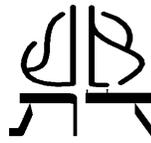


Toras



Aish

A project of the AishDas Society

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

In this week's portion, Yaakov (Jacob) hesitates to allow Binyamin (Benjamin) his youngest child, to return with his brothers to Egypt. Reuven, the eldest of the brothers, guarantees he'd bring Binyamin back home—proclaiming, "Let two of my sons be killed if I fail to bring him back to you." (Genesis 42:37) Yaakov rejects Reuven's offer. In the end, Yehudah (Judah) steps forward and declares, "if I do not bring him (Binyamin) back to you...I will have sinned to you forever." (Genesis 43:9) These words are accepted by Yaakov.

One wonders, why? Why does Yaakov embrace Yehudah's argument and not Reuven's?

Ramban notes that Reuven impetuously makes his comment while there is still food left from their trip to Egypt. Yehudah leaves Yaakov alone waiting until all the food is gone to make his plea. Ramban concludes that only after the food was gone would Yaakov be ready. This teaches the importance of timing. What we say and what we do may be rejected at one moment, but embraced at the next.

Another suggestion is in order: It can be posited that the greatest consequence of doing wrong is to be constantly wracked by the sin itself. And so, Yaakov rejects Reuven's argument as he offered a punishment if he fails. Yehudah on the other hand, is saying that his punishment will be his everpresent guilt in having sinned to Yaakov. In the words of Benamozegh (19th century, Italy) "sin itself is its own punishment."

A final thought comes to mind. Reuven's answer displays the assurance of one absolutely certain of success—so certain he offers the precious lives of two of his sons for punishment. Yehudah, on the other hand, recognizes the precariousness of the mission. He understands that he may not succeed. Hence, he argues, "if I fail, I will forever have sinned to you."

This issue of Toras Aish is dedicated
in honor of my parents
Rabbi Mordechai & D'vorah Weiss
on your wedding anniversary (I won't say which one!)
You are a source of inspiration to our whole family
and many other people as well!
I'm proud to have you as my Aba & Ema!

Yaakov accepts Yehudah's argument and not Reuven's, for, often, greatest success goes to one who understands the danger of the situation and realizes the very real possibility of not succeeding.

Additionally, Yaakov assents to Yehudah precisely because he (Yehudah) was prepared to act even when unsure of success. The real test of commitment is to become involved even when the outcome is unknown. This impresses Yaakov. This idea relates to the Chanukah holiday. Unlike in the Bible, where God assures Moshe (Moses) of success in Egypt, the Hasmoneans received no such assurance. Still, against great odds, uncertain of victory, they fought and prevailed. Maybe that is why we use the dreidel on Chanukah. The dreidel spins without knowing where it will land.

The Biblical Yehudah and Yehudah Ha Maccabee of the Chanukah story interface. Both were aware of the uncertainties of their mission. Notwithstanding, they went forward.

May we all be so courageous, to do, even when unclear about the outcome. And like Yaakov, may we trust—with the help of God—that all will work out.

© 2003 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

It has justly been said that the Hebrew word 'mazel', which literally means the astrological zodiac sign or the luck which comes from the stars, is in actuality a mnemonic for three Hebrew words: makom, z'man and limmud—being at the right place at the right time and knowing how to take proper advantage of an opportune confluence of circumstances. This is precisely what Joseph does when he is taken out from his dungeon prison and brought before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams; not only does he provide the interpretation itself, but he goes on to suggest to Pharaoh that he appoint "an intelligent and wise man" to sequester grain during the years of plenty and dispense it during the years of famine—in effect, to appoint him Grand Vizier (Genesis 41:33-46). Individual initiative must always augment the G-d-given opportunities which come our way.

This is likewise the crucial message which emanates from Hanukkah, a Rabbinically enacted festival which generally falls out during the week of this Torah reading. Hanukkah is called the Festival of Lights, 'Hag Urim' by the great second commonwealth

**TORAS AISH IS A WEEKLY PARSHA NEWSLETTER
DISTRIBUTED VIA EMAIL AND THE WORLD WIDE WEB.
SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR MORE
INFORMATION**

EMAIL YITZ@AISHDAS.ORG

**COPIES OF TORAS AISH ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE
FOLLOWING ADDRESS ON THE WEB (WWW) :**

HTTP://AISHDAS.ORG

The material presented in this publication was collected from publicly available electronic mail, computer archives and the UseNet. It is being presented with the permission of the respective authors. Toras Aish is solely the work of the AishDas Society, and does not necessarily reflect the views of any given synagogue.

