

# OHRNET

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SPECIAL PRE-CHANUKA ISSUE

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### DRESSED TO KILL

“...a fine woolen tunic...” (37:3)

Modern day Caesarea is Israel’s answer to Beverly Hills (and looks suspiciously similar to it.) It’s difficult to find a house in Caesarea that doesn’t have a swimming pool, but although the houses are sumptuous, running the gamut from the merely luxurious to palaces that the Borgias would have killed for (mind you, the Borgias would kill for a glass of Chianti), the dress of the inhabitants is uniformly abysmal.

Out of these palaces traipse their fabulously rich owners, dressed in flip-flops, tank-tops, and above-the-knee cut-off jeans. About as sartorial as a scarecrow.

We live in an era where “dressing down” is *de rigueur*. Even the President of the United States likes to appear in a golf shirt. In fact, apart from Head Waiters and Maitre D’s, formal suits are rarely seen on anyone, except for politicians.

Contrast this to is where I live, a few minutes from Beit Yisrael and Meah Shearim. As with most religious neighborhoods in Israel, few architectural prizes will be garnered by these neighborhoods this year. (That is apart from the notorious “Egg Boxes” in Ramot, designed for trendy seculars. The project won a prestigious architectural award but the apartments proved to be “unlivable” and were snapped up at bargain basement prices by the Orthodox community)

Religious housing is as drab as its inhabitants are princely. On Shabbat, out of these ‘modest’ (to put it nicely) dwellings

emerge people dressed like royalty — whether they are wearing the crown-like *shtreimel* of the Chassidic world, or a black Fedora or Homburg. Religious Jews dress to kill.

The children are outfitted like princes and princesses in contrast to their secular peers, where the pre-pubescent already wear the jaded jeans and expressions of the worldly-before-their-time.

At one time, even the secular world had some idea of the dignity of dress. Before the war, no BBC newscaster would be allowed to open his mouth unless he was wearing a dinner jacket and a black bow tie – and that was on the radio.

But that all seems to have changed.

In this week’s Torah portion, Yaakov makes Yosef a fine woolen tunic, sometimes translated as “a coat of many colors.”

This garment was a sign of leadership. After Reuven had disqualified himself by his inappropriate behavior by moving Yaakov’s bed (35:22), Yaakov elevated Yosef to the status of the “first-born”.

This garment symbolized his leadership status.

The Jewish Princess is an aging canard, an easy target for comedians – mostly Jewish. Truth be known, we are all princes and princesses, just some of us haven’t discovered that inherent nobility and would prefer to ennoble their houses instead.

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**Y**aakov settles in the land of Canaan. His favorite son, Yosef, brings him critical reports about his brothers. Yaakov makes Yosef a fine tunic of multi-colored woolen strips. Yosef exacerbates his brothers' hatred by recounting prophetic dreams of sheaves of wheat bowing to his sheaf, and of the sun, moon and stars bowing to him, signifying that all his family will appoint him king. The brothers indict Yosef and resolve to execute him. When Yosef comes to Shechem, the brothers relent and decide, at Reuven's instigation, to throw him into a pit instead. Reuven's intent was to save Yosef. Yehuda persuades the brothers to take Yosef out of the pit and sell him to a caravan of passing Ishmaelites. Reuven returns to find the pit empty and rends his clothes. The brothers soak Yosef's tunic in goat's blood and show it to Yaakov, who assumes that Yosef has been devoured by a wild beast. Yaakov is inconsolable. Meanwhile, in Egypt, Yosef has been sold to

Potiphar, Pharaoh's Chamberlain of the Butchers. In the Parsha's sub-plot, Yehuda's son Er dies as punishment for preventing his wife Tamar from becoming pregnant. Onan, Yehuda's second son, then weds Tamar by levirate marriage. He too is punished in similar circumstances. When Yehuda's wife dies, Tamar resolves to have children through Yehuda, as this union will found the Davidic line culminating in the *Mashiach*. Meanwhile, Yosef rises to power in the house of his Egyptian master. His extreme beauty attracts the unwanted advances of his master's wife. Enraged by his rejection, she accuses Yosef of attempting to seduce her, and he is imprisoned. In jail, Yosef successfully predicts the outcome of the dream of Pharaoh's wine steward, who is reinstated, and the dream of Pharaoh's baker, who is hanged. In spite of his promise, the wine steward forgets to help Yosef, and Yosef languishes in prison.

