

BS"D



To: Parsha@YahooGroups.com
From: crshulman@aol.com

**INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON PARSHAS MIKETZ
SHABBOS CHANUKA - 5766**

Starting our 11th cycle!

To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/join> or send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Please also copy me at crshulman@aol.com. A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.teaneckshuls.org/parsha> (hosted by onlysimchas.com). It is also fully searchable. See also torah links at www.teaneckshuls.org/parsha

From: TorahWeb.org Sent: Tuesday, December 27, 2005 2:25 PM To: weeklydt@torahweb2.org Subject: [TorahWeb] Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky - The Dual Victory of Chanukah
<http://www.torahweb.org/thisWeek.html>

**Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky
The Dual Victory of Chanukah**

There are two distinct mitzvos that we perform on Chanukah, the mitzvah of hadlakas neiros and the mitzvah of krias Hallel. It is not surprising that Chazal instituted two different mitzvos to commemorate the events of Chanukah, since two miracles occurred that we are celebrating. The miracle of the oil is commemorated by lighting Chanukah candles, whereas the victory of the battle against the Yeavnim is marked by reciting Hallel. Chazal tell us (Megillah 14a) that we recite Hallel when we are saved through a miracle. As great as the miraculous events of the menorah in the Beis Hamikdash were, these events would not cause us to recite Hallel. Only the events of the battlefield preceding the restoration of the Beis Hamikdash should warrant the recitation of Hallel.

Each day of Succos we complete the Hallel, whereas on Pesach we recite an abridged form on Chol Hamoed and the concluding days. Chazal (Taanis 28b) explain that this difference reflects a basic distinction between Succos and Pesach. Each day of Succos is a separate yom tov since the korbanos that are offered each day differ from the previous day. On Pesach the identical korbanos are offered each day, therefore the entire week of Pesach is viewed as one yom tov. Therefore, once a complete Hallel is recited on the first day there is no need to repeat it on subsequent days. Tosafos raises the problem that according to this criterion we should only complete the Hallel on the first day of Chanukah. Why do we view each day of Chanukah as a separate entity? Tosafos concludes that the miracle of the oil was renewed each day. Since each day the oil lasted was a new miracle, we commemorate each miracle with a daily completion of Hallel. The solution of Tosafos seems difficult - since the recitation of Hallel relates to the victory on the battlefield, why is the daily nature of the miracle of the oil relevant? It would seem that the complete Hallel should only be recited once, since we were only saved once.

Although it would appear that the two miracles of Chanukah are distinct from one another, Tosafos obviously viewed them as one. A deeper understanding of the battle between the Chashmonaim and the Yevanim will enable us to understand the relationship between the two miracles we celebrate on Chanukah.

The battle between the Chashmonaim and the Yevanim was fought on two fronts. There was a physical battle fought between armies on a battlefield, and there was also a battle between two ways of life. The hedonistic, impure way of life personified by the Yevanim clashed with

the devotion of the Chashmonaim to the pure life of Torah. This dual battle is emphasized in al hanissim. We not only mention the victory of the few over the many, but also recognize the defeat of the impure and wicked at the hands of the pure and righteous.

When the war ended, it was obvious that the Chashmonaim were victorious on the battlefield. However, it was not apparent who had won the spiritual conflict. Perhaps the Chashmonaim had defeated their enemies with their swords, but it still had to be determined who would emerge victorious in the battle between Torah and Yavan. Hashem performed a second miracle that would prove that the spiritual battle had also been won. Chazal associate the light of the menorah with the light of Torah. If pure oil could burn for eight days despite the defilement of the Beis Hamikdash by the Yevanim, the pure light of Torah had emerged victorious from the darkness of Yavan. The miracle of the oil was not distinct from the miracle on the battlefield, but rather it was the completion of the physical struggle that occurred. The Chashmonaim emerged victorious on the physical and spiritual battlefields. Lighting the menorah in the Beis Hamikdash was not just a mitzvah, but rather the victory in the spiritual war. Being saved from spiritual annihilation warrants reciting Hallel just as a physical deliverance does.

Our reciting of Hallel on Chanukah celebrates both aspects of Chanukah. Although for the victory on the physical battlefield it would have sufficed to recite Hallel once, the spiritual victory was renewed each day of Chanukah, thereby requiring a new Hallel on each day. As we recite a new Hallel each day of Chanukah, let us focus on the victory of the renewal of Torah that is the true cause for our celebration.

Copyright © 2005 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.

<http://www.artscroll.com/Chapters/>

Brisk on Chumash Insights on the Parashah from Brisk to Jerusalem

By Rabbi Asher Bergman

Parashas Mikeitz

And he gathered them together under guard for three days. Yosef said to them on the third day . . . "One of your brothers will be imprisoned under guard, and [the rest of] you go and bring provisions." (Mikeitz 42:17-19).

Why did Yosef have to hold all the brothers under guard for three days before deciding to keep only one brother while allowing the rest to go? he could have offered this compromise immediately!

The brothers agreed to Yosef's plan to hold one of them under guard, because they knew that otherwise they would never be permitted to bring provisions back to their families. But there is a Mishnah (Terumos 8:12) that states, "If idolaters tell a group of women, 'Hand over one of your number for us to defile, and if you don't we will defile all of you,' better they should defile all the women than that one single Jewish woman should be given over willingly to them." The Talmud Yerushalmi (quoted by the Rash) extends this law to a case where idolaters ask a group of people to hand over one person to be executed, or else they will all be killed. No Jewish life may be willingly sacrificed, even if this ultimately costs the lives of many more people.

Thus, if Yosef had made his offer of keeping one of the brother's hostage at the outset, the offer would have had to be refused. The brothers would have been obligated to stay together rather than abandon one of their number to an uncertain fate at the hands of the Egyptian authorities. Therefore, Yosef incarcerated all the brother at first, and afterwards released all but one. This way the brothers were not required to hand over anyone, for Shimon was already imprisoned.

-- Brisker Rav

From: Aish.com [<mailto:newsletterserver@aish.com>]

Subject: Chanukah - Natural is Supernatural, Naturally

http://www.aish.com/chanukahthemes/chanukah_themesdefault/Natural_is_Supernatural3_Naturally.asp

by Rabbi Baruch Beyer

Miracles don't happen anymore, do they?

Chanukah began Sunday evening, Dec. 25rd, and continues until Monday night, January 2, 2005.

Did you ever get into a situation where you could have used a miracle or two? Imagine that you've just been pulled over for doing 65 in a 35 mile an hour zone. As the cop saunters over he is struck with sudden amnesia. You roll the window down and ask in your most innocent voice, "Hello, officer. Is there anything wrong?"

He replies, "Uhhh... I don't think so. I guess I just wanted to wish you a good day." Wouldn't that be great?! Or imagine you receive a note from your credit card company saying that your \$10,000 balance is all forgiven as part of their new customer appreciation policy.

I can hear you saying, Yeah, right. A miracle once in awhile would be nice, but -- get real -- miracles don't happen anymore, do they?

Chanukah is all about miracles and the people who merited them. Why is it that our experience with miracles is only in a historical sense? Why aren't there lead stories on CNN about the latest miracle?

The short answer is that only the super-righteous merit to have miracles performed for them. (Oh well, we don't make the cut to play in that league.) This is all true. The main heroes of the Chanukah story were of course great and righteous individuals. But there were other great and righteous people living at that time, and they did not merit miracles.

You could even argue that there have been "miracle grade" individuals throughout history who did not merit direct divine miraculous assistance. So perhaps when applying for a miracle "grant," there must be something more you need to have on your proposal than "great and righteous."

Frequency of Occurrence

Rabbi Chaim Freidlander provides insight into the granting of miracles in his classic work, *Sifsei Chaim*. He begins with a discussion of the famous Talmudic sage Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa, an individual portrayed many times in the Talmud as a "miracle worker."

In one such episode, the Talmud tells of Rabbi Chanina finding his daughter depressed on Friday evening after she had lit the Shabbat candles. She explained that while filling the lantern in preparation for lighting, she accidentally picked up the jug of vinegar instead of the oil. Rabbi Chanina responded, "Don't worry, the One who told the oil to light, will tell the vinegar to light as well." The story continues that these vinegar lights burned for the entire Shabbat.

Neat story in many regards. Vinegar burning like oil -- an open miracle! There is an important question however, that begs an answer. Jewish philosophy has a general rule of "not relying on miracles to occur." As the Talmud explains, a person should never place himself in a dangerous situation (bungee jumping comes to mind, or perhaps negotiating an LA freeway) and say, "I'm not worried, G-d will save me miraculously."

Why not? Because G-d may not ride in to your rescue! And even if you do merit Divine intervention, you will still have to foot the bill by "paying" for your miracle -- by having merits deducted from your account at the "In G-d We Trust" celestial credit union.

So how did Rabbi Chanina perform his vinegar oil trick so nonchalantly? Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler explains that a person who relies on a miracle, and makes use of the miracle that is done for him, is demonstrating that he feels worthy of Divine favor, that he has "it coming to me." That's why his account is debited. He has sinned in the arrogance department and he loses ground as a result.

