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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



CHANUKAH

Dreidel Dreidel Dreidel.....

The Ancient Greeks have contributed a great deal to society. They played an important part in the development of the alphabet (the first two letters of the Greek alphabet - alpha and beta - have given us the word 'alphabet') and their building methods and structures together with their admiration of sport have made their mark until today.

When the Greeks first officially met with Jewish society, there seemed to be a great respect towards Judaism. We are told that the Greek Ruler Talmi Hamelech demanded that the Sages translate the Torah into Greek.

The Talmud further relates that when Alexander the Great and his conquering legions advanced upon Jerusalem, they were met by a delegation of elders, led by the High Priest Shimon HaTzaddik. When Alexander saw Shimon approaching, he dismounted and prostrated himself before the Jewish Sage.

To his astonished men, Alexander explained that each time he went into battle; he would see a vision in the likeness of this High Priest leading his troops to victory.

In gratitude, and out of profound respect for the spiritual power of the Jews, Alexander was a kind and generous ruler. He cancelled the Jewish taxes during Sabbatical years, and even offered animals to be sacrificed on his behalf in the Temple.

Unfortunately, history would show that Alexander's heirs failed to sustain his benevolence.

What happened? Why did it all go so wrong? Why did the Greeks turn, and what were they aiming for in their battle against us?

The word "philosophy" comes from the Greek philosophia, which literally means "love of wisdom. The Greeks were a talented nation, they loved wisdom and depth. Yet when they got to know and understand the Jews they realised that the Jews didn't just treat the Torah as a book of wisdom, rather they treated it as having a further dimension, one connected to Hashem.

For the Greeks, the Torah offered wisdom, and was a book like any other book of wisdom. They did not wish to connect the Torah to Hashem. Rather, they emphasised to the Jews that they should have 'no part in the G-d of Israel'.

The Maharal states that the (numerical value) of the word Yavan (Greece) is 66. It shares the same Gematria as the word GalGal - circle (i.e. world), and the same Gematria as the words Haya, Hoveh, Yiheyeh (Was, Is, and Will be). The Greeks maintained that everything can be found in this world. The wisdom that one attains can be found by concentrating on the physicality's. The body rules and there is no need to bring in Hashem. All can be found with the circular world.

Am Yisrael differ. We believe that the Torah is not just a book of wisdom and science; rather it is a book of connection to Hashem - Who rules the world. He decides on the future not us.

Have you ever wondered what significance there is in a Dreidel?

Tradition has it that we spin it around and play games to commemorate how the Jewish children yearned for Torah but could not learn in public. Instead they would hide in caves and learn. When the Greek soldiers would be near they would take out their Dreidels and pretend to play. ▶

29 KISLEV 5779

SHABBAT BEGINS: 3:34 PM

SHABBAT ENDS: 4:50 PM

” THE WEEKLY QUOTE
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DVAR TORAH

Chanukah
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

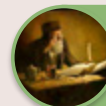
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Our Sages offer a deeper meaning. The Dreidel has four distinct sides, representing the four directions of the compass and the four basic forms of matter - earth, water, air and fire, in other words, solid, liquid, gas and energy. A turn from above sets the Dreidel spinning and its features are obscured in one dizzying blur. But even as the eye beholds confusion, underneath everything comes together to one focal point, the vortex from which all power emanates, the unifying power of the Creator of the Universe. The Greeks thought that they were in charge of this world and through their wisdom could control all the events around them. We believe that our actions can make a difference in this world, but the underlying decision maker is Hashem. The Dreidel is spun, but at the end of the day it will land where Hashem wishes it too.

Once the Greeks realised that the Jews were learning the Torah as a service of G-d, they set edicts to destroy our link to Hashem. They forbid all Torah learning.

The Chafetz Chaim was once asked, why is it that out of all the Avot Avraham Yitschak and Yakov the angel (Satan) decided only to attack Yaakov? Why didn't he attack Avraham or Yitschak?

He answered that Avraham represented Chesed and Yitschak Avoda (prayer). The Satan doesn't mind if a Jew gives the whole day or if he prays the whole day - that for him is 'small fish'. But when a Jew learns Torah, then that is a threat to him that he must try and destroy.

The Torah is a gift from Hashem that carries us from generation to generation. It's the essence of the Jew.

The Greeks raged a war against our connection to Hashem.

It is for this reason that the miracle that occurred to us was through the Menorah.

A candle has two parts - the main body and the wick. Once you light the candle the main body slowly disintegrates but the light continues to burn the same. Similarly we are made of a body and a soul. We might think that the body rules, but as we get older we realise that the body will not be the same forever. It is the soul that is eternal.

Shlomo Hamelech stated "Ki ner mitzvah v'Torah ohr, the mitzvah is a lamp and Torah is the light" (Proverbs 6:23).

The soul is spiritual, yet it is tied to man's body. In this respect, it compares to a lamp that emits lights - non-material - but is tied to the physical wick of the lamp (Maharal, Netiv HaTorah Ch.16).