## ISRAEL Forever

### IN G-D, TRUST WE MUST

“**F**ortunate is the man who places his trust in G-d and does not turn to the proud liars.” (*Tehillim* 40:5) Our Sages in the Midrash apply this passage to Yosef as a criticism of his seeking the help of an Egyptian in gaining his freedom from prison. They point out that because of this misplaced trust Heaven punished him with an extra two years of confinement.

This lesson at the conclusion of this week's Torah portion serves as a reminder to us in our own times that

we cannot rely on the good will of the nations. Just as that Chamberlain of the Cupbearers failed to repay Yosef for his lifesaving interpretation of his prophetic dream, so too have our people been betrayed by all the lands they enriched with their presence.

The current worldwide effort to delegitimize the State of Israel is yet another reminder that only by placing our trust in G-d will we secure Israel forever.

## LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

### YOAV – THE GENERAL AND THE WISE WOMEN

**Y**oav was the commander-in-chief of King David's army and a clever diplomat as well. On two occasions he utilized the services of wise women to achieve his goals.

The first occasion was when he effected a reconciliation between David and his son Avshalom. The latter had fled after murdering his half-brother Amnon to avenge his sexual exploitation of his sister Tamar. Yoav sent a wise



woman from Tekoah to David with a fabricated tale designed to convince him to allow Avshalom to return.

The second occasion was when Yoav's forces surrounded the city of Aveloh Bet Maacha in which the rebellious Sheva ben Bichri had taken refuge. It was a wise woman in that city who negotiated with Yoav and convinced her townsmen to accept his terms and deliver the head of the rebel and save their city.

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. "These are the offspring of Yaakov: Yosef...." Give three reasons why Yosef is considered Yaakov's main offspring.
2. What was praiseworthy about the fact that Yosef's brothers did not speak to him in a friendly manner?
3. How do we see from Yosef's dream about the sun, moon and stars that all dreams contain some untrue element?
4. Who brought Yosef down to Egypt?
5. Where was Reuven when Yosef was sold?
6. In addition to the brothers, who else knew that Yosef was alive?
7. Why didn't G-d reveal prophetically to Yaakov that Yosef was alive?
8. For how long did Yaakov mourn the loss of Yosef?
9. Verse 37:35 states "his father wept." To whom does this refer?
10. Who was Tamar's father?
11. In what merit did Tamar deserve to have kings as her descendants?
12. Why is the word "hand" mentioned four times in connection to the birth of Zerach?
13. Why does the Torah relate the incident with Potiphar's wife immediately after the incident of Yehuda and Tamar?
14. How did Potiphar "see" that G-d was with Yosef?
15. Who in this week's Parsha pretended to be sick?
16. Why were the butler and the baker imprisoned?
17. For how long were the butler and the baker in prison?
18. How did the baker know that Yosef had correctly interpreted the butler's dream?
19. What prompted the butler and baker to tell Yosef their dreams?
20. How was Yosef punished for asking the butler for help?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 37:2 - (a) Yosef was the son of Rachel, Yaakov's primary wife. (b) Yosef looked like Yaakov. (c) All that befell Yaakov befell Yosef.
2. 37:4 - They did not act hypocritically.
3. 37:10 - The moon represented Rachel. Since she had already died, it was impossible for that element of the dream to come true.
4. 37:28 - A caravan of Midianites.
5. 37:29 - He was attending to Yaakov.
6. 37:33 - Yitzchak.
7. 37:33 - Because the brothers had issued a ban against revealing the truth to Yaakov, and G-d, so to speak, abided by their ban.
8. 37:34 - Twenty-two years.
9. 37:35 - Yitzchak, who wept because of Yaakov's suffering.
10. 38:24 - Shem.
11. 38:26 - In the merit of her modesty.
12. 38:30 - To allude to his descendent, Achan, who sinned with his hand by taking four things from the spoils of Jericho.
13. 39:1 - To teach us that just as Tamar acted with pure motives, so did Potiphar's wife.
14. 39:3 - Yosef mentioned G-d's name frequently in his speech.
15. 39:11 - Potiphar's wife.
16. 40:1 - The butler was imprisoned because a fly was found in the king's goblet, and the baker was imprisoned because a pebble was found in the king's bread.
17. 40:4 - Twelve months.
18. 40:5 - The baker dreamed the interpretation of the butler's dream.
19. 40:6 - Yosef asked them why they looked troubled.
20. 40:23 - He remained in prison an additional two years.

