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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON MIKETZ - CHANUKA - 5783

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from: **Ira Zlotowitz** <Iraz@klalgovoah.org> date: Dec 22, 2022, 9:22 PM subject: **Tidbits • Parashas Miketz & Shabbos Chanukah**
Parashas Miketz - Shabbos Chanukah 5783 • December 23rd • 29 Kislev

This weeks edition is dedicated l'ilui nishmas Mrs. Rochel Zlotowitz amus"ח ה"ה חיים חייקל ע"ה

CHANUKA On Erev Shabbos Chanukah, many daven Mincha earlier in the afternoon in order for Mincha to precede the Menorah lighting (this is preferable in order to avoid the appearance of a tartei d'sarei - an inherent Halachic contradiction - of first lighting Shabbos' Menorah lights and then davening Friday's Mincha.) Menorah lighting may not occur before plag hamincha (approximately one hour before shekiya), and should be performed just before lighting Shabbos candles. The Menorah should contain enough oil (or wax) to burn until a half hour after tzeis hakochavim (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 Al HaNisim. Shabbos morning following Hallel, three Sifrei Torah are taken out. Parashas Miketz is Leined in six Aliyos (the aliyah of shishi continues through shvi'i to the end of the Parashah). The keriah of Rosh Chodesh (Bamidbar 28:9-15) is leined from the second Sefer as the seventh aliyah. The keriah of Chanukah (Bamidbar 7:42-47) is leined as maftir from the third Sefer. The haftarah of Chanukah follows. Av Harachamim is omitted. Atah Yatzarta is said in Mussaf Shemoneh Esrei. Borchy Nafshi is added at the end of davening (some add Psalm 30 for Chanukah). Tzidkas'cha is omitted at Mincha. On Motzai Shabbos, one should return from Shul without delay and light the Menorah as soon as possible. There are differing, equally valid, minhagim regarding which should come first, Havdalah or Menorah lighting. If one is away for Shabbos Chanukah, it may be preferable to light the Menorah at the home of one's host on Motzai Shabbos before departing, especially if one will be returning home late. Consult your Rav. On Sunday, the second day of Rosh Chodesh Teves, the full Hallel is recited. Kerias Hatorah includes two Sifrei Torah. From the first sefer, the keriah of Rosh Chodesh (Bamidbar 28:9-15) is leined in three aliyos (instead of four; the usual first two aliyos are combined) from the first Sefer, followed by one aliyah for Chanukah (Bamidbar 7:48-53) from the second sefer Torah. Mussaf of Rosh Chodesh follows. Davening ends with Borchy Nafshi after the Shir shel Yom (some add 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 before Pesach.

REMINDERS There is a praiseworthy minhag of giving gifts to the melamdim of one's children (R' C. Palaggi zt"l). This sets an example of hakaras hatov for children and emphasizes the importance we give to 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 (USA) is Monday night, December 26th. The final opportunity (in case of necessity) is Friday night, January 6th at 10:13 PM. Daf Yomi: Erev Shabbos is Nedarim 59. Daf Yerushalmi: Berachos 40 Mishnah Yomis: Erev Shabbos is Shabbos 12:2-3. Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn't speak to your kids today, make sure to do the same!

NEXT ON THE CALENDAR - Asarah B'Teves is on Tuesday, January 3rd.

PARSHA IN A PARAGRAPH 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 viceroy 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 to harm them • 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 as stealing the goblet and the Shevatim are returned to Mitzrayim. The keriah for Rosh Chodesh pertains to the korbanos brought on Rosh Chodesh. The keriah of each day of Chanukah corresponds to the Korbanos Ha'nesiim and corresponding day of the Chanukas Hamizbeiach. The haftarah of Chanukah (Zecharia 2:14-4:7) is leined. The haftarah discusses the Chanukas HaMenorah during the Second Beis Hamikdash.

FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE “ וַיְהִי מֵעַז שְׁנַתִּים יָמִים וּפְרָעָה “חֲלֵלָם” “And it was at the end of the two years and Pharaoh dreamt” (Bereishis 41:01) The Pasuk notes that Pharaoh’s dreams occurred at the end of the two extra years of Yosef’s imprisonment. What is the significance of the dreams coinciding with this point of Yosef’s imprisonment? 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 the One above, which only He can deliver.

Please reach out to us with any thoughts or comments at:

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from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org> date: Dec 21, 2022, 11:25 AM subject: Rabbi Mordechai Willig - What is in a Name?

Rabbi Mordechai Willig What is in a Name? I

Yosef called his second son Efrayim, "for Hashem has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering" (Bereishis 41:52). According to the simple understanding of the passuk, the root of the name Efrayim - אַפְרַיִם is pri - פְּרִי, fruit. The Da'as Z'keinim gives a radically different explanation of the name, and says that Efrayim is named after his ancestors Avraham and Yitzchak who are referred to as, "ash – אֶפֶר". Avraham said, "I am but dust and ash" (Bereishis 18:27), and Hashem sees Yitzchak before Him as if his ashes are on the altar (Rashi Vayikra 26:42), and Efrayim is the plural of eifer, meaning two sets of ashes. Therefore, all of Yisroel, all of whom are descended from Avraham and Yitzchak, are called Efrayim as it is said, "Efrayim, my favorite son" (Yirmiyahu 31:19). How can this understanding of Efrayim as a plural form of eifer - ashes, be reconciled with the Torah's explicit explanation of Efrayim's name as indicating that Yosef was fruitful, having been blessed with children, as in the mitzvah of "pru u'rvu - be fruitful and multiply" (1:28)?

Perhaps the answer lies in how the mitzvah of pru u'rvu was redefined for Am Yisroel, beginning with Avraham Avinu. Hashem loved Avraham because he commands his children to keep the way of Hashem (18:19). This includes the paternal obligations of mila, pidyon haben, teaching the child Torah and a trade, and marrying him off so that the generations continue in the way of Hashem (Kiddushin 29a). Furthermore, if his children are not observant, he may not have fulfilled pru u'rvu (Mishna Berura 574:12).

We can now reconcile the seemingly unrelated translations of Efrayim. The literal understanding, recorded in the Torah, is "Hashem has made me fruitful". However, in order to properly fulfill the mandate of being fruitful, pru u'rvu, the children must follow in the way of their ancestors. Therefore, the Da'as Z'keinim links Efrayim to eifer - ashes, a reference to Abraham and Yitzchak. Only by Yosef's sons following in their ways, a particularly difficult challenge in the isolation of the land of his suffering, would his being fruitful constitute a blessing. Thus, the name Efrayim representing the successful transmission of a Torah life to future generations, is an appropriate appellation for all of Am Yisroel.

II

Yosef called his firstborn Menashe, "for Hashem has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house" (41:51). The K'sav V'hakabala asks: how could Yosef Hatzadik have forgotten his father's house? Wasn't the image of his father (Rashi 39:11) still uppermost in his mind? Why did Yosef not tell his beloved father that he was alive and well, appointed over all the land of Egypt (41:43)?

The answer is that Yosef did not forget his father for even one moment. Moreover, he bemoaned his father's pain over their separation much more than his own. However, his great righteousness prevented him from honoring his father. Hashem

decreed in his prophetic dream that his father and brothers would bow down to him (Bereshis 37:7-10, see Rashi).

Heavenly decree prevented him from informing his father. He had to overcome his great desire to gladden his father's broken heart, so that the Divine will be fulfilled in its time.

To do Hashem's bidding, he had to distance the thought of honoring his father from his mind. He therefore called his son Menashe, i.e. Hashem enabled me to not think every moment about my father. He was able to put it out of his mind, the equivalent of forgetting. He thanked Hashem, by calling his son Menashe, for this ability. Thus, the name implies great honor toward his father, not the reverse, because only by Hashem's intervention was he able to contain his great love and respect for his father in order to carry out Hashem's plan.

III

Yaakov blessed his grandsons Efrayim and Menashe, and added, "May my name be declared upon them and the names of my fathers, Avraham and Yitzchak" (48:16). The Seforno explains that Yaakov prayed that they be tzaddikim worthy of being called proper descendants of their illustrious ancestors. A more literal interpretation is based on the aforementioned comments of the Da'as Z'keinim and the K'sav V'hakabala. The names of Avraham and Yitzchak are called upon Efrayim which refers to their ashes. And the name of Yaakov himself is alluded to in the name Menashe, which recalls the great love and respect that Yosef had for Yaakov.

The text of Yaakov's beracha is used by fathers to bless their children and grandchildren to this very day. We pray that they keep the way of Hashem and be worthy descendants of our forefathers. We often give them the actual names of our forefathers or names which refer to previous generations, as Yosef did.

We utilize the beracha given to Efrayim and Menashe in particular. Just as they were not influenced negatively by their surroundings in Egypt, we bless our progeny that they, too, will not be led astray by the prevailing culture of their time and place.

On Chanukah we celebrate our ability to resist the Hellenization which swept the world and, sadly, corrupted large segments of the Jewish nation; only the fierce dedication of the Chashmonaim saved them from acculturation and assimilation. Only by replicating the countercultural exclamation of "Mi lashem elai" can we overcome the powerful pull of the host culture which is in precipitous decline. May we, like Yosef, Efrayim, and Menashe, withstand the onslaught of the contemporary Greek-like immorality which surrounds us by clinging to the pure Torah values and precepts represented by the Chanukah menorah.

The Modesty of the Jewish Woman

Excerpted From a Ma'amar by the Tolna Rebbe Shlita

[Rav Yitzchak Menachem Weinberg, the Tolner Rebbe of Yerushalayim]

The Gemara (Shabbos 23a) establishes that women are included in the obligation to light Chanukah candles She'af Hein Hayu BiOso Haneis – “because even they were part of that miracle.” Rashi offers two interpretations to the phrase She'af Hein Hayu BiOso Haneis. First, he explains that the Greeks’ decrees affected both men and women and alike, such that both men and women are obligated to light the Chanukah candles to commemorate the miracle which saved us all from Greek oppression. Secondly, Rashi adds, Al Yedei Isha Naaseh Haneis– the miracle transpired through a woman.

Tosfos in Maseches Megilla (4a) cite the Rashbam as advancing this second interpretation mentioned by Rashi. The Gemara applies the concept of She'af Hein Hayu BiOso Haneis to include women in the mitzvos of candle lighting on Chanukah, the Megilla reading on Purim, and the four cups of wine on Pesach. The Rashbam explains that the Chanukah miracle transpired through the heroism of Yehudis; the Purim miracle unfolded through Ester; and the redemption from Egypt was brought about in the merit of the righteous women of that generation. Tosfos question this explanation, however, noting that the Gemara says הן שאלו – “for even they” – implying that the women were secondary, and not the primary figures in the miracles that are celebrated. Therefore, Tosfos prefer the other interpretation – that the women were included in the Greeks’ decrees, in Haman’s edict, and in the Egyptian bondage. However, Rashi, as mentioned, brings the Rashbam’s interpretation, as do several other Rishonim. How would they respond to Tosfos’ challenge based on the Gemara’s formulation, She'af Hein Hayu BiOso Haneis?