**TO DEDICATE THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE CALL
973-472-0180 OR EMAIL YITZ@AISHDAS.ORG**

historian Josephus. One of the most fundamental reasons for this appellation is a Talmudic passage about Adam, the very first human being:

"When Adam the first saw that the day was becoming smaller and smaller, he said, 'Woe unto me, lest, because I sinned, the world is darkening because of me and is returning to emptiness and void (tohu andbohu) ;... But then when he saw that the day began to grow longer, he realized that the comparative length of night and day was part of the immutable order of the world. He then went and established eight days of Festival. The next year two types of Festivals for eight days were held at that time, with one group giving praise to G-d and the other group giving praise to idols..." (B.T. Avodah Zarah 8a).

This passage is apparently making reference to an ancient Festival of lights which celebrated the beginning of the yearly lengthening of the days, when the frightening night began to lessen in time and give way to the optimistic daylight which began to grow longer. The lights of the menorah which were kindled in the Holy Temple and which are kindled in our homes at the same time of year represents the importance of the human addition to the Divine gift of light, the human kindling of the light of Torah which will eventually lead the world to peace and redemption.

This theme of the importance of human intervention, augmentation and even initiation is fundamental to the festival of Hanukkah from many different perspectives. According to the Sixteenth Century Code of Jewish Law (Shulhan Arukh), the laws of Hanukkah are discussed before the laws of Purim, a logical progression from the one to the other, because Hanukkah falls out before Purim in the Hebrew calendrical year. Maimonides, however, in his 13th Century Mishneh Torah compendium of Jewish Law, discusses the laws of Purim before the laws of Hanukkah. Why? Historically, chronologically Purim

(536-516 B.C.E.) comes before Hanukkah (165 B.C.E.). But my teacher and mentor, Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik, provided a brilliant additional insight. If it were not for Purim, the first Rabbinically added Festival based upon Queen Esther's Megillah which she requested be included within the twenty-four Books of the Bible, we would never know that we in post-Biblical times have the right to initiate a Festival like Hanukkah! It is only after the precedent of Megillat Esther has been established that we recognize the rights of later generations to initiate a Festival like Hanukkah (and Yom Haatzmaut). And from this perspective, both Purim and Hanukkah teach us the importance of rabbinic additives of decrees, enactments and customs to the Torah of the Almighty, how we human students of Torah must enhance the treasure trove of Torah in each generation. The Divine Torah is G-d's gift to us; Rabbinic additions—be they added holidays, decrees or customs—are our gift to G-d and to future generations...

Finally, I would like to strengthen the decision of Rav Joseph Karo, compiler of the Shulhan Arukh, for his having codified the laws of Hanukkah before the laws of Purim in accordance with the calendrical year and despite the historical chronology the other way. From my perspective, Hanukkah deserves to come first—because Hanukkah is a Festival of Israel whereas Purim is a Festival of the galut (exile) of Persia.

According to most chronologies of the midrash, Purim occurred after Cyrus, King of Persia gave permission to the Jews exiled to Babylon—Persia to return to Judea. The majority opted to remain in Persia—for economic and security considerations. Tragically, they suffered the twin dangers of exilic Jewry: assimilation (the "entire" Jewish community went to Ahasueros' open Palace feast, despite the lack of Kashrut certification) and anti-Semitism (Haman). At the end of the day all they can do is defend their own lives and hope for survival; our Sages do not even ordain the recitation of Hallel (Psalms of Praise) on Purim because "we are still slaves of Ahasueros" in Persia.

Hanukkah, on the other hand, occurs in Judea, where we not only defend our lives but we dare to re-dedicate the Holy Temple of world peace. On Hanukkah we recite Hallel for eight days—because in Israel we are not enslaved, in Israel we can re-establish Jewish sovereignty, as we did then for more than two hundred years. Despite the fact that the Hasamoneans ultimately failed in their mission, fell prey to internecine struggle and assimilation, nevertheless Hanukkah is a complete holiday—because in Israel we reach out not only for survival but even for redemption. And since redemption can only take place when the Jews return to the land of Israel and the Torah of Israel, since redemption requires human initiative and human action in accordance with G-d's will, the paradigm for redemption is Hanukkah: human augmentation of G-d's hand in history! © 2003 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

After the brothers returned from Egypt loaded with food, but missing Shimon (Beraishis 42:24-34), they tried to convince Ya'akov to let them bring Binyamin down- as this was the condition set in order to free Shimon. Specifically, Reuvain and Yehuda tried to talk Ya'akov into allowing Binyamin to return with them. Both guaranteed his safe return; Reuvain offered the lives of his two sons as collateral (42:37) while Yehuda offered his own life (and spiritual future) as same (43:9). Yet, Ya'akov's curt response to Reuvain is that Binyamin cannot return, lest tragedy befall him on the way, while he allows Yehuda to bring him down. Ya'akov wouldn't want anything bad to happen to Reuvain's children (his grandchildren) or to Yehuda, so why did he acquiesce to the latter and not the former?