Rabbi Chanina on the other hand, lived on an altogether different plane of existence. He truly believed that the same G-d who gives oil its innate characteristics of flammability, can and will instill the same properties in

vinegar. In his eyes, "nature" and miracle are one in the same, both activated only through the express will of G-d. The entire difference between what we call "natural" and "supernatural" is that nature is a continual expression of G-d's will, whereas a miracle is an expression beyond the everyday. It's just a matter of frequency of occurrence!

To someone who lives with this reality, breathing, sight, trees and flowers, steak and pizza, and vinegar that burns like oil, are all equal expressions of G-d's will in our world.

Daily Miracles

Matityahu and his sons rebelled against the powerful Syrian-Greeks and put themselves in danger. They risked everything for an ideal. Great and righteous as they were, how could they call upon G-d to save them with miracles? Because they too looked at life through the eyes of Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa; they too knew that the supernatural is only natural. They marched into battle against the world superpower with the certainty that G-d's will would be done, even if that meant that miracles would be called upon.

Something more to ponder: The Talmud states that if someone dreams about the names Chananyah, Chanina or Yochanan, that he will have miracles done for him. The Maharsha explains that these names all share the same root word, Chein, meaning graciousness and a freely given gift. What is the connection between a graciously freely given gift and miracles?

Explains the Maharsha: When a person understands that what he has in life is not his due, either through his actions, good deeds or merits, but is solely a gift of the grace of G-d, and recognizes that everything is an expression of "His" will, then G-d acts with him in a similar vein and rewards him with miracles.

The central Jewish prayer, the Amidah, includes a prayer thanking G-d for the "daily miracles He performs for us." What daily miracles? Has he split any rivers for you lately?

No, but he has given all of us life and abilities that we have only begun to appreciate and utilize.

As we light our menorahs this Chanukah, let us remember the lesson of Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa: The same G-d who tells this oil to burn, can tell vinegar to burn as well. For indeed, every breath is a miracle.

This article can also be read at:

http://www.aish.com/chanukahthemes/chanukahthemesdefault/Natural_is_Supernatural3_Naturally.asp

Author Biography: Rabbi Baruch Beyer has worked primarily in Jewish education and development, and even done a short stint as tow truck salesman. He currently helps make the world a more kosher place as an administrator with Star-K Kosher Certification. He lives in Baltimore MD with his wife and kids.

[mailto:rabbiwein-owner@torah.org] **Rabbi Berel Wein**

Sent: Thursday, December 29, 2005 4:07 PM To: rabbiwein@torah.org

Subject: Rabbi Wein - Miketz

www.RabbiWein.com

"FAITH & FATE" - UPCOMING SELECT PREMIERE SHOWINGS
<http://www.rabbiwein.com/FaithAndFate.php3>

Jerusalem Post December 30, 2005 www.rabbiwein.com/jpost-index.html <http://www.rabbiwein.com/column-1092.html>

THE LIGHTS OF CHANUKA I taught a class last Friday morning about the lights of Chanuka. The class was based on the brilliant inspirational words of Rabi Zadok HaKohen of Lublin, one of the most seminal thinkers and Torah geniuses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The greatness of his thoughts leads me to share some of them with you in this humble weekly sheet of mine. The basis of this discussion is the statement haneerot halalu kodesh heim these lights that we light are holy and sanctified. Why are they holy? Those that explain that it is because the Chanuka lights are a remembrance and symbol of

the great menorah and its lights in the Temple nevertheless fail to explain why the Chanuka candles were granted an intrinsic holiness of their own while other remembrances of the Temple afikoman, the matzo sandwich at the Seder, for example were only given symbolic status but not made intrinsically holy unto themselves. It is to this problem that Rabi Zadok addresses himself in his words in Pri Tzadik.

The symbols of light and darkness are paramount in Jewish thought and commentary. The rabbis saw darkness as an independent state of being and not merely a situation of the absence of light. As such, Torah, spirituality, human goodness, the goal of imitating G-ds ways, so to speak, were always represented by the symbol of light, whereas evil, disbelief and cruelty were symbolized by darkness. Thus the Torah is called light as is our immortal soul. A world devoid of Torah and moral standards, of relativism and uninhibited behavior and oafish materialism, is dark beyond description. Rabi Zadok points out that there are two sources of light in our world. One is natural light generated by the sun and the stars and reflected by the moon. This light is independent of human creativity and participation. It is literally a light from heaven. The Midrash teaches us that the other source of light in our world is man-made. G-d inspired original man to rub two pieces of wood one upon another until the friction gave way to actual fire. This happened on the first Saturday night of the world and is the source for our blessing in the weekly Havdala service over a multi-wicked candle that is afire. One source of light is from G-d. The second source of light is manufactured by human beings. In a great sense one is external from G-d and heaven while the other is internal, a product of mans intellect, creativity, efforts and spirit.

Rabi Zadok compares the Written Torah and the Oral Torah to these two different sources of light. The Written Torah is like the natural light emanating purely from G-ds creation, so to speak. It cannot be affected by human intervention or correction. It is wholly independent of mans wishes and abilities. When the Jews accepted the Torah at Sinai they did so unconditionally and without any necessity to intellectually deal with its words. However, when the Jews sinned at the Golden calf, they lost their lofty perch and status. The original source of heavenly light would no longer suffice to light the inner darkness of their souls and of the bleak world that they now faced. They now were required to rub two sticks together, to create their own inner fire that would warm their souls. And the means of creating that inner fire now became the Oral Law, the product of generation after generation of Jewish genius, scholarship, study and concentrated effort. It is this inner fire, produced by human toil and sacrifice, which has lit the darkness of the Jewish world for millennia on end.

The holiday of Chanuka is a rabbinic holiday a holiday of the Oral Law. There is no specific mention made of it anywhere in the written Torah. It is a holiday commemorating the creation of an inner fire by holy people, the children of Aharon, who saved Israel from tyranny and paganism. Thus the candles and lights of Chanuka are intrinsically holy because they are a product of our own self-made fire that burns within our souls. Their holiness stems from human effort and sacrifice. Only humans can consecrate otherwise mundane things and events. The holiness of the Oral Law covers these lights of Chanuka. That is why these small pinpoints of light have illuminated our path throughout time and continue to point to a better future for Israel and all mankind.

Weekly Parsha December 30, 2005 <http://www.rabbiwein.com/parsha-index.html> <http://www.rabbiwein.com/column-1106.html> MIKETZ

The Torahs use of the word miketz at the conclusion - instead of the word acharei after or later is the cause for much comment amongst our sages. The rabbis seem to indicate that the word miketz or ketz signifies not only a chronological change in time frame but rather a complete change from the past situation to a completely different situation and even another era. Pharaohs dreams signify not only that two years have

passed since Yosef was imprisoned but rather that a completely new situation is now about to be constructed that will naturally impinge on the lives of Pharaoh and Yosef. One of the great characteristics of Yosefs personality, as we view it through the lens of the Torah narrative, is his adaptability to change circumstances while retaining his inner self-confidence and rock-hard faith. Even when he is in the pit with snakes and scorpions surrounding him, pleading for his life from his own brothers, he is still Yosef, the confident and optimistic dreamer. Sold into Egyptian slavery, his talents and drive bring him to a position of importance in the house of Potiphar. At no time does he relinquish his belief in himself and in the realization of his dreams. It is the dream of his father and brothers eventually recognizing his greatness and holiness that allows him to avoid the pitfall of Potiphars wife. And even in prison he is the expert on dreams, not only his dreams but those of others as well. His adaptability to fortune, both good and bad, and his ability to remain Yosef the righteous one throughout his life is what sets him apart in the story of the Jews and earns him eternal approbation and approval. In Yosef we see the story of the Jewish people generally. In a world of billions of people of other faiths, of oppressors and murderers, of hardship and never-ending challenge and changing circumstance, of the rise and fall of empires and superpowers, the Jewish people have remained constant in their self-confidence and the eventual fulfillment of their dreams. The outside world often mistook this Jewish strength of adaptability and holy stubbornness for arrogance (Remember DeGaulles statements about Israel and the Jews after the Six-Day War?) It is often disturbing that the only interpreters of dreams for a world that finds itself imprisoned by terror, materialism and emptiness of meaning are the Jews and the Jewish values that have created other faiths and propelled human civilization forward. The State of Israel and the resurgence of Torah within a significant section of the Jewish world in the face of overwhelming hatred, discrimination and assimilation, emulates this ability of Yosef to remain Yosef no matter what changes occur in ones life and society. Our generation also came into being at a time of miketz the ending of an era and the beginning of a completely new world of politics, technology and mass media. The old world of nostalgia is gone, never to return. How we will adapt to the new realities of our existence and yet remain faithful to our heritage and to the realization of our ancient dreams is the supreme challenge of our time. All of Jewish history teaches us that, all statistics and pessimistic experts notwithstanding, we will also be able to be equal to the challenge of Jewish survival and growth and the actualization of the Jewish dream here in Israel and throughout human society.

Shabat shalom. Chanuka sameach. Rabbi Berel Wein

Take Advantage of a \$5.00 Gift Certificate at Rabbiwein.com Enter Code "TORGCERT" at Checkout. Not valid on sale items.

<http://www.jewishdestinystore.com/>

RabbiWein, Copyright © 2005 by Rabbi Berel Wein and Torah.org.

