



BS"D

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYEISHEV & CHANUKAH - 5784

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From: **Ira Zlotowitz** <Iraz@klalgovoah.org> date: Dec 7, 2023, 7:00 PM subject: **Tidbits for Vayeishev - Shabbos Chanukah - In memory of Rav Meir Zlotowitz ZTL** Chanuka

On Erev Shabbos Chanukah, many daven Minchah early in order for Minchah to precede the lighting of the Menorah (to avoid the appearance of a tartei d'sasrei - an inherent contradiction - of lighting Shabbos' Menorah lights and then davening Friday's Minchah). Menorah lighting may not occur before plag hamincha (approximately 1 hour before shekiah), and should be performed just before lighting Shabbos candles. The Menorah should contain enough oil to burn until a half hour after tzeis hakoachavim (approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes after Candle Lighting; note that many shorter 'colored candles' do not meet this criterion).

Throughout Chanukah, Al HaNissim is added in Bircas Hamazon and Shemoneh Esrei. On Shabbos Chanukah, the complete Hallel is followed by two Sifrei Torah being taken out. Seven Aliyos are leined from the weekly Parasha (Vayeishev). Maftir of Chanukah is leined from the second Sefer Torah. The haftarah of Chanukah follows. Av Harachamim is omitted. (Some add Psalm 30 for Chanukah at the end of davening). Tzidkas'cha is omitted at Minchah.

On Motzaei Shabbos, one should return home without delay and light as soon as possible. The minhag varies as to whether Havdalah is followed by Menorah lighting, or Menorah lighting is followed by Havdalah. If one is away for Shabbos Chanukah, it may be preferable to light Menorah at his host on Motzaei Shabbos before departing, especially if one will be returning home late. Consult your Rav.

This week is Shabbos Mevorchim Chodesh Teves. Rosh Chodesh is on Wednesday, December 13th. The molad is Tuesday night at 8:01 pm and 3 chalakim.

On Wednesday, December 13th, Chanukah coincides with Rosh Chodesh, and the full Hallel is recited. Kerias Hatorah includes two Sifrei Torah; the kariah of Rosh Chodesh is leined from the first Sefer in three aliyos (the first two aliyos of the usual four are leined together), followed by one aliyah for Chanukah from the second Sefer. Mussaf of Rosh Chodesh follows. Davening ends with Borchy Nafshi after the Yom (some add Psalm 30 as well).

There is a praiseworthy minhag of giving gifts to our children's melamdin (R' C. Palaggi zt"l). This sets an example of hakaras hatov for your child and displays the importance of chinuch. A gift accompanied with warm words of thanks is a tremendous source of chizuk for our Rebbeim and teachers.

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levanah is Motzaei Shabbos Parashas Miketz, December 16th. The final opportunity in the USA is Tuesday, December 26th.

Daf Yomi - Friday: Bavli: Bava Kamma 36 • Yerushalmi: Shevi'is 62 • Mishnah Yomis: Yevamos 13:2-3 • Oraysa: Next week is Yoma 39a-41a.

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 connect with them as well! Summary - VAYEISHEV: Yosef is the favorite son • Yosef's dreams • The brothers plan to kill Yosef • Reuven persuades them to put him instead in a pit • While Reuven is away, Yosef is sold to Egypt-descending merchants • Yehuda and Tamar • Tamar bears Yehuda twins, Peretz and Zerach • Yosef is sold to Potiphar and rises to become his trusted advisor • Potiphar's wife tempts Yosef • Yosef is wrongfully accused and imprisoned • Yosef is given responsibilities in the prison • Yosef correctly interprets the dreams of the wine steward and the baker • Yosef remains in prison.

The second Sefer Torah is opened for the kariah of Chanukah which corresponds to the Korbanos Ha'nesiim and corresponding day of the Chanukas Hamizbeiach.

Haftarah: The haftarah of Chanukah (Zecharia 2:14-4:7) is leined. The haftarah discusses the Chanukas HaMenorah during the Second Beis Hamikdash.

For the Parsha Table

מִסְרַת גְּבוּרִים בְּיַד חֲלָשִׁים וְרַבִּים בְּיַד מְעֻשִׂים וְטַמְאִים בְּיַד טְהוֹרִים "You placed the mighty in the hands of the weak, the many in the

hand of the few, the impure in the hands of the pure” (Al HaNissim - Chanukah)

While we understand that generally the more powerful army and the larger numbers of fighters would generally win the battle. However, righteousness and purity are not necessarily a weakness in battle. Why then do we recount “וְטָמְאִים בִּידָּהּ” וְטָהוֹרִים, which indicates that the pure defeating the impure is miraculous in nature?

Rav Yitzchak Feigelstock zt”l explains that aside from being far outnumbered by the nations of the world, Klal Yisrael faces another seemingly insurmountable problem in that essentially the art of war belongs to the nations of Esav and is their specialty (see Rashi Bereishis 49:5). When Klal Yisrael engaged in war, such as by Yehoshua at the City of Ay, they were eventually victorious only through miraculous means that only came about when the battle was fought according to the dictates of Hashem and with complete emunah and bitachon. When we engage in mere natural methods, Am Yisrael does not have the means to succeed. It is only when the battle is put forth with the proper spiritual structure that we can conquer our enemies. Therefore, we thank Hashem for enabling our victories by giving us the spiritual means and ability to supernaturally conquer our enemies.

from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org> to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Dec 6, 2023, 8:52 AM subject: Rav Frand - What Was Yehudah Thinking? What Was Tamar Thinking?

Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Vayeishev

What Was Yehudah Thinking? What Was Tamar Thinking?

For a variety of reasons, Parshas Vayeshev is a difficult parsha to understand. One of the more difficult parts of the parsha is the story of Yehuda and Tamar. Tamar married two of Yehudah’s sons and they both died. There was a form of yibum (levirate marriage) in those days, and Yehudah was saving his third son for subsequent marriage to Tamar, but was hesitant to allow that marriage to go forth. At any rate Tamar appears at the crossroads as a zonah (prostitute) and Yehudah, without realizing that it was his daughter-in-law, hires her services. Yehudah has relations with this woman who he thought was a zonah, and she becomes pregnant from him. When Yehudah learns that his daughter-in-law is pregnant, he assumes she had been unfaithful to his third son and ordered her to be put to death. Tamar proves to Yehudah that she was pregnant from him, and he responds, “She is more righteous than I.” (Bereshis 38:26) The Medrash asks, how is it that Yehudah, patriarch of one of the Twelve Tribes of G-d, could do such a thing? What prompted him to have relations with a zonah that he happens to see at the crossroads? The Medrash answers that the Ribono shel Olam sent Yehudah “Malach ha’me’muneh al ha’tayvah” (an Angel appointed over the attribute of human sexual desire). In effect, Yehudah was

almost forced into this unseemly act. He didn’t want to do it, but somehow a spiritual entity “forced him” to do it. The reason this malach was given such a mission was that it was part of the Divine Plan that the Davidic monarchy, and ultimately the Moshiach himself, would descend from this union. So this Medrash explains Yehudah’s action. It was not part of Yehudah’s normal behavior to consort with zonahs. Fine. But what about Tamar? What was Tamar thinking? Did she not realize that her father-in-law Yehudah was a tzadik? How in the world did she expect that she could dress up as a zonah and entice him to have relations with her so that he might father a child through her? I saw an interesting observation in the sefer Avir Yaakov: The observation is that a person needs to do what he needs to do! Somehow, she knew that she needed to bear a child from Yehudah’s family. She saw that Yehudah was not letting her marry Shelah. If the only way for her to conceive from a member of this family was to dress up as a zonah and try to seduce Yehudah into a relationship, that is what she had to try, regardless of how far-fetched an idea this plan was. This is a basic principle in Avodas Hashem (Divine Service). We cannot always pause to ask ourselves “What are the chances of this happening? What are the statistics? Is this going to succeed or is it not going to succeed?” It does not work like that. “Ours is not to reason why, ours is just to do and die” (Alfred Lord Tennyson, “Charge of the Light Brigade”) If every Rosh Yeshiva who came to America in the 1930’s and 1940’s would have thought “How is this going to happen?” then no yeshiva would have ever been built. Ner Yisroel started with four talmidim (students). You do what you need to do, despite the fact that the odds of success may be slim, and you need to hope for the best. That is what Tamar was thinking.

Were You More Handsome Than Yosef? There is a very beautiful and powerful Rambam (Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 5:10) that needs explanation. The Rambam writes: If a person sins, not because he is overcome by lust or passion, but he does it simply out of spite for the laws of the Torah, because “he doesn’t care,” he has made a Chillul HaShem (desecrated the Name of G-d). (In other words, besides punishment for whatever aveira (sin) he committed, he will also be punished for the aveira of Chillul HaShem.) The Torah uses this expression of Chillul Hashem in connection with taking a false oath. Similarly, anyone who abstains from an aveira or does a mitzvah, not for any ulterior motive, neither out of fear nor to seek honor, but simply for the sake of being in compliance with the will of the Creator, blessed be He, has made a Kiddush HaShem (sanctified the Name of G-d). Who does the Rambam marshal as an example of someone who made a Kiddush HaShem by abstaining from aveira, not out of fear or to seek honor, but for the sake of being in compliance with the Divine Will? The Rambam marshals the example of Yosef

abstaining from having relations with his master's wife. A dramatic passage in the Gemara (Yoma 35) states: A poor person, a rich person, and a wicked person each came (to Heaven) to be judged. The poor person is asked: Why did you not occupy yourself with Torah? If he answers "I was poor and I was busy earning my living" they ask him "Were you poorer than Hillel (about whom the Gemara relates his great dedication to learning and studying Torah despite his great poverty)?" The rich person is asked: Why did you not occupy yourself with Torah? If he answers "I was rich and was occupied with my properties" they ask him "Were you richer than Rabbi Elazar ben Charsom (about whom the Gemara relates his great dedication to Torah study despite the great wealth he inherited from his father)?" The wicked person is asked: Why did you not occupy yourself with Torah. If he answers "I was very handsome and was absorbed in my passions" they ask him "Were you more handsome than Yosef?" (The Gemara proceeds to discuss the great efforts Potiphar's wife made to try to seduce Yosef, and Yosef's steadfast refusal to listen to her arguments.) The Gemara concludes that Hillel serves as the "prosecutor" of the poor, Rabbi Elazar ben Charsom serves as the "prosecutor" of the wealthy, and Yosef serves as the "prosecutor" of the wicked. This is what the Rambam alludes to when he cites the righteous Yosef as the paradigm of Kiddush Hashem. There are two problems with this Rambam. Problem #1: The Gemara (Sotah 36b) says that Yosef was actually about to commit an act of adultery with Potiphar's wife until the image of his father, Yaakov, appeared to him in the window, convincing him to back off. Now if we were tempted to do an aveira and we suddenly miraculously saw our father's image in the window, we would also stop. Why then does the Gemara cite Yosef as the paradigm of someone who successfully withstood the temptation of his evil inclination? It is possible that when the Gemara says that "the image of his father appeared to him in the window" the Gemara is alluding to this not being the first time that the image of Yaakov appeared to Yosef. Yosef lived his life by always asking himself "What would my father do in this situation? What would my father say?" Since Yosef lived his life like that on a daily basis, the mention of "his father's image appeared to him in the window" is not talking about a supernatural event. There was no miracle here. Yosef always saw his father peering at him through the window. He always asked himself "What would my father do?" If we lived our lives like that, we would also abstain from giving into sinful temptation. Many times, I told the story of Mr. Harry K. Wolport. The old timers in Baltimore remember him. Harry K. Wolport was a businessman. He was a talmid of Rav Boruch Ber. He learned in Kamenetz and came to the United States of America in the early 1900's. Every one of his Jewish acquaintances felt that they needed to keep their stores open on Shabbos to survive in business. He was tempted to keep his