The Brisker Rav explains why Ya'akov initially refused to send Binyamin back with the brothers. When they first returned, they had plenty of food for the family, so the only reason to bring Binyamin down was in order to free Shimon. With Ya'akov fearing for Binyamin's safety, it would mean endangering Binyamin's life in order to save Shimon's- and the Talmud (Sanhedrin 72b) prohibits sacrificing one life in order to save another life.

Knowing this, Yehuda (Beraishis Rabba 91:6) reassured his brothers that when the food runs out, things would change, as then they would all be in danger of starving to death (including Binyamin). Once Binyamin's life would already be in danger (and not first be exposed to danger due to the traveling), Ya'akov could send Binyamin with them to get food and get Shimon freed. It was for this reason, the Brisker Rav continues, that Yehuda said, "send the lad with me, and let us get up and go, and we will [therefore] live and not die- us and also you and also our children" (43:8). He mentioned themselves being saved before Ya'akov ("us and you" rather than "you and us") because Binyamin was a part of the "us" being saved from starvation, thereby allowing him to travel in the first place.

After explaining why Ya'akov finally agreed to let Binyamin go with them, the Brisker Rav leaves the following question unanswered: If the reason Ya'akov approved Binyamin's going was because there was no other choice (since his life was already in danger), why did Yehuda have to offer his future as collateral at all? The prohibition against putting one life in danger in order to save another life was no longer applicable, so Ya'akov should have allowed Binyamin to go even if there was no guarantee from Yehuda!

However, Rashi had told us (42:36, possibly based on Beraishis Rabba 91:12) that Ya'akov "suspected that perhaps the brothers had killed Shimon or sold him as they had Yosef." If Ya'akov could no longer trust them, even suspecting them of being

responsible for Yosef and Shimon's disappearances, then his fear might not have only been of the dangers of travel, but also of traveling with his brothers. Even if he didn't suspect that they would harm Binyamin, he could not have been certain that the story they had told about what happened in Egypt was fully accurate. Binyamin (already) being in danger was not enough of a reason to let him go unless he was needed to remove that danger. If the Egyptian Viceroy had actually demanded that Binyamin come down before he sells them any more food, then his presence was necessary- and he would be going there to remove the danger from himself and the rest of the family. But if Ya'akov wasn't sure that this part of the story was true (whether it was a ruse to remove Binyamin from his "safe" haven or for another reason), then he would be hesitant to expose him to unnecessary danger.

When Reuvain put his sons up as collateral, the only one in danger was Shimon (as they had just returned with food). Even if his guarantee was enough to convince Ya'akov that they were telling the truth (that Binyamin was needed in order to free Shimon), Ya'akov would not expose Binyamin to danger "just" to save Shimon. But when Yehuda guaranteed Binyamin's safe return, it convinced him that he was (also) needed in order to procure more food. It was then that he allowed Binyamin to travel with them back to Egypt.

While the "standard" perception of why Ya'akov let Binyamin travel after Yehuda's guarantee rather than Reuvain's might be based on his trusting that Yehuda had more influence among the brothers (or a greater ability to protect Binyamin from danger), it very well might be that it was more a matter of timing than anything else; only after the food ran out (and Binyamin himself was in danger) did Ya'akov allow his youngest son to leave his side. © 2003 Rabbi D. Kramer

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

Virtual Beit Medrash

STUDENT SUMMARIES OF SICHOT OF THE ROSHEI YESHIVA HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT"A

Summarized by Shalom Birnbaum

Translated by David Silverberg

In describing the events commemorated on the festival of Chanuka, the Rambam (Hilkhos Chanuka 1:1) provides the general background of the troubles that Am Yisrael confronted under Greek rule. Then, in the second halakha, he records what happened on Chanuka itself: "When Yisrael overpowered their enemies and destroyed them, it was the 25th of Kislev. They entered the Sanctuary and found no pure oil in the Temple with the exception of a single jug. It contained enough to light for only one day, but they lit the candles from it for eight days, until they pressed olives and produced pure oil."

The Rambam writes that the miracle occurred on the 25th of Kislev. Rav Soloveitchik zt"l once raised

a question about this (and this question appears as well in the name of the Ma'aseh Rokei'ach in the "Sefer Ha-maftei'ach" of the Frankel edition of the Rambam). If the Chashmonaim entered the Sanctuary on the 25th of Kislev, the first lighting they performed occurred that night. Thus, the miracle occurred on the 26th of Kislev, rather than the 25th!