Torah.org: The Judaism Site

<http://www.torah.org/>

Project Genesis, Inc.

learn@torah.org 122 Slade

Avenue, Suite 250

(410) 602 -1350 Baltimore, MD

21208

From: Avi Lieberman <AteresHaShavua@aol.com>

Subject: ATERES HASHAVUA

Mesivta Ateres Yaakov 1170A William Street Hewlett NY, 11557 (516)-

374-6465 AteresHaShavua@aol.com

EMES LIYAAKOV

Weekly Insights from MOREINU

HORAV YAAKOV KAMENETZKY zt"l

[Translated by Ephraim Weiss <Easykgh@aol.com>]

"And Yosef remembered the dreams that he had dreamt about them, and he said to them, 'you are spies, who came to scout out the weaknesses of the land.'"

The Ramban on this pasuk explains that when Yosef saw his ten brothers bowing to him, he remembered the dream in which eleven bundles of wheat had bowed down to his bundle. He realized that as Binyomin was not there, the dream as yet had not been fulfilled. As such, he accused his brothers of being spies, so that he could demand that Binyomin come before him. He waited to reveal his identity to his brothers until after the first dream had been fulfilled, as he knew that as soon as he revealed his true identity, Yaakov would immediately come to see him, and that the second dream, in which Yosef's parents bowed to him as well, would be fulfilled first. As such, he devised a plan to ensure that all of his brothers came alone, before they brought Yaakov with them.

Many of the miforshim are bothered by this Ramban. Why did Yosef view it as his obligation to see that the dreams were fulfilled? Even if the dreams were true, that is a matter to be taken care of by Shomayim. Why did Yosef feel the need to get involved?

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zt'l offers the following explanation as to why Yosef carried out this whole charade with his brothers. The sons of Yaakov were complete tzadikim, who did not sell Yosef out of anger or jealousy, but rather because they felt that Yosef was deserving of being killed, as through his royal designs he was destroying the peace and ahavah that existed amongst Yaakov's family. Now that Yosef was on the verge of reuniting with his family, he had to first prove to his brothers that he had no intentions of ruling over them. In accusing his brothers of being spies, Yosef wished to show them how easily a person can be misjudged, so he presented a well constructed, albeit inaccurate argument, which proved 'beyond a shadow of a doubt' that they had come to spy on the land. At this point, the brothers realized that it is wholly possible for a reasonably intelligent person to grossly misjudge a situation. Yosef carried on the act by hiding his cup in Binyomin's sack, and then accusing him of having stolen it. At that point, the brothers felt the first stirrings of guilt for having sold Yosef, as they began to wonder if they too had misinterpreted the situation. Only at that point did Yosef feel confident that his brothers understood that they had dealt with him mistakenly, and only then did he reveal himself to his brothers.

This pshat can be used to explain a very difficult Midrash. The pasuk writes that when Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, they were too embarrassed to face him. The Midrash explains that they had no way to defend themselves against Yosef's rebuke. However, looking through the pesukim, it does not appear anywhere that Yosef rebuked his brothers. Based on what we have explained, we can now understand that through Yosef's long, drawn out plan, he was trying to convey to his brothers that they had failed to judge Yosef the way that they wished to be judged. When they were falsely accused they realized that they had also accused falsely, and this is the tochacha that the Midrash speaks of.

From: ZeitlinShelley@aol.com To: ZeitlinShelley@aol.com

A Turning Point In History

By Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss

Sportscasters often pinpoint a turning point in the game. It might be a big hit that launched the winning rally or a defensive gem that spoiled the opposition's comeback. In a similar vein, there are definitive turning points in Jewish history, a distinct episode that caused a dramatic and huge change in the course of history. One such turning point is, "Vayavei Yosef es dibasam raah el avihem - Yosef brought evil tidings about his brothers to his father (Yaakov)." This activated the chain of events that would lead to Yosef's sale down to Egypt, our following after him, and the eventual dark period of Jewish slavery in Egypt.

That the telling of Lashon Hara should have such horrific consequences is nothing new to us. As the pasuk testifies, "Hamaves v'hachaim b'yad

halashon – Death and life are in the hands of the tongue." The entire generation that left Egypt died in the desert because of the sinful tongues of the spies. Rashi, in Masechtas Gittin, tells us that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed because of Lashon Hara. Many explain that the tragic death of the 24,000 disciples of Rabbi Akiva was due to Lashon Hara as well. The Baal Haturim says that this is why gematria of the word dibasam, evil tidings, equals maves, death.

But Rashi, on this historic episode with Yosef, sheds an interesting insight into the punishment for Lashon Hara. He elaborates that Yosef told his father three things about the tribes. They ate eiver min hachai, a limb from a live animal, they called the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah servants, and they were suspected of certain immoral acts. Rashi then informs us that because Yosef gave these reports, he was punished in kind. For example, for saying that they called the children of Bilhah and Zilpah slaves, Yosef was sold as a slave. And for accusing them of immoral acts, Hashem incited the immoral wife of Potifar against Yosef. This is a very scary angle of Lashon Hara. When we say ill about others, that which we talk about can very likely befall us. Thus, if you tell your friend that so and so has lousy shalom bais, marital harmony, that evil report can have repercussions on your own tranquility at home. Similarly, if you comment to someone in shul that a certain family has no idea how to take care of their children, you put in danger your own family's nachas. It is imperative to bear this in mind before we say anything derogatory about anyone because that which we say might come back to personally haunt us.

The Pirkei D'Rabbeinu HaKadosh reveals yet another aspect of this episode. He says that both Yosef and Yaakov were punished for this dialogue. Hashem punished Yosef, who said the evil tidings, with incarceration in the dungeons of Egypt for twelve years. This is consistent with the punishment of the metzorah, the biblical leper, who we know is punished because he is a motzi rah (a corruption of word metzorah), one who speaks evil, with solitary confinement. As the Torah states, "Badad yeisheiv mechutz l'machaneh moshovo – He should dwell alone and be sent outside of the camp." This is because the baal Lashon Hara has shown that he's not fit for human company, that his wagging tongue is a pollutant that Hashem wants to keep away from everyone else. As bad as the exposure to second hand smoke is, exposure to Lashon Hara is even more deadly. Nowadays, people are in jail or isolated in hospitals, or stuck in windowless computer rooms without any companionship, or they find themselves friendless because Hashem wants to keep their sinful tongue away from others.

Rabbeinu HaKadosh continues that Yaakov, who accepted Yosef's report, was punished that, for twenty-two years, the Divine presence, the Shechina, abandoned him. He concludes that we see from here that the penalty for accepting Lashon Hara is double [or almost double] from that of speaking it in the first place, for Yosef was punished for twelve years while Yaakov was punished for twenty-two years. This is a very huge novelty for most of us instinctively feel that the crime of speaking Lashon Hara is much worse than merely listening to it. After all, the one who tells the story is the instigator. We think, 'I'm just a passive bystander. And what should I do? Take a holier than thou attitude and tell the person that his speech isn't kosher?' From here we see that the answer is a resounding 'Yes!' and that if we succumb to participating in such sinful conversation and allow our curiosity to get the better of us, we leave ourselves vulnerable to Divine wrath which will be targeted even more against us than the baal Lashon Hara himself.

May it be the will of Hashem that we learn to condition our tongues to never speak ill about another and to absolutely always refrain from listening to negative gossip in that merit may Hashem bless us with Long life, good health, and everything wonderful.

To receive a weekly cassette tape or CD directly from Rabbi Weiss, please send a check to Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss, P.O. Box 140726, Staten Island, NY 10314 or contact him at RMMWSI@aol.com. Attend

Rabbi Weiss's weekly shiur at the Landau Shul, Avenue L and East 9th in Flatbush, Tuesday nights at 9:30 p.m. Rabbi Weiss's Daf Yomi shiurim can be heard LIVE on Kol Haloshon at (718) 906-6400. Write to KolHaloshon@gmail.com for details. (Sheldon Zeitlin transcribes Rabbi Weiss' articles. If you wish to receive Rabbi Weiss' articles by email, please send a note to ZeitlinShelley@aol.com.)

From: ZeitlinShelley@aol.com Sent: Thursday, December 29, 2005 9:39 PM

The Chanukah Spirit

By Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss

Each of our Jewish Holidays comes with a special message and has a distinct way that it impacts upon the life of every Jew. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are times of introspection and repentance; Sukkos and Pesach are seasons that strengthen our emunah, belief in Hashem, while Shavuot and Purim emphasize the supremacy of Torah in every Jew's life. The twelve New Moons of the year highlight our belief in the ability to always turn over a new leaf and also firm our conviction in the ultimate renewal of the world with the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days. The Seventeenth of Tammuz with the ensuing three week period capped-off by Tisha B'Av, the saddest day of the year, train us to focus on the loss of our Temple, the sorry state of our exile, and the fact that G-d too is very unhappy with the state of affairs of His Jewish children.

But, what is the special message of the Chanukah festival? In what way should it impact upon us and our children?

The Gemora, in the second perek of Masechtas Shabbos, teaches us that when the Jews vanquished the Syrian-Greeks, we dedicated the Temple and experienced the fabulous miracle of the Menorah. Still, they did not declare Chanukah immediately. Rather, the Sages waited until the next year and only then established the beautiful holiday of Chanukah for all time.

