



# TorahActionLife

## COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

**MIKEITZ**  
SHABBAT CHANUKA  
1<sup>st</sup> TEVET 5777  
Shabbat begins: 15:45  
Shabbat ends: 16:55

This week's edition is sponsored  
Lehatslachat Moshe Ben Rav  
Yitschak Hakohen Vechol Mishpachto



**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
DIRECTOR, TAL

**Potatoes, Eggs  
& Coffee!**

Yosef at a young age faced many challenges. Sold down to Egypt as a slave at the age of 17, he was able to work his way through the prisons to eventually become viceroy of Egypt. He is the first man to be known as wise, to be recognized as a fountain of wisdom and it is the Pharaoh of Egypt who calls him wise.

What was his secret and what's the connection to this Shabbat Chanukah?

Every day we live on this earth we make choices. Things happen, we make decisions, and that shapes our life. It's that simple, but do we put enough thought into how we *react* to things that happen to us?

A story is told of a young girl who complained to her father that her life was miserable and that she didn't know how she was going to make it. She was tired of fighting and struggling all the time. It seemed that just as one problem was solved, another soon followed.

Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen. He filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Once the three pots began to boil, he placed the potatoes in one pot, eggs in the second and ground coffee beans in the third. He then let them sit and boil without saying a word to his daughter. The daughter

waited impatiently, wondering what he was doing. After twenty minutes he turned off the burners. He took the potatoes out of the pot and placed them in a bowl. He took the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. He then ladled the coffee out and placed it in a cup. Turning to her, he asked, "What do you see?" "Potatoes, eggs and coffee," she hastily replied.

"Look closer", he said, "and touch the potatoes." She did and noted that they were soft.

He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg.

Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. Its rich aroma brought a smile to her face.

"Father, what does this mean?" she asked.

He explained that the potatoes, the eggs and coffee beans had each faced the same adversity – the boiling water. However, each one reacted differently.



The potato went in strong, hard and unrelenting, but in boiling water, it became soft and weak. The egg was fragile, with the thin outer shell protecting its liquid interior until it was put in the boiling water. Then the inside of the egg became hard. However, the ground coffee beans were unique. After they were exposed to the boiling water, they changed the water and created something new.

"Which one are you?" he asked his daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a potato, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

In life, things happen *around* us, and things happen to us. The only thing that truly matters is our choice of how we react to and what we make of circumstances. We must learn, adapt and choose to make the best of each experience.

Our reaction has the power of turning boiling hot water in to tasty coffee.

This week is Shabbat Chanukah, and the weekly portion is Miketz, which we supplement with verses from the book of Numbers that relate to the Chanukah, or inauguration, of the Tabernacle as well as a special Haftarah taken from Zechariah relating to the Menorah.

Zechariah was a man who saw many mysterious visions. He would typically ask an angel or the Almighty Himself, to explain the meaning of his visions. And so we find, near the end of the passage we read this week, the following vision:

"I see a lamp stand full of gold, with a bowl above it. The lamps are seven in number; each has seven pipes above it, and by it are two olive trees..."

Characteristically, Zechariah asks the angel, "What do these things mean, my lord?" The angel, like a good psychotherapist, asks him what he thinks the dream means. But the prophet confesses he has no clue.

The angel finally responds, "This is the word of the Lord: 'Not by might, and not by power, but by My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts.'"

Rashi explains that in his vision Zechariah saw seven tubes going to each lamp. There were two olive trees next to the menorah, one on either side.

The menorah ran on "automatic." The trees would beat themselves into the vats and the oil would flow into the lamps by itself. The message was that Zerubavel was destined to put the cornerstone of the Temple



1. Almost every year the Shabbos of Chanuka is Parshas Mikeitz. Are there any allusions to how connect them?

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and that no nation would be able to stop it's rebuilding. The motion had begun and through the efforts of the righteous the second Temple would be built.

This is the lesson of Chanukah. When there is a G-dly spark, the mighty are subdued by the weak, and the many by the few.

In our own little homes, we wish to make the point, to ourselves if not for the rest of the world, that "a little light can drive away much darkness."

The lesson of the power of the single little candle is especially important in this day and age. We are bombarded by the images and sounds of cyberspace, and their message is

often pernicious and malicious. The negative effects of most of what we hear and see on the internet and via other media outlets are typically devastating to our hearts and souls, if not our minds.

Yosef too found himself in a foreign land surrounded by negativity. He was far from his father's influence and the righteous surrounding he grew up in. What was he to do? How would he cope? Many of us would have given up in the face of adversity. Yet he persevered and was able to transform the boiling water into a place that would eventually host his father and family. He shone his light in the dark and changed Egypt for the better.

