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OHRNET CHANUKA *Special*

by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, zt'l

Freedom of / from Religion

Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, zt'l, our beloved Rosh Hayeshiva's first yahrzeit is on Chanuka. May his memory be for a blessing, and may we merit seeing the fulfillment of the prayer in this article: "To introduce more and more Jews to the wealth of Torah study, which will inevitably lead them to the fulfillment of G-d's commands — the essence of religious freedom." Amen.

Freedom of religion is certainly a privilege for which we all have to be thankful. Chanuka is the perfect occasion for celebrating this freedom.

In the special "Al Hanisim" prayer that we add on Chanuka to our regular daily prayers and grace after meals, we recall what the wicked Hellenist Greeks tried to inflict upon our ancestors. They made an effort to force assimilation upon them by causing them to forget the Torah and abandon their fulfillment of the G-dly commands.

We thank G-d for enabling Matityahu, the *Kohen Gadol*, and his courageous sons, to lead a small band of faithful Jews to achieve a miraculous victory over superior forces and to thus regain freedom to practice their religion.

This triumph over human enemies to achieve spiritual security was followed by a triumph over natural limitations in the miracle of the Menorah. Regaining control of the Beit Hamikdash, the triumphant Maccabees rushed to perform the sacred service of lighting the Menorah. The enemy, however, had managed to desecrate the entire supply of olive oil in the area by affecting it with ritual contamination. One miracle then followed another. A small vessel of concealed olive oil with the seal of the *Kohen Gadol* was discovered in a spot which escaped enemy eyes, and, although it had only enough in it to fuel the Menorah for one night, the oil burned for eight nights until a new supply of pure oil would be available.

We thus see that when our ancestors gained freedom of religion the first thing they did was to utilize it for practicing their religion – and their efforts were blessed with success.

How does this relate to the situation of our times?

On the one hand, Jews in Eretz Yisrael and throughout the world must be thankful to G-d that we are not subservient to any enemies like those Hellenist Greeks who used their power to turn us away from our religion. But what are millions of our brothers and sisters doing with this

great opportunity? Is there less assimilation today than when it was imposed on us? Or are we exploiting freedom of religion as an escape hatch for freedom *from* religion? Here is how a renowned journalist described the situation of European Jewry: "The prosperity and privilege characterizing this golden Jewish age has coincided with perhaps the greatest level of Jewish illiteracy in recorded Jewish history. Our great success and integration has come at the expense of our identity and awareness of our heritage and destiny as a people. And while in the past, assimilation — the cost of success in non-Jewish societies — was forced on Jews as the inevitable price of acceptance, today Jews who snub their roots do so by choice."

What this observer says about European Jewry can unfortunately be extended to secular Jewry everywhere.

As we celebrate Chanuka as a gift of freedom of religion, it is our hope and prayer that there will be no need for Jews to be awakened to their identity and their destiny through a rise in the anti-Semitism which has been the catalyst for such soul-searching throughout history.

The way back to our roots must follow the route chartered by the Hellenist Greeks – only with an opposite goal. We must first overcome "the greatest level of Jewish illiteracy in recorded history" by introducing more and more Jews to the wealth of Torah study. This will inevitably lead them to the fulfillment of G-d's commands which is the essence of religious freedom.

In conclusion, the message of Chanuka is to show our appreciation of our freedom of religion by practicing it rather than escaping from it. Only thus will we merit rekindling the Menorah of a rebuilt Beit Hamikdash and fulfill our mission of being a "light unto the nations".

Happy Chanuka!

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

ON THE FIRST YAHRZEIT

*Rabbis, students, alumni, friends and
members of the family have all come together
to share their memories, stories and thoughts in the*

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE BOOKLET FOR RAV WEINBACH

The booklet will be available in print shortly as well as in PDF format on www.ohr.edu

SIYUM AND MEMORIAL KENNES



A Siyum and Memorial Kennes for the first yahrtzeit of our beloved Rosh Yeshiva

HaRav Mendel Weinbach זת"ל

will take place Thursday / 28th November / 25th Kislev / 12:15 pm

in the Main Beis Hamedrash of Ohr Somayach

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, Jerusalem

The Ezras Nashim will be open

לע"נ

הרב חנא מנחם מנדל בן ר' יחזקאל שרגא זצ"ל

גלב"ע כ"ז כסלו תשע"ג

ת.ג.צ.ב.ה.

Excerpt from the Memorial Tribute Booklet for Rav Weinbach

Rav Weinbach, zt'l

BY RABBI DOVID KAPLAN

Each person has a list of people to whom he is indebted. To some he owes a little and to others he owes a lot. And then there are those few to whom he basically owes his life. For me, the most prominent in this last category was Harav Weinbach, zt'l. He was my Rebbe, my mentor and my advisor, as he was for hundreds of others.

I knew him as a *talmid* and worked together with him as a staff member, one of a handful who have done both. I was actually tickled silly to be privileged to have the constant access to him that the staff members had. I never took it for granted. As a matter of fact, the longer I was around him, the more remarkable he became. He was so personable and laughed easily and heartily, but I always had a sense of awe in his presence. There was a certain *atzilut* about him, a type of dignity. More impressive was the sense that he didn't care a lick about personal *kavod*, and he deserved it more than most. One of the beginner students in the Yeshiva once said to me, "Your colleague Rabbi Weinbach said in a talk today..." I wanted to throttle the guy. He was *not* my colleague. A Rebbe is not a colleague. Common purpose? Yes. Colleague? Never!" In speaking to each other we referred to him as "Reb Mendel", but in person he was always "Rav Weinbach" or "The Rosh Yeshiva". Due to his approachability there were underlings who referred to him in person as "Reb Mendel", but I always cringed when I heard it. He treated us as colleagues and communicated the idea that while he is in charge and makes the decisions, we share a common purpose. I once spent about an hour and a half counseling one of the boys who was going through a traumatic family experience. I was emotionally spent and physically rung out. Just then Rav Weinbach walked past and grasped immediately what had been going on. "No one ever told me about this when I signed up" I joked. He gave an understanding chuckle and said, "No one told *us* when we signed up, either".

When I arrived as a student at Ohr Somayach our personal contact was pretty much limited to hearing his talks in the Beit Midrash. However, anyone who ever heard him speak can readily understand that for that alone it would have been worthwhile to have come to the Yeshiva. For a struggling unsuccessful former Yeshiva high-schooler it was priceless inspiration. Each time he spoke, there was a reinforcement of my decision to give learning another chance. It wasn't exactly charisma and it wasn't exactly charm — though he certainly had both — but there was some undefined quality about him

and the way he said things that left me and all the others charged up. Over the years I came to realize that he was the "*rosh hamedabrim b'kol makom*". He was a peerless orator and always hit on the key point at any occasion. He spoke at countless *vorts* and always zeroed in on the target flawlessly, leaving the *chatan* and *kalla* feeling great. I remember one occasion, after he spoke one of the *hanhala* members leaned over and said to me, "The man keeps hitting home runs."