The obvious question is why didn't the Sages immediately declare the festival the very same year that the miracles occurred? The Kedushas Levi and the Sfas Emes both answer that the Chachomim, of blessed memory, wanted to experience for themselves the days of Chanukah when it came around the next year. Only in that way would they be able to divine what special powers lay lurking in the days of Chanukah. When they experienced Chanukah in the next year, they found that the treasure that Hashem planted in the days of Chanukah was the special power and ability to praise and thank Hashem, and therefore the Gemora concludes that they established eight days of Chanukah for Hallel and Hoda'ah, praise and thanksgiving to Hashem.

Thus the special power of Chanukah is to aid us in excelling at the art of prayer. This makes Chanukah one of our most important national holidays since the posuk teaches us that the very reason that the Jewish People was created was to praise the Lord, as it states, "Amzu yatzarti li t'hilasi y'sapeiru -I have created this nation to relate My praise." Indeed, Chanukah's lesson is so fundamental that it was already planned from the beginning of Creation. This is why the twenty-fifth word in the Torah is the word *ohr*, light, to hint to the fact that there will come a time when, on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev, there will be the great miracle of light.

The month Kislev is spelled *chof-samech-lamed-vov*. These letters can be rearranged to spell the two Hebrew words, 'soch lo,' which means a 'total of thirty-six.' This is very fitting since the sum total of candles that we light on Chanukah is six-six. But the words 'soch lo' also mean 'to gaze to Him,' which is also very fitting since this is the meaning of Chanukah: to focus on praising and thanking Hashem.

Furthermore, the sign of the zodiac of the month of Kislev is the *keshet*, the bow. This is very appropriate since the rainbow is the sign that Hashem hearkened to the prayers and sacrifices of Noach and promised to never again destroy the world. Furthermore, the Targum Onkelos translates 'ubakashti,' and with my bow (mentioned by Yaakov Avinu), as 'ubiva-usi,' with my prayer, further proof that the bow is linked to prayer.

The Heroes of Chanukah also point to the message of prayer. How unlikely that the Kohanim, whose sole job was ministering to Hashem and to the spiritual needs of our people, would all of a sudden become masters of artillery and at vanquishing generals. But the Kohein is the symbol of Divine Service, ambassador of our connectivity with Hashem. Thus it was very appropriate that Hashem should use them as the agents of our miraculous delivery since He wanted to herald in this festival the special message of serving Hashem through the medium of prayer, our alternative to the Divine Service in the Temple.

In a similar vein, Rabbeinu Ephraim explains that the term 'tzadik' refers specifically to one who excels at prayer. We know the Chanukah enemy was

Yavon, the Syrian-Greeks. When we add the letter 'tzadik' to the beginning of the word Yavon, presto, we come up with the word Tzion, portraying vividly how the power of prayer led Zion (the Jews) to conquer their Greek enemies.

The Kitzur Shulchan Orech teaches us that eating on Chanukah is not a *seudas mitzvah*, a meritorious banquet, unless we accompany the meal with *z'miros*, songs to Hashem. I believe this unusual requirement is for the following reason. Eating is not really a fitting celebration for Chanukah since it was part of the ways, through sumptuous feasts and banquets of wine, which the Syrian-Greeks succeeded in Hellenizing many Jews. However, if we synthesize the eating with songs to Hashem, then it bears the appropriate message for our Chanukah festivities.

I would like to wish all of my wonderful readers and their families, that we all be blessed with good health, happiness, and everything wonderful.

From: innernet-owner@innernet.org.il [mailto:innernet-owner@innernet.org.il] On Behalf Of Heritage House Sent: Tuesday, December 27, 2005 1:54 AM To: innernet@innernet.org.il Subject: InnerNet - "Chanukah: It's Not For Me!?" INNET MAGAZINE <http://innernet.org.il> December 2005

* * *

"IT'S NOT FOR ME!"

by Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf

* * *

"They searched the Temple thoroughly but found only one small jar of oil, enough to burn for one day. A miracle happened; they were able to light from that oil for eight days." (Talmud)

* * *

Who would have dreamed that within that little jar of oil was a miracle waiting to happen? In a way, we all have something in common with that little jar.

Jewish wisdom has an image of every person: The image is that of a vessel. In some way we are all receptacles. Each of us has the potential to receive or accept spirituality into our lives. However, just as some vessels are more appropriate for certain contents than others, so too certain people seem to be more appropriately shaped -- so to speak -- for certain types of spirituality than others.

We tend to have very definitive images of ourselves. How many times have you looked at someone who had a particular strength -- maybe they are very disciplined or maybe they are very flexible and easy going; maybe they are always up on all the political issues of the day or maybe they never lose their temper -- and said to yourself "that's just not me"?

When looking at ourselves as vessels, an important issue that needs to be explored is this: What is it that determines the "shape" of our personal vessels? What makes one of us a cereal box, one of us a wicker basket and another a crystal vase? The answer, of course, is multi-faceted.

The initial mold of our vessel is cast by G-d. It is then dramatically shaped and worked by our parents, stamped by our friends and society and chiseled here and there by countless life experiences. And then comes our part. Each of us is clearly a central force in molding and shaping ourselves. We each possess a far-reaching ability to make out of everything that we are, the vessel we want to be. As we engage in the process of shaping ourselves, one of the pivotal factors that ultimately determines the nature and contours of our vessel is our self-perception.

Eventually most of us reach a point in life when we look at ourselves and say, "This is who I am." At that moment we unknowingly cross a threshold and in doing so we give a final shape to our vessels -- to ourselves. At the moment that we proclaim "this is who I am," we relegate most everything else to the realm of "that's just not me." The spiritual consequence of putting the final touches of self-perception on our vessels is that we have decided which types of spiritual experiences are open to us and which are closed. For some people there is nothing more sublime and inspiring -- nothing that touches the soul more -- than a stirring piece of Mozart or Yanni; while someone else will decline even the chance to listen to such music because they already know, "that's just not me." For some people it can be a prayer or the sound of the shofar that most fully fills their vessel, while someone else will just look on with a sense of disbelief knowing without a doubt that such things are "just not me."

* * *

One of the most powerful principles that underlies Chanukah -- and one of the most profound opportunities that it presents us with -- is the concept that no matter where we are in life, we still possess the inner ability to recast the form of our vessels. Chanukah is a time when there exists an unusual potential to reshape our vessels and thus enable ourselves to receive all sorts of spiritual gifts that we never imagined we could possess. Chanukah is a time to look again at things that we have

declared to be "just not me" and to open ourselves to the possibility that we can still give new lines, textures and dimension to the figure of our vessels; ourselves.

I would like to make the following suggestion as a method for accessing the full potential of Chanukah. Identify two things in life that fall into the "that's just not me" category. Then, sometime during Chanukah, Go ahead and do them anyway, with the following attitude: "I always thought that this just isn't who I am but I'm going to give it a try and open myself to whatever the experience has to offer."

Of the two things that you try make one of them overtly Jewish, like lighting Shabbat candles Friday evening, attending a class about Judaism or saying a few blessings before and after you eat some of your food one day. The other can be more worldly, like taking a long hike through the woods, visiting a nursing home, or writing in a journal.

* * *

During the eight days of Chanukah the same spiritual lights that were created by the miracle are once again available to every Jewish soul. However, in order to experience and to feel this unique light, we need to detach ourselves from the natural order of things and thereby ready ourselves to receive that which emanates from above the natural order.

- Sefas Emes, early Chassidic master

* * *

The story of Chanukah is the story of the defiance of the natural order of things. It is the story of a moment in history when what should have happened didn't, when the ordinary, the expected and the natural were overwhelmed by the extraordinary, the unexpected and the spiritual. The Jewish rebels turned back the mighty Greek army, Judaism and Jewish life survived the onslaught of a culture that changed world history. and a small vessel that appeared to contain only a bit of oil became the source for eight days of light.

When we look at ourselves and say "that's me" or "that's not me," we lock ourselves into the world of the ordinary and the expected. Chanukah not only reminds us that there is another dimension to life, but it also asks us to open ourselves up to that dimension by stepping outside of the mold we have created for ourselves. When we dare to defy what we would ordinarily expect of ourselves, when we make an effort to give new shape to our vessels, we then become capable of receiving a light that should only have shined for a day but that in fact continues to shine, even today.

Excerpted with permission from "**Chanukah -- Eight Nights of Light, Eight Gifts for the Soul.**" Published by LeviathanPress.com

InnerNet Magazine is published monthly as an on-line digest of fascinating articles from the Jewish world. Topics include relationships, spirituality, personal growth, philosophy, incredible true stories, and special editions for the Jewish holidays. Archives of past articles are accessible on-line at <http://www.innernet.org.il> (C) 2005 InnerNet Magazine

<http://www.chiefrabbi.org/>

Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

Sir Jonathan Sacks

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth [From 2 years ago 5764]

<http://www.chiefrabbi.org/tt-index.html>

Miketz

PHARAOH HAS TWO DREAMS, one about seven lean cows eating seven fat ones, another about seven scorched ears of corn devouring seven healthy ones. He senses their significance and asks his sages to interpret them. None can. His cupbearer then remembers the young man he met in prison who was so accurate in interpreting dreams. He had asked him, once he had regained his freedom, to campaign for his release, but he had forgotten to do so. Now he remembers him. Joseph is brought from prison, smartened up, and presented to Pharaoh. Immediately on hearing the nature of the dreams, he understands what they mean, and tells Pharaoh. There will be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of devastating famine.