Rav Soloveitchik answered (and this answer appears in the aforementioned "Sefer Ha-maftei'ach" in the name of the Arugat Ha-bosem) that the Rambam here operates according to his own position regarding the mitzva of "hatavat ha-nerot" (cleaning the oil lamps of the menorah). The Rambam maintains that the menorah was lit twice daily; beyond the standard lighting in the evening, the menorah was lit as well as part of the hatava. According to the Rambam, there is a mitzvat asei to change the wicks and light them so that they will light more easily later. On the one hand, this mitzva contains the element of preparation, but additionally, it also constitutes a halakhic act of lighting.

Most Rishonim, such as the Ra'avad (Hilkhot Avodat Yom Ha-kippurim 2:2) disagree with the Rambam. The Rashba, too, tries to disprove the Rambam's position in two lengthy responsa. In any event, according to the Rambam, the hatavat ha-menora on the 25th of Kislev occurred in the morning and included the lighting of the menorah. It thus turns out that this hatava comprises one of the components of the Chanuka miracle, and Chanuka, therefore, is the time of hatava. What are the characteristics of this hatava?

Two distinct points stand at the center of this ritual. One mitzva requires arranging the oil lamps. In this sense, "hatava" means cleaning and preparing the menorah. The verb "le-heitiv" in this context means an act of enhancement in terms of quality. Heavy emphasis is placed in the Temple on quality, and this emphasis bears significance in the realm of spirituality, as well.

This past summer, we learned the third chapter of Masekhet Sukka ("Lulav Ha-gazul"), which includes the topic of "mitzva ha-ba'a ba-aveira" (performing a mitzva by violating a transgression). We saw that according to some Rishonim, this disqualification generally applies only mi-de'rabbanan, but when it comes to the Temple service, it applies on the level of Torah law, as it entails a deficiency in quality.

We find other external properties that yield a disqualification in the Temple, such as a physical blemish; even a spot in the eye renders an animal invalid as a sacrifice. Beyond that, there is also a positive demand for quality and perfection. Birds are not disqualified for use in the Temple due to physical blemish, nor does this factor pertain to the firewood on the altar or anything else that originates from the ground. Yet, even regarding these there exists a mitzvat asei of "They shall be unblemished for you, as shall be their libations." Meaning, the Torah requires striving towards perfect quality even regarding unblemished

items, and reaching for the highest possible standards; and this applies on the level of Torah law.

The Gemara in Menachot (64a) exemplifies this notion: "Rabba said: If one had before him [on Shabbat] two sin-offerings, one robust and the other lean—if he slaughtered the robust animal and thereafter slaughtered the lean animal, he is liable [for having violated Shabbat]; first the lean animal and thereafter the robust animal—he is exempt [from punishment]. What's more, we would tell him [after he slaughtered the lean animal] bring the robust animal and slaughter it."

Although a lean animal is not formally disqualified for use as a sacrifice, nevertheless, Halakha requires striving for the highest standard and slaughtering the robust animal, even if the lean animal had already been slaughtered. This is true despite the fact that doing so will retroactively render the original slaughtering (of the lean animal) superfluous, and thus in essence a Shabbat violation.

A similar law applies to the menorah. Technically, the menorah could be lit even without cleaning and neatly arranging the lamps; nevertheless, the mitzva requires cleaning them and making them orderly. The pursuit of the highest quality in the mitzva of lighting the menorah finds expression even in the lighting itself, which is performed specifically with pure olive oil.

There is also a second point that characterizes hatavat ha-menora, according to the way most Rishonim define the mitzva. Lighting entails no physical exertion whatsoever, and the desired result of a shining light is attained immediately. When it comes to hatavat ha-menora, however, the situation is reversed. The work is difficult and filthy, and after its completion one still has nothing; he has merely performed the preparations in the morning for the lighting that will occur late in the afternoon. In the mitzva of hatava, then, we have hard work without results.

We generally perceive Chanuka as a festival of lighting, with all its symbolism. But according to Rav Soloveitchik's understanding of the Rambam, our point of departure lies specifically in the hatava; this is our springboard.

The message for us on Chanuka is partially the joy of lighting, but we must remember as well the task involved in the hatava. The symbolism of hatava is dual: a readiness to roll up one's sleeves and apply himself to a goal, and the emotional ability to invest today to harvest the fruits only tomorrow—and sometimes tomorrow occurs much later than the following day.