- *Kohanim* whose service is disqualified
- The mourner, the contaminated one whose purification is incomplete and the one insufficiently garbed
- Drinking as a disqualification for service and for teaching
- The material and condition of the *kohen* garments
- The requirement for washing hands and feet before performing sacred service
- The *kiyor* (laver), its faucets and its pulley
- What is considered an interruption in the purity of the *kohen's* hands requiring new washing
- Placing the hands inside the *kiyor*
- How much water must the *kiyor* contain
- The disqualification of an uncircumcised *kohen*

## DISQUALIFYING DRINK

“Do not drink intoxicating wine, you and your sons as well.” (*Vayikra* 10:9) G-d thus commanded Aharon to abstain from such drinking before entering the Sanctuary to perform the sacrificial service. The purpose stated was “In order to distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and between the contaminated and the pure.” (*Ibid.* 10:10)

These passages are cited in our *gemara* as the source for disqualifying the sacred service performed by an inebriated *kohen*. In his commentary on Chumash, Rashi explains that the purpose of distinguishing between a sacred service and a profane one implies that a service performed under the influence of wine is disqualified.

The only application of this rule in post-Temple times is the restriction on a *kohen* performing the mitzvah of blessing the congregation after drinking wine. Since offering this blessing is compared to sacrificial service, the *kohen* participating in this service must abstain from drinking.

Does this apply only to wine or does it also apply to other intoxicating drinks?

This is a matter of dispute between leading halachic authorities. In *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 128:38) *Mishneh Berurah* quotes the *Magen Avraham* as ruling that other drinks disqualify the *kohen* only if he reaches a very advanced stage of intoxication, but notes that other authorities rule that he is disqualified once he reaches the point that he cannot properly address a king.

• *Zevachim* 17b

## What the SAGES Say

“The Sage Rav would not deliver a public Torah lecture after a holiday meal, only the day after, because the drinking of wine disqualified him from any halachic ruling in an inebriated state.”

• *Gemara - Zevachim* 18a

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## WED IN DOUBT

**From: Alex**

*Dear Rabbi,  
I have been invited to a kosher wedding but I'm not sure I want to go. For starters, I'm single and a bit frustrated and feel like I might be jealous if I go. Secondly, I'm not sure it's the best use of my time. I mean, I could be learning Torah instead. What should I do?*

Dear Alex,

For starters, I offer my blessings to you that you find your soulmate at the proper time.

Now, I can understand your mixed emotions about attending a wedding while you are frustrated about still being single. That's a natural feeling most people in your situation feel on one level or another.

Still, you must strive to put these feelings aside and try to rejoice in each new couple's joy. G-d is certainly happy for the couple, and your lack of enthusiasm is a bit of a rejection of G-d's will. One piece of practical advice is when you feel that bitter-sweet pain of jealousy, you can turn it into a prayer to beseech G-d to bring you your soulmate. You can say, "G-d, I know I'm not perfect and there's still a lot I have to work on myself, but view this pain I feel as an atonement for my shortcomings. Recall our ancestors who in their pain cried out to You and You answered their prayers. Please G-d, in the merit of my rejoicing over the union of this couple, send me my soulmate at the proper time."

As far as your concern about missing Torah study, you should know that the Talmud (Berachot 6b) teaches that one who rejoices with the chatan and kallah merits receiving the Torah. This is based on the five-fold mention of "kol" in verses referring to the chatan and kallah as well as G-d's giving the Torah at Sinai. But what's the connection and why the need for this teaching?

For one, the Sages might be addressing your very point: Lest one think that attending a wedding will limit one's Torah study, G-d promises that He will give a special influence of

Torah which will more than make up for the time spent at the wedding. But there is also a special connection between a wedding and the Torah. Clearly, the five "voices" accompanying the chatan and kallah is indicative of the Five Books of Moses. In fact, the whole Sinai experience is described as a wedding between G-d, the groom, and His bride, the Jewish People, where the Torah is the actual wedding document that seals the union. Furthermore, by rejoicing in the union of a chatan and kallah whose home will be based on Torah, one celebrates the perpetuation of the Torah from generation to generation.

Our Sages also taught that one who participates in the wedding festivities is as if he rebuilds one of the ruins of Jerusalem. This is also a very lofty idea that seems to be based on the idea that contributing to the building of the foundations of this couple's new home is tantamount to rebuilding Jerusalem. And just as this chatan and kallah have attained their own personal redemption through marriage, sharing in this redemption catalyzes the Redemption of the entire Jewish People. This is yet another very important reason for as many people to attend the wedding as possible: it hastens the entire Nation's return to G-d in the Homeland.