We would play baseball in the park across from the yeshiva at the lunch break. There was one time he came out to play with us. He batted and played the field and could certainly hold his own. But when not batting he didn't stand around and watch like the rest of us. He sat with a *gemara* and learned, until it was his turn to bat again. I realized that that was the real reason he came out. He wanted to teach us how one plays. You can enjoy yourself as a Torah Jew — but there's never a reason to sit around doing nothing.

I knew he loved to learn, and he was constantly doing so. But not seeing him off campus, I had no way of knowing how he spent his time. I figured that having so much on his plate, his hours away from the yeshiva were spent running and planning programs and changing peoples' lives. It was only when a couple of the boys who had spent *bein hazmanim* in Mattersdorf told me, "Every time we went into the local *beit midrash* Rav Weinbach was there learning" that it really sunk in that this is a man who is totally into Torah. And somehow he still ran programs and changed peoples' lives.

The outside world knew him as pioneer in *kiruv* and life-changer of many. I saw him as an immense *talmid chacham* whose life was learning. As the years went on I realized more and more just how much he loved it. Any time I had a question on a *gemara* or a *pasuk* or in any other area of Torah, all I had to do was knock on his office door and enter with an open *sefer*. Whether in the middle of writing or speaking to someone or a meeting — he would be drawn to that *sefer* like metal to a magnet. Proper etiquette may have called for him to tell me to come back later, but he couldn't. He just couldn't. He would stop what he was doing, hear the question and then give an answer. It was always a hands-on lesson that Torah learning reigns supreme. I must confess that a few times over the years I intentionally went in to "ask" a question because I enjoyed so much seeing how attracted he was to Torah. They say that if you want to know who a person really is and what is really important to him, look at his children. Yes, just look at

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Vayeshev

THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

“Then they brought Yosef to Egypt.” (37:28)

Charisma in the eyes of secular society is a dangerous blessing for a Jewish leader. Someone who becomes the darling of the chattering classes walks a tightrope. On the one hand, the chattering can turn to gnashing when the fangs of anti-Semitism emerge quite suddenly from behind the gin-and-tonics.

On the other hand, the “court Jew” can find himself so enamored with his own societal acceptance that he unknowingly betrays his heritage, and he promotes a counterfeit Judaism estranged from the Torah’s eternal truths. Carrying favor with the media can be an overwhelming, if unconscious, temptation.

When a Jewish leader is overflowing with Torah like wine from a cup, however, no alien ideas will take hold in his worldview. There is simply no room for them to gain a foothold. The Torah is like a *mikveh* ritualarium that purifies and refines his thought process. When he is nothing but Torah he is immune to both the approbation and the opprobrium of secular society. His universe is the four cubits of halacha, all that is left of true spirituality in this world.

A Jewish leader lacking the *Weltanschauung* of deep Torah knowledge is a half-empty cup waiting to be filled with an alien brew.

In this week’s Torah portion, Yosef begins his rise to power in Egypt. Yosef represents the ideal relationship between the Jew and society. He has the ear of the nation. He is celebrated and showered with accolades wherever he goes, but he never forgets Whom he represents.

There can have been no more difficult place to bring up Jewish children than Egypt three thousand years ago. And yet when a father blesses his sons on Friday night, the universal paradigm of blessing is that his sons should be like Ephraim and Menashe, the two Egyptian-born (but far from bred) sons of Yosef.

There is also at least one Shabbat during Chanuka. Both Shabbat and Chanuka are statements. Every time we keep Shabbat, we are making the statement that there is a Creator who created everything in existence from nothing. This statement disputes the Greek contention that the world was always here. If the world was always here there can be no absolute. Everything is relative. Ultimate good and bad have no meaning in a steady-state world, a world where there is no G-d. When you take G-d out of the world, things just are “better” or “worse” and dictated by pragmatism or sentiment. Without G-d, nothing is ultimately good or bad.

The symbol of Chanuka is the pure flask of oil hidden in the Holy of Holies. Chanuka is the festival of light, the unadulterated light that shines in our holy Torah. Chanuka

says that not only does absolute truth exist, but it exists in this world.

It’s exclusive, but it’s also available.

It’s exclusive because it exists only in the Torah, not in the Koran nor the New Testament nor the Bagavad Gita nor the Tibetan Book of the Dead. It’s only in the Torah.

Of all the places that a searching Jew looks for spirituality, the Torah is probably the last. Nowadays, all the holiest things are hidden. Nowadays, anything that smacks you in the eye is the opposite of the Truth.

But if you look hard enough and you seek it like pearls and precious stones, there is absolute truth in this world.

That truth was clear for all to see when it shone once at the dawn of Creation in the “hidden light” and was sequestered for the righteous in a future world. That same light shines on in the lights of Chanuka.

And, most of all, it shines on in the depths of our holy Torah.

Miketz

THE HIDDEN LIGHT

“When behold! Out of the river emerged seven cows” (41:2)

One of the most difficult things in life is to take the wisdom of happiness into the despair of depression. The depression and happiness are two different worlds, two different realities.

They have no point of contact.

It’s like visiting time at the State Penitentiary when the telephone has broken down. A one-inch wall of glass separates them like a prisoner from his wife. They gesture to each other, but their mutual isolation is total.

It’s like two people on different islands waving flags at each other, but neither understands the other’s signal.

It’s like two people who don’t know a word of each other’s language, trying to hold a conversation using a dictionary in which every word is mistranslated.

Depression cannot understand the language of happiness.

Seven cows emerge from the river. They are beautiful to behold, strong and healthy. Then, seven other cows emerge from the river. These cows are as dissimilar from the first cows as is possible. They are gaunt, skinny, and malnourished. And then, these evil looking creatures devour the fat cows. Nothing is left. The fat cows are gone and the thin cows are as thin and as miserable-looking as before.

In life, a person must use his days of optimism, the good days, the days that are full of holiness and closeness to G-d to fix in his heart the light of that holiness so that when lean gaunt days come upon him he is prepared. Then he will understand that the light has not vanished; it is only hidden. The light seems to have been swallowed up completely by evil, but in fact it is merely in exile.

At the beginning of time, there shone a unique light called

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

Vayeshev

Yaakov 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.

Miketz

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

PARSHA INSIGHTS

continued from page four

the *Ohr Haganuz* — the “Hidden Light”. This light was not like any light that you or I have ever seen. With this light you could see from one end of the Creation to the other. In other words, you could see the connection between cause and effect. It was self-evident why things happen the way they do.

The *Ohr HaHaganuz* was a spiritual light that revealed the existence of the unseen world of spirituality. G-d hid away the *Ohr Haganuz* after the first thirty-six hours of Creation so that evil would not be able to exploit its power. However, there are times when you can still catch glimpses of its hidden glow.

On the first night of Chanuka, we light one candle, on the second night two. Thus after two nights, we have lit three candles. If you do your math right you'll find that the total number of candles that we light on Chanuka is thirty-six (excluding the *shamash*). The thirty-six lights of Chanuka correspond to the thirty-six hours during which the *Ohr Haganuz* shone.

The power of depression is that it tries to usurp the light. It tries to usurp the true reality of things. It tries to tell us that the good days have been devoured by the bad. That the light has gone forever and that the bad days are now firmly in command.