In yeshiva, we occupy ourselves with the menorah of Torah; in fact, each one of us is a menorah of Torah. We must ask ourselves to what extent we invest in "hatava." For "lighting" we are all prepared to run, whereas "hatava" is far less appealing and enchanting. It entails a lot of hard work, effort, and investment, and its fruits do not initially appear within visible range.

Often we find ourselves in a situation where we are prepared to involve ourselves in lighting, but not in the preliminary stage of *hatava*. We do not see any qualitative or quantitative results within the short range. One must assess the extent to which he approaches his studies with a sense of genuine effort and exertion, while setting for himself specific objectives and goals and rolling up his sleeves in pursuit of them.

In recent years, our world has been afflicted by a sense of unwillingness to invest hard work and effort. In an article I published last year, I mentioned a story I heard from a certain Torah scholar in Jerusalem, a relative of mine, who has a yeshiva named, "Iyun Ha-Talmud" ("In-Depth Study of Talmud"—a name that indeed characterizes the yeshiva). He once spoke with Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik z"l (of Jerusalem) and told him that the exertion in Torah learning in the yeshivot, including the *haredi* yeshivot, is declining. Rav Yosef Dov replied, "You are wrong; it has already declined."

We must ask ourselves, is this indeed the case? Are we prepared to resign ourselves to this decline? Generally speaking, intellectual effort in society has decreased. "Le-ha" in the past someone interested in becoming cultured had to learn the classical languages, which entailed enormous effort, whereas today this requirement has fallen by the wayside. This is true in several other areas as well. Much has been written about this phenomenon, of a generation raised on passive education, on television and instant gratification. I suspect that in recent years the voltage has dropped in the Torah world, as well.

We indeed must "light," but in order to "light" we must first perform *hatava*. We must demand from ourselves intense exertion both on the quantitative and qualitative planes. Not always is this pleasant, but this is what is called for and required—and we must internalize this message and act accordingly.

This issue bears dual significance. Hard work and effort have academic value, in intellectual terms. Without exertion and a sense of struggle and willingness to delve deep into the material, we cannot accumulate knowledge. If a person strives to master Torah knowledge and internalize it, he must understand that he will have to apply himself diligently in Torah learning. He will have to exert himself today so that he can become a Torah scholar several years from now, and to exert himself today so that he can plumb the Torah's depths in the future.

Alongside this aspect, there is also an existential aspect relevant to the *avodat Hashem* latent within Torah study. Commenting on the verse, "Im bechukotai teileikhu" ("If you follow My laws"—Vayikra 26:3), Rashi cites Chazal's interpretation, "that you exert yourselves in Torah." Emphasizing the *hatava* dimension in Torah study is critical in order for the learning to assume the status of *avodat Hashem*, and to proceed from a connection to and identification with God and His Torah. This is no simple task, but we must

strive for our Torah to be a "living Torah," and we are therefore called upon and required to strive for the highest quality in our learning, to exert ourselves and work assiduously in Torah study.

I do not wish to give a dark, gloomy prognosis. The *hatava* aspect need not diminish the daily enjoyment that must accompany every *ben Torah* as he deciphers a particular point over the course of study. Enjoyment that begins with *hatava* will reach the stage of *hadlaka* (lighting). The combination of effort that bears long-term fruit, with the experiential learning that provides short-term enjoyment, is particularly meaningful.

The days of Chanuka, therefore, shall serve for us as a reminder of the *hadlaka*, the light of Torah, and of the *hatava*. On a personal, institutional and communal level, we must raise the banner of learning that combines both *hadlaka* and the *hatava*. (*This sicha was delivered on Chanuka 5763 [2002].*)

BRIJNET/UNITED SYNAGOGUE - LONDON (O)

Daf HaShavua

*by Rabbi Reuben Liuvingstone
Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue*

"And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh Dreamed" (Bereishit 41:1)

The Sidra continues narrating the story of Joseph's experience in prison and afterwards. On the one hand, he went through extraordinary suffering once his brothers sold him off as a slave and throughout his imprisonment.

On the other hand, he appears to have maintained an equally extraordinary faith and ends up being saved from every evil that he encounters—eventually flourishing beyond all expectations as Viceroy of Egypt. This teaches us the object lesson that the man of faith will always maintain hope—no matter how far his situation aggravates; "The righteous man falls seven times and rises up again" (Proverbs 24:16). And this hope is often profoundly rewarded.

The Tanach is full of examples of this type of fortitude and attendant change of fortune. In the case of Mordechai, Haman had ordered his execution and the extermination of all Jews young and old. But, remarkably, he maintained an extraordinary spiritual focus—calling Jews to prayer and penance by his own example. Not only were they saved but soon after we read that "Mordechai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold" (Esther 8:15).