store open on Shabbos as well. But he said, "I cannot do this to Rav Boruch Ber!" Rav Boruch Ber used to appear to him in the window because Mr. Wolport kept that image in front of him. That is how he was able to withstand the temptation to open his store on Shabbos. When a person lives his life like that on a daily basis, such visages in the window are not supernatural. Problem #2: Why does the Rambam chose the story of Yosef as the paradigm of stopping to do an aveirah "not out of trembling and not out of fear and not for the sake of honor"? Why Yosef? The Chiddushei HaRim says that if after 120 years, we go to Heaven and they ask us "Why didn't you stop sinning like Yosef did?" we have a simple answer to that question: "I am not Yosef". They don't call me "Yissacher haTzadik" (the righteous one). They call me "Yissacher." Yosef is given the attribute "HaTzadik". "What do you want from me? I am not Yosef!" "Why don't you make a siyum every year on the entire body of Torah literature like Rav Chaim Kannievsky?" The answer is obvious: "It is because I am NOT Rav Chaim Kanievsky." Rav Elyashiv used to learn in the Beis Medrash on Erev Pesach. Why don't you do that?" The answer is "It is because I am NOT Rav Elyashiv!" I am not Rav Elyashiv and I am not Rav Chaim Kanievsky and I am not Yosef haTzadik. The Chiddushei HaRim answers: Yes, you are Yosef HaTzadik, because that is what Yosef HaTzadik did for Klal Yisrael. He gave us the spiritual strength to withstand temptation. That is why the Rambam marshals the act of abstention of Yosef haTzadik. Just like Avraham Avinu gave us the spiritual ability to be a martyr for Kiddush HaShem. Rav Chaim of Volozhin explains that all the patriarchs put qualities of self-sacrifice and other spiritual powers into our spiritual DNA. Yosef gave us the ability to say "No." That is one answer to this second problem. I was told that the Brisker Rav also gave an answer to this question of why the Rambam uses the example of "like the act of abstaining by the righteous Yosef." The Brisker Rav says that when Potiphar's wife is trying to seduce Yosef, he gives her a list of reasons why it would be inappropriate for him to do that (Bereshis 39:8-9) "Look – my master concerns himself with nothing in the house, and all that he has, he placed in my custody. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has denied me nothing but you, since you are his wife; how then can I perpetrate this great evil?" Finally, at the end of his list, Yosef adds "And I would be sinning before Elokim." The Brisker Rav said Yosef's final remark is his key argument. Every other argument can be answered with an excuse. "He wasn't such a good boss; he made me work too hard; he wouldn't mind anyway; he is fooling around himself..." All these justifications can be offered. A person can rationalize everything. There is only one thing that cannot be rationalized: "And I would be sinning before Elokim." The Brisker Rav says this is the meaning of this Rambam. When a person is faced with such temptation, he should remember Yosef

haTzadik. Yosef haTzadik overcame his temptation by remembering “And I would be sinning before Elokim.” Any person who keeps that in mind, will not do an aveira.

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from: The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust <info@rabbisacks.org>
subject: Covenant and Conversation Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt”l

Speech Therapy VAYESHEV Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

From Vayeshev to the end of the book of Bereishit we read the story of Joseph and his brothers. From the very beginning we are plunged into a drama of sibling rivalry that seems destined to end in tragedy.

All the elements are there, and it begins with ominous parental favouritism. Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons. The Torah says this was because “he had been born to him in his old age.” But we also know it was because Joseph was the first son of his beloved Rachel, who had been infertile for many years.

Jacob gave this favouritism a visible symbol, the richly ornamented robe or coat of many colours that he commissioned for him. The mere sight of this coat served as constant provocation to the brothers. In addition there were the bad reports Joseph brought to his father about his half-brothers, the children of the handmaids. And by the fourth verse of the parsha we read the following:

When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him, velo yachlu dabro le-shalom. Gen. 37:4 What is the meaning of this last phrase? Here are some of the standard translations:

They could not speak a kind word to him. They could not speak peacefully to him. They could not speak to him on friendly terms.

Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschutz, however, recognised that the Hebrew construction is strange. Literally it means, “they could not speak him to peace.” What might this mean? Rabbi Eybeschutz refers us to the command in Vayikra 19:17:

You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely reprimand your neighbour and not bear sin because of him.

Lev. 19:17 This is how Maimonides interprets this command as it relates to interpersonal relations:

When a person sins against another, the injured party should not hate the offender and keep silent . . . it is his duty to inform the offender and say to him, why did you do this to me? Why did you sin against me in this matter? . . . If the offender repents and pleads for forgiveness, he should be forgiven.

Hilchot Deot 6:6 Rabbi Eybeschutz’s point is simple. Had the brothers been able to speak to Joseph they might have told him of their anger at his talebearing, and of their distress at seeing

the many-coloured coat. They might have spoken frankly about their sense of humiliation at the way their father favoured Rachel over their mother Leah, a favouritism that was now being carried through into a second generation. Joseph might have come to understand their feelings. It might have made him more modest or at least more thoughtful. But lo yachlu dabro le-shalom. They simply couldn’t bring themselves to speak. As Nachmanides writes, on the command: You shall not hate your brother in your heart: “Those who hate tend to hide their hate in their heart.”

We have here an instance of one of the Torah’s great insights, that conversation is a form of conflict resolution, whereas the breakdown of speech is often a prelude to violent revenge.

The classic case is that of Absalom and Amnon, two half-brothers who were sons of king David. In a shocking episode, Amnon rapes Absalom’s sister Tamar:

Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornate tunic that she wore; she put her hand to her head and went off, weeping as she went.

And Absalom, her brother, said to her, “Has your brother Amnon been with you? For now, my sister, be silent; he is your brother. Do not take this affair to heart.”

And Tamar remained, forlorn, in the house of her brother Absalom. When King David heard all about this affair, he was absolutely livid. And Absalom would not speak a word to Amnon, neither good nor bad, for Absalom despised Amnon for having violated Tamar, his sister.

2 Samuel 13:19-22 Absalom maintained his silence for two years. Then he invited all of David’s sons for a feast at the time of sheep-shearing, and ordered his servants to wait until Amnon was drunk and then kill him, which they did.

Hate grows in silence. It did with Absalom. It did with Joseph’s brothers. Before the chapter ends, we see them plot to kill Joseph, then throw him into a pit, and then sell him into slavery. It is a terrible story and led directly to the Israelites’ exile and slavery in Egypt.

The Talmud (Brachot 26b) uses the phrase, ein sichah ela tefillah, which literally means, “Conversation is a form of prayer,” because in opening ourselves up to the human other, we prepare ourselves for the act of opening ourselves up with the Divine Other, which is what prayer is: a conversation with God.

Conversation does not, in and of itself, resolve conflict. Two people who are open with one another may still have clashing desires or competing claims. They may simply not like one another. There is no law of predetermined harmony in the human domain. But conversation means that we recognise one another’s humanity. At its best it allows us to engage in role reversal, seeing the world from the other’s point of view. Think of how many real and intractable conflicts, whether in the personal or political domain, might be transformed if we could do that.

In the end Joseph and his brothers had to live through real trauma before they were able to recognise one another's humanity, and much of the rest of their story – the longest single narrative in the Torah – is about just that.

Judaism is about the God who cannot be seen, who can only be heard; about the God who created the universe with words and whose first act of kindness to the first human being was to teach him how to use words. Jews, even highly secular Jews, have often been preoccupied with language. Wittgenstein understood that philosophy is about language.

Levi Strauss saw cultures as forms of language. Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker pioneered study of the language instinct. George Steiner has written about translation and the limits of language.

The Sages were eloquent in speaking about the dangers of lashon hara, "evil speech," the power of language to fracture relationships and destroy trust and goodwill. But there is evil silence as well as evil speech. It is no accident that at the very beginning of the most fateful tale of sibling rivalry in Bereishit, the role – specifically the failure – of language is alluded to, in a way missed by virtually all translations.

Joseph's brothers might have "spoken him to peace" had they been open, candid and willing to communicate. Speech broke down at the very point where it was needed most.

Words create; words reveal; words command; words redeem. Judaism is a religion of holy words. For words are the narrow bridge across the abyss between soul and soul, between two human beings, and between humanity and God.

Language is the redemption of solitude, and the mender of broken relationships. However painful it is to speak about our hurt, it is more dangerous not to do so. Joseph and his brothers might have been reconciled early on in their lives, and thus spared themselves, their father, and their descendants, much grief. Revealing pain is the first step to healing pain.

Speech is a path to peace.

**Vayeshev & Chanuka –
A Midrashic Connection**
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This is from a speech I gave at an even on Chanuka 29th of Kislev, 5741 based on a vort of my grandfather Rav Michel Kossowsky ZTL (in the sefer תועפות הרים).

In Shir Hashirim, we find the passage: הדודאים נתנו ריח "The Mandrakes gave forth fragrance, ועל פתחיו כל מגדים" And at our door all types of precious fruits." These mandrakes refer to the plant that Reuven found and gave to his mother. The Midrash explains that "The Mandrakes gave forth fragrance" alludes to Reuven's attempt to save Yoseph from his brothers by advising them to throw him into the pit instead of killing him. He intended to wait until his brothers would leave and then

return to the pit to save Yoseph. Our sages teach that the pit itself was dangerous, containing snakes and scorpions.

The Midrash continues to explain that the second half of the passage, "And at our door all types of precious fruits," represents the Ner Chanukah, The Menora, we light at the doorpost, which is so precious to us, because it reminds us of the miracle of Chanukah and the story of the Maccabees. What does the Midrash mean by such an explanation? Why does it connect Reuven's plan to save Yoseph with the story of Chanukah and its lights?

My grandfather Rav Michel Kossowsky ZT"L answers in Toafos Harim that to understand the Midrash, we must remember that Yehuda also had a plan for Yoseph. It was Yehuda's plan to sell Yoseph as a slave to an Egypt bound caravan. In this way, his life would be saved, even though he would be forced to live in Egypt.

Superficially it would appear that Yehuda's plan was better for Yoseph. After all, he would have a better chance to survive as a slave in Egypt for the rest of his life, than even for a short period of time in a pit full of snakes and scorpions! Who knows if Reuven would be in time to rescue Yoseph from such imminent danger! Our sages, however, didn't see it that way. To them, just the opposite was true. They condemn Yehuda for his suggestion to sell Yoseph into Egypt, and praise Reuven for his intention. Why?

It appears that in the eyes of our sages, to be sold to Egypt could be considered a fate worse than death. For what kind of life would Yoseph be forced to live in Egypt? Yoseph had been brought up in ideal Jewish surroundings. He was Yaakov's favorite student from among all the children and grandchildren. To Yoseph, God's teachings and commandments were directly transmitted through Yaakov, from Yitzchok and Avraham. He was their spiritual heir, the one amongst all the brothers who earned the name Yoseph Hatzadik, Joseph the Righteous. What would his fate be in Egypt, a wicked land, a slave society, corrupt and evil in all the ways abhorrent to Judaism? So young and impressionable, how could Yoseph keep his ideals strong? How could he resist assimilating? Later events indeed did show how difficult this was, and that Yoseph managed to survive as a Jew only by superhuman moral heroism and by God's miraculous intervention. Reuven's plan was truly dangerous, but it was the only way Yoseph's spirit could be saved; the only way to keep him in an atmosphere of Kedusha.