The Greeks sought to extinguish our soul, they sought to extinguish our real life thread. Our ancestors stood up and fought for the right path and were rewarded with finding the holy oil which miraculously lasted for 8 days.

As we commemorate the courage of our ancestors and the miracle performed by Hashem with the lighting of the candles we spin the Dreidel. The letters on it form acronym for nes gadol hayah sham - a great miracle happened there. The mystical teachers point out that the Gematria, of these four letters is equal to the Gematria of Mashiach.

Ultimately, when the mad spinning will finally come to an end, when the gray blur comes into focus and the true nature of creation is revealed, the world will be illuminated with the Divine Presence, which all will recognise and we will enter the Messianic age.

■ Shabbat Shalom

RABBI DOV HARROUCH - JEWISH EXPERIENCE



HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT EVERYTHING THAT HASHEM DOES FOR US IS FOR OUR GOOD?

We know that we do a beracha for the good that Hashem grants us (Hatov ve Ha metiv) but we also do a Beracha for the bad (Barouch Dayan Haemet) !

Let's analyse these two berachotes , and from this explanation we can understand that all is for our good !

We know that the ultimate Good is Hashem there isn't any bad in his essence! The Beracha emphasizes by saying THE ALMIGHTY GIVES US GOOD AND ADDS GOOD TO THE GOOD WE ALREADY HAVE! Amazing! Duplicates it for us because he loves us so much! More you love more you give!

On the other hand the Beracha of the bad (that we see it bad) we thank Hashem by saying that he is the judge of Emet! Truth! What does that mean??

Well Emet is G. signature! Anything He does is Emet la Amito! Meaning there is no lying or cheating! His truthfulness is fluid, no barriers! He knows what's best for us! Like he inflicted on Yossef Hatsadik!

His brothers throwing him in the pit , getting sold to strangers , thrown in jail for 2 years with no reason ! That looks bad! But it's not! On the contrary it's the ultimate Good which is translated by being Emet with him! Right, just ! That's why Yossef has the emblem of Yossef the Just! He is the only one that can teach us that everything that G. does for us is for our own good! The proof is that at the end all of his dreams come true!

May all of our dreams come true! Amen!

Shabbat shalom

HALACHA BY RABBI DOV HARROUCH

Is it permitted to allow one's child, who has yet to reach the age of Mitzvah obligation but is old enough to be trained in Mitzvah performance (generally around age 5 or 6, depending on the child's development) to light the Chanukah candles?

The Ben Ish Chai (Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, 1835-1909; listen to audio for precise citation) encourages one to allow his child to light the additional candle placed alongside the Chanukah candles - which we generally call the "Shamash" - in order to train him in the performance of Mitzvot. The clear implication, of course, is that one may not allow a child to light any of the actual Chanukah candles.

Others, however, disagree. Rabbi Chayim Palachi (rabbi of Izmir, Turkey, 19th century), in his work

"Mo'ed Le'kol Chai," writes that one may allow a minor that has reached the age of training in Mitzvot to light the "Nerot Hiddur," meaning, the candles lit in addition to the single candle strictly required each night. These candles are added for the purpose of "Hiddur," beautifying the Mitzvah, and are not included in the essential obligation, which requires lighting just one candle each night. Therefore, Rabbi Chayim Palachi rules that one may allow a child that has reached the age of Mitzvah training to light these candles. This is also the position taken by Chacham Ovadia Yoseph, in Halichot Olam.

It should be noted that women's obligation with regard to Chanukah candles is the same as men's, and therefore one may allow his wife to light any of the Chanukah candles, including the first candle lit in fulfilment of the essential obligation.

Summary: One may not allow a child under the age of Mitzvah obligation to light the first Chanukah candle, through which one fulfils the essential obligation. He may, however, after reciting the Berachot and lighting the first candle, allow a child that has reached the age of Mitzvah training to light the additional candles, which are lit for the purpose of "Hiddur" beautifying the Mitzvah.

■ Shabbat shalom

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI CHAIM ABOULAFIA

During his youth, Hebron's Jewish community sent him on a mission to Turkey, where his knowledge and wisdom enabled him to be named Chief Rabbi of Izmir. In addition, upon returning to the Holy Land he was named Chief Rabbi of Sefat and later of Tiberias.

Rabbi Chaim Aboulafia committed himself to the spiritual resurrection of Tiberias' Jewish community through the construction of yeshivas and synagogues. As well, he consecrated himself to the development of the city itself by improving numerous homes for the community. Yet he didn't stop there, as the members of the community owed him much – some their jobs, some their livelihoods. In fact Rabbi Chaim, whose name had become synonymous with chesed (generosity), was responsible for reviving the famous Rabbi Meir Baal Haness fund, a communal fund devoted to the city's poor. He didn't hesitate to send messages, and messengers, to the Diaspora and call Jews the world over to come help their brothers in Tiberias.

During that era, the Holy Land's Jewish community was weak, and the country's roads were fraught with danger.