On the surface, this is a conventional story. A person wrongfully imprisoned wins his freedom. A young outsider proves wiser than the established sages of a great court. More significantly, given the parameters of biblical narrative, a simple believer in the G-d of Abraham beats the priestly elite of Egypt at their own game. The term used for the

sages whom Pharaoh consults is chartumim. Almost certainly it refers to an official class of adepts, decoders of divine mysteries, specialists in the occult, who read omens and interpret dreams.

The technical term for this kind of dream interpretation is oneiromancy, the practice of divination through dreams, seen as messages – usually warnings – sent to the soul by the gods or the spirits of the dead. It was widely practised in ancient Egypt, Greece and Mesopotamia. Dream decoders in those societies had high status, were close to rulers and their courts, and wielded considerable influence. It is no accident that the two interpreters of dreams in Tenakh – Joseph and Daniel – do so in alien environments, Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Mesopotamia / Babylon. While the Torah attaches significance to dreams (not least to those of Joseph himself) it regards dream-divination as an essentially pagan practice associated with magic and myth. That is why the Torah goes out of its way in the accounts of both Joseph and Daniel to emphasise that they sought their interpretations, not from the occult arts, but from G-d himself.

There are, however, beneath the surface, more profound motifs at play. I want, in this essay, to examine one of them which has immense implications for Judaism as a whole.

Three Times the word Elokim appears in Genesis 41. The first is when Joseph explicitly disavows any personal skill in interpreting dreams:

"I cannot do it," Joseph replied, "But G-d [Elokim] will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

The second and third are uttered by Pharaoh himself, after Joseph has interpreted the dreams, stated the problem (seven years of famine), provided the solution (store up grain in the years of plenty), and advised him to appoint a "wise and discerning man" to oversee the project:

The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and all his officials. So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, in whom is the spirit of G-d [Elokim]?" Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since G-d [Elokim] has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace . . ."

What is going on here? Pharaonic Egypt was not a monotheistic culture. To the contrary, it was a place of many gods and goddesses – the sun, the Nile, and so on. To be sure, there was a brief period under Ikhnaton (Amenhotep IV) when the official religion was reformed in the direction not of monotheism but of monolatry (worship of one god without disputing the existence of others). But this was short-lived, and certainly not at the time of Joseph. The entire biblical portrayal of Egypt is predicated on their belief in many gods (against whom G-d "executed judgement" in the days of Moses and the plagues). Why then does Joseph take it for granted that Pharaoh will understand his reference to G-d – an assumption proved correct when Pharaoh twice uses the word himself? What is the significance of the word Elokim?

As we have noted elsewhere in these studies, Tenakh generally and the Mosaic books specifically have two primary words for G-d, the four-letter name we allude to as Hashem ("the name" par excellence) and the word Elokim. The sages understood the difference in terms of the distinction between G-d-as-justice (Elokim) and G-d-as-mercy (Hashem). This led them to their famous comment on the opening words of Torah ("In the beginning, Elokim created . . ."), namely that G-d initially sought to create the world under the attribute of justice, but discovered that it could not persist by justice alone. Therefore He combined justice with mercy and compassion. This alone allows humanity to survive.

The philosopher-poet of the eleventh century, Judah Halevi, proposed a quite different distinction, based not on ethical attributes but on modes of relationship – a view revived in the twentieth century by Martin Buber in his distinction between I-It and I-Thou. Halevi's view was this: the ancients worshipped forces of nature, which they personified as gods. Each was known as El, or Eloah. The word "El" therefore generically means "a force, a power, an element of nature."

The fundamental difference between those belief-systems and Judaism was that Judaism believed that the forces of nature were not independent and autonomous. They represented a single totality, one creative will, the Author of being. The Torah therefore speaks of Elokim in the plural, meaning, “the sum of all forces, the totality of all powers.” Elokim is an abstract noun meaning “all that exists, and every cause that shapes their interactions, under the aspect of the single creative force that brought them into being.” Moving from the ancient to the contemporary world, we might say that Elokim is G-d as He is disclosed by science: the Big Bang, the various forces that give the universe its configuration, and the genetic code that shapes life from the simplest bacterium to homo sapiens.

Hashem is a word of different logical form. It is, according to Halevi, G-d’s proper name. Just as “the first patriarch” (a generic description) was called Abraham (a name), and “the leader who led the Israelites out of Egypt” (another description) was called Moses, so “the Author of being” (Elokim) has a proper name, Hashem. The difference between proper names and generic descriptions is fundamental. Things have descriptions, but only persons have proper names. When we call someone by name we are engaged in a fundamental existential encounter. We are relating to them in their uniqueness and ours. We are opening up ourselves to them and inviting them, in readiness and respect, to open themselves up to us. We are, in Kant’s famous distinction, regarding them as ends, not means, as centres of value in themselves, not potential tools to the satisfaction of our desires. The word Hashem represents a revolution in the religious life of mankind. It means that we relate to the totality of being, not as does a scientist (seeing it as something to be understood and controlled) but as does a poet (standing before it in reverence and awe, addressing and being addressed by it).

Elokim is G-d as we encounter Him in nature. Hashem is G-d as we encounter Him in personal relationship, above all in that essentially human mode of relationship that we call speech, verbal communication, conversation, dialogue, words. Elokim is the aspect of G-d to be found in creation. Hashem is the aspect of G-d disclosed in revelation.

One of the most striking features of Judaism is the tension it embodies between the universal and the particular. The Torah begins with characters and events whose significance is that they are universal archetypes: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the flood, the builders of Babel. Their stories tell us about the human condition as such: obedience and rebellion, faith and fratricide, hubris and nemesis, technology and violence, the order G-d makes and the chaos we create. Not until the twelfth chapter of Bereishith does the Torah turn to the particular, to one family, that of Abraham and Sarah, and the covenant G-d enters into with them and their descendants.

That duality and its sequence – from the universal to the particular – is not marginal to Judaism. One might almost call it the basic structure, the depth grammar, of the Jewish mind. Two examples will illustrate the point.

The first is birkat hamazon, “grace after meals.” The first paragraph is completely universal. We speak of G-d who “feeds the whole world with grace,” who “provides food for all creatures” and who “feeds and sustains all.” The second paragraph is saturated with singularity. It talks of the things that are specific to Judaism and the Jewish people: the “land” (Israel) He has given us as a heritage, the history of our ancestors (“for having brought us out . . . of the land of Egypt and freed us from the house of bondage”), the “covenant” (brit) He has “sealed in our flesh,” and “Your Torah which You have taught us.” These are not universal. They are what make Jews and Judaism different.

The second example is the blessings we say before the Shema, morning and evening. In both cases, the first blessing is universal. It speaks of nature and the cosmos, light and darkness, and the cycle of time as it moves from day to night or night to day. There is nothing here about

Jews and Judaism, Israel and its covenant with G-d. The second paragraph, however, is about the special relationship between G-d and Israel. In exquisite poetry it speaks about the love of G-d for this people, and the expression of that love in the Torah He has given us. Here prayer rises to heights at once poetic and passionate. This is the supreme language of I-Thou.

The duality has legal-theological expression in the form of two covenants, the first with Noah and all humanity after the flood, the second with Abraham and his descendants, given detailed articulation at Mount Sinai and during the wilderness years. On the one hand there is the Noahide covenant with its seven commands: not to murder, steal, commit adultery, blaspheme, worship idols or practise needless cruelty against animals, together with a positive command to establish a system of justice. These are the minimal and basic requirements of humanity as such, the foundations of any stable and morally acceptable society. On the other is the richly detailed code of 613 commands that form Israel’s constitution as “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Not only is the duality worked out in the form of law and ethics, covenant and command. It is also expressed in Judaism’s dual epistemology, its twofold scheme of human knowledge. This was given lucid expression in a midrash: “If you are told, ‘There is wisdom [chokhmah] among the nations,’ believe it. If you are told, ‘There is Torah among the nations,’ do not believe it.”

Torah and chokhmah are both biblical categories. Torah is to be found primarily in the five books of Moses generically known by that name. The primary text of chokhmah, wisdom, is Mishlei, the Book of Proverbs, but it is also to be found in Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) and Job. The word chokhmah appears 37 times in Proverbs, 18 times in Job and 25 times in Ecclesiastes – and only 35 times in the rest of Tenakh.

The difference between them is this: Chokhmah is the truth we discover; Torah is the truth we inherit. Chokhmah is the universal heritage of mankind, by virtue of the fact that we are created in G-d’s “image and likeness” (Rashi translates “in our likeness” as “with the capacity to understand and discern”). Torah is the specific heritage of Israel (“He has revealed His word to Jacob, His laws and decrees to Israel. He has done this for no other nation”). Chokhmah discloses G-d in creation. Torah is the word of G-d in revelation. Chokhmah is ontological truth (how things are); Torah is covenantal truth (how things ought to be). Chokhmah can be defined as anything that allows us to see the universe as the work of G-d and humanity as the image of G-d. Torah is G-d’s covenant with the Jewish people, the architecture of holiness and Israel’s written constitution as a nation under the sovereignty of G-d.

