the release of the chamberlain: Ashrei ha'gever asher sam Hashem miyvach; "Praiseworthy is the man who has made Hashem his trust." This alludes to Yosef, who as a result of asking the chamberlain twice to remember him, had two years added to his imprisonment." Chazal's statement begs elucidation. It begins by intimating that Yosef was the exemplar of bitachon, trust, in the Almighty, then concludes that Yosef was punished precisely for relying on the chamberlain. Not only was Yosef not lauded for his bitachon, but two years were added to his sentence, as a consequence of his reliance on mortal assistance. Furthermore, what did he do that was inconsistent with Torah outlook? One should not sit back comfortably and wait for the "cavalry." He must do some sort of hishtadlus, endeavoring, upon which Hashem's blessing will rest. This is precisely what Yosef did.

The simple explanation, upon which the commentators expound, is that it all depends on who is voicing his bitachon. Horav Ezra Barzal, zl, observes that when a person becomes ill, he calls the doctor, who prescribes medicine. Indeed, is this the way a Jew should live? The illness was not generated by the doctor. It came from Hashem. Thus, it would be appropriate that the person pray directly to Hashem. Why go to the doctor?

Apparently, this depends on the spiritual level of the sick person. One whose bitachon level is very high should turn to Hashem. Most of us, however, have yet to reach this pinnacle of spirituality. Therefore, the hishtadlus requisites that apply to us are different. The question is how much hishtadlus is too much? It all depends upon one's level of trust. Clearly, Yosef had achieved an unparalleled degree of bitachon, which demanded that he place his unequivocal trust solely in Hashem.

The Chazon Ish, zl (Emunah u'Bitachon), explains that, indeed, we must all place our trust and faith in Hashem. Hishtadlus, undertaking endeavors, does not conflict with bitachon, but rather, facilitates it. We do not sit back and place our order for Heavenly assistance and wait for it to arrive. The question is what form of hishtadlus does one employ? It must be hishtadlus that, under the right circumstances, can be the vehicle for salvation. For example, grabbing onto a piece of straw, a string – something that cannot possibly be the medium for salvation -- does not only defeat the purpose of hishtadlus – but it is a ludicrous act of hopelessness, which is the opposite of bitachon.

The critique of Yosef was founded in his turning to the chamberlain for help. How can one rely on an Egyptian to support a Jew? Yosef should have known better than to turn to such a person for support. Such action is not hishtadlus – it smacks of yishuv, despair. The chamberlain was the wrong address for hishtadlus. One who requires brain surgery does not seek a blacksmith.

Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, relates that during his escape from Europe to Eretz Yisrael, the Brisker Rav, zl, refused to eat the food that was served on the ship because of his kashrus concerns. After a few days of travel, one of the sailors on the ship approached the Rav and said, "Kavod haRav, I have a solution for his Honor. We catch the fish daily from the ocean. The Rav can easily check for signs of kashrus (fins and scales). Fish do not require ritual slaughter, so the Rav can eat."

The Rav listened, then asked, "What about preparation? How will the fish be cooked?" The sailor replied that they had a brand new pot in the ship's galley which had never been used. It was, thus, kosher. The Rav replied, "This might suffice for the young children. It is necessary, however, to have a Jew light the fire; otherwise, it is bishul akum, cooked by a non-Jew, rendering it rabbinically kashrus deficient." "Rebbe, I am Jewish! I will be happy to light the flame and prepare the fish for his honor."

"If that is the case," replied the Rav, "it all makes sense. I would not understand why a gentile would be concerned whether I eat or not. Now that you inform me that you are Jewish, I am able to eat. Thank you for enabling me."

Yosef HaTzaddik was not in any way deficient in his bitachon. His oversight was in turning to the Egyptian chamberlain as his medium of hishtadlus.

ויאמר פרעה אל יוסף... אין נבון וחכם כמוך אתה תהיה על ביתי ועל פיך
ישק כל עמי

Pharaoh said to Yosef... “There can be no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and by your command shall all my people be sustained.” (41:39,40)

In Shemos 1:8, the Torah records, “A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Yosef.” The Talmud (Sotah 11a) contains a debate between Rav and Shmuel concerning the “new” Pharaoh: Was he truly a new monarch who had now ascended to the throne? Or was he the same Pharaoh of Yosef’s time who conveniently forgot who it was that had benefited Egypt in their time of national need? If, indeed, it was the same Pharaoh whose benevolence to Yosef now donned a cloak of despotism concerning the Jews, how is it that he was not impacted by the miracles that were wrought when Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon HaKohen demanded that he set the Jews free? If the original Pharaoh was so dazzled by Yosef following what was one powerful interpretation of his dreams, seeing the extraordinary miracles that accompanied Moshe and Aharon’s remonstrance to let Hashem’s people go should have bowled him over. This cannot be the same Pharaoh, or did his memory suddenly change with his stripes?

Horav David Povarsky, zl, explains that essentially it is the backdrop of the two encounters which distinguishes the two sides of Pharaoh. When Yosef portended to Pharaoh concerning the events of the next fourteen years, he made no demands of Pharaoh. Indeed, Pharaoh, in all practicality, made a very judicious move by appointing Yosef as viceroy. It made Pharaoh appear benevolent, and did not endanger his position as ruler of the country. On the contrary, it enhanced his position and made him wealthy beyond his dreams. Furthermore, Pharaoh retained his position while simultaneously adding the services of an astute advisor.

Conversely, Moshe and Aharon sought to transform Egypt’s workforce by catalyzing the Jewish slaves release from their bondage. When one is asked – nay, demanded – to free millions of slaves, it becomes quite personal. This would invariably have put a strain on the Egyptians and, by extension, Pharaoh’s pocket. Under such conditions, Pharaoh was not going to react positively to Moshe and Aharon – regardless of the convincing powers of their miracles. As long as it cost nothing, Pharaoh had no argument with a newly-freed slave becoming viceroy. When his personal interests were affected, it became an altogether different story.

Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, sums this up with an anecdote that leaves us with a true – but bitter – lesson. A man standing on a bridge saw