We might explain that although the miracle occurred primarily through the women, nevertheless, because of their exceptional modesty, they chose to make themselves subordinate to the men, and remained inside the homes without appearing in public to take credit for bringing about the miracle. It was because of the women’s conduct that the Gemara writes She'af Hein Hayu BiOso Haneis, emphasizing their exceptional modesty. May Hashem help all parents raise their daughters according to this tradition of modesty and submission, in the spirit of the principle, Kol Kvoda Bat Melech Penima, and receive from them much nachas, Kein Yehi Ratzon

from: **The Rabbi Sacks Legacy** <info@rabbisacks.org>

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COVENANT & CONVERSATION

To Wait Without Despair

MIKKETZ

Something extraordinary happens between the previous parsha and this one. It is almost as if the pause of a week between them were itself part of the story.

Recall last week's parsha about the childhood of Joseph, focusing not on what happened but on who made it happen.

Throughout the entire rollercoaster ride of Joseph's early life he is described as passive, not active; the done-to, not the doer; the object, not the subject, of verbs.

It was his father who loved him and gave him the richly embroidered cloak. It was his brothers who envied and hated him. He had dreams, but we do not dream because we want to but because, in some mysterious way still not yet fully understood, they come unbidden into our sleeping mind. With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship of Covenant & Conversation, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel.

An extraordinary couple who have moved me beyond measure by the example of their lives. "I have loved the Torah of R' Chaim Schimmel ever since I first encountered it. It strives to be not just about truth on the surface but also its connection to a deeper truth beneath. Together with Anna, his remarkable wife of 60 years, they built a life dedicated to love of family, community, and Torah." – Rabbi Sacks

His brothers, tending their flocks far from home, plotted to kill him. They threw him into a pit. He was sold as a slave. In Potiphar's house he rose to a position of seniority, but the text goes out of its way to say that this was not because of Joseph himself, but because of God:

God was with Joseph, and he became a successful man. He lived in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that God was with him, and that God granted him success in all that he did.

Gen. 39:2–3 Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, and failed, but here too, Joseph was passive, not active. He did not seek her, she sought him. Eventually, "she caught him by his cloak, saying, 'Lie with me'! But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside" (Gen. 39:12). Using the garment as evidence, she had him imprisoned on a totally false charge.

There was nothing Joseph could do to establish his innocence. In prison, again he became a leader, a manager, but again the Torah goes out of its way to attribute this not to Joseph but to Divine intervention:

God was with Joseph and showed him kindness, granting him favour in the sight of the prison warden... Whatever was done there, God was the one who did it. The prison warden paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because God was with him; and whatever he did, God made it prosper.

Gen. 39:21–23 Then Joseph met Pharaoh's chief butler and baker. They had dreams, and Joseph interpreted them, but insisted that it is not he but God who was doing so:

"Joseph said to them, 'Interpretations belong to God. Tell me your dreams.'"

Gen. 40:8 There is nothing like this anywhere else in Tanach. Whatever happened to Joseph was the result of someone else's deed: those of his father, his brothers, his master's wife, the prison warden, or God Himself. Joseph was the ball thrown by hands other than his own.

Then, for essentially the first time in the whole story, Joseph decided to take fate into his own hands. Knowing that the chief butler was about to be restored to his position, he asked him to bring his case to the attention of Pharaoh:

"Remember me when it is well with you; please do me the kindness to make mention of me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this place. For indeed I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that they should have put me into prison."

Gen. 39:14–15 A double injustice had been done, and Joseph saw this as his one chance of regaining his freedom. But the end of the parsha delivers a devastating blow:

The chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, and forgot him.

Gen. 39:23 The anticlimax is intense, emphasised by the double verb, "did not remember" and "forgot." We sense Joseph waiting day after day for news. None comes. His last, best hope has gone. He will never go free. Or so it seems.

To understand the power of this anticlimax, we must remember that only since the invention of printing and the availability of books have we been able to tell what happens next merely by turning a page. For many centuries, there were no printed books. People knew the biblical story primarily by listening to it week by week. Those who were hearing the story for the first time had to wait a week to discover what Joseph's fate would be.

The parsha break is thus a kind of real-life equivalent to the delay Joseph experienced in prison, which, as this parsha begins by telling us, took "two whole years." It was then that Pharaoh had two dreams that no one in the court could interpret, prompting the chief butler to remember the man he had met in prison. Joseph was brought to Pharaoh, and within hours was transformed from zero to hero: from prisoner-without-hope to viceroy of the greatest empire of the ancient world.

Why this extraordinary chain of events? It is telling us something important, but what? Surely this: God answers our prayers, but often not when we thought or how we thought. Joseph sought to get out of prison, and he did get out of prison. But not immediately, and not because the butler kept his promise.

The story is telling us something fundamental about the relationship between our dreams and our achievements. Joseph was the great dreamer of the Torah, and his dreams for the most part came true. But not in a way he or anyone else could have

anticipated. At the end of the previous parsha – with Joseph still in prison – it seemed as if those dreams had ended in ignominious failure. We have to wait for a week, as he had to wait for two years, before discovering that it was not so. There is no achievement without effort. That is the first principle. God saved Noah from the Flood, but first Noah had to build the Ark. God promised Abraham the land, but first he had to buy the Cave of Machpelah in which to bury Sarah. God promised the Israelites the land, but they had to fight the battles. Joseph became a leader, as he dreamed he would. But first he had to hone his practical and administrative skills, first in Potiphar’s house, then in prison. Even when God assures us that something will happen, it will not happen without our effort. A Divine promise is not a substitute for human responsibility. To the contrary, it is a call to responsibility. But effort alone is not enough. We need *siyata diShemaya*, “the help of Heaven.” We need the humility to acknowledge that we are dependent on forces not under our control. No one in Genesis invoked God more often than Joseph. As Rashi says, “God’s Name was constantly in his mouth.”[1] He credited God for each of his successes. He recognised that without God he could not have done what he did. Out of that humility came patience.

Those who have achieved great things have often had this unusual combination of characteristics. On the one hand they work hard. They labour, they practise, they strive. On the other, they know that it will not be their hand alone that writes the script. It is not our efforts alone that decide the outcome. So we pray, and God answers our prayers – but not always when or how we expected. (And of course, sometimes the answer is ‘No’.)

The Talmud (Niddah 70b) says it simply. It asks: What should you do to become rich? It answers: Work hard and behave honestly. But, says the Talmud, many have tried this and did not become rich. Back comes the answer: You must pray to God from whom all wealth comes. In which case, asks the Talmud, why work hard? Because, answers the Talmud: The one without the other is insufficient. We need both: human effort and Divine favour. We have to be, in a certain sense, patient and impatient – impatient with ourselves but patient in waiting for God to bless our endeavours.

The week-long delay between Joseph’s failed attempt to get out of prison and his eventual success is there to teach us this delicate balance. If we work hard enough, God grants us success – not when we want but, rather, when the time is right.

[1] See Rashi’s commentary on Genesis 39:3

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Vol. 30 No. 10 Parshas Mikeitz

Yosef’s Strategy (Adapted from the K’li Yakar)

Yosef’s behaviour towards his brothers appears strange, to say the least. He clearly had no intention of harming them, as is evident from the course of events. Why then, did he cause both them and his father so much anguish, by accusing them initially of being spies, and later, of being thieves? The Ramban explains that Yosef’s actions were centered around his dreams, which he now took upon himself to implement. The K’li Yakar disagrees however. If G-d wanted the dreams to come true, he points out, then He would see to it that they would, with or without Yosef’s assistance, in which case, there was no justification for Yosef to behave the way he did.

*

The K’li Yakar therefore, based on the Mahari Avuhav, first explains why Yosef declined to reveal his identity (see main article, Parshas Vayeishev), ascribing it to the fact that G-d did not inform Ya’akov that he was alive. And if G-d did not reveal it, it must be *Midah ke’Neged Midah* for Ya’akov’s failure to return home from Lavan, in which case he knew that the knowledge of his identity would have to remain hidden from Ya’akov for exactly twenty-two years, as Chazal have taught. So he would not reveal it either, until those twenty-two years had elapsed.

And as for the pain he caused his brothers by his base accusation, that he did in order to cleanse them for having sold their brother into slavery – the sin was immense, so he undertook to bring about their atonement measure for measure. It seems to me though that, according to Rashi in *Ki Seitzei* (22:8), who pronounces guilty someone who does not build a parapet round his roof, even though the man deserved to die, one could pose the same question on the K’li Yakar as he himself posed on the Ramban. For it was no more Yosef’s business to act as G-d’s policeman than it was to implement his dreams.

Be that as it may, he proceeds to elaborate.

*

Yosef’s accusation came to atone for their having suspected him of coming to spy on them, when, twenty-two years earlier, his father sent him to find out how they were. They thought that he had come to discover what mischief they were up to, and to report it to their father Ya’akov. And in keeping with the Pasuk in *Yechezkel* (22:9), which states that spying often leads to killing, they decided to strike first, as the Pasuk writes in *Vayeishev* “And they planned to kill him”.

The words “And behold your sheaves went round my sheaf”, in Yosef’s first dream, the K’li Yakar continues, is a reference to the spying that he accused them of at his first confrontation, because it is the way of spies to go round the town to discover its most vulnerable points. A proof for that is the fact that they entered Egypt through ten different gates. And as a result, they

were brought before Yosef, before whom they prostrated themselves.

This atoned for the sin of accusing him of coming to spy on them. And then, to atone for throwing him into a pit, he had them cast into jail for three days (and ‘jail’ is synonymous with a pit, as we see from Yosef, who told the chief butler “because they placed me in a pit”). Moreover, even after he set the other brothers free, he kept Shimon in jail, since he was the one who actually threw him into the pit.

In fact, Yosef’s strategy seemed to have worked, since the brothers confessed to their sin, when they exclaimed “But we are guilty for what we did to our brother ... “. And they did so following his declaration that he was a G-d-fearing man, a claim they believed, because they saw how, in spite of his accusation, he had treated them fairly and compassionately by sending them home with provisions for their family. This was sufficient to convince them that what was happening to them was by the Divine Hand (Midah ke’Neged Midah), and not the work of a wicked despot.

*

And as for the libel of the goblet, that Yosef engineered in order to negotiate slavery. Indeed, the brothers did volunteer to become his slaves, and this was to atone for their having sold him as a slave and after all, they did not succeed, so the mere threat of slavery sufficed.

*

And when the brothers, following their return journey home, related their experiences in Egypt, Ya’akov used the word “Eifoh” (43:11) which, based on a Pasuk in Yeshayah (27:8) has connotations of ‘Midah’, and therefore hinted to the Midah ke’Neged Midah with which G-d was dealing with them. Ya’akov himself, who did not know about the sale, may not have realized what he was saying, but as Chazal say on a number of occasions, he prophesied without realizing that he was prophesying.