The Midrash teaches that this is precisely the lesson of Chanukah as well. For the Greek tyrants would have only been too glad to let us live – provided we lived as Greeks! They wanted us to become part of their culture. They even built us theatres and stadiums! They outlawed Torah and Mitzvot; seeking to turn us away from God and His commandments. Indeed, they succeeded for a time, only too well. Many Jews succumbed. The MISYAVNIM, turncoat Jews, Hellenists,

made common cause with the Greek tyrants. Against the Jewish Hellenists as against the tyrant Greeks, the Maccabees rose. They risked their lives to remain devoted to Hashem. Better death than assimilation! The lights of Chanukah remind us of this struggle; of this triumph; of the triumph of the spirit of our people. They commemorate our victory in a life-and-death struggle to preserve the spirit of our forefathers. The lesson of the Midrash, linking Reuven's plan and Chanukah, is clear. Living in surroundings of a Torah way of life, can be a matter of life and death. Often, to resist the corruption that exists in the world around us, we must be a Yosef Hatzadik or a Yehuda Hamakabi.

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Yosef and Chanukah

Parshas Vayeishev

Chanukah

By Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

Posted on December 5, 2023 (5784)

In a parsha laden with intriguing episodes, the sale of Yosef by his brothers certainly stands out. The question shouts at us, how could tzadikim of the magnitude of the sons of Yaakov Avinu, the shivtay kah, commit such a grievous sin.

Both the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh and the Sforno deal with this issue. The Ohr HaChaim deals with it in a more technical manner so I will discuss the Sforno's pshat. He explains that the shvatim when they saw Yosef coming, assumed that he was not coming to check on their welfare, but rather to either find some fault on their behalf, or to cause them to sin. This would either lead to their father cursing them or their being punished by Hashem, thereby leaving Yosef alone as a 'blessed' son. If Yosef was trying to kill them in this world, and certainly in olam habah, then he was considered a rodef, one who is actively in pursuit with intention to kill. The halacha in such a situation is that one is obligated to take the initiative and kill the rodef. The ten tzadikim sat as a beis din and this was the clear halacha which they decided upon.

The fact that they were tzadikim and were still considered as such even after the sale can be illustrated by their names being on stones of the breast plate of the Cohen Gadol as a reminder before Hashem. We see that their state of mind was that they had not sinned by their calmly sitting afterwards and having a seuda. Whereas Bnei Yisrael after killing Shevet Binyamin sat and cried to Hashem, and even Daryavesh was distraught after throwing Daniel into the lions den, they sat calmly and had a seuda!

Lastly, when confronted by the harshness of the second in command to Paroah they knew that it must be midah kneged midah from Hashem for some sin they had committed. They care takingly scrutinized the previous twenty one years without finding any sin for which they might deserve it! (We'd

probably find ample cause with a cursory look at our past twenty one minutes!) Finally, when they reviewed the events of twenty two years past, they understood that this was punishment, not for the sale itself, but rather for their harshness and lack of sympathy to Yosef, midah kneged midah!

However, as Hashem, who sees deep inside each individual testifies, the brothers were jealous of Yosef. Even if these feelings didn't influence their judgment, they were held accountable for them.

Where did this jealousy stem from? Yosef was a "ben zekunim" of Yaakov Avinu, and was therefore given the ksonas pasim, the special silk coat. Rashi's second pshat quotes the Targum that ben zekunim means a wise son to whom he passed the teachings that he had absorbed from Shem and Ever. The Klay Yakar explains that the reason that he taught Yosef as opposed to the other sons is simply that Yosef displayed more of an interest.

I, however, saw in the name of Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky zatzal, that the teachings of Shem and Ever were different then the regular Torah teachings of the Avos and were particularly pertinent to Yosef and not to his brothers. The Toras Avos was to set up a yeshiva in every place that they would find themselves, teach to others, and proclaim the name of Hashem to all. Shem, who lived in the generation of the flood and Ever, who lived in the generation of the tower, found it impossible to begin yeshivas. Their Torah was how to survive amongst terrible resha'im. How not to be affected by the surroundings which are acting contrary to the will of Hashem. This was the Torah that Yaakov learned for 14 years on his way to Lavan, far different than the Torah he had learned as an "ish tam yoshev ohalim", for 63 years. Yaakov foresaw that Yosef would need this Torah and not his brothers, and therefore taught it only to him. The brothers misunderstood their fathers intentions and thought that they were being treated as an Esav or Yishmael and were therefore jealous. This jealousy set the stage for the galus of Mitzrayim. As we celebrate this Shabbos Chanuka, we have to realize that the golus of Yavan also had jealousy at its very root. Chazal say that the Yevanim darkened our eyes with their decrees. Chazal choose one decree which seems to epitomize the deeper intentions of the Yevanim. "Write on the horn of an ox that you have no portion in the Elokay Yisrael."

The Siftei Chaim expounds beautifully on this medrash. "On the horn of an ox." They wanted to remind us of the chait ha'agel. The Yevanim believed that as a result of that sin, Hashem had rejected us. On a deeper level, Hashem has two ways of dealing with this world; the natural and the supernatural. On the 'maaseh hamerkavah', the face of a lion is to the right and the face of an ox is to the left. The 'stronger' right hand side symbolizes the hanhagah of the supernatural, the strength and the dominion of the lion. The ox on the

‘weaker’ left symbolizes the ‘natural’ events of the world. The plowing and the planting which allow us to have nature serve our needs. When Moshe Rabeinu was leading us through the wilderness, we merited the miraculous hand of Hashem. The manna, the clouds, the well of water, etc. The mistake of Klal Yisroel was their thinking that if Moshe was no longer with them to bring them to the level of the miraculous, then they were supposed to now drop down to the level of the natural. This was exemplified by the calf that they made. Not a denial of Hashem, but rather a symbol and a reminder that all the natural events which would occur were in reality the ‘hidden’ hand of Hashem. However, for Klal Yisroel to deal on such a level was a spiritual catastrophe which led to actual idol worship.

The Yevanim, along the same lines, wanted us to write on the horn of the ox. The ox which symbolizes the natural and it’s horn which symbolizes it’s strength. They were extremely jealous of the miraculous bond between us and Hashem. They wanted us to accept that Hashem only deals, even with the Jews, on a natural level. That there is no special relationship between us and Hashem.

“You have no portion.” Portion, in this context means a partnership. Hashem has made us partners with Him in this world. As the Nefesh HaChaim writes, every act that we, Klal Yisroel do, affects the influences which will come down to this world. Hashem has, in effect, handed the reins over to us. The ‘tov’ and ‘ra’ in this world are brought about by our acts of drawing close to Hashem or by, c”v, distancing ourselves from Him.

Rav Brevda came to the Yeshiva and spoke about how we all want to make the big decisions. Nuclear disarmament, peace with Syria, pullout from Chebron. In reality, of course, we can’t make those decisions. We must settle for the little decisions; should I go to minyan, should I make the seder, should I speak the lashon horah. What we must realize is that it is those ‘little’ decisions which will determine those big issues. That is our portion, our partnership, with Hashem. The bracha that can be in this world is in our hands to bring. That, the Yevanim, couldn’t handle. They wanted us to write that we have no portion, no partnership.

“In Elokay Yisroel.” Hashem runs this world through a command structure of agents. Many of these agents were, at different stages of world history, worshiped as idols. As if they had some power, independent of Hashem. They do have power, and therefore can carry the same name as Hashem, elohim, but only as delegated by Hashem. The name of Hashem which refers to this aspect of Him being the power source is Elokim. That’s why we say, Hashem Elokim Emes. The only true power source. Elokay Yisroel refers to our actions having the ability to either turn on, or turn off, that power. We have that partnership with Elokay Yisroel and we affect that power with our ‘little decisions’. With our

adherence to Torah and mitzvos and our conquering of that olam hakatan, ourselves. The Yevanim wanted to have that control through their connection to the natural. External beauty as opposed to inner perfection. “No portion in Elokay Yisroel.” May Hashem give us the meiras einayim, the clarity of vision, to realize the unique and central role that we play in this universe. To recognize the special partnership that we share with Elokay Yisroel, and with the vigor of a lion, to accept that responsibility and act accordingly. May that bond be strengthened to the point that we too will light the menorah in the Beis Hamikdash.

Good Shabbos.

Yisroel Ciner

<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/finding-miracles-in-the-darkness/>

Rabbi Kenneth Brander President and Rosh HaYeshiva, Ohr Torah Stone **This Hanukkah I’m celebrating a different kind of miracle**

We don’t have to look as far back as the Maccabean story to find wonders worth commemorating

Hanukkah feels different this year. The vanquishing of our enemies that occurred in the days of the Maccabees during their war against the Greeks seems distant this Hanukkah. As we light our flickering candles, still shrouded in the darkness of the murderous pogrom on the seventh of October, with 136 hostages from 10 months to 83 years old still being held in Gaza, and the tragic aftermath of so many fallen, how can we possibly rejoice and celebrate this year?

Unlike many other rituals, the lighting of the Hanukkah candles is accompanied by two blessing (three on the first night). Following the standard blessing for performing a mitzva, a commandment, one recites the blessing of She’asa Nissim, giving thanks to God for the miracles performed “in those days, at this time.” Yet if we carefully examine the formulation appearing in Rambam’s Mishneh Torah (Hilchot Megillah v’Chanuka 3:1), we will notice that some of the manuscripts have a slightly different version, which reads “bayamim hahem uvizman hazeh,” which translates as “in those days and at this time.” With the addition of a single letter vav, these editions of Rambam offer an entirely new meaning to this blessing: that just as miracles took place long ago, miracles continue to surround us in every generation to the present day.

... these have been unimaginably difficult weeks for the families of the murdered and the kidnapped, for the fallen, wounded and the displaced, for the soldiers serving in every corner of this country, and for all of Am Yisrael. But even within this darkness, the light of unity and volunteerism is shining brightly.

This year, I am celebrating the miracle of solidarity. Grassroots efforts have popped up overnight like nothing Israel has ever

seen. Meals have been distributed, people have been welcomed into homes, and thousands of reservists, 130% of those called up, have reported for duty. The amount of donations: food, clothing, toys, rides, visits, hugs, army supplies, medications, and more that have been offered to those in need has been astounding. Our collective resolve in the face of the horrors is nothing short of miraculous, and a reminder of what we are capable of when we band together.

And I am celebrating the miracle of heroism. In the face of the horrors of October 7th, so many heroes have risen to defend our brethren. I carry with me the memory of Ohr Torah Stone alumnus Elhanan Kalmanson z”l, who drove with his brother and nephew to Be’eri on the morning of October 7 on their own and managed to rescue dozens of victims. I am thinking of Aner Elyakim Shapiro z”l, who protected a packed public bomb shelter by throwing the hand grenades that terrorists had tossed inside back out and finally falling on the last one to absorb the impact to protect others. And at the same time, those continuing to celebrate life, including Aner’s sister who got engaged just last week, have exhibited tremendous courage to push on despite the pain and the grief. This Hanukkah, I bask in the light of the heroism of our soldiers – including countless members of the OTS family. The courage of their families and of all those maintaining the homefront is as much a divine gift as the Maccabean initiative.