A further example is Daniel. The Persians conspired against him and the Jewish people. Eventually a decree was issued by King Darius prohibiting the worship of any god other than the king himself (Daniel 6:7). Daniel openly defied this decree and refused to recognise Darius as the deity that his people considered him to be. "Then the king

commanded and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions" (6:16). Not only was he saved from this fate but, incredibly, ended up being appointed chief counsellor to the king!

Finally, the story of Chanukah and the Hasmoneans is itself an object study of an equally miraculous reversal of fortune.

This phenomenon is beautifully summed up in the prayer of Hannah. "He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes and cause them to inherit the throne of glory" (Samuel 1, 2:8). But Hannah wasn't just referring to an abstract possibility—she was asking for just such a miracle in her own life and expressing her profound faith in that possibility. © 2003 Produced by the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue - London (O) Editor Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, emailed by Rafael Salasnik

RABBI NOSSON CHAYIM LEFF

Sfas Emes

The Sfas Emes begins this ma'amar with a quote from his Grandfather. The Chidushei HaRim, in turn, is commenting on a statement in the Gemara (Maseches Shabbos, 23b). As you will soon see, that statement cries out for explanation ' for it comes across as a total non-sequitur. Thus: 'Ha'ragil be'neir...' ("If a person takes the lighting of candles—for Chanuka or for Shabbos—as a regular feature of his life, his sons will be talmidei chachamin. ").

To say the least, this statement is puzzling. Why? Because no connection is apparent between lighting candles regularly and having one's sons develop as talmidei chachamim. How did the Chidushei HaRim handle the puzzle? He pointed out that lighting candles in a context of mitzvos can convey a vital message to one's children (and to oneself!). That message is: even in a setting of hergeil (habit, routine), one can rise in one's Avoda. How? By bringing to bear the elucidation (he'ara) and freshness (hischadshus) that newly lit candles symbolize. Thus shielded from the deadening power of hergeil, a person (and his progeny) can reach higher levels of ruchniyus. As noted, the message can help the potential talmidei chachamim in two ways—either via its impact on the sons directly, or indirectly, via its impact on the potential facilitators, the parents.

Mention of the word "hergeil" leads the Sfas Emes to another phrase where -- if one looks with eyes inspired by the Sfas Emes—one can also find the word "hergeil". But to understand what comes next, we must go back to first principles.

The reason why we light candles on Chanuka is for 'pirsu'mei nisa'. (That is: to broadcast news of the miracle that we experienced on the first Chanuka). The reason for the candles to be lit is to enable passers-by to see them, and remind themselves of the miracle. Accordingly, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim, 672,b) tells us that Chanuka candles may be lit: "ad she'tikaleh

ha'regel min ha'shuk". In a non-literal translation: "until traffic in the market-place stops". In a more-or-less literal translation:

"until the feet [of passers-by] are no longer in the market-place".

So much for the plain, simple meaning of the phrase: "ad she'tikaleh ha'regel". The Sfas Emes leads us forward now to another dimension of meaning. The word ha'regel means "the foot". But working with allusion (remez), the Sfas Emes reads the word as "hergeil"—habit, routine. Thus the Sfas Emes is telling us that we light the Chanuka candles to bring renewal and remove habit from our Avodah.

Doing mitzvos as a matter of unthinking routine is a constant threat to the active, conscious way in which we should strive to live our relationship with HaShem. The Sfas Emes is telling us to let the Chanuka candles remind us to focus our mind and our emotions on our actions when we do mitzvos. "Hergeil" (routine; habit) is the enemy We should be aware of what we are doing rather than live our Yiddishkeit as unthinking creatures of habit.

"Ad she'tikaleh hergeil min hashuk!" © 2003 Rabbi N.C. Leff and torah.org

YESHIVAT BEIT OROT

Orot HaParsha

*From the teachings of Rav Dani Izak, Rosh Hayeshiva
Translated and edited by Tzvi Harris*

Yosef's behavior in our parsha raises many questions. First of all, why didn't he contact his father during all the years that he was the viceroy of Egypt? We know that Yosef was careful to honor his father, for when his father wished to send him to his brothers he responded quickly, even though he was aware of his brothers' hatred and that there was danger involved. Why would he extend his father's suffering by not contacting him even though he now had the ability to do so?

We'll attempt to answer this question on two levels. First, from Yosef's viewpoint, we'll try to understand what he was thinking. On a higher level, we'll try to see how Hashem's hand was guiding the "behind the scenes" history of Am Yisrael, bringing out the strengths and unique attributes of Bnei Yisrael.