In our day and age, how do we counteract the immense influence of such overwhelming forces? We can only do so if each of us is committed to use the power of modern technology to assert tolerance, kindness, morality, and ethical behaviour. In essence we are to be wise like Yosef and use the challenges of this generation to turn the boiling water into delicious coffee. Through our little light, we are able to shine through a lot of darkness. When we use and light that spark of G-d, then no one can stop the rebuilding of our nation.

Our voices may be soft, but they will be heard. The positive images that we present may be dim, but they will be seen.



**RABBI ALAN GARBER**  
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**Life Patterns**

We could easily view the first 30 years of Joseph's life as a roller-coaster. As a young man he is described as a favourite son to his father, he is given a special coat and dreams of grandeur are revealed to him – he is on the way up! But then things go downhill for Joseph; through the jealousy of his brothers he is initially thrown into a pit and then descends further as he is sold as a slave to Egypt.

After Joseph arrives in Egypt he is on the ascent. He is bought by one of Pharaoh's ministers and becomes successful to such an extent that his master trusts him to manage his entire household. But then Joseph dips right back down again; his master's wife falsely accuses him of adultery and he ends up in prison for 12 years. But then, as described at the beginning of this week's sedra, Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams successfully and is elevated from the depths of the dungeon to become the Prime Minister of Egypt – a position he then holds for 80 years.

A closer analysis of the ups and downs of the first 30 years of Joseph's life reveals to us an important lesson. It seems that whenever Joseph is focused on himself and his own greatness he falls and when he starts to think of others he is elevated. Through revealing his own dreams to his brothers he evokes jealousy and descends; by helping and supporting his master in Egypt he ascends; through focusing on his physical beauty he attracts the attention of his master's wife and descends into prison and

his elevation from that prison clearly hinges on his shift of focus, to care for others:

*"And Joseph came to them (his fellow prisoners – the butler and the baker) in the morning and he saw that they were aggrieved. And he asked them . . . why are your faces downcast today?"* (Bereishit 40:6-7)

This conversation, which is recorded for eternity in the Torah, was a crucial turning point. Through focusing on the distress of his fellow prisoners they open up to Joseph and reveal their dreams to him. And it is Joseph's ability to interpret these dreams that hold the key to the release of Joseph from prison when he is called upon to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh.

We all face challenging times in our lives and we need to deal with these challenges; but we can elevate ourselves as well as our personal situation by keeping our eyes and hearts open to the people and community around us to see what we can do to help. Shabbat Shalom.



**AHARON GABAY**  
**The Best Of Both Worlds**

There are two events in Klal Yisrael which seem very similar on the surface, but when analysed in depth, they are clear to be far from the same. The stories of Chanukah and Purim tell of the attempt to annihilate the Jewish people, Chanukah by the Greeks and Purim by the Persians. Both nations with their military power sought to destroy the Jewish nation and heritage. Religious practice was forbidden and the Jews succumbed to oppression. Haman poisoned the mind of Achashverosh misleading him to believe Jews hated the Persians. He claimed they would remove a fly from their wine and drink it, but

would dispose of it if it were touched by the king himself. The Greeks attempted to remove the cornerstone of Judaism by preventing the Jews from keeping their calendar; disorientating them from their religious way of life. In both events a terrible battle took place and the Jewish nation was successful in their counter attacks and their opponents perished.

However, when we take a deeper look, there is more than meets the eye. Purim



2. What do we know about the wife of Yosef, Osnas?

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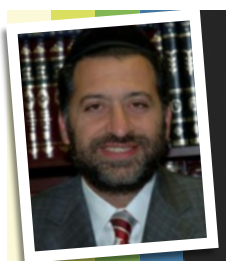
teaches us the events around one man (Haman) seeking mass genocide against our nation. Haman was. A massive battle took place and the Jewish nation was victorious. The Purim story is portraying all things physical, there are four Mitsvot which all entail physical activities and when the Jewish people are attacked they respond with a full skirmish. Purim is when the physical world has the driver seat and in turn the spiritual world will react accordingly. When we want to drown out the name of Haman we use a "gragger" which all the effort is done underneath and the result is above, signifying the work being down here in the physical world and the result being a won-

drous outcome in the world above.

In contrast, on Chanukah, the Greeks sought to displace the Torah and religious activities and not to physically harm us. They wanted to sever the spiritual connection that the Bnei Yisrael have with their Creator. The battle that took place was with a small battalion of Jewish warriors against an entire Greek legion. The story of Chanukah evidently signifies all things spiritual and teaches us that when there is a decree against the Jewish religion, the response is a spiritual one where the Torah is stood by and Mitsvot are still performed. We use fire to light the Menorah which is a spiritual

element, something that cannot be touched. With the Dreidel that we spin, the work is done from above and the outcome is below signifying the spiritual world taking lead, spiralling down into a physical world causing great effect.