Though the sages valued Torah above all else, they had a high regard for chokhmah. They instituted a special blessing for chokhmei umot olam (“the sages of the nations” or, as the Singer’s Prayer Book puts it, persons “distinguished in worldly learning”): “Blessed are You . . . who has given of His wisdom to flesh and blood.” Consistent with the pattern established in the Grace after meals and the blessings before the Shema, the Amidah speaks of universal wisdom (“You favour man with knowledge and teach mankind understanding) before it speaks of the particular heritage of Israel (“Bring us back, O our Father, to Your Torah”).

So there are the universals of Judaism – creation, humanity as G-d’s image, the covenant with Noah and knowledge-as-chokhmah. There are also its particularities – revelation, Israel as G-d’s “firstborn child,” the covenants with Abraham and the Jewish people at Sinai, and knowledge-as-Torah. The first represents the face of G-d accessible to all mankind (creation); the second, that special, intimate and personal relationship He has with the people He holds close, as disclosed in the Torah (revelation) and Jewish history (redemption). The word for the first is Elokim, and for the second, Hashem.

We can now understand why it is that Bereishith works on the assumption that one aspect of G-d, Elokim, is intelligible to all human

beings, regardless of whether they belong to the family of Abraham or not. So, for example, Elokim comes in a vision to Avimelekh, king of Gerar, despite the fact that he is a pagan. Abraham himself (defending the fact that he has told a half-truth in calling Sarah his sister) says to Avimelekh, "I said to myself, There is surely no fear of G-d [Elokim] in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife." The Hittites call Abraham "a prince of G-d [Elokim] in our midst." Jacob, in his conversations with Laban and later with Esau uses the term Elokim. When he returns to the land of Canaan, the Torah says that "the terror of G-d [Elokim]" fell on the surrounding towns. All these cases refer to individuals or groups who are outside the Abrahamic covenant. Yet the Torah has no hesitation in ascribing to them the language of Elokim.

That is why Joseph is able to assume that Egyptians will understand the idea of Elokim, even though they are wholly unfamiliar with the idea of Hashem. This is made clear in two pointed contrasts. The first occurs in Bereishith 39, the passage that describes Joseph's time in the house of Potiphar. The chapter consistently and repeatedly uses the word Hashem in relation to Joseph ("Hashem was with Joseph . . . Hashem gave him success in everything he did"), but when Joseph speaks to Potiphar's wife, who is attempting to seduce him, he says, "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against Elokim." The second lies in the contrast between the Pharaoh who speaks to Joseph and twice uses the word Elokim, and the Pharaoh of Moses' day, who says, "Who is Hashem that I should obey Him and let Israel go? I do not know Hashem and I will not let Israel go." An Egyptian can understand Elokim, the G-d of nature. He cannot understand Hashem, the G-d of personal relationship.

Judaism was – and to this day remains – unique in its combination of universalism and particularism. We believe that G-d is the G-d of all humanity. He created all. He is accessible to all. He cares for all. He has made a covenant with all.

Yet there is also a relationship with G-d that is unique to the Jewish people. It alone has placed its national life under His direct sovereignty. It alone has risked its entire being on a divine covenant. It alone testifies in its history to the presence within it of a Presence beyond it. As the Russian (non-Jewish) thinker Nicholas Berdyayev put it in his *The Meaning of History*:

I remember how the materialist interpretation of history, when I attempted in my youth to verify it by applying it to the destinies of peoples, broke down in the case of the Jews, where destiny seemed absolutely inexplicable from the materialistic standpoint . . . Its survival is a mysterious and wonderful phenomenon demonstrating that the life of this people is governed by a special predetermination, transcending the processes of adaptation expounded by the materialistic interpretation of history. The survival of the Jews, their resistance to destruction, their endurance under absolutely peculiar conditions and the fateful role played by them in history: all these point to the particular and mysterious foundations of their destiny.

As we search in the 21st century for a way to avoid a "clash of civilizations" it seems to me that humanity can learn much from this ancient and still compelling way of understanding the human condition. We are all "the image and likeness" of G-d. There are basic, non-negotiable principles of human dignity. They are expressed in the Noahide covenant, in human wisdom (chokmah), and in that aspect of the one G-d we call Elokim. But there are many ways, each distinct and unique, in which different cultures and civilizations define their relationship with the Author of all being. We do not presume to judge them, except insofar as they succeed or fail in honouring the basic, universal principles of human dignity (the sanctity of life, the integrity of the family and property, the fundamentals of justice and so on). We as Jews are (or should be) secure in our relationship with G-d, the G-d who has revealed Himself in the intimacy of love, whose expression is Torah. The challenge of faith in its particularity and universality is therefore

today what it was in the days of Abraham and Sarah: to be true to our particular heritage while being a blessing to others, whatever their heritage. That is a formula for peace and graciousness in an era badly in need of both.

From: Weekly Sedra United Synagogue London [DAF-HASHAVUA@SHAMASH.ORG] on behalf of Rafael Salasnik [rafi@BRIJNET.ORG] Sent: Thursday, November 03, 2005 6:32 AM To: DAF-HASHAVUA@SHAMASH.ORG Subject: daf-hashavua Noach 5766/2005



UNITED SYNAGOGUE - LONDON (O)

Noach Vol 18 No 5 5 November 2005 3 Cheshvan 5766 Shabbat ends in London at 5.16pm THE ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED BY: BRIJNET - British Jewish Network - UK branch of Shamash

...
The Everlasting Light
Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks

Since 9/11, the phrase most often on people's lips has been Samuel Huntington's remark about a "clash of civilizations." In the history of the West, however, the first great clash of civilizations took place in the second century BCE, in the series of events we commemorate on Hanukkah.

The conflict between Antiochus IV and his Hellenized Jewish sympathisers on the one hand, Matityahu and his sons, the Maccabees, on the other, was not about power and politics but about culture and creed, values and ideals, beliefs and ways of living. It was a unique confrontation between the two civilizations which have shaped the West ever since: Athens and Jerusalem, ancient Greece and the heritage of Israel.

Greece was one of the supreme cultures of antiquity. Alexander the Great, ruler of the vast empire that bore his name, had been taught by Aristotle, pupil of Plato, who himself had been taught by Socrates. Athens was the birthplace of the experiment in politics known as democracy. It was also the home of sculptors, architects, painters, historians and dramatists whose artistic achievements have seldom been surpassed.

Israel, by contrast, was a small and relatively powerless state that had been conquered by one empire after another. All it had was a passionate devotion to the word of G-d, and a religious literature beyond compare. The Greeks believed in holiness of beauty; Jews believed in the beauty of holiness. The Greeks saw themselves as conquerors and civilizers of the world; Jews sought nothing more than the narrow strip of land promised to their ancestors, and the freedom to honour their covenant with G-d.

Yet, in one of those reversals that occur very rarely in history, Israel proved stronger than Greece - not only then, but subsequently. The victory won by the Maccabees was the beginning of the end of Greece as a world power. Not accidentally do we recall, on Hanukkah, the words of Zachariah:

"Not by force, nor by might, but by My spirit, says G-d."

The strength of a civilization never lies in force of arms. It lives in its ideals. The Greeks believed in the world of the senses and the knowledge conveyed by human understanding. Jews believed in a G-d beyond the senses, and the knowledge conveyed by Divine revelation. Supernatural faith gave them a more than natural strength.

Though these events took place more than 2000 years ago, we are living through a similar confrontation today - between a material, physical, secular culture that has no interest in, or time for, the things that surpass

our understanding, and our own faith in faith itself, and the way of life in which it is expressed.

We remain guardians of the light within us that comes from a source beyond us.

Its symbol is the menorah the Maccabees lit in the Temple. The Temple itself was eventually destroyed, but the spirit it symbolized proved to be an everlasting light.

<http://www.jewishpress.com>

Q & A: The Order Of Lighting Candles For Shabbat Chanukah

By: Rabbi Yaakov Klass Wednesday, December 28, 2005

QUESTION: What is the proper order for lighting the Chanukah candles and the Sabbath candles on Friday afternoon? And which comes first on Motza'ei Shabbat (Saturday night), Havdala or Chanukah candles? Moshe Jakobowitz Brooklyn, NY

ANSWER : When the Torah lists (Bamidbar, Parashat Pinchas) the Additional Sacrifices (Korbanot Musaf) offered on the Sabbath, Rosh Chodesh, the festivals, as well as Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we find the pasuk (ibid. 28:23), "Milvad olat haboker asher le'olat hatamid ta'asu et eleh — Aside from the burnt offering of the morning which is for a continual offering (i.e., the daily continual offering of the morning, or Tamid shel shachar) shall you offer (lit. "make") these."

It is from this verse that the Mishna in Tractate Zevachim (89a) derives the rule of "tadir," namely, the concept of that which is "more constant than another." The Mishna states: "That which [any mitzva] is more constant than another takes precedence [in its performance] over the other. The Tamid offerings precede the Musaf (additional) offerings; the Musaf offerings of the Sabbath precede the Musaf offerings of the New Moon; the Musaf offerings of the New Moon precede the Musaf offerings of Rosh Hashana, as it is stated, 'Milvad olat haboker ...'" (as quoted above).