And I am celebrating this state, and what it means to live in the Jewish homeland in the 21st century. Even in the wake of the largest pogrom since the Holocaust, we cannot lose sight of our good fortune. Never again can we be decimated, for we have a land of our own and the resolve needed to defend it. To witness the return of the Jewish people to our sacred homeland is a living miracle, and it is the anchor of our confidence in these uncertain times.

Bayamim hahem uvizman hazeh, in those days and at this time. In the midst of the grief and the fear, there are miracles all around us, just as there were long ago. Like the Maccabees, we face a challenging threat, but we are resolutely committed to our cause. As we move forward, our challenge is to not lose sight of these miracles, to be inspired by them, empowered to persevere until the darkness of this moment is overtaken by a great, shining light.

No matter what comes, we can face it together.

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/> **Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz**

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz The Value of a Good Deed - Parashat Vayeshev

In Parashat Vayeshev, we read about the story of “the sale of Joseph.” Jacob’s sons envied Joseph, who was beloved by his father and dreamed dreams of ruling over the family. They took advantage of a moment when they were away from their

father’s house to sell Joseph into slavery. This story is one of the most complex narratives in the Torah because, despite the brothers’ intention to remove Joseph from their path, their actions eventually led to the realization of Joseph’s dreams. He became a viceroy in Egypt, brought the entire family there, and became the leader of the family, just as he had dreamed.

However, the original plan of the brothers was more sinister. As the Torah describes their conversation when they saw Joseph approaching: *“And they said one to another: ‘Behold, the dreamer comes. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, An evil beast has devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.’”* (Genesis 37, 19-20) This plan was not executed because Reuben, the eldest brother, intervened and suggested an alternative: *“And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said: ‘Let us not take his life.’ And Reuben said to them: ‘Shed no blood; cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him.’”* (Ibid Ibid, 21-22)

At this point, we do not understand what Reuben hoped to achieve. What is the difference between murder and throwing Joseph into a pit where he would die from hunger and thirst? But the Torah reveals Reuben’s motives. He did not intend to leave Joseph in the pit but “to deliver him out of their hands, to restore him to his father.” Reuben sought to prevent the young brother’s murder and the grief of their father, thinking that once the brothers left the place, he could return to the pit, lift Joseph out of it, and save his life. In the end, Reuben’s plan failed. Joseph was taken out of the pit and sold into slavery. However, we want to dwell on Reuben’s proposal and properly assess it. Reuben, being the eldest among the brothers, naturally should have hated Joseph more than the others because if Joseph’s dreams were fulfilled, Reuben would be ousted from his natural position as the firstborn and leader of the brothers, and Joseph would take his place. Despite this, Reuben was the one who sought to save Joseph from a cruel fate and return him to their father. In the Midrash, we find an interesting thought about Reuben’s deed. The sages say: *“If Reuben had known that the Holy One, Blessed be He, would write about him ‘And Reuben heard and delivered him out of their hands,’ he would have taken him on his shoulders and brought him to his father.”* (Leviticus Rabbah 34, 8) Even though Reuben chose a morally correct action, he did not evaluate it properly. If Reuben had known that the Torah would appreciate his choice and present him as the one who saved Joseph, he would have put more effort into rescuing him and bringing him back to their father. Reuben did not consider his act important enough, so he settled for the suggestion of throwing Joseph into a pit and for the plan – that failed – of saving him later. Reuben’s moral choice was not assessed properly and therefore it was not done correctly. When we perform a good deed, it is essential to reflect on the meaning and value of the deed, as well as its consequences on ourselves

and our surroundings. This is illustrated in the relationship between parents and children: when a parent behaves morally, aside from the deed itself, they impart a way of life that their children are likely to adopt and pass on to future generations. If we evaluate our actions appropriately, it will lead us to perfect deeds, deeds we can be proud of, and that will influence not only ourselves but everyone around us. *The writer is rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites.*

from: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <rabbiyy@theyeshiva.net> date: Dec 7, 2023, 8:55 PM subject: The Jewish Heart is Beating Stronger than Ever - Chanukah Essay by Rabbi YY
The Jewish Heart is Beating Stronger than Ever
No, We Have Not Betrayed Our Mission: Yehudah, Tamar and a Chanukah Drama

By: Rabbi YY Jacobson
The Judah-Tamar Drama

It is a fascinating story: (1) Judah has three sons, Er, Onan and Shalah. His oldest son, Er, married a woman named Tamar, but died prematurely, without children. His bereft father, Judah, suggested to his second son, Onan: "Consort with your brother's wife and enter into levirate marriage with her, and establish offspring for your brother."

Here, we are introduced, for the first time, to the concept of levirate marriages, discussed later in the book of Deuteronomy: "When brothers live together, and one of them dies childless, the wife of the deceased man shall not marry outside to a strange man; her brother-in-law shall come to her, and take her to himself as a wife, and perform a levirate marriage. The first-born son whom she bears will then perpetuate the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be obliterated from Israel."

One of the great biblical commentators, Nachmanides, writes that this mitzvah embodies "one of the great mysteries of the Torah" and that even before the Torah was given, people knew of the spiritual benefits of a levirate marriage. The biblical commentators explain that the child born of the union between the brother of the dead man and his former wife -- both of whom are intimately connected with the deceased man -- is considered the spiritual son of the deceased. The Kabbalists even explain that the first-born child of the levirate marriage is a reincarnation of the soul of the first husband, bringing the deceased man, as it were, back to life.

So Judah suggested to his second son Onan to marry his brother's widow and perpetuate the legacy of the deceased brother.

Now, Judah's second son also died prematurely without having any children. Judah refused to allow her to marry his third son, Shalah. This put her in an impossible situation: she could not go out and marry anyone else, because she was bound to Shalah, but her father-in-law would not allow her to marry Shalah.

Now, during those early times prior to the giving of the Torah, Nachmanides explains, other relatives, in addition to brothers, used to carry out this obligation of levirate marriages. So following the death of both of Tamar's husbands, she went and lured her former father-in-law, Judah, into a relationship with her, that impregnated her. As a guarantee that he would pay her for the relationship, Judah gave Tamar his seal, cord (2), and staff.

"Some three months passed," the Torah relates (3), "and Judah was told, 'Your daughter-in-law Tamar has committed harlotry, and she has become pregnant by harlotry.'"

"Take her out and have her burned," said Judah.

"When she was being taken out, she sent word to her father-in-law, saying, 'I am pregnant by the man who is the owner of these articles. Identify, I beg you, these objects; who is the owner of this seal, this cord, and this staff?'"

"Judah immediately recognized them, and he said, 'She is right; it is from me [that she has conceived]. She did it because I did not give her to my son Shelah.'"

A Spiritual Story

The stories in the Torah are not just tales of ancient Jewish history. They also reflect spiritual timeless experiences that take place continually within the human soul. In his commentary on the book of Genesis, Nachmanides wrote: "The Torah discusses the physical reality, but it alludes to the world of the spirit (4)."

Here is a classical Chassidic interpretation on the episode of Judah and Tamar, treating the story as symbolic of the inner spiritual life of the Jew.

Betrayal and Its Consequences

The name Judah, or Yehudah, containing within it the four letters of the name of Hashem, symbolizes G-d. Tamar is the Hebrew name for a palm tree, representing the Jewish people and their bond with G-d (5). The Talmud explains (6), that "just as the palm tree has but one 'heart,' so too do the Jewish people have only a single heart, devoted to their Father in heaven."

(The heart of the date palm is its sap. Unlike the saps of other trees, like the olive or almond tree, the sap of the palm is found only in its trunk, but not in its branches or leaves. This is the meaning behind the Talmudic statement that the palm tree possesses only a single "heart" (7)).

The intimate union between Tamar and Judah, the Jew and G-d, occurs during the sacred days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. During those days, G-d, or Judah, exposes Himself to His people, evoking within them a yearning to transcend and to become one with G-d.

But then, some time passes, and the spiritual inspiration of the High Holy days wears off. Judah is informed that "Tamar, your Kallah (8), has committed harlotry, and she has become pregnant by harlotry." The news arrives to G-d that His bride has gone looking elsewhere for bliss.

At one point during our lives, we may be inspired to connect to the deeper Divine rhythm of life. Yet, the cunning lore of numerous other gods captivates our imaginations dulls our vision. We substituted the G-d of truth with the ego-god, the power-god, the money-god, the temptation-god, the addiction-god, the manipulation-god, and the god of self-indulgence.

What is even sadder for Judah is the news that "Tamar" is so estranged that she became pregnant by harlotry. This symbolizes the stage in life when the Jew rejects the G-d of his forefathers permanently and decides to build his future with superficial sources of gratification.

"Take her out and have her burned," says Judah. The purpose of the Jew is to serve as the spiritual compass of human civilization, to bear witness to the truth of the One G-d, the moral conscience of the world. When the Jew loses sight of the *raison d'être* of his existence when he believes that his salvation lies in the fact that the world loves him, that he was praised in an editorial of The New York Times, his existence is in danger. The world will come to loathe him, and he will have no anchor.

The Truth Emerges

The great Jewish mystic, the Arizal, Rabbi Isaac Luryah, writes that "the judgment that began on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is completed some three months later, during the days of Chanukah." That's why it is at this period of time, three months after the intimate union between Judah and Tamar, that Judah (the metaphor for G-d) is "informed" regarding the spiritual status of Tamar (the Jewish people) and the verdict is issued that Tamar has no future.

"When Tamar was being taken out, she sent word to Judah, saying, 'I am pregnant by the man who is the owner of these articles. Identify, I beg you, these objects. Who is the owner of this seal, cord, and staff?'"

During that fateful time, when the "prosecuting angels" have almost been successful in demonstrating to G-d that the Jewish people have become alienated, at that very moment, the Jew sends word to G-d, saying, "I am pregnant by the man who is the owner of these articles!" The information you received that I abandoned you, is a blatant lie! Gaze into the deeper layers of my identity and you will discover that I belong to You, that my intimacy is shared only with You, G-d. "I am pregnant from Judah and not from anybody else!" the Jew declares.

"Identity, I beg you, these objects. Who is the owner of this seal, cord, and staff?" For during the festival of Chanukah, when the judgment of Rosh Hashanah is finalized, the Jew kindles each night a wick, or a cord, soaked in oil, commemorating the event of the Jews discovering a sealed single cruse of oil after the Greeks had plundered the holy Temple in Jerusalem (9).

The Jew further points to the staff in his arm (10). In order to preserve his faith, he was forced time and time again, for millenia, to take the wandering staff in his arm, abandon his

home, wealth and security, and seek out new territory where he could continue to live as a Jew.

"Identity, I beg you, these objects. Who is the owner of this seal, cord, and staff?" the Jew asks G-d. "It is to this man that I am pregnant!" Our loyalty and commitment remain eternally to the owner of the "seal" and "cord" of the Chanukah flames; our deepest intimacy is reserved to the owner of the "staff" of Jewish wandering.

Sure, the insanity of exile and the traumas of millennia have confused so many of us. But -- as we have all seen since the last Hamas-Israeli war on October 7th, 2023 -- the Jewish heart is beating stronger than ever. The Divine holiness embedded in the core of every Jewish soul is shining.

Who Is the Traitor?

"Judah immediately recognized the articles, and he said, 'She is right; it is from me that she conceived. She did it because I did not give her to my son Shelah.'"

When G-d observes the burning flames of the Chanukah menorah, He immediately recognizes that indeed, His people have never left Him. True, the Jew does fall prey at times to the dominating external forces of a materialistic and immoral world, yet this enslavement is skin deep. Probe the layers of his or her soul and you will discover an infinite wellspring of spirituality and love.