And the same applies to when Ya’akov then instructed them to carry spices down to ‘the man’, to pacify him. Little did he realize that this was to atone for the brother’s sale of Yosef to the Yishme’elim, who were taking spices down to Egypt. And that is why he concluded “And G-d Almighty will give you mercy ... “. To be sure, once they had atoned for their sin, G-d’s mercy was assured.

Parsha Pearls ... The Partners Dish

“Why do you all look at one another” (42:1).

See Rashi.

The Seforno, who translates the Pasuk as above, explains it with Chazal, who have said that ‘a dish belonging to partners is neither hot nor cold’, meaning that a job that needs to be done by partners never gets done, since each partner expects the other one to perform it.

And that is precisely what Ya’akov meant when he said to his sons ‘Why are you looking at each other (in anticipation)? Get on with it!’

Placing the Blame

“And one (brother) said to the other “The truth of the matter is that we are guilty ... “ (42:21).

A group of Avreichem paid R. Yosef Chayim a visit, shortly after the Chevron massacre of 1927. The speech turned to the current sufferings of Jews in general, and the blood that was being spilt in Eretz Yisrael in particular.

One of the Avreichim remarked that this was the result of those lax Jews who played soccer on Shabbos.

R. Yosef Chayim arose from his chair, and as he was wont to do when he got excited, he planted the palms of his two hands firmly on the table, declaring in a voice charged with emotion, that he disagreed with the Avreich.

After all, he explained, who were these ‘terrible sinners’? The vast majority of them were discharged soldiers who had fought in the first world war. Doubtlessly, he said, they had been forced to eat non-Kasher food and to desecrate the Shabbos.

And in that situation, he continued, they probably went on to transgress severe sins which time and circumstances brought upon them. Then when they were discharged and returned to their homes in Russia and the Ukraine, they suffered the pogroms initiated by Petlora and his hoodlums, who murdered, with unspeakable cruelty, men women and children. Many of them witnessed first-hand, their own fathers, wearing Tallis and Tefilin, slaughtered before their very eyes.

‘Now I ask you’, he concluded, ‘What do you expect of these people, who went through so much hardship and suffering? Do you really believe that their sins are so terrible that K’lal Yisrael are forced to pay for them?’

‘Who then is responsible?’ asked the Avreich.

‘The truth of the matter is that “we are guilty”’, replied R. Yosef Chayim (mimicking the above Pasuk). ‘Nobody forced us to eat T’reifos or to desecrate the Shabbos. Nor were our parents slaughtered before our eyes.

We merited to live in Yerushalayim in a frum environment, and it is therefore from us that the Midah ha’Din makes demands. If we are lax in our observance of Torah and Mitzvos – on our level – then who knows that it is not because of our sins that K’lal Yisrael suffers’.

*

This was the way of R. Yosef Chayim, to object in no uncertain terms, against those who spoke ill of other Jews. In fact, when someone did so, he would compare it to a son who insulted or even cursed his father. Whoever would repeat this shameful act to others, would only serve to increase the father’s disgrace.

from: Rabbi YY Jacobson <rabiyy@theyeshiva.net> date:
Dec 22, 2022, 4:06 PM subject: Why Was Pharaoh Blown
Away by Joseph? - Miketz/Chanukah Essay by Rabbi YY
Rabbi YY Jacobson

It is a riveting story. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, has two dreams, we learn in this week's Torah portion, Miketz. In the first, Pharaoh sees himself standing over the Nile River, "And, behold, there came up out of the River seven cows, handsome and fat of flesh and they fed in the reed grass. And, behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the River, ugly and lean of flesh and stood by the other cows upon the bank of the River. And the ugly and lean cows ate up the seven handsome and fat cows." [1]

In the second dream, Pharaoh sees seven thin, shriveled ears of grain swallow seven fat ears of grain. None of the wise men of Egypt can offer Pharaoh a satisfactory interpretation of his dreams.

Then, the "young Hebrew slave," [2] Joseph, is summoned from his dungeon to the palace. Joseph interprets the dreams to mean that seven years of plenty, symbolized by the fat cows and fat grain, will be followed by seven years of hunger, reflected by the lean cows and the shriveled ears. The seven years of famine will be so powerful that they will "swallow up" and obliterate any trace of the years of plenty.

Joseph then advises Pharaoh how to deal with the forthcoming crisis [3]: "Now Pharaoh must seek out a man with insight and wisdom and place him in charge of Egypt. A rationing system will have to be set up over Egypt during the seven years of surplus," Joseph explains, "in which grain will be stored for the upcoming years of famine."

Pharaoh is blown away by Joseph's vision. "Can there be another person who has G-d's spirit in him as this man does?" Pharaoh asks his advisors. "There is none as understanding and wise as you," he says to Joseph. "You shall be over my house, and according to your word shall all my people be ruled; only by the throne will I outrank you." Joseph is appointed Prime Minister of Egypt. The rest is history.

4 Questions

The Biblical commentators struggle with four major questions concerning this remarkable story. [4]

A) It is difficult to understand how following his interpretation of the dreams, Joseph proceeded to give Pharaoh advice on how to deal with the impending famine. How is a freshly liberated slave not scared of offering the king of Egypt, the monarch who ruled a superpower, unsolicited advice? Pharaoh summoned Joseph from the dungeon to interpret his dreams, not to become an advisor to the king! Such chutzpah could have even cost him his life.

B) It is clear from the narrative that Pharaoh was thunderstruck by Joseph's solution to the problem. But one need not be a rocket scientist to suggest that if you have seven years of plenty

followed by seven years of famine, you should store food during the time of plenty for the time of hunger. What's the genius in Joseph's advice?

C) Pharaoh also was amazed by Joseph's interpretation of the dreams themselves, which none of his own wise men could conceive. But Joseph's interpretation seems simple and obvious: When are cows fat? When there is lots of food. When are they lean? When there's no food. When is grain fat? When there is a plentiful harvest. When is grain lean? During a time of famine. So why was Pharaoh astonished by Joseph's rendition of his dreams? And why could no one else conceive of the same interpretation?

D) How did Pharaoh confer upon Joseph the highest position in the land not even knowing if his interpretation will materialize? Pharaoh's butler offered the king to invite Joseph to explain his dreams because he saw how on target the interpretation of Joseph was. Why did the Egyptian king immediately appoint Joseph as viceroy without any evidence that this young slave was the right man for the job?

Uniting the Cows

On Shabbos Parshas Miketz, 27 Kislev, 5734, December 22, 1973, the Lubavitcher Rebbe presented the following possible explanation. [5]

The dream experts of Egypt did conceive of Joseph's interpretation to Pharaoh's dreams, that seven years of hunger would follow seven years of plenty. Yet they dismissed this interpretation from their mind because it did not account for one important detail of the dream.

In Pharaoh's first dream, he saw how the seven ugly and lean cows that came up after the seven handsome cows "stood near the other (fat) cows upon the bank of the River." [6] There was a moment during which both sets of cows coexisted simultaneously, and only afterward did the lean cows proceed to swallow the fat cows.

It was this detail of the dream that caused the wise men of Egypt to reject the interpretation that Joseph would later offer to Pharaoh and compelled them to present all types of farfetched explanations. [7]

For how is it possible that plenty and famine should coexist? Either you have fat cows alone or you have lean cows alone, but you can't have them both together! The seven years of famine cannot be present during the seven years of surplus. Either you have lots of food, or you have no food. But you can't be both satiated and hungry at the same time. You can't be wealthy and poor at the same time.

This is where Joseph's brilliance was displayed. When Joseph proceeded to tell Pharaoh how to prepare for the coming famine, he was not offering him unwelcome advice on how to run his country; rather, the advice was part of the interpretation of the dream.

Joseph understood that the coexistence of the two sets of cows in the dream contained the solution to the approaching famine: During the years of plenty Egypt must "live" with the consciousness and awareness of the years of famine as though they were already present. Even while enjoying the abundance of the years of plenty, Egypt must experience in its imagination the reality of the upcoming famine, and each and every day store away food for it. The seven lean cows ought to be very much present and alive in people's minds and in their behaviors during the era of the seven fat cows. Conversely, if this system was implemented in Egypt, then even during the years of famine the nation would continue enjoying the abundance of the years of plenty. The seven fat cows would be very much present and alive even during the era of the seven lean cows. This is what impressed Pharaoh so deeply about Joseph's interpretation.

To begin with, Pharaoh was struck by Joseph's ingenious accounting for that one detail of the dream that had evaded all the wise men of Egypt.

But what thrilled him even more was Joseph's demonstration that Pharaoh's dreams not only contained a prediction of future events, but also offered instructions on how to deal with those events. The dreams did not only portend problems, but also offered solutions.[8]

Many people can tell you all about the pending problems. Joseph's uniqueness was that within the very dream which predicted the crisis he can perceive the solution.

Do You Need G-d? Do You Have a Real Friend?

The stories of the Torah describe not only physical events that took place at a certain point in history, but also detail metaphysical and timeless tales occurring continuously within the human heart.

The wisdom of Joseph's presentation to Pharaoh becomes strikingly clear when we reflect on the spiritual message behind the story.

All of us experience cycles of plenty and of famine in our lives. There are times when things are going very well: We are healthy, successful, and comfortable. Often during such times, we fail to invest time and energy to cultivate genuine emotional intimacy with our spouse, to develop real relationships with our children, to bond deeply with friends, and to create a sincere bond with G-d. We feel self-sufficient and don't need anybody in our lives.

Yet when a time of famine arrives, when a crisis erupts (heaven forbid) in our lives we suddenly feel the need to reach out beyond ourselves and connect with our loved ones and with G-d.

But we don't know how to. Because when we do not nurture our relationships and our inner vulnerability during our years of plenty, when the years of famine confront us, we lack the tools we desperately need to survive the crisis.

This is the essence of Joseph's wisdom: You must never detach the years of plenty from the years of famine. When you experience plenty, do not let it blind your vision and desensitize you from what is important in life. The priorities you cultivate during your "good times" should be of the kind that will sustain you during your challenging times as well.[9] If you are investing your time and energy in things that will prove futile when the climate of your life changes and will not hold you up when challenges come, you might want to re-examine your present choices. Why wait for the day you will have to say, "If I would have only realized?"

A Pot of Margarine

At the conclusion of every 16-hour workday in Bergen-Belsen, the block commander liked to have some fun with his Jews. The meal at the end of the day consisted of old dry bread, filthy watery soup and a pot of something like margarine made from vegetable fat.