The Talmud then questions the statement of the Mishna: Perhaps the quoted verse only teaches us that the Tamid sacrifice of the morning precedes the Musaf offering? How do we know that [more frequent] Musaf sacrifices also precede [less frequent] Musaf sacrifices (since there is no constancy — namely, daily — but only a greater frequency)? We derive it from the verse [that follows the verse quoted above], "Ka'eleh ta'asu layom shiv'at yamim — Like these shall you offer daily, for seven days." It does not state "eleh" (these) but "ka'eleh" (like these). Just as the Temidin precede the Musafin, so do more frequent Musafin precede less frequent Musafin (see Rashi ad loc.).

The same concept is illustrated in Tractate Berachot (51b), where the Mishna considers the points of difference between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel in relation to a meal. Regarding the order of blessings over the Kiddush cup, Beit Shammai say that the blessing over the sanctification of the day is recited first, while Beit Hillel maintain that the first blessing is recited over the wine, followed by the blessing sanctifying the day (e.g. Mekaddesh HaShabbat, Mekaddesh Yisrael ve'hazemanim, etc.). The Halacha follows the opinion of Beit Hillel. According to Beit Hillel, the wine provides the occasion for the blessing (over the day). But the Talmud adds another reason: the rule of tadir — that which is regular takes precedence over that which is infrequent.

We do find an exception to this rule, as described in Tractate Sukkah (54b), when they sanctified the New Moon in the time of the Beit Hamikdash. When Rosh Chodesh fell on a Sabbath, the Psalm of the Sabbath (Psalm 92) was deferred in favor of the Psalm of the New Moon (Psalm 104). Was it overridden? The Gemara explains that it was merely superseded. The Gemara then asks: Do we not have the rule of tadir? R. Yochanan answers that the Psalm of the New Moon was given precedence because they wished to make it well known that a new month had been sanctified.

All these examples are relevant to your question. The Tur (Orach Chayyim 679) states in the name of the author of Halachot Gedolot (regarding the lighting of Chanukah candles on the Sabbath eve): In a situation where both the Chanukah candle and the Sabbath candles have to be lit, the Chanukah light is to be kindled first, for if one were to light the Sabbath candles first, he would subsequently not be permitted to light the Chanukah candle, since he has already accepted the Sabbath. Tosafot, however, state that one may light the Sabbath candles first, followed by the Chanukah candle, since the lighting of Sabbath candles is not necessarily connected with the acceptance of the Sabbath. The Beit Yosef, the Bach and the Darchei Moshe all seem to believe that lighting of Sabbath candles is not equivalent to acceptance of the Sabbath, and thus they permit the Sabbath candles (tadir) to precede the Chanukah candles.

The Magen Avraham, however, states that while a man does not accept the Sabbath with the lighting of candles, a woman does — and thus even according to those

who would allow a man to light Chanukah candles after the Sabbath candles, a woman who lights the Sabbath candles cannot kindle the Chanukah lights afterwards.

The Taz goes even further and also prohibits a man from lighting Chanukah candles if he has previously lit the Sabbath candles. He reasons that since the accepted custom is that a woman accepts the Sabbath with the lighting of candles and is not permitted to do any melacha (forbidden labor) afterwards, the same applies to a man who has lit the Sabbath candles.

It is interesting to note the case discussed in Tractate Shabbos (23b), when a choice has to be made between lighting the Sabbath candles and the Chanukah candles. (Rashi notes that this discussion deals with a case where a poor person has only enough money to purchase oil for one of them, and he cannot afford both.) The conclusion is that we are required to opt for the Chanukah candles because of pirsumei nissa, publicizing the miracle which occurred, in spite of the fact that the Sabbath candles fall under the rule of tadir.

When we kindle the Chanukah lights first, as is our custom, and then light the Sabbath candles, we also accord precedence to pirsumei nissa over the rule of tadir. At the conclusion of the Sabbath, the Shulchan Aruch rules that in shul the Chanukah candles are lit first and then Havdala is made [over wine]. Rema adds that this should certainly also be the order in which it is done in one's home, since one has already heard Havdala in the synagogue.

The Taz states that the Mechaber (R. Yosef Caro) originally quoted the rule [of first lighting Chanukah candles and then making Havdala] — as subsequently stated in Orach Chayyim 681:2 — from Terumat HaDeshen, which he cites in his commentary of Beit Yosef on the Tur. The Taz then quotes the Terumat HaDeshen as also stating that there are some who light the Chanukah candles only after having made Havdala on wine (as opposed to just having said "Atah chonantanu" in the Shemoneh Esreh, or saying "Hamavdil" only). Why does R. Yosef Caro opt for the first view of Terumat HaDeshen? In order to delay the ushering out of the Sabbath (apokei yoma, me'acharinan leh — see Pesachim 105b). The Taz also notes that he heard that the Maharal of Prague followed the second view of Terumat HaDeshen, namely, reciting Havdala (on wine) first and then kindling the Chanukah candles.

The Taz then remarks that he himself would be inclined to follow the second view, based on the previously quoted Mishna in Berachot (51b), from which we derive the rule of tadir. He then goes into a lengthy exegesis of examples throughout the Talmud which do not necessarily follow the rule of tadir (such as Motza'ei Shabbos that coincides with yom tov, "yaknehaz," the blessings of leishet basukkah and of the zeman, etc.). He finally concludes that although the custom has already been established in shul to light Chanukah candles first and then to recite Havdala over wine, those who understand these matters according to Halacha should preferably — at home — recite Havdala over wine first and only then proceed to kindle the Chanukah lights.

The Mishna Berura (ad loc.) is critical of the text of Rema because a person does not fulfill the requirement to make Havdala by listening to its recital by the sheliach tzibbur in the synagogue, since he did not have the intention to discharge the obligation in that manner. (Perhaps, we might add, because he also makes Havdala at home.) Therefore he concurs with the Taz; but since there are so many views among the Rishonim (see Be'ur Halacha ad loc.), we do not change "the [age old] custom in Israel" and continue to first light Chanukah candles and then make Havdala on wine in shul. At home, he concludes, one follows his own custom. The Be'ur Halacha adds in the name of Pri Megadim that we should not reproach anybody in regard to this matter since everyone has on whom to rely [with either of the practices].

Thus the custom we follow does not incorporate the rule of tadir on the Sabbath eve, where we light the [much less frequent] Chanukah light first because of the acceptance of Shabbat with Sabbath candle lighting, whereas our general practice is to abide by the rule of tadir when it comes to the recital of Havdala, and we kindle the Chanukah lights — at home — after Havdala.

From: Halacha [mailto:halacha@yutorah.org] Sent: Monday, December 26, 2005 9:04 AM Subject: YUTorah Halacha **Overview- Chanukah and Mehadrin Min HaMehadrin**

WEEKLY HALACHIC OVERVIEW

BY RABBI JOSH FLUG

www.yutorah.org

Chanukah and Mehadrin Min HaMehadrin

The Beraita in Shabbat 21a, states that the mitzvah of Ner Chanukah is fulfilled by lighting one light per household per night. Mehadrin (those who seek out fulfillment of mitzvot) light one light per person (of the household) per night. The practice of the mehadrin min hamehadrin (the very scrupulous) is a matter of

dispute between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel. Beit Shammai are of the opinion that on the first night, eight lights are lit and one continues in descending order until the eighth night where one light is lit. The Halacha follows Beit Hillel, who are of the opinion that on the first night, one light is lit and one continues in ascending order culminating in the lighting of eight lights on the eighth night. This article will explore the various opinions regarding mehadrin min hamehadrin.

The ambiguity of the practice of mehadrin min hamehadrin lies in the relationship between regular mehadrin and mehadrin min hamehadrin. Do the mehadrin min hamehadrin also fulfill the practice of the mehadrin, or is this practice a distinct practice that is not based on the mehadrin practice? This question is a matter of dispute between Rambam and Tosafot. Rambam, Hilchot Chanukah 4:1, writes that the practice of the mehadrin min hamehadrin is that the lights on the first night correspond to the number of people in the household. On the second night, two lights are lit for each member of the household, and this pattern follows until the eighth night where eight lights are lit for each member of the household. Clearly Rambam is of the opinion that mehadrin min hamehadrin is built on the practice of mehadrin. However, Tosafot, Shabbat 21b, s.v. VeHaMehadrin, claim that mehadrin and mehadrin min hamehadrin cannot coexist. If the number of lights is reflective of both the number of people in household and the corresponding day, it is not recognizable which practice is in effect. For example, if one lights eight lights on the fourth night, it is possible that there are eight members of the household and one is fulfilling the practice of mehadrin. Alternatively, there may be two members of the household, and one is fulfilling mehadrin min hamehadrin. For this reason Tosafot state that one can either light based on the number of members in the household (mehadrin), or light one light for the entire household (according to Beit Hillel) and increase one light every night (mehadrin min hamehadrin). According to Tosafot the mehadrin min hamehadrin practice is considered preferable because there is more hidur (enhancement) when the lights correspond to the specific day of Chanukah.

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 671:2, rules that even if there are many members of the household, one should light one light on the first night of Chanukah and increase one light every night of Chanukah. Rama, ad loc, notes that common practice is that every member of the household lights one light on the first night and increases one light per night.