That's the message of this week's Torah portion, and it's also the message of Chanuka. The thin cows want us believe that the healthy cows are gone forever. That they rule in their stead. The nations of the world want us to believe that we no longer have any portion in the G-d of Israel – that He has hidden the light forever.

However, those thin cows will only be in business for just as long as G-d allows them to keep the good cows in exile. They have no independent power. One day, very soon, that Hidden Light will blaze once more in this world of darkness and the rule of the gaunt and evil cows will be revealed as no more than a dream.

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 Vayeshevs 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.

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. What did the fat cows being eaten symbolize?
2. How did Pharaoh's recollection of his dream differ from Nevuchadnetzar's recollection of his dream?
3. What was significant about the fact that Pharaoh dreamed repeatedly?
4. What does "Tsafnat Panayach" mean?
5. What happened to the Egyptians' grain that was stored in anticipation of the famine?
6. What did Yosef require the Egyptians to do before he would sell them grain?
7. Did Yaakov and his family still have food when he sent his sons to Egypt? If yes, why did he send them?
8. What prophetic significance lay in Yaakov's choice of the word "redu" — "descend" (and not "lechu" — "go")?
9. Why does the verse say "Yosef's brothers" went down to Egypt (and not "Yaakov's sons")?
10. When did Yosef know that his dreams were being fulfilled?
11. Under what pretext did Yosef accuse his brothers of being spies?
12. Why did the brothers enter the city through different gates?
13. Who was the interpreter between Yosef and his brothers?
14. Why did Yosef specifically choose Shimon to put in prison?
15. How does the verse indicate that Shimon was released from prison after his brothers left?
16. What was Yaakov implying when he said to his sons: "I am the one whom you bereaved."?
17. How did Reuven try to persuade Yaakov to send Binyamin to Egypt?
18. How long did it take for Yaakov and family to eat all the food that the brothers brought back from Egypt? Give the answer in terms of travel time.
19. How much more money did the brothers bring on their second journey than they brought on the first journey? Why?
20. How did the brothers defend themselves against the accusation of theft?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week's Questions!

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

1. 41:4 - That all the joy of the plentiful years would be forgotten. (Not that the good years would provide food for the bad years.)
2. 41:8 - Pharaoh remembered the contents of his dream but didn't know its meaning. Nevuchadnetzar forgot even the contents of his dream.
3. 41:32 - It showed that the seven good years would start immediately.
4. 41:45 - He who explains things that are hidden and obscure.
5. 41:55 - It rotted.
6. 41:55 - Become circumcised.
7. 42:1 - Yes, but he sent them because he did not want to cause envy in the eyes of those who did not have food.
8. 42:2 - It hinted to the 210 years that the Jewish people would be in Egypt: The word "redu" has the numerical value of 210.
9. 42:3 - Because they regretted selling Yosef and planned to act as brothers by trying to find him and ransom him at any cost.
10. 42:9 - When his brothers bowed to him.
11. 42:12 - They entered the city through 10 gates rather than through one gate.
12. 42:13 - To search for Yosef throughout the city.
13. 42:23 - His son Menashe.
14. 42:24 - Because he was the one who cast Yosef into the pit and the one who said, "Here comes the dreamer." Alternatively, to separate him from Levi, as together they posed a danger to him.
15. 42:24 - The verse says Shimon was bound "in front of their eyes," implying that he was bound only while in their sight.
16. 42:36 - That he suspected them of having slain or sold Shimon, and that they may have done the same to Yosef.
17. 42:37 - He said, "Kill my two sons if I fail to bring back Binyamin."
18. 43:2,10 - Twice the travel time to and from Egypt.
19. 43:12 - Three times as much, in order to repay the money they found in their sacks and to buy more even if the price had doubled.
20. 44:8 - They said, "We returned the money we found in our sacks; can it be that we would steal?"

Abarbanel

ON PARSHAT VAYESHEV & MIKEITZ

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

Vayeshev

In this Torah portion it is very difficult to understand why Yaakov favored Yosef over all his other sons and why Yosef's brothers hated him to the point of selling him into slavery after having nearly executed him. Abarbanel makes it clear that even though all of Yaakov's sons had attained a high level of spiritual perfection, Yosef was the only one who totally absorbed Yaakov's teachings. Even though he was only 17, Yaakov recognized his superior intelligence and put him in charge of the family's herds and flocks. Yet he lacked any trace of arrogance as he is referred to as a 'youth' in regard to the sons of the maidservants Bilhah and Zilpah. He attended them and deferred to them even though they were the least significant of the brothers. He considered Bilhah and Zilpah his father's wives, not mere concubines. His self-awareness also allowed him to demonstrate humility and self-effacement.

Even the fact that Yosef brought an evil report about his brothers to his father is indicative of his superior character, for his intention was to improve their behavior. Yosef certainly did not slander them with his own opinion. Rather, he reported to his father in privacy what *others* were saying about them. Yosef's actions were based entirely on his love for his brothers, not by a desire to elevate himself at their expense.

Yaakov's love for Yosef was not the normal love of a father for his son. It was based on something deeper. When Yosef is described as "the son of his old age", this hints at Yosef's ability to relate to everyone in the family uniquely and individually. To his brothers he was a youth who respected their seniority. But he dealt with Yaakov with a gentleness and moderation which indicated that he saw himself as a true son, not just a youth deferring to the seniority of the father. Yaakov perceived this as a sign of his superior intelligence and character and therefore loved him more than the other brothers. Onkelos in his Aramaic translation conveys this idea as he renders the verse, "son of his old age" as "son of wisdom." Yosef had none of the impetuosity of youth. He thought through situations carefully, acting quickly when necessary and being deliberate when necessary.

There are two reasons for the brothers' hatred of Yosef. They were not able to understand that Yaakov did not find anything wrong with them. Rather, he favored Yosef because of his unique and unusual intellectual and ethical accomplishments. The brothers, however, were convinced that Yaakov was reacting to the slanderous accusations that Yosef had brought against them. We can assume that Yaakov chastised

them without revealing the source of the information, as no father wants to create strife in his family. The brothers assumed that Yosef was the source of the accusations, and that was why Yaakov favored him.

Secondly, they believed Yosef would inherit everything and that they would be relegated to the status of sons of concubines. Just as Yishmael and Esav had been sent away, they too felt that they would be completely cut off.

Miketz

The main difficulty in this *parsha* is how to understand why Pharaoh accepts Yosef's interpretation of his dreams and subsequently appoints him, a lowly Hebrew slave, to a position of enormous power and responsibility even before he can find out if Yosef's predictions are correct.

The first key to answering the question is to analyze the wine steward's recommendation to Pharaoh that Yosef be permitted to offer an interpretation. Besides the fact that Yosef interpreted the wine steward's dream simply and correctly, he impresses upon Pharaoh several other points in Yosef's favor:

1. Yosef had no inside information as to the guilt or innocence of either the steward or the baker.
2. Both of them were held in the exact same place, so Yosef could not draw any inferences from our respective positions in the prison.
3. He could not make use of any astrological calculations as we reported our dreams at the same time.
4. He didn't have access to any outside information as he was with us the entire time.
5. He is a Hebrew and a slave and therefore ignorant of the customs and culture of Egypt and the ways of Pharaoh's court.