To understand the first, overt level, we'll study Yosef's actions as they related to his brothers and what it was that he hoped to gain in this strange game of "hide and seek" that he "played" with his brothers. Understanding Yosef's reasoning will also explain why he had to cause his father extra sorrow by forcing Binyamin down to Egypt.

We'll also try to answer some additional questions:

1) The second time that Yaakov's sons went down to Egypt, Yosef invited them to eat with him and he seated in age order: "from the oldest to the

youngest" (43:33). If he truly wished to hide the fact that he was their brother, why did he behave in such a way? Even his brothers were surprised, as the Torah says: "The brothers looked at each other in amazement" (43:33)

2) The midrash says that the brothers hadn't had wine since the day that they sold Yosef, but at that meal the brothers drank wine, and became intoxicated. What had changed? They didn't know yet that they had found their brother!

3) Yosef instructed that his goblet be hidden in Binyamin's sack. His messengers later explained the goblet's importance to the brothers by saying that Yosef uses it for divination, but why did Yosef specifically choose a goblet to hide in Binyamin's sack?

A careful study of the parsha will reveal the following insight. Yosef was worried that the family unification would be superficial. He tried to set up a reunion that would foster unity based on real feelings of brotherhood and love. His hope was that the feeling of unity would be permanent and extend to all future generations of Am Yisrael.

This was Yosef's aim even before his brothers sold him. When he set out to find his brothers at his father's request he met a man in the field. He told the man "I am seeking my brothers" (37:16) meaning: I am seeking real brotherhood- a bond of true, boundless and unconditional love. The man answered: "They have moved on." (37:17). Rashi explains- "they moved themselves away from unity." A short time after this event they sold Yosef.

Yosef knew that if he would return to his father's house immediately after his ascent to the leadership of Egypt, he would overshadow his brothers because of his power. The bond unifying the newly united family would then be superficial and wouldn't be strong enough to last and be a model of unity for the future Am Yisrael. A non-permanent reunion would have ruined Yaakov's lifelong dream and aspiration, the goal which he labored for over many years of hardship, building a unified House of Yisrael. When Yaakov set out for Charan we read about the stones that he gathered to rest upon. The midrash teaches: Rabbi Yehuda said, "Yaakov gathered twelve stones. Hashem decreed that Yaakov would produce 12 tribes."

We now understand why Yosef didn't return to his father's home after rising to power in Egypt. He first scrutinized his brothers' behavior, and only when a strong and pure fraternity was displayed did he reveal himself to his brothers.

When dining with his brothers, Yosef seated them by age order to send a message. If each person would occupy his proper place, the ensuing unity of qualities and strengths would empower them to achieve great things, even while having each person maintain his uniqueness.

The wine that they drank at this meal represents the flow of life- a life of joy and purity. Yosef placed his goblet in Binyamin's sack to hint to them that by breaking the family bond they shattered the joy and natural unity of Am Yisrael.

This experience strengthened Am Yisrael, and unity remained forever a part of our nation's essence, both in the hidden potential and in actuality.

It is interesting to note that under Hashem's guiding hand, everything that happened to Yosef also happened to Yehuda.

When Yosef was sold to Mitzrayim, the Torah told us immediately afterwards: "Around this time, Yehuda left his brothers" (38:1) Rashi explains that the brothers removed him from his position of leadership. They claimed that had Yehuda told them to return Yosef they would've listened to him.

Following this, Yosef became entangled in a messy story with Potiphar's wife. He ended up marrying Potiphar's daughter, and she was the mother of his children.

Yehuda also became mired in a complex situation with Tamar, and ended up fathering children from this bond. Peretz and Zerach were their children, and the Mashiach is a descendant of Peretz.

Parallel to Yosef's becoming the ruler of Egypt, Yehuda rebuilt his position of leadership amongst his brothers. Yosef insisted that Binyamin be brought to Egypt and Yaakov refused to permit this. Reuven tried unsuccessfully to convince Yaakov to permit Binyamin to go, and it was only when Yehuda accepted responsibility for Binyamin that Yaakov agreed. Yehuda said: "I myself will be responsible for him. You can demand him from my own hand. If I do not bring him back and have him stand here before you, I will have sinned for all time" (43:9-10).

Later on, when the brothers were led back to Yosef after the missing goblet was found in Binyamin's sack, it was Yehuda who represented the brothers and pleaded on behalf of Binyamin.

These events indicate that Hashem was preparing the leadership of Am Yisrael. Yehuda was pushed into the position of leadership, through the personal and familial complications that he experienced.