The margarine was scooped out of a large tub, and after the meal had been distributed and the tub was empty, the commander allowed the starving prisoners to jump into the empty tub and lick the remaining margarine from the walls of the tub. The sight of starving Jews licking up bits of margarine provided nightly entertainment for the commander and his guards. One prisoner, however, refused to be a part of the commander's show. Though like all the rest he was a withered, starving shadow of a man aged far beyond his years, still, he would never allow himself to scavenge for a lick of margarine. The other prisoners called him Elijah. In some unspoken way, the others drew strength from Elijah's refusal to join the frenzy. Then, one night, something happened that seemed to shatter whatever spirit remained in the prisoners.

Elijah cracked. All at once he threw himself into the greasy vat and furiously rolled around like a crazed beast. And how the commander howled. It was a deep belly laugh of satanic satisfaction. The last of the Jews had been morally broken. Later, after the guards left and the Jews were in their barracks, Elijah took off his shirt and began to tear it to shreds. The others looked on in silence. Had Elijah gone mad? He would study the shirt for a moment, carefully looking it over, as if searching for some exact location, and then tear that area into a strip. He looked up. His eyes were on fire.

"Do you know what tonight is? Tonight is the first night of Chanukah."

Elijah studied the shirt again, finding another choice spot to tear. A spot he had purposely saturated with grease from his rolling in the margarine tub. That night Elijah led the others in the lighting of the Chanukah flames. The wicks came from the strips of his shirt, and the bits of margarine Elijah had furiously scavenged was the oil.

Elijah's light continues to shine to this very day. For him, even in a time of famine he was sustained by the faith and a fire of the times of plenty.

[1] Genesis 41: 1-4.

[2] Ibid. 41:12.

[3] Ibid. 41:33-40.

[4] See Ramban, Bechayah, Akeidah, Abarbenel, Ralbag, Alshich, Kli Yakar, Or Hachayim and Maharik—in their commentaries on the story.

[5] Published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, pp. 339-347. The Rebbe's explanation follows Rashi's interpretation of the story. See however Ramban to Genesis 41:4, Ralbag and Or Hachaim ibid. 41:33 for an alternative perspective, which would be invalid according to Rashi (Likkutei Sichos ibid. footnote #9).

[6] Genesis 41:3.

[7] See Rashi ibid. 41:8, from Midrash Rabah Genesis 89:6.

[8] There is a problem here. The detail of the cows coexisting at the river was not repeated by Pharaoh when sharing his dreams with Joseph. See Likkutei Sichos ibid. for an explanation. One possible approach is based on what the Ramban says here, that it is obvious that Pharaoh repeated all the details to Yosef and the Torah does not have to say it, because it is obvious. The Kli Yakar (41,3) says clearly that it was this coexistence which led Yosef to his interpretation, so although the Torah doesn't explicitly mention it in Pharaoh's version of the dreams, Yosef certainly heard it (or sensed it) from him.

But maybe there is something deeper: Perhaps the Torah does not mention it because Pharaoh underscored it, as he could not find meaning in it. This was part of Yosef's brilliance to pick up on it and turn it into a central theme of the dream and the solution to the crisis.

[9] King Solomon in his profound wisdom put it simply: "A friend's love endures for all times" (Proverbs 17:7).

ד"ר Harav Hezkyahu Avrom Broide – Rabbi of "Ganei Ayalon" (Achisomoch, Lod) Dayan and Rosh Kollel Zichron Kelem

STOOD BY THEM IN THE TIME OF THEIR DISTRESS

"כשעמדה מלכות יוון הרשעה על עמך ישראל להשכיחם תורתך ולהעבירם
When the wicked Hellenic government rose up against Your people Israel to make them forget Your Torah and violate the decrees of Your will. "To forget Your Torah," *Toras Hashem*. "The decrees of Your will," *Hashem's* will. But ... "You, in Your abounding mercies, stood by them in the time of their distress, You waged their battles, defended their rights, and avenged the wrong done to them." War for their distress, fight, and revenge!!! The Greek struggle was against *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, but the struggle of the *Chashmonaim* does not carry that title or proclaim a war for the honor of

Heaven and a war for His sake, but a battle for themselves and their image – for their distress, strife and the wrong done to them. The so-called ideological struggle could be seen as a struggle over beliefs and opinions. Greek philosophy versus Jewish values. The Greeks did not fight against life, they did not seek to murder and kill. Their goal was to instill the Greek culture and force it on the Jews as well. They did not seek to destroy the Temple, only to abolish the differences between holy and profane, and between impure and pure. They didn't even spill out the oils used to light the *menorah*, they just defiled them. Something that is not apparent at all from an external view. [היזק שאינו ניכר] Furthermore, It is even permissible according to *halachah* to light the *menorah* with impure oil. It could have been taken as a situation that could be lived and was survivable. But the Hasmoneans saw this trend as an existential decree. A war against the home. A threat to their souls and a fight for their lives and they risked their lives in an impossible reality of the few against the many and the weak against the powerful. A war of survival, a war with no other option. A clear and enlightened recognition that harming the observance of the Torah and *mitzvos* is destruction and a decree of death. At this point the miracle happened. From then on it was clear that the victories were supernatural, against all odds. They came about because You "stood up for them, waged, defended and avenged" their battles, rights and revenge. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* fought for them. The power and abilities of the Hasmoneans were miraculous and wondrous. (Psalms 21:22). תכלית. הלוא משנאיך ה' אשנא, ובתקוממך אתקוטט. תכלית. LORD, You know I hate those who hate You, and loathe Your adversaries. I feel a perfect hatred toward them; I count them my enemies." The מרן הגר"ז מרן הגר"ז explains, When David Hamelech fought against *Hakadosh Baruch Hu's* enemies he fought against them and hated them with a fundamental hatred. What then is the addition made by the statement, "I count them my enemies"? Isn't it obvious that they are his enemies? The explanation lies in the big difference ... In the beginning they were Your haters and adversaries. This is indeed a reason for the willingness to fight them without compromise. But, from then on, they were my enemies. No more Your haters, but my enemies!!! My trouble, my justice and my personal revenge. "I count them my enemies." In the overwhelming recognition that war against G-d is the war of our personal existence, lies the secret of victory. The lack of this recognition is the cause of failure. When we gain closeness to G-d and a perfect recognition that G-d, the Torah and Israel are one, we are able to overcome all our archenemies.

[ג] דרגין אינן מתקשרין דא בדא, הקדוש ברוך הוא אוריתא
When Joseph appears before Pharaoh and is asked to solve the dream. "שמעתי עליך לאמור תשמע היום לפתור
Now I have heard it said of you that for you to hear a

dream is to tell its meaning." Joseph answers Pharaoh saying, "Not I! God will see to Pharaoh's welfare." Rashi explains: "G-d will put the answer in my mouth"!!! Complete nullification, I am nothing. All my essence and ability is what G-d gives me. "There is no other besides Him." From this the salvation sprouts and the seed of *Klal Yisrael's* salvation is sown in Egypt. The words of Rambam הלכות מלכים ומלחמותיהם (ז – Once he enters into the bonds of war, he shall lean on the Refuge of Israel and its Savior in times of trouble, and he will know that by the unity of G-d he wages battle and he shall put his soul in His hand and he shall not fear nor be afraid ... And everyone who fights with all his heart, fearlessly, and his intention will only be to sanctify His Name, is guaranteed that he will not be harmed and no evil will come upon him and a secure house will be built for him in *Am Yisrael* and him and his children will merit it forever and in the world to come, as it says, "כי עשה יעשה ה' לאדוני בית נאמן כי מלחמות ה' אדוני נלהם ורעה לא תמצא בך וגו' והיתה נפש אדוני צרורה בצרור החיים את ה' א-לקיך For the L-rd will grant my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the L-rd, and no wrong is ever to be found in you ... the life of my lord will be bound up in the bundle of life in the care of the L-rd." (שמואל א' כ"ה:כה)

From Parsha@torahinaction.com From the Ha'amek Davar - Miketz - 5783

FROM THE HA'AMEK DAVAR – MIKETZ – 5783 Yosef explained to Par'oh that his dreams communicated seven years of plenty to be immediately followed by seven years of famine. Without title, and without pausing for reaction or reply, he switched from interpreter to advisor, counseling him with: And now let Par'oh seek out a man that is discerning and wise, and set him over Egypt... He will prepare Egypt during the seven years of plenty (41:22-23). Par'oh dreamed: the seven thin cows were devouring seven fat cows, and the seven thin ears of corn were devouring the seven full ears of corn. All about cows. All about corn.

The Meshech Chochma pays attention to Par'oh's dreams taking the form of such natural phenomena. He cites a story that appears in both the Yerushalmi (Bava Metzia 2:5) and in Bereishit Rabba (33:1) about Alexander the Great's journey to a very distant part of the world where, on arrival, he asked the king to explain how they dispensed justice in his lands. The story runs as follow. The king demonstrated the answer by inviting Alexander the Great to watch him personally judge a case that had just then come before him. There, the purchaser bought an article from a seller that, unknown to either of them, had an extremely valuable gemstone within. The purchaser argued that when he bought the object he did not know that it contained a gemstone, so he believed that it was on him to pay up the huge difference to the seller. The seller, in contrast, responded that he did not know about the gemstone at the time

of the sale, so it was the buyer that was lucky, and it was his property. On inquiry, the king found that both the buyer and the seller had children of marriageable age. He therefore recommended that they make a match and the married couple share the gemstone, so that it would happily remain in the hands of both families for future generations. That sounds most reasonable, admirable, and fair. Alexander the Great, however (who as a disciple of Aristotle was probably one of the most sophisticated men of his age), was quite appalled. Had he judged the case, he declared, he would have put both litigants to death and confiscated the gem for the treasury. The king then asked him whether the sun shone in his country and whether there were animals in the country. Yes it did, yes there were, Alexander assured him. Then the king solemnly informed him: "You, G-d, save man and You save the animals" (Tehillim 36:7). For it is solely in the merit of the animals that He saves mankind. That the sun shines, brings rain, and lets the corn grow. For if the animals do not do good, at least they are not corrupt like you and your people who bring unjust suffering on the non-privileged and less fortunate.

The Ha'amek Davar, among other mefarshim, explains that when the Torah brings a repetition of an event (as this one, where it details both Par'oh dreams and the words he subsequently used when telling them to Yosef), it does so for a reason, which is our task to work out. Otherwise "Par'oh told his dreams to Yosef" would be quite enough.

Like the mind-frame of Alexander the Great, Par'oh was corrupt, and Yosef knew that only too well. The fact that Potifar, one of his officers, threw him into the dungeon for no reason: "I did nothing wrong here, yet they put me into the dungeon" (40:15) indicates that his life was worthless, utterly worthless, unless the powers of Egypt actually needed him. He had not been judged or even given a chance to report his version of what happened. For he was worth no more to the ruling powers than the two litigants who, apart from their treasure, were of no value to the ruling powers. Things only changed in Yosef's favor because Par'oh had dreams whose portends deeply disturbed him (41:8). Then Yosef suddenly acquired value because he was the man that might be able to put the mind of the ruling Par'oh at rest.