Pharaoh is impressed and has Yosef summoned. Whereas Pharaoh's astrologers offered deeply symbolic and metaphorical interpretations, Yosef's interpretation is so simple that any Egyptian farmer could have said the same thing. Why then does it resonate so strongly with Pharaoh? First of all, it is important to understand that Pharaoh recognizes that his dream was clearly prophetic and that the true meaning was blurred by images and metaphors that imitate but still obscure the simple message. Deep down the dreamer has an innate sense of the dream's meaning. The correct interpretation simply triggers the proper response. When the interpretation is correct, the dreamer is suddenly reminded and feels in the depths of his soul that this was exactly what he saw. Yosef's

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CHANUKA, EDUCATION & INSPIRATION

From: Alan in Brooklyn

Dear Rabbi,
Do the words Chanuka and Chinuch (education) have the same root? If so, what is the connection?

Dear Alan,

Yes, these words are connected. Chanuka means inauguration, as Chanuka celebrates the “*Chanukat Hamizbe’ach*,” the re-inauguration of the altar by the Maccabees after its defilement.

Chinuch is an expression indicating the beginning of something. Thus, it means inauguration, but it also means education, which begins and initiates a person in the way that it is hoped that he will follow. As King Solomon wrote, “*Chanoch l’na’ar al pi darko* — teach a child according to his way.”

“Chanuka” when read as two words (*chanu kaf-hey*) means “they encamped on the 25th,” indicating that the Maccabees were victorious in battle and rested from their enemies on the 25th of Kislev.

Sources:

- Rashi, Tractate Shavuot 15a

From: Josh in Melbourne

Dear Rabbi,
I just wanted to ask you a few questions about

Chanuka. Why is Chanuka so important? What is the main feature of Chanuka? What do you think would happen if the Greeks were successful in the battle against the Maccabees? Why were the Maccabees chosen to fight the Greeks? Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Dear Josh,

Chanuka is so important because it means the victory of Torah over Greek philosophy.

Unlike previous pagan ideas so revolting to Jews, Greek paganism was bound up with beauty, art and philosophy. Therefore, it captured the imagination of many Jews. Many Jews became “Greekified,” or “Hellenists.”

This may surprise you, but the Greeks did win. You see, there was a battle and there was a war. The Maccabees won the battle and were able to hold on for a while but eventually they succumbed to Pompeii’s conquest 80 years later.

But the miracle of the oil inspired us to realize that G-d is with us no matter what. Without that inspiration the Jewish People might not have been able to survive future periods of even greater persecution.

Why the Maccabees? Because their father Mattityahu possessed faith in G-d which gave him the courage to stand up against power and corruption. The name “Maccabee” comes from the Hebrew acronym “*Mi Camocha B’eilim Hashem*” — who amongst the mighty is like You, G-d?” Although the Maccabee’s military victory didn’t last, the miraculous events of the war and the oil inscribed the message of faith and loyalty indelibly into the Jewish soul.

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

MODI’IN – THE CITY OF THE MACCABEES

Modi’in is the historical name of the mountain stronghold of the Maccabeans whose victory over the vastly superior forces of the Hellenist Greek oppressors is celebrated on Chanuka.

In his historical account of that epic struggle between pagan idolatry and Hebrew faith, Josephus describes how the wicked Antiochus ordered his officers to wipe out any trace of Judaism. They did indeed slay anyone who remained faithful to Torah observance, except for those who fled to the mountain area of Modi’in together with Matityahu, the son of Yochanan.



It was from this Modi’in that Matityahu and his five sons led their small band of faithful Jews in a seemingly hopeless war of “the mighty against the weak, the many against the few, the impure against the pure, the wicked against the righteous, the sinners against those who adhered to the Torah” — a war ending in a miraculous victory, climaxed by the miracle of the oil in the Menorah which burned for eight days.

Since the Six-Day War, the Modi’in area has been intensely developed and is the home of the fast-growing city of Modi’in I’lit, a thriving Torah-observant community, midway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

CHANUKA - IN THESE TIMES

“For the miracles, and the salvation, and the mighty acts, and the victories, and the battles which You performed for our fathers in those days - in this time.”

On Chanuka we light candles and recite prayers to publicize the miracles wrought by G-d, saving us from death and destruction at the hands of the Greeks. The two miracles mentioned in connection to the holiday are: the military victory, and the lighting of the Temple Menorah which remained lit for eight days with enough oil for only one day.

What is the connection between these two miracles, and what is the significance of eight days?

In general there are two types of miracles — one that transcends nature entirely, and one that takes place within nature. The basic difference between them is that the first cannot be denied by those who witness it, while the later can be. This was the case with Chanuka. The nonbelievers denied the miracle of the military victory. The miracle of the oil, which was clearly from G-d, was meant to show the nonbelievers that G-d was behind the miraculous salvation of the few and weak over the mighty Greek army.

Seven and One

The number seven represents the nature of this world which was created in seven days, while eight represents a level above nature. The miracle of the military victory which

happened in a natural way is represented by the number seven. The lighting of eight candles represents the drawing down of G-d's Divine light, which is above nature, into the seven day cycle of the world. According to the above, the eight candles should be viewed as seven and one. Each day we light the candles we draw down G-d's light which is above nature into the world, resulting in the manifestation of G-d's providence that transcends the limits of this world without breaking the laws of nature (*Lekutei Halachot*).

In Those Days - In This Time

The miracles of Chanuka, which took place during a time that G-d's countenance was hidden from us, are meant to remind us of G-d's constant presence — a lesson for all generations, showing us that G-d is with us even in exile, protecting us from harm. In fact, the prayer we recite proclaims this very fact.

The phrase “in this time” alludes to G-d's continuous performance of miracles for us in every generation. Even when the miracles are hidden within nature, when we look at our lives with faithful eyes we will often see the hand of G-d working behind the scenes. Sometimes it is only after we are saved, like in the story of Chanuka, that we are able to see just how G-d was there all along helping us to succeed.

With a little faith and a simple shift in perspective the cry “G-d is nowhere” will become - G-d is *nowhere!* *Happy Chanuka!*

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The Talmud, often referred to as “The Sea of the Talmud”, is vast both in breadth and depth. The *gemara* (Megillah 18b) describes the difficulty of maintaining a hold on all the Torah you learn, quoting Proverbs (23:5): “When you lift (or close) your eyes from it – and it disappears”.

Chazal (Eruvin 54b) prescribe a method for gaining a true understanding and making a lasting acquisition of all the material you learn. Rav Chisda is quoted as saying, “The Torah can only be acquired with signs.”

Talmud Navigator is an attempt to organize the Talmud in database form, mapping and charting the Talmud by tagging the various components and building blocks of the according to type and hierarchy. It is based on the system outlined by the Ramchal in

Derech Tsvunos.

This system of textual organization serves as a self-help way to outline the *sugya* in a clearer fashion. It assists in promoting a better understanding of the flow of the *Gemara* and in facilitating summary and review. It is also an excellent tool for a less advanced *Gemara* learner to identify and grasp the logical flow and interconnections of its various components.