"If the Jew has, in fact, gone astray here and there, it is my fault," G-d says, not his. "Because I did not give Tamar to my son Shelah." Shelah is the Biblical term used to describe Moshiach (11), the leader who will usher in the final redemption. G-d says that for two millennia I have kept the Jewish nation in a dark and horrific exile where they have been subjected to horrendous pain and savage suffering. Blood, tears, and death have been their tragic fate for twenty centuries, as they prayed, each day and every moment, for world redemption. But redemption has not come.

How can I expect that a Jew never commits a sin? How can I expect that a Jew never seeks a nest in the outside gentile world, when I held back for so long the light of Moshiach?

"It is I, G-d, who is guilty of treason," G-d says. Not the Jew. Tamar is an innocent, beautiful palm tree, which still has only one heart to its Father in heaven.

Cold Soup

Rabbi Manis Friedman once shared the following thought (12):

Three thousand, three hundred and fifteen years ago G-d asked us if we would marry him. We had an extraordinary wedding ceremony, with great special effects--we were wowed. After the wedding, He said, "I have a few things I'd like you to take care of for me so, please... I'll be right back." He hasn't been heard from since. For more than three thousand, three hundred years. He has sent messengers, messages,

postcards--you know, writing on the walls... but we haven't heard a word from Him in all this time.

Imagine, a couple gets married, and the man says to his new wife, "Would you make me something to eat, please? I'll be right back." She begins preparing. The guy comes back 3300 years later, walks into the house, up to the table, straight to his favorite chair, sits down, and tastes the soup that is on the table. The soup is cold.

What will his reaction be? If he's a wise man, he won't complain. Rather he'll think it's a miracle that the house is still there, that his table and favorite chair are still there. He'll be delighted to see a bowl of soup at his place. The soup is cold? Well, yes, over 3300 years, soup can get cold.

Now we are expecting Moshiach. If Moshiach comes now and wants to judge, what's he going to find? Cold soup?

He will find an incredibly healthy Jewish people. After 3300 years we are concerned about being Jewish, which means we are concerned about our relationship with G-d.

Yes, if Moshiach comes today, he'll find that our soup is cold. We suffer from separation anxiety. We suffer from a loss of connection to our ancestors. We suffer a loss of connection even to our immediate family. The soup is cold. The soup is very cold. But whose fault is that? And who gets the credit for the fact that there is soup altogether?

We are a miracle. All we need to do is tap into it. We are the cure. Not only for ourselves, but also for the whole world. So let Moshiach come now and catch us here with our cold soup because we have nothing to be ashamed of. We are truly incredible. When G-d decided to marry us, He knew He was getting a really good deal.

A Jew is a child of G-d. A Jew is a prince. A Jew is the holiest of the holy. A Jew is truly one with G-d. And even when you look at yourself in the mirror and you feel disloyal, the truth is that your ultimate loyalty remains to G-d, to truth, to holiness, to purity.

Moshiach is ready to come. May we see him now!

(This essay is based on the writings of the Chassidic Masters (13))

1) Genesis, chapter 38. 2) "Pethila" in Hebrew literally means a string or a wick. Judah gave her the string that he used to bind his sheep (Sechel Tov on Genesis 38:18). Many commentators, including Rashi, translate the word to mean a wrap or cloak. 3) Genesis 38:24-26. 4) Commentary on the opening verse of Sukkot. Psalms 92:13. 5) Sukkah 45b. Megilah 14a 7) Rashi ibid.; cf. Ritva. 8) In Hebrew, "Kalasecha" (Genesis 38:24). This can be translated as "your daughter-in-law," or, literally as your kallah, your bride. 9) Shabbas 21b. 10) The Hebrew term for "the staff," "v'hamateh" has the same numerological value as the word "Hakeli," the vessel, symbolic of the menorah in which we kindle the Chanukah

flames. Hence, this verse is alluding to the three components of the Chanukah lights: the menorah, the wick, and the oil, all of which testify to the eternal allegiance of the Jew to G-d. 11) Rashi Genesis 49:10. 12)

http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2540/jewish/Cold-Soup.htm 13) Bas Ayin Parshas Vayeishev, authored by Chassidic Master of Safed, Rabbi Avraham of Avrutch (1765-1840). He was a disciple of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Bardeitchev and of Rabbi Nachum and Rabbi Mordechai (Reb Matele) of Chernobyl.

<https://en.yhb.org.il/revivim1072/>

The Commandment to Serve in the Army – Saving Jewish Lives

Revivim

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

IDF soldiers fulfill two great commandments: saving Jewish lives, and settling the Land of Israel * During wartime, soldiers must be willing to enter dangerous situations where the risk outweighs the potential rescue * The commandment to conquer and defend the land overrides the preservation of individual lives * The prohibition of murder is absolute * If evildoers present a person with two options: either murder so-and-so, or be killed – one should choose death, rather than transgress and murder another person

At present, when our heroic soldiers endanger themselves on the battlefield for the sake of saving the nation and state, it is fitting to re-emphasize the tremendous sanctity of the commandment they are fulfilling with their very bodies. The soldiers fulfill two great commandments, each one a general commandment equal to all other commandments: the first is saving Jewish lives, and the second is settling the Land. Saving Jewish Lives: We are commanded that if we see a fellow Jew in danger, we must make an effort to come to his aid, as the Torah says: "Do not stand by your brother's blood" (Leviticus 19:16). And for this, one must be willing to take certain risks. All the more so, when the entire Jewish people is in danger, that there is an obligation to make effort toward saving the Jewish people. Our Sages already said in the Mishnah: "Whoever saves a single Jewish life, it is as if he saved an entire world" (Sanhedrin 4:5). Therefore, one who takes part in sustaining the entire nation, it is as if he literally sustained an entire world. And this is an absolute, obligatory war (Maimonides, Laws of Kings 5:1).

Defending the Land: We are commanded to inherit and settle the Land of Israel, meaning that the land should be under Jewish sovereignty, and settled with Jews across its entire length and breadth. And this commandment is equal to all other commandments (Sifrei, Re'eh 53).

These Commandments Override the Preservation of Individual Lives Indeed, there is no commandment to endanger oneself in a situation where it is probable that the would-be rescuer will

be killed in order to save individual Jewish lives. However, during wartime, when it is necessary to endanger soldiers in order to win the battle, soldiers must be willing to enter situations where the danger outweighs the potential rescue. As Maran HaRav Kook wrote, the principle of “ve’chai ba’hem” (‘and you shall live by them’, i.e., the words of the Torah), from which we learn that pikuach nefesh (saving lives) overrides all commandments in the Torah, does not apply during warfare, since the laws for the public differ from those for the individual. And for the sake of sustaining the public, individuals must be willing to enter danger (Mishpat Kohen 143). Based on this, the responsa Tzitz Eliezer (13:100) wrote that also the principle of “chayecha kodmim le’chayeh chavercha” (“your life takes precedence over your friend’s life”) does not apply during warfare, “rather, all war recruits are obligated, together as one person, to sacrifice, each one his soul, for the sake of saving the life of his fellow. And this too is included in the laws of the public, and under the guidelines of national conduct and ordinances.”

Similarly, the commandment to conquer the Land of Israel, and thereby defend it, overrides the preservation of individual lives, since the Torah did not intend for us to rely on miracles. And since there are casualties in every war, the commandment to conquer the Land obligates us to endanger lives on its behalf (Minchat Chinukh 525, 614; Mishpat Kohen p. 327). All the more so, there is a commandment to fight in order to defend sections of the Land of Israel already under our control.

Spilling Blood – Be Killed, Rather Than Transgress From the general commandment, we continue to the specific commandment to sacrifice one’s life rather than transgress one of the three severe prohibitions – idol worship, forbidden relations, and spilling blood. We will deal here with spilling blood. If evildoers present a person with two options: either murder so-and-so, or be killed – one should choose death, rather than transgress, and murder another person.

The Talmud relates an incident of a man who came before Rabba, head of the Pumipedita academy, with a dire question: the city ruler commanded me to murder so-and-so, and if I do not do so, he will kill me; is it permitted for me to murder him in order to save my life? Rabba responded: be killed, and do not kill, for who is to say that your blood is redder – perhaps that man’s blood is redder?! (Sanhedrin 74a).

Even When It Seems His Life Takes Precedence Even when it seems to a person “that his blood is redder than his fellow’s,” meaning, that his life takes precedence over his fellow’s life because he is young and healthy, while being told to kill an elderly man who no longer recognizes those around him – even in such a case, he should be killed, and not kill that person. This is because the reasoning of “who is to say your blood is redder” is not the reason that a person must surrender himself to be killed rather than kill his fellow – it is merely illustrating the logic of the law. The law itself stems from the

fact that murder is absolutely prohibited. Thus, under no circumstances may a person save himself by murdering his fellow (Mishpat Kohen 143 p. 319).

Surrender Your Fellow or We Will Kill You Also, when one is not being asked to murder a person with his own hands but to cause his death – he should be killed, rather than transgress. For example, if they demanded that he surrender a person to criminals or enemies, or reveal to them where he is hiding so they can kill him – he should be killed, and not surrender. This is because accessories to bloodshed (abetting murder) also fall under “be killed, rather than transgress” (Razah, Nimukei Yosef, Ramban, Chinukh 296).

Similarly, if they demanded he provide a weapon so they can kill someone, without which they would be unable to kill him – he should be killed, rather than surrender the weapon (Ritva, Radbaz 4:92). And similarly, if they demanded he throw someone to a predatory animal thereby causing his death – he should be killed, and not throw him (Minchat Chinukh 296:25). Likewise, if they demanded he testify false testimony in order to execute someone – he should be killed, and not testify false testimony (Chatam Sofer, Ketubot 19a).

A Group is Demanded to Surrender One for Execution If a group of people are demanded to surrender one of them for execution, no matter who, under the threat that if they do not hand one over, they will kill them all – they should all be killed, and not hand one over for killing (Tosefta Terumot 7:23). This is because the prohibition of murder is absolute, and even to save many, it is forbidden to transgress the prohibition of murder. Some halachic authorities permit them to cast lots to decide whom to surrender (Tiferet LeMoshe, Yoreh Deah 157). Others forbid casting lots to decide whom to surrender, since only via ruach ha’kodesh (Divine spirit) is it permitted to employ lots (Chadrei Deah 157, Nachal Yitzchak, Choshen Mishpat 87:3).

The Meiri wrote that if they demand handing one over for execution, and if not, they will kill everyone, and there is present a treifah person – i.e., one who sustained an injury to a vital organ that will likely cause his death within a year – it is permitted to hand him over in order to save the rest (brought in Shayarei Kneset HaGedolah notes to Beit Yosef Yoreh Deah 157:36. However, actively killing him is forbidden – Degel Reuven; Tzitz Eliezer 9:17).

One Who Sacrifices Himself to Save His Comrades is Called Holy When Gentiles demand one person for execution or else they will kill everyone, it is permitted for one of them to volunteer to surrender himself in order to save his comrades, similar to the self-sacrifice of the martyrs of Lod. The daughter of a Roman ruler was found murdered, and the Jews of Lod were threatened that if the murderer was not surrendered, they would all be killed. Lulianus and Papus volunteered, saying, we killed her; they were executed, saving all their brethren (Rashi Bava Batra 10b). Our Sages said of the Lod martyrs:

“Those executed by the government – no one can stand in their enclosure” (Pesachim 50a).