The dreams were about cows, and about corn: "You, G-d, save man and You save the animals" (Tehillim 36:7). For it is solely in the merit of the animals represented by the cows that He saves mankind, and with the rain that makes the corn grow. You, Par'oh are corrupt, and it is on you to ensure that the corruption of your regime does not cause Egypt "to be cut off through starvation" (41:36).

Yosef was too subtle to place the position before Par'oh in such stark terms. He expressed it positively: "And now let Par'oh seek out a man that is discerning and wise, and set him over Egypt... He will prepare Egypt during the seven years of

plenty”. In doing so, he was asking for a person who was wise, effective, trustful, and honest enough to gather food resources for storage in preparing for famine, and how Egypt might survive through fair allocation of food during those very lean years. That person, explains the Meshech Chochma, would have to be incorruptible, and thus outside Par’oh’s ruling circle; someone who would not hoard to provisions to sell at the highest prices to the wealthy leaving the poor to rot. In short, the cows and the corn in Par’oh’s dreams hinted that something was rotten in the State: corruption, which could ultimately destroy it during the famine through the complete breakdown in trust between the ruler and those ruled. Only a competent and honest outsider would prevent it. And, as events showed, that was Yosef who, as the story later unfolds, (41:5-57; 47:13-24) established famine relief in Egypt on the basis of trust and integrity, and to whom the people of Egypt declared: “It is you that has kept us alive!” (47:25).
Jacob Solomon

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Thoughts on the Weekly Parshah by **HaRav Eliezer Chrysler**
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Happy Birthday C.B. Vol. 30

Chanukah Supplement The Hidden Light (Adapted from the **B’nei Yisaschar**)

The Parshah of the Menorah in Emor (24:1-4) begins with the words “Tzav es B’nei Yisrael”, which, the B’nei Yisaschar observes, has the same numerical value as ‘bi’Yemei Matisyahu ben Yochanan’ (which we say in Birchas ha’Mazon and in the Amidah) plus one. This discrepancy of one (‘Aleph’ as we will now explain) teaches us he says, that the light that shone during the days of Matisyahu was a derivative of the light that G-d created on the first day of the Creation, and which He subsequently hid. That hidden light, the Zohar explains, was placed in the Torah, and those who study it diligently, benefit from its magical properties. That is why Or and Ner (light and lamp respectively) hint at Torah, which stems from ‘Chochmah’ (the first of the ten S’firos [after Da’as]). And the reason that the miracle of Chanukah took place with Or and Ner is because it is the Chochmas ha’Torah that the Greeks set out to destroy, and Chochmas ha’Torah is the antithesis of Hellenism (Greek culture), and the symbol of our victory over the Greeks. Chazal have also said that wherever there is olive oil there is Chochmah (and they derive this from the Pasuk in Shmuel 2, where Yo’av sent to Teko’ah, the prime oil-producing olives area, to fetch a wise woman). The miracle took place with the Menorah, which was placed on the south side of the Azarah, and the Gemara explains in Bava Basra (25b) that someone who wants wisdom, should turn to the south. Interestingly, it is the south that remains bright

throughout the year, summer and winter, because that is where the sun (our main source of light) reaches its zenith. With this we can understand the discrepancy of one between ‘bi’Yemei Matisyahu ben Yochanan’ and “Tzav es B’nei Yisrael”. Because, bearing in mind that ‘Aleph’ represents Chochmah (as in the Pasuk in Iyov “ve’a’alafcha chochmah”), it is ‘bi’Yemei Matisyahu ben Yochanan’ together with the ‘Aleph’ (with the illumination of Chochmah that took place at that time) that equals “Tzav es B’nei Yisrael”, the Mitzvah of taking pure olive oil and kindling the Menorah.

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And this will help us understand the Gemara in Shabbos (23b) which, in answer to the question ‘Where did G-d command us (to kindle the Menorah, as we recite in the B’rachah)?’, gives two answers – from “Lo Sasur ... “ (Rav Ivya) and from “She’al ovicho ve’yagedcho ... “ (Rav Nechemyah). Why, the commentaries ask, does the Gemara pose this question specifically with regard to lighting the Menorah on Chanukah (and not to any other Mitzvah mi’de’Rabbanan)? And what is the bone of contention between the two answers? To answer the two questions, the B’nei Yisaschar first cites the Roke’ach, that the Mitzvah of Chanukah is hinted in Parshas Emor (by way of the juxtaposition of the Parshah of the Menorah beside that of the Yamim-Tovim, and the Mitzvah inherent in the above hint of the equivalent numerical value of “Tzav es B’nei Yisrael”, and ‘bi’Yemei Matisyahu ben Yochanan’). Only the Gemara was puzzled in that “Tzav es B’nei Yisrael” is missing one, and it is therefore necessary to add the ‘Kolel’ to make up the numbers. What the Gemara really means to ask therefore, is from where we know that a discrepancy of one is acceptable in Gematriyos? And it is in this regard that the Amora’im argue. Rav Ivya quotes the Pasuk “Lo sosur ... “, which continues “mi’kol asher yagidu lecho yomin u’s’mol”, with reference to Ya’kaov’s blessing of Yosef’s sons, where he switched his right and left hands. Because there he said, “Ephrayim u’Menasheh ki’Reuven ve’Shimon yih’yuli”, and the numerical value of “Ephrayim u’Menasheh” is equal to that of “Reuven ve’Shimon”; well almost! It is actually one more, and is therefore the source for the permitted discrepancy of one in Gematriyos. Rav Nechemyah on the other hand, quotes the Pasuk “She’al ovicho ve’yagedcho ... “, and this hints at the second explanation, which we discussed earlier. We wrote that the extra one in ‘bi’Yemei Matisyahu ben Yochanan’, serves as a hint to the Chochmas ha’Torah which the Greeks attempted to abolish, and which Yisrael regained as a result of the extra illumination of light that shone from the hidden light which in turn, derives from ‘Chochmah’. Now, in Kabbalah, Chochmah is known as ‘Aba’ (as well as being called ‘Aleph’, as we explained earlier). Consequently, the Pasuk “She’al ovicho ... , zekeinecha ve’Yomru lach”, refers to ‘Aleph’ (denoting

Chochmah [indeed, even the end of the Pasuk hints to that, for Chazal have said that ‘a Zakein’ is one who has acquired wisdom]). According to Rav Nechemyah then, an extra number is not generally acceptable in Gematriyos, only here, due to the implication of the ‘Aleph’. * * *

All About Chanukah What Sort of Oil Was It? (Adapted from the Mo’adim ba’Halachah)

R. Chayim Soloveichik asks how the Chashmona’im could have fulfilled their obligation with the self-increasing oil in the Beis-Hamikdash on the subsequent seven nights. The Torah’s obligation is to light olive oil, whereas what burned in the Menorah from the second night and onwards was miracle oil (since the olive oil was used up already on the first night). The Mo’adim ba’Halachah cites the Redak in Melachion 2 (4:7), who exempted the miracle oil of Elisha (in the episode of the wife of Ovadyahu) from Ma’asros for exactly the same reason. R. Chayim therefore explains that the miracle of the Chanukah oil was not a quantitative miracle, but a qualitative one. In other words, there was no visible increase in oil (like there was with Elisha). What happened was that the oil that was already in the lamps simply increased in quality and burned longer. R.

Chayim also uses this explanation to answer the Beis-Yosef’s Kashya, why we celebrate the first night of Chanukah, seeing as the jar contained sufficient oil to last for one day anyway, so that the miracle only began on the second night? According to his description of the miracle however, the Kashya falls away. Since already on the first night, each lamp contained only sufficient oil to burn for one night. The fact that it did not decrease at the regular rate was already a miracle. And the Mo’adim ba’Halachah uses R. Chayim’s explanation to clarify the Machlokes

between Beis Shamai, who hold ‘Pochsin ve’holchin’ (that one kindles eight lights on the first night, seven on the second and so on), and Beis Hillel, who holds ‘Mosifin ve’holchin’ (one light on the first night, two on the second and so on). If, as R. Chayim maintains, all the oil that was placed in the Menorah on the first night simply increased in quality, then it transpires that potentially, there was sufficient oil in the lamp to burn miraculously for eight days; on the second night, there was sufficient oil for seven days ... , forming the basis of Beis Shamai’s opinion. Beis Hillel, on the other hand, do not go after the potential, but after the factual, and factually, one day’s miracle took place on the first night, two on the second and three on the third (see also, note 13, p.158 in the Mo’adim ba’Halachah).

* From One to Eight

In spite of the principle that with few exceptions, we always rule like Beis Hillel, there is a well-known hint that is brought by the commentaries, that the Halachah is like Beis-Hillel with regard to the progression of the Chanukah lights (from one to eight). The hint actually lies in the word ‘Chanukah’, which is

the acronym of ‘Ches Neiros, Ve’Halachah Ke’Beis Hillel’, whose first letters it spells. The Mo’adim ba’Halachah cites commentaries who use this acronym to answer two famous questions regarding Chanukah: 1) Why Chazal instituted Chanukah for eight days and not seven (see above “What Sort of Oil Was It”, paragraphs 4 and 5)? and 2) Why they did not institute a ninth day as S’feika d’Yoma like they did on Pesach, Shavu’os and Succos? Had there been seven days of Chanukah, they explain, then on the fourth day we would kindle four lights, both according to Beis Hillel and according to Beis Shamai, and there would be nothing to demonstrate that the halachah is like Beis Hillel; and the same problem would arise on the fifth day, had they instituted a ninth day. A perhaps not so well-known hint for the same Halachah is presented by the Roke’ach (cited by the B’nei Yisaschar) who observes in Parshas Emor (24:2 and 4), that the Torah first writes “Leha’alos ner tamid” (singular) and then “Ya’aroeh es ha’neiros” (plural), proving that we kindle one light on the first night, and progress on the second night to two (like Beis Hillel), rather than beginning with eight lights on the first night, and ending with one on the last (like Beis Shamai).

*

A Hint for Chanukah in the Torah

The B’nei Yisaschar also cites the Roke’ach with regard to a hint in the Torah for Chanukah, based on Nevuchadnetzar’s dream, where he dreamt of an image, part of gold, part of silver and part of copper, and which, according to Daniel’s interpretation, referred to Bavel, Madai and Yavan (Greece), respectively. It can hardly be a coincidence therefore, that the last word in Terumah is ‘Nechoshes’ (copper), which is followed by the Parshah of the Menorah, as the Roke’ach points

from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com> date: Dec 16, 2022, 10:02 AM subject: Torah Musings Daily Digest for 12/16/202

Yehudah and Tamar: Marriage or Harlotry?

by R. Moshe Kurtz

Lomdus on the Parsha: Vayeishev

Based on the Acclaimed Sefer Chavatzes HaSharon

Q: Did the relations between Yehudah and Tamar constitute a sin? He inquired of the council of that locale, “Where is the prostitute, the one at Enaim, by the road?” But they said, “There has been no prostitute here.” (Genesis 38:21)

Following the deaths of Er and Onan, Yehudah is reluctant to give his final son, Sheilah, as a husband to Tamar. Rather than wait indefinitely, Tamar takes matters into her own hands by dressing as a prostitute and having relations with Yehudah. There are many questions raised by this narrative - one such question is how could Yehudah, a virtuous son of Yaakov, succumb to soliciting the services of a prostitute?