Each Thursday we will post a PDF file which maps the *gemara* studied in that week's *Daf Yomi* cycle. G-d willing, we plan in the future to make available the Excel file which enables the user to make his own condensed selections of the *Gemara*. For example: Highlighting the main statements, arguments, questions, conclusions or personalized anchor points of the *sugya* determined by the learner to facilitate his own review.

Talmud Navigator is prepared by Rabbi Hanoach Zweig and is available at www.ohr.edu

YOMA 16 - 29

“One who suspects a good person of wrongdoing will suffer bodily pain.”

This statement, by Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, explains why the *kohanim* cried after they imposed an oath on the *Kohen Gadol* that he would do the service on Yom Kippur correctly and not like the *Tzedukim* taught. Although they were obligated to give this oath, as taught in the *mishna*, they were nevertheless worried that their suspicion was in fact unjust (in the case of a “kosher” *Kohen Gadol*), and that they would suffer physically as a result.

Rashi explains that this principle is learned from what happened to Moshe Rabbeinu. When he was sent by G-d to tell the people that they would be taken out of Egypt, Moshe replied, “But they won’t believe me!” — suspecting that the Jewish People lacked faith. As a result he was punished by G-d, and was inflicted with a leprous hand.

• Yoma 19b

“The Satan” (Yetzer Hara — evil incination) does not have permission to incite to transgression on Yom Kippur.”

Rami bar Chama explains on our *daf* that by examining the *gematria* numerical value of “*HaSatan*” — “The Satan” — we can learn this. “The Satan”, the Sage explains, “has the *gematria* value of 364. But there are 365 days in a year. This teaches that there is one day in the day when he has no permission to incite — on Yom Kippur.”

• Yoma 20a

“When Klal Yisrael does the will of G-d they will be beyond any number.”

This is the manner in which the Sage Rabbi Yonatan explains the apparent contradiction in a prophetic verse in the Book of Hoshea (2:1): “And the number of the Jewish People will be like the sand at the sea; that cannot be counted.” Rabbi Yonatan asks: “like the sand of sea” implies that they are a finite number, whereas “that cannot be counted” indicates they are countless. He resolves this by teaching that the Jewish People are “finite” when they do not fulfill the will of G-d, but are “infinite” when they fulfill the will of G-d.

• Yoma 22b

“Any Torah scholar who is offended and does not want revenge and does not bear a grudge is not a Torah scholar.”

This statement, made by Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Tzadok, may sound strange and unbecoming the spiritual loftiness which a Torah scholar should strive to embody. Also, it appears to contradict the behavior of the great Sage Mar Zutra, who each night forgave anyone who had slighted him during the day. (*Tractate Megilla 28a*)

Many explanations are offered to help us understand our *gemara*. One approach is that Mar Zutra wholeheartedly forgave people who slighted him on a personal level, whereas the statement in our *gemara* refers to a Torah scholar who was shown disrespect with respect to Heavenly matters of Torah and *mitzvot*. In such a case he should not forgive the other person since he dishonored not only the scholar but also the holy Torah — and this offense cannot be “repaired” unless the offender is repentant and sincerely seeks atonement and *teshuva* (Ritva).

• Yoma 23a

“From the first days of the Jewish People the study of Torah in Yeshiva has never ceased.”

This statement of Rabbi Chama the son of Rabbi Chanina is based on numerous verses, all of which contain the word “*zaken*”. Although this word means “old” in a literal sense, it is understood here to mean “Torah wisdom acquired by yeshiva study.” The Maharsha explains that we find elsewhere (*Kiddushin 32a*) that the word “*zaken*” is understood by our Sages to be an acronym for “*zeh kana chochma*” — “this person has acquired Torah wisdom.”

And although the word “*zaken*” lacks a letter “*chet*” that would seem needed in order to indicate *chochma* wisdom, the Steipler Rav teaches that it is indicated without writing it, since Torah wisdom is the only true acquisition that a person can possess.

• Yoma 28b

THE CHANUKA CANDLE — HAVDALAH HULLABALOO

BY RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

Chanuka, O Chanuka...

Just thinking about the upcoming holiday of Chanuka should be enough to warm the cockles of anyone's heart. With menorah lighting, dreidel spinning, *latkes*, *sufganiyot*, family time and plenty of *l'hodot u'lehallel*, not to mention extra Torah learning, Chanuka gives us eight memorable days and nights. But even once you decide which opinions to follow regarding where and when to light the menorah, there still remains an annual halachic debate that has been simmering since the time of the *Rishonim*. I am referring to whether one should light the Menorah or make Havdalah first on Motzei Shabbat Chanuka.

Light the Menorah

Motzei Shabbat Chanuka is unique as it presents a situation of competing halachic principles. This has been the basis of the centuries-old debate regarding which mitzvah has priority and should therefore be performed first. The Shulchan Aruch rules that on Motzei Shabbat one should light the Chanuka menorah in shul before making Havdalah. The Rema adds that certainly at home one must do so as well, and lighting the menorah precedes making Havdalah. This is based on the Trumas HaDeshen's application of the Talmudic dictum of "*afukei yoma m'achrinan*" — delaying the leaving of Shabbat. Meaning, if one can delay ending Shabbat he should do whatever necessary to keep the holiness of Shabbat a bit longer. Therefore, they rule that it would be preferable to light the menorah *before* making Havdalah, especially as it will augment the "*pirsumei nisa*" — "publicizing the miracle" — by at least a few precious minutes.

Taz: Tadir Tonight

However, the Taz counters that the famous Talmudic adage of "*tadir kodem*" takes precedence. When one is faced with doing two different *mitzvot* and is in doubt which one to perform first, he should begin with the one that is done more frequently. A prime Biblical example is that even on Shabbat, Yom Tov, and Rosh Chodesh, the *korban tamid* — the communal daily sacrifice — was offered before the *korban musaf*, the special sacrifice for those days. The Taz

applies this '*tadir*' principle to Motzei Shabbat Chanuka. He maintains that since Havdalah is made every Saturday night, whereas Chanuka candles are only kindled eight nights a year, making Havdalah takes precedence. Additionally, he argues, once one lights Chanuka candles on Motzei Shabbat, he is showing that he intrinsically already ended Shabbat; if so what further gain can there be by delaying Havdalah further? He adds that the great Maharal of Prague (this author's namesake) also ruled to make Havdalah before lighting the Menorah.

Taking Sides

As mentioned previously, this halachic debate has been ongoing for centuries, with many *Poskim* taking opposing sides. Those who sided with the Shulchan Aruch and Rema to light the Chanuka menorah first include such luminaries as the Magen Avraham, Vilna Gaon, Elya Rabba, Levush, and Chayei Adam, while others, including the Pri Chadash, Chida, Ben Ish Chai, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, and Aruch Hashulchan conclude that the Taz was correct and one should make Havdalah first.