It is Permitted to Surrender One Like Sheba Ben Bichri If the demand is to surrender a specific person for execution like Sheba ben Bichri, and if not, they will kill everyone – they should surrender him, and not be killed (Yerushalmi Terumot 8:4). Sheba ben Bichri was a scoundrel who incited Israel against King David, and when Yoav the army commander waged war against him, he fled to the city of Abel Beit Maacha, and fortified himself there. Yoav laid siege on the city, with the goal of destroying it, and killing its inhabitants who had assisted the rebellion. “A wise woman called out from the city ‘Listen, listen! Tell Yoav to come here so I can talk to him!’ He approached her, and the woman said ‘Are you Yoav?’ ‘I am’, he replied. She said to him ‘Listen to what your handmaid has to say’. ‘I am listening’, he said... ‘I am one of those who seek the welfare of the faithful in Israel. But you seek to bring death upon a mother city in Israel! Why should you destroy the LORD’s possession?’” Yoav replied, “Far be it, far be it from me to destroy or to ruin! Not at all! But a certain man from the hill country of Ephraim, named Sheba son of Bichri, has rebelled against King David. Just hand him alone over to us, and I will withdraw from the city.” The woman assured Yoav, “His head shall be thrown over the wall to you.” The woman came to all the people with her clever plan; and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bichri and threw it down to Yoav. He then sounded the horn; all the men dispersed to their homes, and Yoav returned to the king in Jerusalem” (II Samuel 20:16-22).

When the Gentiles Demand a Specific Person who does Not Deserve Execution In the opinion of Rabbi Yochanan, even if the one whom the Gentiles are demanding to be surrendered is not legally liable for execution, since on account of him the Gentiles are coming upon the whole group, they may surrender him in order to be saved. In contrast, according to Reish Lakish, only if the one they request deserves death like Sheba ben Bichri, may he be surrendered. But if he does not deserve death, it is forbidden to surrender him, thereby causing his death in order to save themselves. The halachic authorities are divided over whom the law follows.

The Story with Ola ben Koshev and Elijah’s Revelation The Yerushalmi (Terumot 8:4) tells of Ola ben Koshev who fled from the government and hid in Lod, near Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. The Romans surrounded Lod, and threatened that if he is not surrendered, they would destroy the city. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi went to Ola ben Koshev and convinced him to surrender himself. Before then, Elijah the prophet was accustomed to frequently reveal himself to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, and from then, on ceased to appear. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi fasted several fasts for Elijah to return and reveal himself. Elijah appeared and argued “Do I reveal myself to informers?!” Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi replied: ‘But did I not

act legally, for if someone specific is sought he should be surrendered’? Elijah responded: “But that is not the way of the pious.”

Some halachic authorities say the law follows Rabbi Yochanan, that it is permitted to surrender the one sought by the Gentiles despite not being legally liable for execution, and as Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi practiced (Ran, Ritva, et al). Others say the law follows Reish Lakish, and Ola ben Koshev would have been permitted to surrender, since he was liable for execution by the government (Rambam 16).

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Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

Ohr Somayach Insights into Halacha - Chanukah For the week ending 14 December 2019 / 16 Kislev 5780

Chanuka: A Bochur's Perennial Predicament
Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

One fascinating issue that affects many thousands annually is the quite contemporary question: Where is the proper place for a Yeshiva Bochur to light his Menorah? Since the phenomenon of having a yeshiva where students not only eat but also dorm is relatively recent, there is not much early Rabbinic or halachic literature on this exact topic. Bochurim are not really guests, and might be getting their spending money from their parents - who are usually paying their tuition; yet, many do not live at home. So, they do not seem to fit into any clear-cut category. What is a striving student to do?

A ‘Fiery’ Debate Contemporary authorities use precedents as clues to ascertain the proper solution for the Bochur Dilemma. One relevant debate is that of where a guest who generally eats at another’s house but “comes home to roost” is supposed to light his Chanukah candles. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 677, 2), quoting the Tur and Rosh (See Gemara Shabbos 23a, passage about Rav Sheishes), states that a guest (Achsanoi) is required to light his own Menorah, or at least contribute to the host’s Chanukah candle expenses. However, if this guest, even a son who’s hanging out at his parents’ place, has his own apartment (that opens to a public thoroughfare) where he sleeps, then he must light his Menorah there. The reason is because of Chashad, suspicion. Since passersby know that our Achsanoi has his own pad, and will notice whether or not there was a lit Menorah there, they will suspect that he did not light a Menorah at all, not realizing that he eats his meals out and possibly would have kindled where he ate. Accordingly, it would seem that the place where one sleeps is considered his key “dwelling place”. However, the Rema (ad loc.),[1] citing the Rashba (Shu”t HaRashba vol. 1, 542),[2] asserts that one should light his Menorah in the place where he eats. He explains that “nowadays” since we light indoors,[3] the ‘Pursume’i Nissa’ engendered by kindling the Chanukah lights, is no longer actually meant for random

passersby, but rather for the people living in the house. If so, there is no reason to be worried about Chashad, as his family and friends would know that he eats in one place and sleeps in another. Therefore, he rules that such an Achsanoi would light his Menorah where he eats, and not where he sleeps. Many great authorities, including the Bach, Magen Avraham, Taz, Pri Chadash, Pri Megadim, Chayei Adam, Aruch Hashulchan, and Mishna Berura,[4] all agree with the Rema, that a guest who eats in one place yet sleeps in another, should light his Menorah where he eats. The Taz adds proof to this from the halachos of Eruvei Chatzeiros, where we find that the main dwelling place of one who sleeps in one location but eats in another, is considered where he eats. [See Gemara Eruvin (72b - 74b) and Shulchan Aruch and main commentaries (Orach Chaim 370, 5).] Accordingly, it would seem that a Yeshiva Bochur might fit into this category, as he (hopefully) eats in a different location than where he sleeps. So where should he light? The Yeshiva's dining room or in his dira / dorm room? Dira Daze Several authorities, including the Chazon Ish, Rav Aharon Kotler, the Steipler Gaon, Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky,[5] mv"r Rav Yaakov Blau,[6] and Rav Asher Weiss,[7] maintain that the Rema's ruling still holds true and rule that the proper place for a Bochur to light the Menorah is the Yeshiva's dining room. However, many other contemporary decisors question the application of the halacha of a guest pertaining to the average Bochur, due to several reasons, including: A Bochur's "dwelling place", where he feels "at home" and considers his own personal place, storing all of his belongings, etc. is in his dira / dorm room, and not in the yeshiva's communal dining room. Students have no personal stake in the dining room; they eat and leave, similar to a restaurant. Therefore, many consider it a stretch to consider a dining room as a Bochur's "prime dwelling place". Many Yeshiva dining rooms are locked throughout the day and only open mealtimes. How can it possibly be considered someone's personal place if he is denied entry most of the time? It is possible that a Yeshiva Bochur's din is more comparable to the case of the shepherd (or talmid) that lives in the field yet eats at someone's house, that for him, regarding the halachos of Eruvei Techumin, the Techum follows the place where he sleeps, and not where he eats.[8] For those living in Eretz Yisrael, nowadays most people do light the Chanukah licht outdoors, potentially making the Rosh's shitta once again the core ruling. Ergo, Chashad might once again be a problem. Therefore, one living in Eretz Yisrael should need to light where he sleeps.[9] Due to these concerns, many contemporary decisors, including Rav Moshe Feinstein, the Minchas Yitzchak, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner, Rav Moshe Sternbuch, Rav Binyomin Zilber, Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fischer, Rav Nosson Gestetner, Rav Menashe Klein, the Rivevos Efraim, and the Nitei Gavriel,[10] all rule that the main

dwelling of a Bochur is his dira / dorm room, and that that is the preferred place where he should light his Menorah. Yet, several of these Poskim assert that in order not to come into a halachic dispute and to better satisfy all opinions, that it is preferable that the Bochurim should eat at least one meal a day in their dorm room. Others advocate contributing to someone lighting in the dining room's Chanukah candle expenses, or lighting again there without a bracha.

Safety First Yet, it must be stressed that many of these Poskim qualify their ruling, explaining that if the hanhala of the Yeshiva forbids lighting Menorahs in the dorm due to the ever possible threat of fire, R"L, and instead orders the Bochurim to light in the dining room, then that is indeed what they must do.[11] Most Yeshivos, especially in Chutz La'aretz, practically follow this minhag, and lighting in the dining room is de rigueur.

Sefardic Illumination Sefardic Bochurim have a bit of a different issue. Sefardim predominantly follow the Shulchan Aruch's ruling of only the head of the household, functioning as an agent of sorts, lighting one Menorah for the entire family.[12] Poskim are divided as to whether these Sefardic Bochurim who eat and sleep in Yeshiva are considered part of their father's household or not. Many contemporary authorities, including Rav Ovadiah Yosef, Rav Mordechai Elyahu, Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul, the Tefilla L'Moshe, Rav Ezra Attiah, and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach,[13] rule that a Sefardic Bochur may not light in his Yeshiva at all, as he is exempted by his father lighting at home.[14] However, others Sefardic decisors, including the Yaskil Avdi, Rav Shalom Mashash, and Rav Yehuda Adess,[15] maintain that a Bochur living in Yeshiva is deemed 'his own man' and therefore even a Sefardic Bochur would be required to light his own Menorah, or join in with someone else lighting (preferably an Ashkenazic Bochur) in his Yeshiva.[16] This is also how many Ashkenazic poskim ruled for Sefardim, including the Chazon Ish, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, the Az Nidberu, and the Shevet Halevi. Rav Vosner adds that it is nevertheless preferable that these Sefardic Bochurim should have kavanna specifically to not be yotzei with their fathers' lighting.[17] Every Bochur should ascertain from his Rav or Rosh Yeshiva which opinion the Yeshiva follows before Chanukah, to mitigate any potential halachic mix-ups. The Gemara teaches, and is later codified in halacha, that someone who is scrupulous withkindling Ner Shabbos and Ner Chanukah will merit having sons who are Talmidei Chachamim.[18] Therefore, it certainly seems worthwhile and apropos that our budding Talmidei Chachamim should be meticulous in making sure that their lighting of the Menorah is truly "mehadrin min hamehadrin".