Besides the potential issues related to the laws of Niddah (being intimate with a woman who has menstruated), there is a more glaring challenge with what transpired. Rambam (Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Ishus 1:4) writes: When the Torah was given, a harlot became forbidden, as Deuteronomy (23:18) states:

"There shall not be a harlot among the children of Israel."

Therefore, a person who has relations with a woman for the sake of lust, without kiddushin (betrothal), receives lashes as prescribed by the Torah, because he had relations with a harlot. Accordingly, any sexual act that is performed outside the context of marriage constitutes a transgression of the law against harlotry. (See, however, Ra'avad ad loc. who qualifies the scope of harlotry; a non-marital sexual act is not ipso facto a violation of this mitzvah.)

While, we may wish to simply answer that this entire episode pre-dates the Torah, and is thus not subject to such strictures, we would still need to resolve the matter according to those who believe that the families of the patriarchs sought to abide by Torah law (see Tosafos, Chullin 91a, s.v. K'Man). In fact, the Talmud (Sotah 10a) informs us that Yehudah even went to far as to vet Tamar prior to engaging with her: Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says: She provided eyes for her statements (i.e., with her words she provided an opening for Judah to solicit her). When Judah solicited her to engage in sexual intercourse with him, he first attempted to verify her status and said to her: Are you perhaps are a gentile? She said to him: I am a convert. He asked: Perhaps you are a married woman? She said to him: I am an unmarried woman. He asked: Perhaps your father accepted betrothal for you and you are unaware of it? She said to him: I am an orphan. He asked: Maybe you are impure? She said to him: I am pure.

According to this Talmudic account, Yehudah was clearly concerned for any potential impropriety. It therefore begs the question: Why would Yehudah go so far as to inquire Tamar of her Jewish, marital and purity statuses but neglect to take the prohibition of prostitution into account?

Indeed, earlier commentaries were perplexed by the same question. R. Eliyahu Mizrahi (Sefer HaMizrachi, Gen. 38:15) suggests that in addition to the collateral, Yehudah also provided Tamar with either a document or small sum of money in order to effectuate a halachic betrothal (kiddushin).

However, the Maharsha (Sotah 10a) presents two challenges to such an assumption:

(A) If Yehudah truly acted in accordance with the law, then he should have felt no subsequent shame. However, he is clearly attempting to conceal the matter by sending his friend Chirah the Adullamite to retrieve his collateral on his behalf (see Gen. 38:20).

(B) On a more fundamental level, there is a basic principle in the laws of marriage that the betrothal requires the presence of witnesses in order to legally effectuate the marriage. These kind

of witnesses are not simply called upon to testify in the event that the marriage needs to be proven, but are actually an indispensable component of the process - *eidei re'iyah l'kiyuma*. A man can hand a ring or document to a woman with the intent to marry her, but absent the witnesses nothing of halachic significance has taken place. Considering Yehudah was acting in a discreet fashion it is doubtful that anyone witnessed their transaction, thus relegating their union to an act of harlotry instead of marital intimacy.

R. Mordechai Carlebach seeks to resolve the second challenge by citing the Rosh (Yevamos 3:7) who posits that a marital document which is written by the groom himself actually does not require any witnesses. This is extrapolated from the well established law that a man who writes his own writ of divorce does not require witnesses to sign on. If we are willing to accept that Yehudah went so far as to provide Tamar with a marital document, it is also plausible to believe that he wrote it himself, thus not requiring any witnesses.

However, it should be noted that there is a significant school of Medieval scholars who disagree with the Rosh and limit this exception to matters of divorce (see Ritva and Rashba on Yevamos 31b).

A major point of concern with such an answer is that according to Tosafos (Gittin 4a, s.v. D'Kaima) normative halachah deems it insufficient to only have witnesses on the document itself; we require witnesses to observe the handing of the document from the husband to his wife (i.e. *eidei chasimah*). If so, the same standard would be applied to creating a marriage: Thus, while the man's own handwriting might suffice in lieu of the witnesses' writing, it cannot replace the presence of witnesses who are required to observe the handing over of the document. R. Carlebach makes another attempt to explain how Yehudah effectively betrothed Tamar without witnesses. The Talmud in Kiddushin (65b) derives hermeneutically that the act of betrothal bears legal similarities to monetary transactions. The Gemara informs us that in monetary law, it is sufficient for an individual to declare he owes another party money since "the admission of a litigant is tantamount to one hundred witnesses." Therefore, it stands to reason that if a man declares he is betrothed to a woman it should be a sufficient basis for us to recognize their marital connection. However, the Gemara rejects this suggestion since one can only admit to that which pertains to himself - not to something that is detrimental to another party. Thus, the act of betrothal requires witnesses since it binds this woman exclusively to one man, which is technically to the detriment of all other potential husbands in the world. However, prior to the Torah being given, betrothal did not exclude a woman to other men and thus by Yehudah simply declaring Tamar as his wife would be sufficient to circumvent the sin of harlotry.

In either event, Yehudah clearly felt a degree of shame for what transpired between him and Tamar. As we noted, he even attempted to distance himself by sending his friend to pay his due. Whether or not Yehudah's actions can be justified on a legal level, it is clear that from a broader moral standpoint this form of conduct is anathema.

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Note: This series is not intended to dispense practical halachic conclusions. The Torah presented here is but a small extraction from the breadth of the sefer Chavatzelos HaSharon and is not affiliated with the author in any official capacity. Translations are adapted from Sefaria, Chabad.org, Mechon Mamre, and my own. Contact: rabbikurtz@cas-stamford.org

<https://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/parsha/self-defense-2/2022/12/22/>

Self-Defense

By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser - 28 Kislev 5783 – December 22, 2022

R' Kahana said, R' Nosson ben Minyomi expounded in the name of R' Tanchum: If the Chanukah Menorah is placed higher than twenty cubits it is disqualified, as are a Sukkah and the cross-beam over the entrance of an alley. R' Kahana also said, R' Nosson ben Minyomi expounded in R' Tanchum's name: Why is it written [Bereishis 37:24] 'And the pit was empty, there was no water in it?' From 'and the pit was empty', do I not know that there was no water in it; what then is taught by, 'there was no water in it'? There was no water, yet there were snakes and scorpions in it.

The Sifri wonders what the connection between these two statements is. The Pnei HaMenorah offers an interesting insight. According to the Shulchan Aruch, the menorah should be placed outside, in the doorway to the public thoroughfare in order to publicize the miracle of Chanukah. The Rama writes that in our days everyone lights their menorah indoors, and later-day commentaries explain that the primary promulgation of the Chanukah miracle is for the people inside the house. The Gemara's juxtaposition of the two maxims can be explained on a deeper level as the various references incorporate the ideal of the mitzvah of Ner Chanukah.

The Sukkah represents a sanctuary of divine influence, of inner kedusha and light, with the special guests (ushpizin) who grace its premises. The cross-beam across the top of the alleyway indicates the line of demarcation between the reshus hayachid and the reshus harabim.

The pit that is empty of water refers to a home without Torah, which is compared to water. If a home lacks Torah the void will inevitably be filled with harmful influences and the force of the yetzer hara, e.g. snakes and scorpions.

It could be understood that in the earlier years it was not necessary to tout the miracle of Chanukah within the home.

Steeped in Jewish law and tradition, the members of the household were imbued with Torah and Yiras Shamayim. The home was a fortress of faith, like the Sukkah itself. It was, in fact, the masses outside who needed the inspiration of Chanukah.

Our times, however, are different. The home needs protection and light, inspiration and chizuk, to maintain the standards of Torah. The allusion to the cross-beam establishes a spiritual boundary. It establishes the perimeters that will ensure the retention of our true Jewish identity and separate us from assimilation and the harmful influences that abound in the public domain, in the street. The candles of Chanukah guard the house, and illuminate it from within with the light of Torah and kedusha to avert a spiritual void.

The Gemara also tells us (ibid.) that the mitzvah of Chanukah lighting is "one light for a man and his household." Our chachamim tell us that this teaches us that, unlike other mitzvos for the home which can be performed by one household member himself – e.g., the mitzvah of mezuzah or ma'akeh (a guardrail for the roof of the house) – the mitzvah of Ner Chanukah must have the participation and presence of all the members of the household. The Tzemach Dovid suggests that this is because of the special import of this mitzvah. The light of the Chanukah Menorah is symbolic of the flame of Yiddishkeit and alludes to the significance of ensuring that the innate radiant spark of Yiddishkeit is brightly illuminated. Such an undertaking cannot be achieved by proxy; each household member must personally be engaged in the mitzvah.

We pray that the energy and potency of the menorah and its light will protect our homes and inspire us to a higher level of Torah and holiness.

During the Second World War, the Brisker Rav escaped to Kovno, where he sat in his house and learned. R' Kalmanowitz, who was the rav of the city, heard of his arrival and immediately went to welcome him.

When he knocked on the door, the Rav called out, "Who is it?" Rav Kalmanowitz responded, "It is the rav of the city, Rav Kalmanowitz."

The Brisker Rav called out that someone should open the door, but it took a very long time because the Brisker Rav had barricaded the door with heavy sacks of grain.

Understanding that they feared war, R' Kalmanowitz asked, "What is the explanation of this? There is no war in this city!" The Brisker Rav contended that there was, in fact, an explicit halacha that obligates a person to seal the door even when there is no war. R' Kalmanowitz replied that he did not recall such a halacha and asked where the halacha was found.

The Brisker Rav showed him the Rambam (Hilchos Dei'os 6:1) which states that if one lives in a place where the inhabitants are evil, he should move to a place where the people are righteous and follow the ways of good. If in all the places with

which he is familiar or hears of, the people follow improper paths, or if he is unable to move to a place where the behavior is proper, for whatever reasons, he should remain alone in seclusion. If they are wicked and sinful and do not allow him to reside there unless he mingles with them and follows their bad behavior, he should go out to caves and deserts rather than follow their path.

The Brisker Rav explained: “Here in this city, there are maskilim, there are those who deny Hashem, people with terrible middos who do evil deeds. We need to go to the midbar (desert). But this is a time of war, and we can’t go to the midbar. I am making my house my midbar and therefore it’s difficult to get into the house. It takes one half hour of work to remove the sacks blocking the door because outside there is danger. The children know that we have no connection to that outside world. We are not connected to anything – not their deeds, not their entertainment, not their education. We have nothing to do with their city.”

Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, a prominent rav and Torah personality, is a daily radio commentator who has authored over a dozen books, and a renowned speaker recognized for his exceptional ability to captivate and inspire audiences worldwide.

<https://vinnews.com/2022/12/20/a-lost-midrash-and-the-prequel-to-chanukah/>

Lost Midrash and the Prequel to Chanukah

December 20, 2022

By Rabbi Yair Hoffman for 5tjt.com –

If we delve into the prehistory of Chanukah, we learn all sorts of interesting new information. When we combine this information with Midrashim – it enhances our understanding even more. Finally, when we unearth lost midrashim and combine it all together – the information can be downright fascinating.

LOST MIDRASHIM

It is a sad fact that over 90% of our Midrashim have been lost. This is due primarily to the seizure of manuscripts and seforim by the Catholic Church in Europe. How do we know that this is the percentage that was lost? The answer is that it can be culled from a statistical analysis of the sheer numbers of Midrashim quoted in the Drashos of the Rishonim that are simply not there. Nine out of ten times that a Rishon cites a Midrash – it is not to be found.

Below we find a Midrash cited by the Bach that can only be found in Eisenstadt’s Otzar HaMidrashim (p. 93). Boruch Hashem, this one was not lost entirely, but others, unfortunately were.

The Bach writes (Orech Chaim 670:4):

“That evil one [Antiochus] decreed to abolish the Korban Tamid and he further said to them: They have one particular

practice in their hands – if you abolish it from their hands, then they will already be lost. Which practice is it? The lighting of the Menorah – as it states, “l’haalos bah ner tamid – to light in it a constant lamp – there is a drasha the entire time that they will light it, they shall be constant – they shall always endure. They then went and made impure all of the oils. When Klal Yisroel returned and did Teshuvah, risking their lives for the Avodah – then Hashem saved them. This happened through the Kohanim – those that served Hashem. And then a miracle happened also with the lamps.”

HIS BROTHER BEFORE HIM

This author would like to suggest that the Midrash fits quite nicely into some of the historical background of Chanukah. Antiochus’s brother was the Seleucid/Greek ruler who had reigned before him. His name was Seleucus the IV – Philopater.

It seems that Seleucus the IV, actually had much respect for the Beis HaMikdash. He gave gifts to the Beis HaMikdash and initially allowed an exemption of his tax revenue – any Korban brought to the Beis HaMikdash. The sources indicate that it was not just him who esteemed and gave gifts to the Beis HaMikdash – his predecessors did as well.

Eventually, Seleucus IV fell under extraordinary pressure. He had lost a war with Rome and had to pay them war debt. He sent his minister Heliodorus to the Beis HaMikdash to collect money out of its treasury. In the years before the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes IV – the villain of Chanukah, Heliodorus succeeded in getting that money out of the Beis HaMikdash treasury. When he returned from Yerushalayim back to Seleucus IV – Heliodorus assassinated his king!

Heliodorus then took the throne for himself. Seleucus’ son should have been the true heir, but he was being held back as a hostage in Rome. Eventually, Seleucus’s brother, Antiochus Epiphanes, pushed out Heliodorus and took over the Seleucid Greek Empire himself. He implemented the Hellenization process ever further.

By the way, Antiochus’ original name was Mithridites. He ruled from 175 BCE to 164 BCE – a total of eleven years.

THEY HAD RESPECT

The point is that, initially, his family had some respect for the traditions of the Jewish people – to the point where they themselves gifted items to the Beis HaMikdash and exempted the Korbanos from taxes. The Midrash that tells us how Antiochus was aware of the efficacy of the Korban Tamid as well as the lighting of the Menorah – now further sheds light on the historical context behind the pre-history of Chanukah. We can also see why he may have been especially concerned with Rosh Chodesh, Bris Milah and Shabbos.

The war itself encompassed many miracles of the nature of gibborim b’yad chalashim. When we recite the Al HaNissim let us keep this in mind.

THE SEVEN BATTLES

The Chashmonayim first embarked upon a series of guerilla warfare attacks on the Greeks. They then embarked upon a series of seven battles. These battles were: the Battle of Wadi Haramia (167 BCE) the Battle of Beth Horon (166 BCE) the Battle of Emmaus (166 BCE) the Battle of Beth Zur (164 BCE) the Battle of Beth Zechariah (162 BCE) the Battle of Adasa (161 BCE) the Battle of Elasa (160 BCE). In the Battle of Adasa, General Nicanor was defeated and killed. This day, the 13th of Adar, was declared a special day by Yehudah Maccabee (See Megilas Taanis). Later it was rescinded after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. The author can be reached at yairhoffman2@gmail.com

from: **Rabbi Berel Wein** <genesis@torah.org> to: rabbiwein@torah.org date: Dec 22, 2022, 11:12 AM subject: Rabbi Wein - According to His Plan

MIKETZ The entire narrative of the story of Joseph and his brothers, as he sent off the Jewish people to Egyptian society, slavery and ultimate redemption, is meant to illustrate to us the guiding hand of Providence in human affairs. There is no question that all of the participants in this dramatic narrative acted according to their own wishes and wisdom. Yet the confluence of all of these conflicting personalities and ambitions leads to the desired end of the fulfillment of the prophecy and promise of God to Abraham about the future fate of the Jewish people. This principle, that man proposes but God disposes is one of the basic beliefs of Judaism and is vindicated, for good or for better, throughout the history of the Jewish people and humankind generally. All of the twists and turns of daily and national life, the seemingly random and inexplicable events that assault us on a regular basis, somehow have a purpose and a goal. They help us arrive at the situation and circumstance that God's destiny has provided for us. The difficulty in all of this is that very rarely is this pattern revealed or are we aware of it. The Lord told Moses that 'you will see my back, not my face.' We see things much more clearly in retrospect than in the ability to judge present events and somehow predict the future. All of the dreams of Joseph will be fulfilled but no one could have imagined at the onset of the story how they could have been fulfilled and under what circumstances, of both tragedy and triumph, they would come to be the reality of the narrative of the story of Joseph and his brothers. Of all of the brothers, Joseph seems to be the one that is most aware that he and they are merely instruments in God's plan. The rabbis teach us that Joseph was distinguished by the fact that the name of God never left his lips and that he always attributed events to divine providence and God's will. That is why Joseph is seen as the main antagonist to Eisav, for Eisav always attributed events to random chance and to human action and power. We will see later that this was also the main

contest between Pharaoh and Moshe. Pharaoh continually maintained that the troubles of the Egyptians were coincidence and that all of the blows that he sustained were due to circumstance and nature. Even when his wise men stated that the finger of God was pointing at him, he refused to admit that it was the divine presence that was driving Egypt to destruction.

We also live in a world where many see the events that surround us as being mere happenstance, random events engendered by human beings. However, Judaism knows better and teaches better and we are therefore confident that all of the processes ordained for us millennia ago will yet be completely fulfilled. There is a divine hand that guides the affairs of mankind. Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

From: **Ohr Somayach** <ohr@ohr.edu> Date: Thu, Dec 22, 2022, 12:40 PM Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Miketz Parshat Miketz by **Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair** - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

PARSHA OVERVIEW It is two years later. Pharaoh has a dream. He is unsatisfied with all attempts to interpret it. Pharaoh's wine chamberlain remembers that Yosef accurately interpreted his dream while in prison. Yosef is released from prison and brought before Pharaoh. He interprets that soon will begin seven years of abundance, followed by seven years of severe famine. He tells Pharaoh to appoint a wise person to store grain in preparation for the famine. Pharaoh appoints him as viceroy to oversee the project. Pharaoh gives Yosef an Egyptian name, Tsafnat Panayach, and selects Osnat, Yosef's ex-master's daughter, as Yosef's wife. Egypt becomes the granary of the world. Yosef has two sons, Menashe and Ephraim. Yaakov sends his sons to Egypt to buy food. The brothers come before Yosef and bow to him. Yosef recognizes them but they do not recognize him. Mindful of his dreams, Yosef plays the part of an Egyptian overlord and acts harshly, accusing them of being spies. Yosef sells them food, but keeps Shimon hostage until they bring their brother Binyamin to him as proof of their honesty. Yosef commands his servants to replace the purchase-money in their sacks. On the return journey they discover the money, and their hearts sink. They return to Yaakov and retell everything. Yaakov refuses to let Binyamin go to Egypt, but when the famine grows unbearable he accedes. Yehuda guarantees Binyamin's safety and the brothers go to Egypt. Yosef welcomes the brothers lavishly as honored guests. When he sees Binyamin, he rushes from the room and weeps. Yosef instructs his servants to replace the money in the sacks and to put his goblet inside Binyamin's sack. When the goblet is discovered, Yosef demands Binyamin to be his slave as punishment. Yehuda interposes and offers himself instead, but Yosef refuses.

PARSHA INSIGHTS

In The Heart Of The Child

“So Pharaoh sent and summoned Yosef, and they rushed him from the dungeon...” (41:14)

Little children usually find it very difficult to do things by themselves. They need a constant helping hand, constant encouragement. They can be bold, but only when a parent is close by. When out of sight, tears quickly replace bravado until once again they feel the hand that comforts.

As babies, our first faltering steps are greeted by parental glee. Hands reach out to guide our every step. When we stumble, Mom and Dad are always there to stop us from falling.

There comes a day, however, when we stumble, but we find no helping hand. We fall to the ground. Tears fill our eyes and dismay fills our hearts. We look around in amazement. "Where are you? Mommy? Daddy? Are you still there?"

Only from the moment our parents let us fall can we learn to walk by ourselves. Only from the moment that our parents are prepared to let us become adults can we stop being children. If, as parents, we never give our children the possibility of falling down, they will never learn to stand by themselves. Of course, to everything there is a season. Everything has to be in its time. If a child is challenged beyond his capabilities, he may assume that he will never be able to achieve what is being asked of him, and suffer from this negative programming for life.

A challenge in its correct time is always an opportunity to grow, an opportunity to get to know who we really are.

The festival of Chanukah celebrates two events: The defeat of the vast Seleucid Greek army by a handful of Jews, and the miracle of the one flask of pure oil which burned for eight days in the Menorah. If you think about it, our joy at Chanukah should center on the deliverance from our enemies. However, our main focus seems to be the miracle of the lights. Why should this be so?

Chanukah took place after the last of the Prophets - Chagai, Zecharia and Malachi - had passed from this world. After they passed, Hashem no longer communicated directly with humans. Suddenly, we were like children left alone in the dark. The Parental Hand had gone. With prophecy taken from the world, we would need to grow by ourselves, to become like adults. No longer could we depend on Hashem to reach down to us. Now, we would need to stretch our arms upward to Him. We had been given a chance to grow. To find out who we were. In the darkness of a world without prophecy, we would need to forge our connection with Hashem in the furnace of our own hearts. But it is difficult. Sometimes we feel "Mommy, Daddy...where are you? Are you still there?" The heart grows a little cold with longing. Sometimes we need a little extra help.