Many decisors offer additional rationales and reasons to explain why they feel that the other opinion is incorrect. For example, the famed Avnei Nezer wrote a point-by-point refutation of the Taz's proofs, while the Chedvas Yaakov later did the same to his arguments. And, interestingly, although Rabbi Yaakov Emden cites that his father, the renowned Chacham Tzvi, scorned those who would light Chanuka candles first, he nevertheless personally concluded that that is the correct course of action.

Contemporary Kindling

Contemporary authorities also have taken sides on this issue. The Chazon Ish, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and Rabbi Shmuel HaLevi Vosner made / make Havdalah first, while the Tukachinsky Luach, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, and Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv ruled that the Chanuka lights should be kindled first. Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch writes that even according to those who make Havdalah first, nevertheless, if the setup and making Havdalah would delay the Chanuka lighting more than a half hour after nightfall, then it

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would be preferable to light the Menorah first, to ensure that one does not miss an opportunity for the optimal time of the mitzvah of kindling the Menorah.

Lighting It Up

So, knowing that there is such a huge difference of opinion as to the proper halacha, what is one to do? The Mishna Berura (681, 3), asking that very same question, famously concludes that in shul one should light Chanuka candles before making Havdalah (if applicable; many, if not most shuls nowadays do not make a communal Havdalah), yet at home “*d’avid k’mar avid, d’avid k’mar avid*”, whichever *shitta* one decides to follow, he is acting correctly. Accordingly, even if you have a *minhag* to light the menorah first while your neighbor is busy making Havdalah first, both of you should realize that both are equally halachically valid opinions. It is said that Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld used to ask his wife to prepare his Menorah for him on Motzei Shabbat Chanuka outside his house (*Minhag Yerushalayim*) while he was still in shul. This way, when he came home he would not have to decide which opinion to follow, and rather he would immediately light the menorah (before Havdalah), in order not to “pass over a mitzvah”.

Don’t Mix and Match

The noted Melamed L’Hoyeel, Rabbi Dovid Tzvi Hoffman (late 1800s), wrote an interesting responsum, relating a personal anecdote. Apparently, after following the Taz’s approach of making Havdalah first for twenty-five years in his role as the Rabbi in Berlin, one Motzei Shabbat Chanuka he decided that he was going to follow the Rema’s opinion and light the Menorah first, as it was getting late. As he was about to light, he suddenly remembered that he had uncharacteristically forgotten to say “*Atah Chonantanu*” in Ma’ariv, and technically had not yet ended Shabbat. He realized that according to the Magen Avraham he was now *required* to make Havdalah before lighting the menorah. He understood that he was receiving a Heavenly sign from Above. Thus, he concluded, as should we all, that although both positions might be officially correct, with many great halachic authorities through the generations to rely upon for whichever opinion one chooses to follow, nonetheless, it is improper for one to change his longstanding *Minhag*.

Whether we are contemplating the lights of Chanuka or the Havdalah candle, regardless which we light first, let us internalize their message that G-d’s *hashgacha* (Divine Providence) in this world, showing us that the triumph of light over darkness, is eternal and everlasting.

@ OHR Profiles of Ohr Somayach Alumni and Students

by Daniel Keebler

THE “JUGGLING” JEW

Dr. Mordechai Paul, Age: 31

Ramat Eshkol, Jerusalem

University of Calgary — Biology Major

Tel Aviv University – M.D. — Family Medicine

The Center Program Alumnus

Dr. Mordechai Paul had smooth sailing into beginner’s Judaism, listening to Torah lectures during long walks in Calgary. Little did Mordechai know that he was heading into a jam-packed, highly fulfilling juggling act between advanced levels of Jewish study and years of medical training.

The JLE trip left Mordechai so inspired that he stayed in Ohr Somayach an additional three months. Mordechai then began medical school at Tel Aviv University, and frequented Ohr Somayach at every opportunity. Eventually, the university dean gave him a two-year leave of absence to

study in Ohr Somayach and get married.

Some family members thought Mordechai’s first medical procedure after graduating must have been a self-administered lobotomy, since he immediately went back to yeshiva for 12 months, with only a part-time job at a hospital. Yet Mordechai says that at the time “It worked out for us financially,” and that “my wife is always trying to figure out ways to maximize my learning.”

Today Mordechai attends an “early morning *kollel*” (learning before and after prayers at sunrise), followed by a full day of work in a family medicine clinic, and an evening learning Torah at another *kollel*. Mordechai traces his juggling success back to Ohr Somayach and says he is still close with the rabbis. To top it all off, Mordechai’s enthusiasm for Judaism was well received by his family; they now enjoy the beauty of Shabbat and are active members of

the Jewish community in Calgary.



Questions

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 Chanuka take place?
5. Name two non-halachic customs connected with Chanuka.
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 Chanuka?
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 Chanuka?
16. Why is there no Mussaf prayer on Chanuka except for Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh?
17. How does the name Chanuka 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 Chanuka?
20. Which regular prayers in the morning service do we omit on Chanuka?

Answers

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 Chanuka 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 Chanuka 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 Chanuka 1:1)
5. Eating either donuts or potato pancakes made with oil and playing with the sivion (dreidel).
6. Three blessings the first night and two the other nights. (Rambam, Laws of Chanuka 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 nesi'im (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 Chanuka. (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 Chanuka 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 Chanuka. (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. (“Chanuka” means inauguration.)
20. Tachanun and Psalm 20 before Uva Letzion. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 683:1)