[1] Also in his Darchei Moshe (Orach Chaim 677, 1). [2] See the Taz's (Orach Chaim 677, 2) explanation of the Rashba's intent. Although others argue that this was not necessarily the Rashba's true intent, nonetheless, in the words of the Pri HaSadeh (Shu"t vol. 2, 70) "we need to pasken like the Rashba, according to the Taz's

understanding". [3] See Darchei Moshe (Orach Chaim 671, 9), Rema (ad loc. end 8), Mishna Berura (ad loc. 54), and Biur Halacha (677 s.v. pesach). [4] Bach (Orach Chaim 677 s.v. uma"sh HaRosh), Magen Avraham (ad loc 6 & 7), Taz (ad loc 2), Pri Chadash (ad loc), Pri Megadim (ad loc Eshel Avraham 5), Chayei Adam (vol. 2, 154, 32), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc 3), and Mishna Berura (ad loc 11). The Rema, as well as several others, maintain that in their times, even the Rosh would agree to the Rashba's ruling. [5] These decisors' opinions are cited in Ma'aseh Ish (vol. 4, pg. 132), Shu"t Teshuvos V'Hanhagos (vol. 2, 342, 11), Orchos Rabbeinu (vol. 3, pg. 25 - 26; new edition 5775, vol. 3, pg. 152 - 154; however, it is known that although ruling this way lemaaseh, the Steipler Gaon was not so happy with the setup of many Yeshiva dining rooms, explaining that they are too much like restaurants), Rav Shimon Eider's Sefer Hilchos Chanukah (pg. 37, footnote 32), and Emes L'Yaakov (on Tur / Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 677, footnote 591). A similar ruling is given by the Pri HaSadeh (Shu"t vol. 2, 70). However, the Chazon Ish and Steipler Gaon qualify their ruling, maintaining that if the Bochorim can eat two of their daily meals in their dorm rooms during Chanukah, then it would be preferable for them to light there. [On the other hand, see footnote 10, citing Rav Moshe Sternbuch's concern with this.] See also Rav Eliyahu Schlesinger's Mitzvas Ner Ish U'Beiso (vol. 1, Ch. 5, 10, and footnote 34) who writes that the ikar follows those who hold a bochor should light in the Yeshiva's dining room; yet, he concludes in the footnote that there are many valid opinions and therefore "d'avid k'mar avid, d'avid k'mar avid", whichever shitta one decides to follow, he is acting correctly. [6] Chovas HaDar (Neiros Chanukah, Ch. 1, footnote 59; at length). After weighing the issue, Rav Blau explains that Yeshiva Bochorim are not the true Baal HaBatim, as technically speaking, the Yeshiva hanhala can expel them if it wishes to do so. Hence, they are considered on some level as Bnei Bayis of the Rosh Yeshiva. Therefore, he maintains that the whole Yeshiva campus is considered one living place for all students, and they therefore should light where they eat. He adds that if one wants to davka light where he sleeps, he should have in mind not to be yotzai with the lighting in the dining room, as me'ikar hadin, since all students are all considered Bnei Bayis, only one of them technically has to light. [Yet, it should be noted that Rav Blau zt"l did not address a case where the students rent their own private dira that is not part of Yeshiva's campus. In such a scenario, it seems that he would agree that the Bochorim should light where they sleep, as then, they are not considered true Bnei Bayis of the Rosh Yeshiva.] [7] Kuntress Minchas Asher B'Hilchos Chanukah (5772, 5). He maintains that from the words of the original Rishonim grappling with this issue (the Rosh and Rashba ibid.), it certainly seems that they would cover the case of a Yeshiva Bochor; as even in those days, one who always eats his main meal at his friend's house does not have a set seat at his friend's house, and still eats small meals and snacks in his own place. And even so, the Rishonim still maintain the place of eating's preference over the place of lodging for Chanukah candle kindling. Accordingly, the Yeshiva dining room is still the preferred place to light. Rav Weiss concludes that even so, if one cannot fulfill the Mitzvah with all of its nuances properly in the dining room, then it is preferable that he should light where he sleeps. [8] Case based on Gemara Eruvin 73a. See Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 409, end 7), Magen Avraham (ad loc. 14), Machatzis HaShekel (ad loc.), and Pri Megadim (ad loc. Eshel Avraham 14). However, Rav Asher Weiss (Kuntress Minchas Asher B'Hilchos Chanukah 5772, 5, 2) points out that the Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 370, 10), when citing this ruling, concludes with "Tzarich Iyun", which both the Machatzis HaShekel (ad loc. s.v. mashma) and Pri Megadim (ad loc. Eshel Avraham, end 10) understand to mean that the Magen Avraham himself was unsure if this rule that applies to Eruvei Techumin would apply by Eruvei Chatzeiros. If so, continues Rav Weiss, it certainly would not by Neiros Chanukah! [9] It is well known that Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l maintained this very strongly, that nowadays in Eretz Yisrael, with no problems regarding lighting outdoors, one must do so. Consequently, Chashad becomes a problem again and therefore one must light where he sleeps. Recently, a talmid of Rav Elyashiv's ruled for a visiting relative in Eretz Yisrael who was eating out over Shabbos Chanukah, that although the ikar place for lighting Shabbos candles is where one eats [see Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 263, 9), Shulchan Aruch HaRav (ad loc. 1), Chayei Adam (vol. 2, 5, 14), Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (75, 8), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 3 & 4), and Mishna Berura (ad loc. 40 & 41)], nevertheless, one must first light the Chanukah Menorah where he was sleeping. [10] Rav Moshe Feinstein (Shu"t Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah vol. 3, 14, 5; Orach Chaim vol. 4, 70, 3; and Orach Chaim vol. 6, 45), the Minchas Yitzchak (Shu"t vol. 7, 48), Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo, Mo'adim vol. 1 Ch. 14, 5, pg. 273 - 275 and Ma'adanei Shlomo, Mo'adim pg. 118 - 119), Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (cited in Shvus Yitzchak on Hilchos Chanukah pg. 112; also in Ashrei HaIsh, Orach Chaim vol. 3 pg. 269 - 270, 36), Rav Shmuel Halevi Wosner (Shu"t Shevet HaLevi vol. 3, 83), Rav Moshe Sternbuch (Shu"t Teshuvos V'Hanhagos vol. 2, 157, 7 s.v. u'linyan & 342, 11; Mo'adim U'Zmanim vol. 6, 88, and vol. 8, Lekutei Ha'aaros to vol. 6, 88; in the latter source he adds that it should not help if one changes his usual eating place just for Chanukah, as the halacha should follow his usual year-round routine as

that would be one's ikar keveeyas dira), Rav Binyomin Zilber (Shu"t Az Nidberu vol. 5, 38, 2), Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fischer (Shu"t Even Yisrael vol. 9, Inyanim, 51; see also Halichos Even Yisrael, Moadim vol. 2, pg. 346, 12), Rav Nosson Gestetner (Shu"t L'Horos Nosson vol. 6, 44, 5 - 6), Rav Menashe Klein (Shu"t Mishnah Halachos vol. 11, 538), the Rivevos Efraim (Shu"t vol. 4, 163, 2), and Nitei Gavriel (on Chanukah pg. 16) [11] See Emes L'Yaakov, Halichos Shlomo, Shu"t Az Nidberu, Shu"t Shevet Halevi, Shu"t Mishnah Halachos, and Mo'adim U'Zmanim (ibid.). The reason is that according to several shittos, the dining room is the preferred locale for lighting; and even according to the majority who argue, nevertheless, most hold that it is still second best. However, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Shu"t Igros Moshe ibid.) writes that it is preferable that different Bochorim take turns watching the Menorahs in the dorms to make sure that a fire does not break out. [12] Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 671, 2), based on Tosafos (Shabbos 21b s.v. hamehadrin). See also Ben Ish Chai (Year 1, Parshas Vayeishev, Hilchos Chanukah 16) who writes that the minhag in Baghdad was even for a married son living in his own wing of his parent's house to first hear his father's brachos and lighting and then light himself in his private quarters - without a brachah, as he was already yotzei with his father. [13] Rav Ovadia Yosef (Shu"t Yechaveh Daas vol. 6, 43), Rav Mordechai Eliyahu (Darchei Halacha Glosses to Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 139, 28), Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul (Kovetz Zichron Yehuda vol. 1, pg. 104), the Tefilla L'Moshe (Shu"t vol. 2, 52), Rav Ezra Attiah (quoted in several of the above sources), and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo and Ma'adanei Shlomo ibid.). [14] Interestingly, Rav Ovadia Yosef (Chazon Ovadia on Hilchos Chanukah pg. 150 - 151; also cited in Yalkut Yosef on Moadim pg. 231, 2) and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo ibid. footnote 22; however, he prefers that the Sefardi Bochor join into someone else's lighting) maintain that even if a Sefardi Bochor is in a different country and time zone than his parents (ex. an American Sefardi boy learning in Eretz Yisrael), he nevertheless should still not light his own Menorah, as he is still considered part of their household, since the father is still sending him allowance, paying his tuition and expenses etc. However, most other poskim (including Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul and Rav Mordechai Eliyahu) do not agree, and in this instance maintain that the Bochor is required to light his own Menorah. See sefer Toras HaYeshiva (Ch. 12) at length. [15] Shu"t Yaskil Avdi (vol. 7, Hashmatos 8), Rav Shalom Mashash (cited in R' Moshe Harari's sefer Mikraei Kodesh, Hilchos Chanukah Ch. 9, 26, footnote 93; see also Shu"t Tevuos Shemesh, Orach Chaim 7), and Rav Yehuda Adess (Sefer Shiurei Chanukah, 14) [16] Accordingly, all the Sefardim can get together and light one Menorah. Alternatively, the Sefardi Bochor might fulfill his obligation by the Menorah lighting in the Beis HaMidrash (see Shu"t Yechaveh Daas ibid.). [17] Chazon Ish (Ma'aseh Ish vol. 4, pg. 131), Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv (cited in Shvus Yitzchak ibid.), the Az Nidberu (ibid.), and Shevet HaLevi (Kovetz M'Beis Levi on Moadim pg. 118, 3). [18] See Gemara Shabbos (23b); Rashi (ad loc. s.v. banim), Rambam (Hilchos Shabbos Ch. 5, 1), Tur and Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 263, 1), Aruch Hashulchan (ad loc. 11), and Mishna Berura (ad loc. 2). See also Sod Hadlakas Ner Chanukah from the Raavad's son. There are additional ways of understanding this passage as well; for example, see Kaf Hachaim (Orach Chaim 264, 38).

Disclaimer: This is not a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary to raise awareness of the issues. In any real case one should ask a competent Halachic authority. This article was written l'zechus Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam v'chol yotzei chalatzeha for a yeshua sheleimah teikif u'miyad! Rabbi Yehuda Spitz, author of M'Shulchan Yehuda on Inyanei Halacha, serves as the Sho'el U'Meishiv and Rosh Chabura of the Ohr Lagolah Halacha Kollel at Yeshivas Ohr Somayach in Yerushalayim. For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomos / sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu. © 1995-2023 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org>
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Chanukah Lights and Campus Darkness
BY Rabbi Moshe Hauer 07 DEC 2023

On August 31, 1837, Ralph Waldo Emerson gave an epic address at Harvard University in which he said "character is higher than intellect." Those five words should guide the presidents of Harvard, Penn, and MIT and their colleagues as they attempt to dig themselves out from their shameless and disastrous testimony to Congress and find the path forward for American "higher" education.

Decades before the current tsunami of university antisemitism, Harvard professor Dr. Robert Coles used Emerson's phrase to diagnose the problem he was already observing in universities. "Institutions originally founded to teach their students how to become good and decent, as well as broadly and deeply literate, may abandon the first mission to concentrate on a driven, narrow book learning—a course of study in no way intent on making a connection between ideas and theories on one hand and, on the other, our lives as we actually live them." Knowledge must never be divorced from values. The United States is an international leader in science, technology, and medicine, yet we consider our primary contribution to the world the American values of human dignity, justice, and freedom. When we worry about China or Russia winning the race to Mars or to energy independence, it is not only our national pride that is at stake. We are fearful of seeing that powerful knowledge in the wrong hands.

We have that same fear today as we observe the hateful rhetoric and chants filling the classrooms and quads of America's leading universities. We are horrified by the character and values of those claiming the knowledge and pedigree provided by these institutions and we are fearful of what their future as civic, scientific, and political leaders portends for this country.

American Jews have been on the vanguard of fighting for liberal values. Jews will be the last to shut down academic debate or to exclude anyone's perspective from the classroom. Jewish tradition celebrates vigorous intellectual argument as essential to the pursuit of truth, but it insists that knowledge must never be divorced from values. The Talmud (Kiddushin 31b) synthesized these ideals elegantly and practically when it noted that father and son, teacher and student, may argue like enemies in their determined pursuit of truth but will not leave the study hall until their love for each other is made clear. That vision of academic debate bears not the slightest resemblance to the poisonous rhetoric of teachers and students that have made these university environments hostile to Jews. As the prophet Zacharia urged, we must find room in our hearts and minds to love both truth and peace.