One point of this comparison is particularly interesting. Why exactly is the union of chatan and kallah, who are marrying each other for the first time, compared to the rebuilding of a ruin that already once stood?

The answer lies in the Jewish mystical teaching that soulmates are not separate male and female souls, but rather male and female components of the one unified soul in the spiritual realm which is divided in half upon entering this world. This separation represents a certain spiritual deconstruction that becomes rectified through the re-union of the halves in marriage. Thus it is quite apropos that the building of a "new" home is compared to restoring a ruin of the spiritual realm alluded to by "Jerusalem".

With these ideas in mind, I encourage you to attend the wedding, and with the help of G-d, great things will result from it – for you in particular and for the Jewish People in general!

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## THE PRICE IS WRONG

### Question:

Reuven wants to buy a house from Shimon but doesn't want to pay the price he is asking. He hits on a plan how he can get Reuven to come down in price. He will get a couple of his friends to approach Shimon as potential customers and when they hear the price he demands they will back out, claiming that this house is way overpriced, and thus influence Shimon to lower his price for Reuven's sake. Is this ethical?

### Answer:

This is unethical and forbidden by halacha. Two Talmudic examples are cited as the basis for this ruling.

In *Mesechta Succah (34b)* we find that the Sage Shmuel was enraged at the price gouging perpetrated by the merchants selling *hadassim* for use in fulfilling the mitzvah of the Four Species on Succot. He insisted that they lower their prices or else he would issue a ruling that *hadassim* whose tops were missing were also kosher. Since there were plenty of such *hadassim* available, the price of even the perfect *hadassim* would drop.

In his commentary, Ritva notes that Shmuel held that imperfect *hadassim* qualified for the mitzvah but that there was a preference to use perfect ones. He was therefore not manipulating the price of the perfect *hadassim* through any falsehood. From this we can deduce that if *hadassim* without tops were indeed not kosher, Shmuel would not have made such a threat. The spurious bargaining of Reuven's friends is therefore forbidden both for being a lie and a deception. In addition, Reuven is guilty of transgressing the Tenth Commandment which forbids one against coveting another's home to the point where he tries to pressure him to sell at a price to which he is not agreeable.

The flip side of such unethical behavior is found in *Mesechta Kiddushin* (beginning of Third *perek*) of the Jerusalem Talmud. There we learn of a strong condemnation made by Rabbi Zeira of a fellow who saw someone about to purchase something and offered the seller a higher price, only in order to force the original buyer to make a higher offer.

• Based on the response of Rabbi Yitzchok Zilberstein, Rabbi of the Ramat Elchanan Community in Bnei Brak

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY \_\_\_\_\_

### MAZAL TOV AND ZAKA

**M**azal, a 14-year old girl living in the Torah observant town of Emanuel in the Shomron, was very excited about participating in the wedding of her brother. But a terrorist attack on the bus she was riding in almost put an end to her hopes.

A little over a month before the wedding the bus she was on was just about to enter Emanuel when a terrorist ambush claimed the lives of nine people. One of the many seriously wounded was Mazal, who went into a coma. When she finally emerged from the coma she begged the doctors to allow her to go and dance at her brother's wedding. Their answer, based on her delicate condition, was negative.

To the rescue came Moti Buckchin, a volunteer in the ZAKA organization. The prime responsibility of this highly respected organization is to identify the victims of terrorist attacks and traffic accidents and to assure that all parts of their bodies are brought to burial in accordance with religious law. The ZAKA volunteers are often the first ones to arrive at the scene of a terrorist attack and to administer emergency medical treatment.

This time, however, a ZAKA volunteer dealt with life rather than death. Moti set up a satellite feed from the brothers wedding to Mazal's bed so that she could participate virtually in his wedding.

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# THANKS & PRAISE

BY RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH

*“They established these eight days of Chanuka as a time to thank and praise Your great Name.”*

**T**hese concluding words of the special *Al Hanassim* prayer we add to our regular prayers on Chanuka express the essence of the celebration of these eight days. We thank G-d for granting us a miraculous victory over the superior forces of an enemy bent on forcing us to abandon our faith.

But thanks is not enough!

The Hallel we add to our morning prayers on Chanuka is the vehicle for praising the “great Name” of G-d – the way in which the Creator demonstrates that He also runs this world.

The difference between thanks and praise has thus been explained by the *Sefas Emes*:

We thank G-d for delivering us from a threat to our physical or spiritual security. If someone is given a choice, however, between danger followed by deliverance or an absence of danger, the natural reaction is to choose the latter. Such a choice, however, is the product of shortsightedness. Only when one is exposed to danger and sees the hand of G-d coming to his rescue does he develop an intense awareness of Providence.