The Opinion of Rama

At first glance, the dispute between Shulchan Aruch and Rama seems to correspond to the dispute between Tosafot and Rambam. Shulchan Aruch rules in accordance with the opinion of Tosafot that one can either fulfill mehadrin or mehadrin min hamehadrin but not both. Rama rules in accordance with the opinion of Rambam that the mehadrin min hamehadrin practice encompasses the mehadrin practice.

However, there are numerous difficulties in assuming that Rama rules in accordance with the opinion of Rambam. First, according to Rambam, mehadrin min hamehadrin is accomplished by the head of the household lighting one light for each member of the household. Rama's practice is that every member of the household lights his own lights. Second, according to Rambam, the number of lights corresponds to the number of members of the household – even those who are not obligated to light. Rama's practice will only provide lights corresponding to household members who actually light their own lights. Third, according to Rambam, the primary mitzvah is fulfilled by lighting one light. All additional lights are above and beyond the actual requirement. Ostensibly, it is unjustifiable to recite a beracha upon lighting additional lights as those additional lights are not part of the actual fulfillment of the mitzvah. Yet, Rama, in ruling that each member of the household lights his own set of lights, implies that each member of the household recites his own beracha.

The explanation for Rama's opinion is hinted to in Rama's own Darkei Moshe, Orach Chaim 671:2. Rama cites the opinion of R. Avraham of Prague who suggests that the concern of Tosafot – that lighting multiple sets of lights inhibits one's ability to determine which practice is being followed – is limited to the time period when the Chanukah lights were lit at the entrance to the house. The Gemara, Shabbat 21b, states that the Chanukah lights should be lit outdoors at the entrance to the home. If it is too dangerous to do so, it is even permitted to light the lights indoors. R. Avraham of Prague suggests that since nowadays everyone lights indoors, it is possible to light multiple sets of lights and still fulfill the opinion of Tosafot. This can be accomplished by lighting each set of lights in a distinct location. By doing so, it is clearly recognizable that each set of lights represents one member of the household. R. Avraham of Prague states that this method is the preferred method as it fulfills the opinion of Tosafot and Rambam.

One can now suggest that in principle, Rama follows the opinion of Tosafot. According to Tosafot, mehadrin min hamehadrin is fulfilled by one member of the household lighting the number of Chanukah lights that correspond to the day of

Chanukah. Ideally, this should be done by each member of the household who is obligated in the mitzvah of Chanukah. However, since doing so would inhibit one's ability to determine which night of Chanukah it is, only one set of lights is lit on behalf of the entire household. Nevertheless, nowadays, where it is possible to light multiple sets of lights and still determine which night of Chanukah is being observed, every member of the household who is obligated in the mitzvah should light a set of lights in a distinct location. According to this explanation, it is justifiable for each member of the household to recite his own beracha. [This explanation is based on the comments of Aruch HaShulchan 671:15-18.]

The only problem with this explanation is that it does not fulfill the opinion of Rambam in all situations. If there are members of the household who do not light, the number of sets of lights will not correspond to the number of members of the household. One can either suggest that Rama primarily follows the opinion of Tosafot, and is not concerned with the opinion of Rambam in these situations. [This is implied by Aruch HaShulchan 671:9.] Alternatively, one can suggest that even Rambam agrees that the number of lights only corresponds to the number of household members who are obligated in the mitzvah. [Meiri, Shabbat 21a, cited in Mishna Berurah, Biur Halacha 675:3, states that only adult members of the household are counted.]

The Explanation of R. Yitzchak Z. Soloveitchik

R. Yitzchak Z. Soloveitchik, Chidushei Maran Riz HaLevi, Hilchot Chanukah 4:1, provides an alternative explanation for the opinion of Rama. He suggests that in principle, Rama follows Rambam's opinion. However, there is a dispute in Hilchot Milah as to whether hidur mitzvah (enhancement of the mitzvah) can exist outside of the context of the actual mitzvah. Rambam, Hilchot Milah 2:4, is of the opinion that once the actual fulfillment of the mitzvah is completed, there is no purpose to performing hidur mitzvah. Tur, Yoreh Deah 264, disagrees and maintains that one can fulfill hidur mitzvah even after the mitzvah is completed. Rama, Yoreh Deah 264:5, follows the opinion of Tur.

R. Soloveitchik suggests that Rambam's insistence that the head of the household light all of the sets of lights is due to his own opinion that hidur mitzvah cannot be accomplished outside of the context of the actual mitzvah. Therefore, a different member of the household cannot light the additional lights. However, Rama is of the opinion that hidur mitzvah can be fulfilled outside of the context of the actual mitzvah. Therefore, if another member of the household lights, it will constitute a fulfillment of mehadrin min hamehadrin. [One must still address whether is appropriate to recite a beracha upon fulfilling hidur mitzvah and whether the head of the household should light additional sets of lights corresponding to the members of the household who do not light.] The Weekly Halacha Overview, by Rabbi Josh Flug, is a service of YUTorah, the online source of the Torah of Yeshiva University. Get more halacha shiurim and thousands of other shiurim, by visiting www.yutorah.org. To unsubscribe from this list, please click here.

From: Meorot [mailto:meorot@meorot.co.il] Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2005 11:26 AM To: members@meorot.co.il Subject: Meorot Vol. 343 72b 73a

Eiruvei Chatzeiros in Summer Rentals

When several houses share a common courtyard, an eiruv chatzeiros must be set in order to carry from the houses into the courtyard and vice versa. Even though the courtyard is surrounded by walls, and is technically a reshush hayachid, carrying is still restricted without an eiruv chatzeiros. Accordingly, an apartment building also requires an eiruv chatzeiros in order to carry from the apartments into the stairwell or lobby. The common areas of the building have the halachic status of a courtyard, and thus even though the entire building is technically considered one big reshush hayachid, an eiruv chatzeiros is still necessary. In regard to a residential apartment building, this halacha is clear and undisputed, since the particulars match exactly to the courtyards that existed in the time of the Gemara. The question becomes more complicated in regard to hotels, hospitals and the like, where residents are given private rooms, and also share a common area. There are countless particulars to this question, rendering each public building a halachic world unto itself. For example, in the summer-rentals common in Eretz Yisrael, known as tzimerim (Yiddish for "rooms"), each family has its own cooking facilities in its room, and eats independently. In a ho-tel, each person has his own room, but they usually eat together in a common dining room. In a hospital, each patient eats in his own room, but the food is provided by a common kitchen. These distinctions are very significant in determining whether an eiruv chatzeiros is necessary to carry from one's private room into the public hallways.

Tzimmerim: Since the residents of tzimerim eat independently, each room is like a separate house, which would require an eiruv chatzeiros. However, the poskim find other reasons why tzimerim may be exempt. The halacha (85b, Shulchan Aruch O.C. 370:2) rules that when a land-lord lives in the courtyard, and retains a

"handhold" on all the houses therein by leaving his belongings there, he unites all the houses into one common property. All the houses are considered his, and there is no need to make an eiruv since everyone else is a guest in his home (see Mishna Berura *ibid.*, s.k. 10, 11).

The Maharshag (Teshuvos, 122) and R' Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe O.C. I, 141) rule that such is the case when a hotel or tzimmerim owner lives on the premises. He has a "handhold" on all the rooms, since he leaves his furniture there for the guests to use. Therefore, there is no need to make an eiruv chatzeiros.

However, most Poskim reject this ruling (Chazon Ish 92 s.v. Teshuva; Shemiras Shabbos K'Hil-chosa ch. 17 footnote 58 citing Aruch HaShulchan; Dvar Avraham III 30; Minchas Yitzchak IV 55 citing Maharsham; Shevet HaLEvi II 54; R' Elyashiv also concurred with these opinions, see Eiruv Chatzeiros, p. 274), insisting that the furniture provided for the convenience of the guests is not considered a "handhold" for the landlord. The furniture is also rented to the guests, along with the room, and therefore it is considered theirs and not his.

It is important to note, that even when the landlord does not retain a handhold on the rooms, an eiruv chatzeiros is only necessary if the tenants stay for more than thirty days. When a room is rented for less than this amount of time, the tenants are of secondary importance to the landlord. Since he is the only significant resident, the courtyard is not considered a common area, and thus there is no need for an eiruv chatzeiros (see Shulchan Aruch O.C. 370:8, Mishna Berura *loc. cit.*). Hotels and hospitals: The halachos of eiruvim distinguish between neighbors who share their meals in one common room, and neighbors who have collective supplies of food, but eat independently. When they actually eat together, the common dining room unites them into one group. Therefore the courtyard does not resemble a public area and no eiruv is necessary. This is often the case in hotels, where guests dine together. Even if the courtyard is home to gentiles or Jewish apostates, who would render an eiruv invalid (see 61b), one may still carry from the homes into the courtyard. Here, there is no need for an eiruv at all.

When each family eats alone, sharing a common supply of food, they are not considered one collective group. Nevertheless, the food supply takes the place of an eiruv, to unite them and permit them to carry into the courtyard (71a). In this case, there is need for an eiruv, and the common food supply serves that function. This is often the case in hospitals, where patients eat alone in their rooms, from food prepared in a common kitchen. If a gentile or Jewish apostate is staying in the hospital, it is forbidden to carry from private rooms into the public corridors, since they render the "eiruv" invalid (Nesivos Shabbos, by R. Blau, ch. 31, footnote 15)