An Arab Sheik, who had rebelled against the central controlling power, marched on Tiberias and took control of the town and its surroundings. This Sheik wanted to develop the region under his control and knew that he could only achieve this with the help of the Jewish community. He hoped that Jews would settle in Tiberias, create jobs by investing there, and give the city a much-needed boost. In doing so, the Sheik also sought to increase his power base and political standing against the Pasha (high ranking official) who ruled in Damascus.

Thus Rabbi Chaim Aboulafia, who was then Chief Rabbi of Izmir in Turkey, had found an opportunity to return to the Holy Land, which he did as soon as possible with his family and a dozen of his students. Beforehand, however, he went through the entire city collecting funds aimed at strengthening the community of Tiberias. On the day that he did this, the Sultan was also in town, and when he came across Rabbi Chaim Aboulafia, he saw a column of fire above the head of the Tzaddik. ■

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HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

VIOLATING SHABBAT TO TREAT A FEVER

The Shulhan Aruch (Orach Haim 328:7) rules that if somebody suffers from "Kadahat" – a fever – on Shabbat, it may be treated even if this entails Shabbat desecration. The question arises as to how this Halacha practically applies nowadays, and under which circumstances the treatment of a fever overrides the Shabbat prohibitions.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef (Hazon Ovadia – Shabbat, vol. 3, p. 246) writes that Shabbat may be violated if a person's body temperature is 40 degrees Centigrade – 104 degrees Fahrenheit – and is not being reduced through standard medications, and the cause of the fever is unknown. Under ordinary circumstances, when standard fever reducers are effective in lowering the patient's body temperature, or if the patient has an ordinary cold or flu, the situation is not considered potentially life-threatening, and thus Shabbat may not be desecrated for the sake of treating the patient. Shabbat desecration is warranted only if the patient has a mysterious fever that reached 104 degrees, and is not responding to standard remedies. In such a case, medical attention must be immediately sought, even if this entails desecrating Shabbat.

In the case of a fever that does not meet all these conditions, Hacham Ovadia writes, one may summon a non-Jew to do what is necessary for the sake of treating the patient. (Certainly, medication may be taken for a fever of any temperature, as the prohibition against Refua (medication) on Shabbat does not apply in the case of somebody with a fever.)

Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1924-1998), in Or Le'sion (36:13), adopts a more lenient position, allowing Shabbat violation even if the patient's temperature is only 39 degrees Centigrade, or around 102 degrees Fahrenheit. One may follow this lenient opinion, and violate Shabbat for the sake of treating a patient with this body temperature if he does not respond to standard medication.

Importantly, these guidelines do not apply to infants or to elderly patients. In the case of an infant or elderly person, a fever of any temperature can be potentially dangerous, and so if the patient has a temperature above 98.6 Fahrenheit, and fever reducers do not lower the fever, everything must be done to seek immediate medical attention, even if this entails Shabbat desecration.

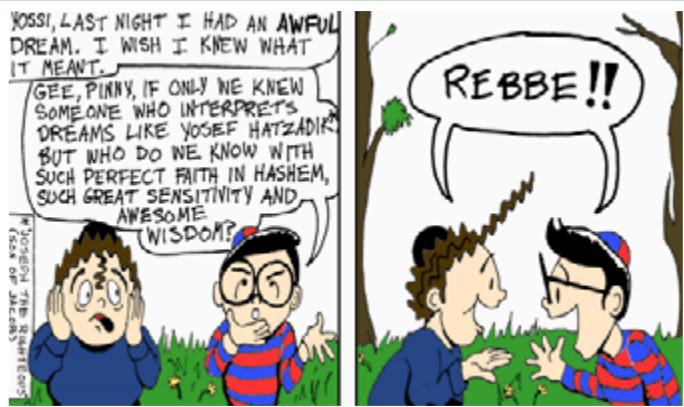
Summary: If somebody on Shabbat has an unexplained fever of 102 degrees Fahrenheit or above, and standard fever reducers are not effective in lowering the patient's temperature, this is considered a potentially dangerous condition, and thus medical attention must be immediately sought even if this entails Shabbat desecration. In the case of an infant or elderly patient, even a slight fever that does not respond to standard medications must be treated as a potentially life-threatening situation that must be immediately treated even at the expense of Shabbat desecration. ■

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TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- 1 How does the verse indicate that Shimon was released from prison after his brothers left?
- 2 What was Yaakov implying when he said to his sons: "I am the one whom you bereaved?"
- 3 How did Reuven try to persuade Yaakov to send Binyamin to Egypt?
- 4 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.
- 5 How much more money did the brothers bring on their second journey than they brought on the first journey? Why?

Answer

1 42:24 - The verse says Shimon was bound "in front of their eyes," implying that he was bound only while in their sight. 2 42:36 - That he suspected them of having slain or sold Shimon, and that they may have done the same to Yosef. 3 42:37 - He said: "Kill my two sons if I fail to bring back Binyamin." 4 43:2,10 - Twice the travel time to and from Egypt. 5 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.



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