- Chanuka begins on the evening of the 25th of Kislev and continues for eight days.
- For the entire eight days of Chanuka it is forbidden to fast or to eulogize.
- It is permitted to work; however it is customary for women not to work for at least the first half hour of the candles' burning, and some have the custom not to work for the entire time of burning. The types of activities that are forbidden are things like sewing and laundry etc. (Cooking is permitted.)
- There is no obligation to have festive meals; however it is customary to celebrate by eating special meals anyway, because of the fact that the dedication of the Temple and Altar took place during Chanuka.
- It is customary to sing during the meals songs that thank and praise G-d. To sing and speak about Torah makes the meal into a seudat mitzvah, a meal of religious significance.
- It is customary to eat milk foods because Yehudit, daughter of Yochanan the High Priest, was taken to be defiled by the Greek ruler Holofernes. She fed him cheese (to make him thirsty) and wine (to quench his thirst); and after getting him drunk she killed him. This was one of the events that sparked the Maccabean uprising. Food fried in oil is also eaten to commemorate the miracle of the Menorah. Latkes and donuts are the most common foods.
- One should not fast during Chanuka, even on the occasion of a parent's yarzeit (anniversary of death).
- The festivities of Chanuka should be combined with study of Torah. Although many people have a custom to play card games on Chanuka, the Mishna Berurah states that, "He who cares for his soul should not involve himself in card games."
- It is obligatory to light candles, and one should even borrow money to fulfill this mitzvah. If a poor person needs money for Chanuka candles the community is obligated to provide for him.
- The minimum obligation is that every household should have one candle burning every night. It is customary to be scrupulous regarding this mitzvah: to have one candle on the first night and an additional candle every night (1-8), and for everyone in the house as well.
- Any type of oil is acceptable for use in the menorah, however, it is best to use olive oil. The oil should not be made of a forbidden substance, nor should it be something from which it is forbidden to derive benefit.
- The menorah should be similar to the Menorah in the Temple and hence most authorities forbid using electric lights or gas lamps.
- The light should be clear, and the wicks should not flicker.
- Wax candles are also acceptable, providing they have a single wick.
- All wicks are acceptable, but it is best to use cotton. The same wicks may be used over and over again.
- It is correct to have a menorah of glass or metal if one is lighting with oil, since other substances such as clay become disgusting after one use. If one can afford it, it is correct to buy a beautiful menorah.
- If one is using candles a menorah is not necessary.
- If a number of people are lighting in one household they should make a slight separation between their menorahs so that there is no confusion to the observer as to the number of candles.
- Ideally, the menorah should be placed outside the house to the left of the entrance. Since anti-Semitism was so common throughout Jewish history it became customary among many communities to place the menorah inside the house, near the entrance or on the table. In many families it is the custom to place the menorah in a window facing the public, especially where many people share one entrance (e.g., apartment building). In Israel it is customary to light outside in a special box that prevents the flames from blowing out.
- In most Yeshivot and Seminaries, it is customary for students to place their menorahs in the dining room at windows facing the street or public thoroughfare. (Lighting in the dormitories is usually a fire hazard and should therefore be avoided)
- The menorah should be no lower than three *tfachim* from the floor (approx. 10.5 inches or 27cm) and should be no higher than 20 amot from ground level (35.5 ft or 10.8 m). Ideally, it should be about 10 *tfachim* high (35 inches or 90 cm).
- The menorah should have all the candle or wicks on the same level, none higher or lower than the others.
- It is customary to have an additional candle (the shamash) with which to light the other candles and in order to use its light. The shamash should be placed in a way that shows that it is not one of the Chanuka candles.
- It is forbidden to derive benefit from the light of the menorah just as it was forbidden to derive benefit from the Menorah in the Temple, and also in order to show that its purpose of the menorah is for a Mitzvah, not just for illumination.

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The Laws of CHANUKA

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- It is preferable to have the candles in a straight line, and not in a semi-circle; however it is permitted to have them in a semi-circle providing each candle is clearly separated from the others.
- It is prohibited to light the shamash from the Chanuka candles.
- Left over wicks and oils should be destroyed after Chanuka (except for unused oil left in bottle) since they may not be used for anything else. One should not store the used wicks and oil for the next year, since there is a probability that it will be used for profane purposes by accident.
- There are different customs as to the lighting of the menorah. Some light at sunset. Some light about ten minutes after sunset and some light 1/2 hour after. Some specifically light after the evening service is recited (Maariv). Ideally a person should follow the custom of his father. If this is not known or is inapplicable for any reason, one should follow the custom of the local community.
- It is obligatory to put in enough oil, or a long enough candle to burn for at least 1/2 hour after nightfall (i.e. the appearance of three medium size stars).
- In exceptional circumstances one may light one and a quarter hours before sunset with a blessing. (However one should be careful to put in more oil or to use longer candles). If possible it is better to appoint an agent to light candles at the correct time, than to light early. .
- If one forgot or was not able to light at the correct time, one may light as long as people are still awake in the house in which one is lighting.
- One should prepare the wicks and candles etc. before Maariv (if you light after) or well before the time of lighting in order to light the menorah at the correct time.
- It is best to light in the presence of many people in order to publicise the miracle.
- On the first night three brachot, blessings are recited. "Lehadlik ner shel Chanuka", "She asa nissim" and "Shehecheyanu"...
- On the other nights only the first two blessings are said.
- All the blessings should be recited before actually lighting the candles. First light the Shamash before the blessings to avoid delay. It is forbidden to speak between the recitation of the blessings and the completion of candle lighting.
- "Haneirot Halalu" is recited either during or after the lighting of the additional candles.
- "Maoz tsur yeshuaty" then sung.
- Place first candle on the extreme right of the menorah. On the second night add a candle on the left. Light the newest candle first and proceed to the right.
- There are different customs regarding the placement of the candles, some follow the right and left of the observer from outside, some follow the right and left of the person lighting inside.
- Do not remove the Shamash from the wick until the flame catches on most of the wick.
- One does not add candles if they forgot to light on any night..
- The menorah should not be moved after it has been lit.
- If the menorah was lit in accordance with the requirements of Jewish law and it was extinguished, one is not obligated to relight it, but one may relight it without reciting a blessing.
- If the menorah was not lit properly in the first place, or was lit in a windy place and blew out then one is obligated to relight if it went out within 1/2 hour after nightfall.
- On Friday afternoon, the Chanuka candles should be lit before the Shabbat candle-lighting time (if one accepted Shabbat early, it is forbidden to light Chanuka candles). Mincha should be said before lighting, if possible.
- Remember to put in more oil or bigger candles on Friday, so that they burn 1/2 hour after nightfall. Try to light just before the Shabbat candles, (without of course delaying the lighting of the Shabbat candles)
- When lighting on Saturday night, some authorities say that one should light Chanuka candles before Havdalah, others say after Havdalah. One should follow their family custom in this. (Mishna Berurah 681:2 and Aruch HaShulchan 681:2)
- If one is a guest at someone's house (and staying there), one should give the owner a small amount of money to buy a portion in their candles and one may fulfil the obligation through the owner. Alternatively the guest may light his own menorah.
- If one is eating out then one should light the menorah at their place of residence.
- During morning prayers, Shacharit, one should recite the full Hallel every day.
- "Al hanissim" the special paragraph of prayers for Chanuka is added in the silent prayers, Shmoneh Esreh and also in Grace after Meals. If one forgot to say this addition, one should not repeat either Shmoneh Esreh or Grace.
- It is customary to light a menorah in the Synagogue every evening. It is placed at the southern wall of the Synagogue, in imitation of the Menorah in the Temple in Jerusalem.

8 Reasons for 8 Days

Why Chanuka is celebrated for 8 Days

BY RABBI REUVEN SUBAR

The Chanuka miracle: A flask with one night's oil burned for 8 nights. But being that there was oil for one night, the miracle actually lasted only 7 nights. So why is Chanuka 8 nights? Here are 8 approaches to answer this question:

1. They divided one night's oil into eight portions. Miraculously, each portion lasted an entire night.

Beit Yosef, Orach Chaim 670

2. The Greeks ransacked the Temple many days in search of oil to defile. Despite their strength and numbers, they overlooked one flask. A few weak, battle-weary Jews found it immediately.

HaMeiri in Lehodos U'lehallel; Sefer HaEshkol, Chanuka 6:13

3. Wanting the oil to last, they made the wicks one-eighth of the normal thickness. Nevertheless, the flames burned just as brightly as if the wicks had been the normal thickness.

Chidushei HaRim

4. The golden Menorah was ritually impure. So were all the Jewish soldiers, having come in contact with death on the battlefield. Therefore, they were forced to make a temporary earthenware Menorah, because earthenware is more resistant to impurity. But earthenware is porous, and when it's new it absorbs a small but significant part of any oil put in it. Therefore, one night's oil for a gold menorah was not sufficient for an earthenware menorah because some of the oil is lost to absorption.