The joy of Chanukah is not so much because we got what we prayed for, that we were delivered from the Greeks, but the fact that G-d let us know that He was still there. He answered our prayers with a miracle. In a world where spiritual decay had tainted the holiest places, a light burst forth in the center of the

world to tell us that He was still there. A light that told us that darkness had not extinguished the light. It was only hiding it. Hashem communicated with us through the darkness of a world without prophecy. He let us know that He was still with us even in the dark. Even though the channel of prophecy had fallen silent, our Father was still there, watching over us.

That little flask of oil would burn and burn. It would burn not just for eight days. It would burn for thousands of years. We would take those lights with us into the long, long night of exile, and we would know by the very fact of our survival against all odds that He was with us even in the darkest of nights. He was always there. He has always been there. Sometimes it seems that the darkness cannot get any darker. More Jews observe Chanukah than any other Jewish festival. Those lights did not burn for just eight days. Those little lights have been burning for more than two thousand years. However far someone may be from their Jewish roots, you can still find a Menorah burning in the window. A little spark that lingers on. A holy spark hidden in the heart of a child.

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From: **Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky** <rmk@torah.org>
Date: Wed, Dec 21, 2022 at 3:49 PM Subject: Drasha - Mercy Filling To: <drasha@torah.org>

Parshas Miketz Mercy Filling

Parshas Miketz details the continuing saga of Yoseph and his brothers. Yoseph's brothers, forced by the famine that gripped the land of Canaan, travelled to the only country that had food – Egypt. They were placed in front of Yoseph, the Viceroy of Egypt, and he recognized them. They however, did not realize that the Egyptian Viceroy was the brother they had sold some twenty-two years earlier. Yoseph immediately accused them of being spies and when they communicated their familial history to him mentioning that they had left a younger brother behind, Yoseph seized the opportunity. In order to prove their truthfulness, he ordered one of the brothers to be held hostage until the rest of the brothers would return with Binyamin, the youngest sibling.

When the brothers returned home, Yaakov chided them for revealing the whereabouts of Rachel's lone surviving son; he was reluctant to allow them to bring Binyamin to Egypt citing his fears for his son's safety.

But the brothers convinced Yaakov that there was no other option and finally he sent them off with the following blessing: "If it must be so, then do this – Take of the land's glory in your baggage and bring it down to the man as a tribute — a bit of balsam, a bit of honey, wax, lotus, pistachios, and almonds.... Take your brother, and arise, return to the man. And may Almighty G-d give to you mercy in front of the man that he may release to you your other brother as well as Binyamin. And

as for me, as I have been bereaved, so I am bereaved.” (Genesis 43:11-14).

The expression, “may Almighty G-d give to you mercy in front of the man” seems strange. Why did Yaakov pray the the Almighty give the brother’s mercy? Shouldn’t Yaakov have prayed that Hashem give Yoseph the attribute of mercy, saying, “may G-d let the man have mercy upon you.” Why is Yaakov asking Hashem to bestow the brothers with mercy instead asking the Almighty to bestow the attribute of mercy upon the antagonistic Viceroy whom they would soon face?

Rav Yoseph Chaim Sonnenfeld would tell the story of the Rav of Shadik, Poland. He was newly appointed when he was warned of a particular Jew who was known as a government informer, who would strong-arm the previous Rabbi and community leaders into giving him high honors in the synagogue and into allowing him to lead the rituals.

The new Rav would stand for none of this. When the man was called for the sixth aliyah the first Shabbos, he began making his way from his seat on the eastern wall of the synagogue to the bimah, when suddenly the new Rabbi began to shout. “Where do you think you are going? You are known as an informant to the government which is of the worst crimes a Jew can commit. How dare you show your face in the synagogue, let alone take a place for an aliyah? Get out of the shul! The man froze in horror. Then, before storming out of the synagogue, he shook his fist at the Rabbi while muttering, “I will teach you all a lesson.”

A few months later, the Rav who was also a mohel, was on his way to perform a bris. He was a mile or so outside the city when suddenly a wagon containing the informer overtook his own coach. The informer jumped to the footrest of the wagon, and while the Rabbi’s two students recoiled in fear, the man threw himself in front of the Rabbi and began to beg for forgiveness from the entire community.

The Rabbi explained, “Shlomo Hamelech tells us, ‘Like a reflection in the water so is the face of man to man’” (Proverbs 27:19). From the moment after I admonished this fellow, all I did was try to find out about his good qualities. Then I concentrated my hardest on creating a deep love for this Jew and that love exuded from my soul. When the alleged informer saw me today, he experienced that love that I had for him and he reciprocated. As he felt the same way about me as I did for him. He understood his terrible misdeeds of his past life and repented with a sincere heart. It is only through that love that he repented and we became endeared to each other.

Rabbi Avraham Chaim of Zlatchov explains: Yaakov explained to his children that in order for the Viceroy to have mercy upon them, they must approach him with mercy as well. Thus he says, “may Almighty G-d give to you mercy in front of the man.” Sometimes it is we who must fill our hearts with love in order to get that same love and mercy back in return.

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Tomorrow

by South Africa Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein

A name reveals so much, especially the name of a festival. It captures the essence of the message of the holy days. We're celebrating Hanukkah, and so it is worthwhile to embark on a journey of discovery into understanding the name of this festival. What does 'Hanukkah' actually mean? Why was this name chosen to capture the essence of these holy days?

Perhaps, if we understand the origins of the word itself, we can begin to understand the essence of these holy days.

One of our great sages, known as the Maharsha, says the word Hanukkah comes from the Hebrew word which means to dedicate, and refers to the dedication of the new altar, which was built after the Maccabees recaptured the Temple. The story of Hanukkah is set during the time of the mighty Greek empire, which had invaded the land of Israel and imposed not just political dominion over the Jewish people, but cultural and ideological hegemony too. In seeking to impose Hellenistic values and philosophy, and supplant Torah values and a Jewish way of life, the Greeks outlawed the performance of many crucial mitzvot, including Shabbos and circumcision - in an attempt to subvert the entire Jewish value system. Their campaign is captured in the siddur, in a special paragraph we say during Hanukkah: "The Greek kingdom rose up against Your people Israel to make them forget Your Torah and to remove them from the statutes of Your will."

The epicentre of this ideological battle was the Beit HaMikdash - the Holy Temple. Unlike the Romans, who came after the Greeks, and who actually burnt the Temple to the ground, the Greeks were more intent on transforming the Temple and redirecting it towards their own pagan, polytheistic rites and rituals. They brought idols into its sacred precinct and used the Temple and its facilities for their pagan worship.

And so when the Jewish people, led by the heroic Maccabees, were able to defeat the Greek empire and restore freedom to the land of Israel, through the miracles of God, one of the first things they did was to purify the Temple - as we say in our prayers: "And afterwards Your children came to the Holy of Holies of Your House, cleansed Your Temple and purified Your sanctuary and kindled lights in the courtyards of Your

Holy Place, and established these eight days of Hanukkah to express thanks and praise to Your Great Name."

The battle itself was miraculous - an ad hoc collection of a small group of amateur soldiers, militarily defeating the mighty Greek empire. But the defining miracle of Hanukkah is the oil that burned for eight days. When the victorious Maccabees re-entered the temple, they could only find one small jug of oil that had remained sealed up and uncontaminated, and therefore fit to be used for the menorah in the Temple. And although it only contained enough oil to sustain the menorah for one day, it miraculously lasted for eight days, by which time further oil could be procured.

This action of lighting the menorah and dedicating the newly constructed altar served not just to return the Temple to its sacred service - it also symbolised a complete spiritual rededication of Jewish society at large. And so Hanukkah represents rededication after the destruction and a recommitment after a period of spiritual darkness.

This applies no less to today's times. Today, when we celebrate Hanukkah and kindle the lights of our menorah, we are in effect rededicating ourselves to spirituality and living Godly lives. We see this contemporary relevance in the actual words we say at this time; we thank God for the miracles of Hanukkah, "in those days and in this time".

What an interesting phrase, "in those days and in this time".

The Ramchal explains that Jewish time is not linear, but cyclical; that every year, when, for example, Pesach comes around, it's not that we are remembering an event that happened in the distant past, but rather we cycle back to re-experience the same spiritual energy, the same primordial energy of freedom that was unleashed in the world at the time of the original Pesach.

And so too with Hanukkah. The Divine light and energy of renewal and rededication, which led to the miraculous events of Hanukkah, returns to the world every year at this time - hence, "in those days and in this time."

Hanukkah has been a beacon of light for the Jewish people throughout the generations. In one historic era after another, we have drawn on its light to rededicate and renew ourselves, to rise up from imposing physical and spiritual challenges and infuse ourselves with renewed inspiration and strength. The remarkable thing about Jewish history is, simply put, that we are still here. We have stood the test of time. No other nation has survived under such difficult circumstances; no other nation has endured such dispersion, with its value system and its identity and its vision for the future intact. The energy of rededication and renewal has powered the Jewish people through history.

And the light and energy of Hanukkah is there for us to draw on in our personal lives. Each one of us goes through times when we start to lose our way, when we feel flat and

uninspired, and disconnected from the light of Torah.

Contained in Hanukkah is the power to bounce back, to refresh and reinvigorate ourselves, and our connection to God and His Torah.

The power to "bounce back" is embodied by God Himself. One of the 613 commandments is to "walk in the ways of God". The Talmud explains that one's purpose in life is to emulate God, specifically in terms of His compassion and kindness. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik expands this definition to include the mitzvah of Creation itself. Just as God created the world, we are also called on to create the world with flourishing families and societies. Rav Soloveitchik refers to a Midrash, which says that before this world was created, there were many other worlds that God created and subsequently destroyed.

Rav Soloveitchik explains that from this Midrash we learn that there is not only a mitzvah to create, but also a mitzvah to recreate after a period of destruction. We "walk in the way of God" and rebuild after setbacks and stumbles. We do so on a personal level and we do so on a national level, drawing on the spirit of Hanukkah. As human beings, we are susceptible to mistakes. But we have the ability to bounce back - to rededicate ourselves to our task, redouble our efforts, renew our lives. This is the message of Hanukkah. It is this spirit of renewal and rededication that has animated so much of Jewish history.

We have seen this particularly in the years since the Holocaust, as the Jewish world, with God's blessings, has renewed and rebuilt itself. There was the miraculous creation of the State of Israel three years after the Holocaust ended, and then the equally miraculous rebuilding of the great citadels of Torah learning - the yeshivot - after they were all but blotted out. Together, these have led to a rebirth of Jewish life. This is the spirit and the energy of Hanukkah made manifest on a national level, and it is the spirit and energy of Hanukkah that we can apply on a personal level as well - the spirit to renew, to rebuild, to recreate, to start again - just as our ancestors did when they re-entered the Temple, rebuilt the altar, and rekindled the flame of Judaism. "In those days and in this time."

It happened then and it can happen now.