This emphasis on the fusion of intellect and character lies at the heart of the story of Chanukah, when the Jewish people encountered the Greeks, a nation similarly preoccupied with the quest for knowledge. Yet the Greek intellectual pursuits came along with blatantly immoral interests and practices that ultimately led the Jewish people to rebel against them. In one such ugly display, Greek rulers demanded *Prima Nocta*, where every new bride would lie first with the governor. While many Jews of the time were initially taken in by the Greeks' shared pursuit of knowledge, we were jolted back to reality by their bifurcation of that knowledge from basic morality and values. The Chanukah candles provide a stark reminder that knowledge alone casts a dark and menacing shadow but when

fused with values provides much light. That light can chase away the darkness and confusion currently enveloping our university campuses and their leadership and move them away from their spineless and valueless equivocation to instead guide their institutions to provide a genuinely higher education, staffed and led by men and women who are not just good teachers but good examples, educating their students to be good and decent, and building a future that reflects the prioritization of character over intellect.

<https://jewishlink.news/one-size-bava-kama-daf-37/>

One Size: **Bava Kama Daf 37**

By **Rabbi Dr. Daniel Friedman**

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Boxing is not a pretty sport. Sometimes, it can get pretty ugly. In 1997, Mike Tyson infamously bit off a piece of Evander Holyfield's right ear. And yet, unbelievably, the fight continued. And then, not wanting to appear unfair or unjust, Tyson later bit into Holyfield's left ear, making them both equal! Nevertheless, Holyfield became an inspiration and lesson in faith to us all. He later forgave Mike Tyson, declaring that he believed in God and divine destiny. May we all aspire to such faith in heaven!

Today's daf continues the discussion of the compensation one must make for smiting his fellow.

תָּנָן בִּישָׁא תַקַּע לִיה לְהוּא גִבְרָא אֲתָא לְקַמֵּיה דְּרַב הוּנָא אָמַר לִיה זִיל הָב לִיה פִּלְגָא דְּזוּזָא הָהּ לִיה זוּזָא מְכָא בְּעֵי לְמִיתְבָּה לִיה מִינֵיהּ פִּלְגָא דְּזוּזָא לֹא הָהּ מִשְׁתַּקִּיל לִיה תַקַּע לִיה אֲחֵרִינָא וְנִהְבִּיה נִהְלִיה Conan the barbarian once smote someone. He came before Rav Huna for judgment. He said to him: Go and pay him half a half compensation. He had a worn-out zuz, from which he wanted to give his victim the half-zuz he owed. But no money-changer would take it from him. And so, he smote the fellow's other ear and gave him the entire zuz.

This Talmudic story is the source of the classic lesson we're taught as kids. "Stop complaining about your sore ear, or else the playground bully will come back over and punch the other one and make them both equal," we're told. But of course, that's ridiculous and makes no sense at all. Sadly, as irrational as it sounds, in our 21st century society the proverbial practice of smiting the other ear with the objective of creating equality is often glorified as ideal practice. Rather than building up and creating different opportunities for those who are weaker, we lower the bar for all.

It happens in the educational arena, such as college admissions. Privileging historically disadvantaged demographics in the name of equality is appropriate, so long as it does not lower the broader level of education. Similarly, at the school level, it is admirable to have an open-door policy for all students, even those with learning challenges. However, the school must provide additional resources to cater to these

children's special needs. Otherwise, the ability for the other students to excel in their studies may be hampered by the need to maintain a slower overall pace in the classroom.

It happens in the realm of men's and women's ritual roles as well. Hashem created women and men equal. But in our small mortal minds, equality means homogeneity. Men and women must be exactly the same. And so, in certain non-traditional ideological camps, efforts have been made to ensure that women and men serve Heaven in precisely the same manner. Sadly, when that happens, both women and men suffer. For example, their decision to include women in the minyan count and accord them opportunities to lead services did not result in a total increase in interest and participation amongst the membership. Instead, the men concluded that they were no longer needed and stopped showing up. As strange as it sounds, the same ideologues decided that girls should reach adulthood and become bat-mitzvah at age 13, just like the boys. Incredibly, this aspiration for homogenization denies basic biological differences! Rather than recognizing the special regard Hashem shows women by advancing their physical maturity, they "bite off their ear" and make them just like the boys whose maturational development is naturally delayed.

Rather than believing all should be treated homogeneously, the traditional Torah world recognizes the different strengths of boys and girls, and designs programs uniquely suited to each. The learning format and style of yeshivas and seminaries are very different. Yet, it is precisely this differentiation that has resulted in a level of learning unparalleled in Jewish history. Every year, new institutions of Torah learning are opening for women and men, precisely because we acknowledge their different learning and ritual needs.

Likewise, on a personal level, as parents we must ensure that we are finding ways to engage each of our children in a differentiated, unique approach. King Solomon teaches, "Educate a child according to his manner." That's not easy, but if Hashem has given you children of varying abilities and qualities, He has also provided you with the strength and creativity to bring out the best in each one. Don't ever compromise on achieving excellence for one child in the mistaken belief that all must be treated homogeneously. Insisting that all your children must attend the Mir or medical school is not helpful. At the same time, however, withholding such opportunities from one child so that the others don't feel bad is equally futile.

One size does not fit all. Attempting to do so results either in clown or lotus shoes. May you celebrate the unique qualities of every child of Hashem and strive to bring out the best in everyone!

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www.torah.org/learning/drasha Parsha Parables By Rabbi
Mordechai Kamenetzky

The Search for Authenticity

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Every year, the dictionary editors at Merriam-Webster name a word of the year. I am not sure what the criteria for that distinguished dedication are, but it is certainly not bestowed upon a newfangled word or phrase that was created to describe an invention or action that was non-existent before.

I think that they choose a word that people search for in their dictionary, and in this day and age, it must be an online dictionary. I know that because this year they picked a very old word, but somehow people are searching for its meaning, and the truth of its meaning is certainly eluding them.

This year, they picked the word "authentic."

Yes, my friends, "authentic" is the word of the year! With so much fake, phony and fraud (pardon my uninventiveness) in the world, people are trying to understand what authentic means.

And they are, nebach, going to Merriam-Webster for the answer.

The editor-at-large, Peter Sokolowski, told the Associated Press in an exclusive interview, "We see in 2023 a kind of crisis of authenticity. What we realize is that when we question authenticity, we value it even more."

This year, according to Mr. Sokolowski, "There was no particularly huge boost at any given time, but a constancy to the increased interest in 'authentic.'"

I cringe at the blind leading the blind and then searching in dictionaries for the truth.

Unfortunately, authenticity, outside the source of total truth, is nowhere to be found. Newspapers (except for this one) are filled with lies. Broadcasts are filled with deviations. Images are altered, so that they speak falsehoods. Books are filled with fake history. And of course, periodicals are filled with fake current events. So where can we find out what authentic means?

My father used to use an expression, "Ah Russishe emes. A Russian truth." The reason behind the expression was that the official Soviet newspaper was called Pravda. In Russian, Pravda (п?????) means truth. The Yiddish version of the paper was called ?павда means truth. The Yiddish version of the paper was called "Emes," the Hebrew word for truth. The problem is that instead of spelling it on the masthead as alef, mem, tov, they spelled it in a cockamamie, Russian perversion, ayin, mem, ayin, samach. And thus, even their name was a lie. People are searching for the truth, but it eludes them. But the lies they buy, sometimes in innocence, become their mantra of their search for world peace and tikkun olam. As much as it is hard to believe, the Jewish neshamos, pleading for Palestinians

and protesting alongside Arab-influenced brutes, certainly think that they are altruistic, peace-loving saviors. But once the authenticators are truly fabricators, the stories concocted and the narratives recited become (for lack of a better word and equally abhorrent) their gospel.

An askan once requested to get a certain mission accomplished with the Russian government through a group of heretics who claimed to want to help the kehillah. Rav Chaim Soloveitchik allegedly rejected the idea and countered with the following story: There was a group of conniving thieves who came up with a daring plot. They dressed up like policemen and government officials, with badges and uniforms, and went to a very wealthy man who was known to store his cash in a safe. They told him that they suspect that there were counterfeiters on the loose and they had to verify his cash to ensure that the bills were not fraudulent. Although he was not suspected of being a counterfeiter, they said, they would have to inspect his cash. They issued him an official receipt for 5,000 rubles and said they would give it to the official bank where the money would be inspected and certified. All he would have to do is wait 24 hours, go to the bank, present the receipt, and he would get his cash back.

The man complied. After all, these men were policemen and government agents.

The next day, he went to the bank and presented the receipt for his cash and the certificate of authenticity, but all he received from the banker was a puzzled look.

“What are you talking about? What is this paper?”

The man was indignant. “Don’t play games! This paper is the receipt. I got it from the police for giving you all the cash!”

The banker shook his head. “Nobody brought us cash. You must be insane!”

The fellow was flabbergasted. “What do you mean? The police came and they brought you cash!”

“We never received any cash from policemen. Your receipt is worthless!”

The man began to scream. “How could you say that? They were dressed like policemen! They must have been policemen.”

The banker sighed. “You fool! They may have been dressed up like policemen. They may have even carried guns like policemen, but they were not policemen. They were fakers.”

Rav Chaim explained the obvious: “They may look like askanim and dress up like them as well, but they are not the ones to help us. They will do more harm than good.”

People are indeed for authenticity, but the places in which they look are mired in misrepresentations. And the purveyors of authenticity are dealing deceit.

I am reminded of the story that Rav Noach Weinberg used to relate: A young man entered the portals of Yeshiva Aish HaTorah for a few days and then decided to leave in order to pursue his quest across the Land of Israel. After two weeks of

spiritual hunting, including stops at shuls in Meah Shearim and visits to holy sites in Tiveriah and Tzefas, the student returned to Yerushalayim and headed straight back to the yeshiva.

“Rabbi Weinberg,” he exclaimed, “I spent two weeks travelling the length and breadth of Israel in search of spirituality, and I want you to know that I found absolutely nothing!”

Rav Weinberg just nodded. “You say you traveled the entire country and did not find any spirituality?”

“Yes, sir,” came the resounding reply. “None whatsoever!”

“Let me ask you,” Rav Weinberg continued, “what is your opinion about the Israeli Bafoofsticks?”

“Bafoofsticks?” the student countered. “What’s a Bafoofstick?”

“That’s not the point,” the rabbi responded. “I just want to know how you feel about them.”

“About what?”

“The Bafoofsticks.”

The young man looked at Rav Weinberg as if the learned man had lost his mind, and tried to be as respectful as he could under the circumstances. “Rabbi,” he exclaimed in frustration, “I’d love to tell you how the Bafoofsticks were. I’d even spend the whole day discussing Bafoofsticks with you. But frankly, I honestly have no idea what in the world a Bafoofstick is! I wouldn’t even know a Bafoofstick if I saw one!”

Rav Weinberg smiled, for he had accomplished his objective.

“Tell me,” he said softly, “do you know what spirituality is?”

Merriam-Webster may be dealing their deceit as they collaborate in defining authenticity, but there is only one place that is the source of authentic truth. That is the words and outlook of Torah.

Merriam-Webster can translate and define. They can even name it “Word of the Year.” But do they know what authenticity really is?