Bava Metzia 40a & Maharsha Chullin 55

5. In one account, the text reads "and there wasn't enough (oil) it to burn even one day..."

Sheiltos DeRav Achai Gaon, Parshas Vayishlach found in footnote to Megillas Antiochucus in Siddur Otzar Hatefilos

6. Seven days commemorate the miracle of the oil, and one day commemorates the miracle that a few weak Jewish soldiers defeated the mighty Greek legions.

Kedushas Levi

7. Chanuka occurred in the year 3622 (139 BCE). Calendar calculations and other historical sources indicate that the 25th of Kislev, the first day of Chanuka, fell on Shabbat that year. Therefore, they needed to light the menorah before sunset Friday night, and consequently needed a little more than a night's-worth of oil.

Atzei Zayis

8. The commandment to light the menorah with pure oil is written in the Torah (Leviticus, chapters 23 and 24) immediately after the commandment to observe the Succos festival for 8 days (7 days of Succos followed by Shemini Atzeres). The Sages saw this as a Divine hint that Chanuka should be for 8 days.

Bnei Yisaschar in the name of the Rokeach

• Research based on *Sefer Ner Lemeah*,
Rabbi Yerachmiel Zeltzer

Albarbanel **ON PARSHAT VAYESHEV & MIKEITZ** *continued from page eight*

interpretation went straight to Pharaoh's heart. He was not interpreting the dream. Rather he was revealing what Pharaoh already essentially knew.

Pharaoh already believed that dreams were a result of Divine inspiration and that a correct interpretation can only come through someone with exceptional wisdom and understanding. Yosef informed Pharaoh of the enormous difficulties and complexities that would result from the fourteen-year cycle of plenty and famine. Pharaoh realized immediately that he had to appoint someone with that very exceptional wisdom and understanding to administer a new and comprehensive agricultural program. Yosef informed Pharaoh that whoever he chose would have to deal with the fact that the Egyptians

would resist efforts to confiscate grain in order to prepare for the famine. This would require wisdom and sensitivity to guarantee the cooperation of the populace. He would also have to understand the intricacies of market economics and would have to know how to store the grain properly to prevent it from spoiling. There would also be considerations in regard to selling the grain to other countries. Finally, there would be the complicated matter of supervising a large number of agents who would be tempted to steal for themselves. The bottom line was that Pharaoh would be faced with a monumental task that would require an extraordinary individual with the power of a king over the entire nation. In Pharaoh's eyes Yosef was the obvious choice despite his humble background.

Rav Weinbach, zt'l BY RABBI DOVID KAPLAN *continued from page three*

Rav Weinbach's children. Sons and sons-in-law who are all *talmidei chachamim*. Serious, no-nonsense *talmidei chachamim*. That was the man.

Rav Weinbach did not go for any of the gimmickry so widespread (and ineffective) today in the world of kiruv. He taught through word and deed that the way to bring Jews closer is to teach them Torah. As he once told us at a staff meeting, "We may call certain classes in the Yeshiva by certain names for the sake of packaging, but the bottom line is that they are all Torah."

His efficiency was legendary. Everything he did was done with *zerizut* of mind and body. How else could he have accomplished as much as he did? His desk was clear at the end of the day – a sign that he had completed the various tasks he assigned himself at the beginning of the morning. Speaking to him was the same. In all the years of being at the yeshiva and dozens of conversations, I don't remember him ever telling me to come back the next day. When I'd ask to speak to him it was always, "Come back in ten minutes" or "Just wait outside, we're almost finished." And one never left his office with any ambiguity. You received a decisive answer to any question. Whether it was in asking advice or in asking permission to embark on a project – it was inevitably a clear yes or a clear no. And in a poignant lesson to our generation, his efficiency was without the aid of a cell phone. He detested those instruments, as he did all of the modern technology which has brought so much vulgarity into the world.

The range of what he could be asked about was mind-boggling. I personally asked him halachic questions that arose in the yeshiva, personal advice, guidance for dealing with *talmidim*, and general Torah questions. And there was often a phone call or two where someone else was calling to ask a question. I, and so many others, would walk out of that office with our dilemmas resolved. He had a particularly clear grasp on the tricky Israel scene, ranging from the secular public on one extreme to the Neturei Karta on the other. I would also come to him to get a direction for putting together public talks, and he always came through. He would give ideas for topics to discuss and, possibly more important, what topics to avoid.

The *gemara* says that when Rabbi Chanina passed from this world, Rabbi Yochanan tore thirteen garments and cried, "The man I feared is gone." We didn't fear Reb Mendel in the purest sense of the word, but he was definitely the man who kept us in line. Any sort of deviation from pure Torah *hashkafa*, whether in action or in deed, would be pointed out. On the other hand, he was effusive in his praise for a job well done or a talk well delivered, and there was very little that felt better.

In the course of visiting various cities around the world, I have found that one phenomenon keeps on repeating itself. Whether a kiruv center in the U.K. or a shul in Australia, or an outreach operation in Denver, Rav Mendel was somehow involved. Policy decisions, halachic obstacle courses, the direction a community should take – the long reach of his wisdom had come into play. I came to realize how big he had really become and how large segments of Klal Yisrael were so dependant upon him. So many of his small physical actions had huge communal effects. A letter of *haskama* in a book or *sefer* affected countless people. Advice to a communal rabbi affected the many members of that given community. A phone conversation with a kiruv center director carried ramifications for who knows how many. And these sorts of things took place every single day, numerous times a day. How many lives were touched, changed, and saved by one person simply can not be measured or fathomed. And when I say "one person" I obviously mean the Rebbetzin too. The two of them were clearly one. There is simply no way a man could do so much without the encouragement, support, and yes, the advice and counsel of his wife. All of his, and therefore ours, is most certainly hers.

There was no shock at the *petira*, as we all knew the end was near. But we are numb. So many feel that they have lost the guide of their life. When Rav Moshe Feinstein was *niftar*, one of my Rebbeim said, "It was a world *with* Reb Moshe and now it's a world *without* Reb Moshe". That is the way I – and I'm sure countless others – feel right now. It was a world *with* and now it's a world *without* Reb Mendel. The Yeshiva will continue and his *talmidim* will carry on. But it won't be the same. It will never ever be the same. The heavens cried with us at the *levaya* as the rain poured down, much the same as my tears pour down with the writing of these words, and the realization that things will never be the same. On a personal level, I knew that he had *nachat* from me, and that knowledge was priceless, much the same as a child who knows his father is proud of him. Many other *talmidim* who are now involved in spreading Torah surely feel the same. How could one possibly get that back? Oy, Reb Mendel, we're going to miss you so much. So very much.

The grand welcome Reb Mendel received in *Shamayim* cannot be imagined. The *malachim* created by his Torah, his *mitzvot*, the Torah of his family and *talmidim*, his *chessed*, and so much more, were probably laughing and dancing. Instead of him standing up and speaking, he was the one spoken about. And then there's the tally of all the accomplishments. All that he put into motion will continue eternally to be added to his account and placed onto his desk. Only this time, his desk will never be cleared. The pile will only grow higher and higher.