This is why it is insufficient to merely thank Heaven for

the miracles which made victory over the Hellenists possible. We must also praise Him for having exposed us to a danger and eventually saved us from it because this gave us a greater appreciation of both the mercy and the power of G-d.

When we reflect on the experiences of Jews throughout history, we see glimpses of Chanuka in every generation. Although we have not been privileged to overcome an enemy and return to our Beit Hamikdash as we did in the days of Matityahu, we have survived inquisitions, pogroms and even a Holocaust. It has already been said by one of our great Torah scholars that the survival of the Jewish people is the most powerful proof that G-d runs the world.

Let us therefore utilize Chanuka as a time for thanking G-d for the miracles of our survival and praise Him for the experiences that brought us closer to Him. Just as we thank and praise G-d for our miracles as a nation, each of us must also have the same approach to the individual trials we face in life. May the spirit of Chanuka permeate every facet of our lives so that we can learn to be closer to our Creator.

1. Which miracle do we celebrate with the lighting of candles?
2. How did they know that the oil found was uncontaminated?
3. Who led the battle against the Hellenites?
4. During which of the "four exiles" did the miracle of Chanukah take place?
5. Name two non-halachic customs connected with Chanukah.
6. How many blessings are made before lighting candles?
7. Why do we light the extra candle known as the "shamash"?
8. What is added to our regular prayers at least three times a day?
9. What is the special reading of the Torah each day?
10. Is it obligatory to eat a meal like on Purim?
11. When do we have occasion to use three Sifrei Torah on Chanukah?
12. What three mitzvot did the Hellenites decree against?
13. What damage did the Hellenites do to the Beit Hamikdash?
14. What two military advantages did the Hellenite army have over the Jews?
15. Is it permissible to do work on Chanukah?
16. Why is there no Mussaf prayer on Chanukah except for Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh?
17. How does the name Chanukah indicate the date when this holiday begins?
18. What special prayer do we add to the morning services?
19. What did the Jews do after victory that explains the name Chanukah?
20. Which regular prayers in the morning service do we omit on Chanukah?

### Answers to the Chanuka Questions!

1. The oil for lighting the menorah in the Beit Hamikdash after the victory over the Hellenites was only enough for one day and it miraculously lasted for eight days until a new supply of pure oil was available. (Rambam, Laws of Chanukah 1:1)
2. Its container had the seal of the kohen gadol. (Mesechta Shabbat 21b)
3. Matityahu, the kohen gadol and his sons. (Rambam, Laws of Chanukah 1:1, and the "Al Hanissim" prayer in the Siddur)
4. The third exile under Hellenite oppression during the era of the second Beit Hamikdash. (Rambam, Laws of Chanukah 1:1)
5. Eating either donuts or potato pancakes made with oil and playing with the sivon (dreidel).
6. Three blessings the first night and two the other nights. (Rambam, Laws of Chanukah 1:4)
7. Since it is forbidden to benefit from the light of the candles we light an extra one so that if we do benefit it will be from that one called the shamash because it is sometimes used to serve as the lighting agent. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 673:1)
8. The prayer "Al Hanissim" (Ibid. 682:1)
9. The gifts of the nesim (heads of the twelve tribes at the inauguration of the Sanctuary as recorded in Bamidbar 7:1-8). (Ibid. 684:1)
10. No. But if the meal is accompanied by songs of praise to Heaven it is considered a seudat mitzvah. (Ibid. 670:2)
11. When Rosh Chodesh Tevet is on Shabbat and we read selections for Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and Chanukah. (Ibid. 684:3)
12. Shabbat, circumcision and Rosh Chodesh. (Midrash)
13. They made breaks in the walls and contaminated the sacred items. (Rambam, Laws of Chanukah 1:1)
14. They were stronger and more numerous. ("Al Hanissim" Prayer)
15. It is permissible to work but women have a custom of refraining from work for the first half hour that the candles are burning. (Mishna Berurah 670:1)
16. Because there were no additional sacrifices in the Beit Hamikdash during Chanukah. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 682:2)
17. If we break up the word into two parts — Chanu, and the letters chaf and hei, we read that they rested from the war on the 25th day of the month.
18. Hallel (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 683:1)
19. They rededicated the altar in the Beit Hamikdash, which the Hellenites had defiled. ("Chanukah" means inauguration.)
20. Tachanun and Psalm 20 before Uva Letzion. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 683:1)

*Happy Chanuka from the*  
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