Yehuda's task is to uplift all of the nation's energies, even the negative ones, to avodat Hakodesh (service of Hashem). Peretz was born from Tamar when Yehuda thought she was a prostitute. This was done to sanctify all levels.

When it became apparent that Yehuda displayed genuine concern for all of the brothers, including Binyamin, Rachel's son, he proved that he was a unifying influence in Am Yisrael, and was pushing Am Yisrael to reach it's potential.

This can be seen from the sudden change in the story as told in the Torah. From the time that Yosef was sold, Yaakov was not referred to as Yisrael until the

* * Chaza"l relate that the man Yosef met was the angel Gavriel.

moment that Yehuda accepted responsibility and began leading his brothers. "Send the boy with me," said Yehuda to his father Yisrael. "Let us set out and get going. Let's live and not die." (43:8). Yehuda's leadership later evolved into the Royal House of David and the Mashiach. When he began displaying leadership qualities Yaakov could once again be referred to as Yisrael- the name that expresses the full potential of Am Yisrael.

The events transpiring in our time can also be analyzed on two levels. The overt, superficial level, and on the level of Hashem's hidden agenda. The more we delve into the depths of unfolding events the more we'll see Hashem's guiding hand and understand that His plan is leading Am Yisrael in a positive direction towards the complete redemption. © 2002 Yeshivat Beit Orot Biblical translations based on *The Living Torah* by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan

MACHON ZOMET

Shabbat B'Shabbato

by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

For the second time, Yosef makes an attempt to interpret dreams when others have tried and failed.

First he interpreted the dreams of the Cupbearer and the Baker, who said to him, "We had a dream which nobody can explain" [Bereishit 40:8]. And then, Yosef was summoned to Pharaoh, who said the same thing, "I had a dream which nobody can explain" [41:15]. As we know, Yosef succeeds in interpreting the dreams and also sees their fulfillment. What is Yosef's secret of success?

This question becomes even stronger in light of how simple the dreams appear to be. When Yosef himself dreamed that the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him, he did not need anybody else to offer any interpretation, the meaning of the dream was perfectly clear. So why couldn't the Cupbearer understand that if he has a dream of squeezing grapes into Pharaoh's goblet and giving it to Pharaoh, the meaning is that he will be returned to his former position? The same can be asked about this week's Torah portion. Was it so hard to understand that healthy cows and ears of corn symbolize plenty, while emaciated cows and ears of corn are a symbol of famine? Why was Yosef the only one who could figure this out?

When the Cupbearer and the Baker told Yosef about their frustration, his first reaction was, "The explanations belong to G-d, please tell me about it" [40:8]. This sentence has an apparent contradiction. If G-d has the explanations, why should the ministers tell Yosef their dreams? Different commentators have suggested answers to this (see Ibn Ezra, Rav Saadia Gaon, Chizkuni). According to Radak, "The explanations belong to G-d—Just as all dreams stem from G-d, and He will show people the future as He wishes, so He has control of the explanations and He

makes people smart enough to understand dreams and their interpretations. If nobody would appear to explain the dreams, they would be in vain." That is, the source of the ability to interpret dreams is the wisdom that G-d has distributed to those who fear Him.

Perhaps the main problem that the dreamers and the interpreters had was with the numbers in the dreams. What is the significance of "three branches... three baskets... seven cows... and seven ears of corn?" It did not occur to Pharaoh's advisers that the numbers are units of time. This is evidently what led them to give other explanations: "You will have seven daughters, you will bury seven daughters... you will establish seven countries, seven countries will revolt against you" [Bereishit Rabba 89].

How did Yosef understand that the numbers in the dreams referred to units of time? Evidently, this he noted that the repeated number three in both dreams corresponded to a number that was probably well known to all the people:

"And on the third day, Pharaoh's birthday..." [40:20].

In his wisdom, Yosef understood that the three branches and the three baskets symbolized three days, until the time that the simple events in the dreams could take place. Armed with this understanding, when Yosef was called to Pharaoh, he was able to suggest that the number "seven" in the king's dreams also represented a unit of time. Since this was a long-range effect, it was logical to talk of years and not days.

In this way, Yosef was able to fulfill his own words, "The explanations belong to G-d." Based on the assumption that G-d provides guidance on how to explain a dream, Yosef was able to break the secret code. It was thus not surprising that Pharaoh declared, "Nobody else is as wise and as smart as you" [41:39].



Got Any Ideas?

Toras Aish is looking for a new logo!

We are trading in the "AishDas" logo and looking to create our own identity. If you have an idea for a logo please forward it along to

yitzw@aol.com

Thanks!