Chanukah is a unique time of the year where there is a specific bond between Bnei Yisrael and Hashem. There is endless kedushah pouring into our world. We should take advantage of this opportunity and utilise more of our time for Torah and Mitsvot.



HALACHA  
RABBI ELI MANSOOR

### The Importance Of Lighting Hanuka Candles At The Proper Time

The Talmud teaches, "Habiba Misva Be'shata" – "a Misva is beloved in its proper time." This means that God cherishes Misvot that one performs at the preferred time, immediately, without any delay, which demonstrates the importance he affords to the Misva. In fact, the Gemara establishes that if one performs a Misva "Ke'ma'amara" – precisely as it was intended to be observed, then he will never receive bad tidings, as the power of the Misva will protect him.

The verse states in Kohelet (8:5), "Shomer Misva Lo Yeda Dabar Ra" – "One who 'guards' a Misva shall know no evil." The word "Shomer" can be understood as referring to anticipation and excitement, as in the verse, "Ve'abib Shamar Et Ha'dabar" ("and his father looked forward to the matter" – Bereshit 37:11). Yaakov Abinu waited anxiously, with anticipation, for the fulfillment of Yosef's dreams. Similarly, the verse in

Kohelet refers to somebody who is "Shomer Misva" – who looks forward with great excitement and anticipation to the Misva, and rushes to perform it at the first opportunity, rather than delaying it. Such a person "shall know no evil" – will be spared from harm, as the merit of the Misva will protect him.

A remarkable story is told of the Roke'ah (Rabbi Elazar of Worms, Germany, 1160 1237), who lived in a low-lying city that was protected by a dam, which kept away the water of the nearby river. Once, the area experienced an infestation of swordfish, which came and gnawed at the dam. This put the entire city in grave danger, as the waters would flood the city if the dam broke. The king blamed the Jewish community for this crisis, and summoned the Roke'ah to his palace. He warned that if the swordfish did not leave the dam within the next three days, all the city's Jews would be ordered to leave the city.

The Roke'ah accepted the warning, and assured the king that he would be able to send the swordfish away – on condition that the king provide the Jews of the city with wine for the celebration of Purim the following day. The king agreed, and gave the Rabbi money to purchase all the wine the Jews would need for their Purim celebration.

The Jews of the area celebrated Purim like they never had before, with great joy and festivity. That same day, the swordfish suddenly left.

The Jews had observed a Misva with great joy, excitement and intensity – and they were thus spared from harm.

The Rambam describes the Misva of the Hanukah candle lighting as a "Misva Habiba Ad Me'od" – "an exceedingly beloved Misva." By performing this Misva at its proper time, we perform a double "beloved" act: the Misva itself is "beloved," and a Misva performed at the ideal time is also "beloved." We cannot even imagine how cherished such a Misva is before God, how we endear ourselves to Him by performing such a special Misva at the proper time.

It therefore behooves us to make every effort to light the Hanukah candles at the earliest time, which is approximately 4:50 PM (in the NYC area). This is particularly so if one in any event is home and has the opportunity to light at that time. Rather than waiting until later in the evening, after dinner, he should go the synagogue, recite Mincha and Arbit, and then light the Hanukah candles with his family at the proper time. We will then, God willing, be deserving of the Almighty's special grace and protection, and be privileged to hear only favorable news, and be spared all bad tidings.

(The Rabbi Jacob S. Kassin Memorial Halacha Series, Authored by Rabbi Eli J. Mansour)



3. How did Yosef know the Egyptian language as when speaking to Paro we do not find he used an interpreter?

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# חנוכה



חנוכה is such a happy time

So I decided to make a rhyme

Antiochus the wicked king

Did many terrible things

To wipe out yiddishkeit was his aim

To make אידן and גוים all the same

We אידן kept the תורה way

And in the end he had to run away

A jug of oil so small

Not meant to last 8 days at all

It stayed light for 8 days bright

What a special sight

So the menorah we do light

And latkes and doughnuts we do bite.

By Sheina Yodaiken Age 8 London



1. At the end of Parshas Mikeitz, in addition to listing the usual number of pesukim, it unusually adds the number of words in an unusual manner. It says 2000 and 25 words. The Bnei Yisosschor sees in this an allusion to chanuka. The minimal requirement is for one candle on each of the eight nights of chanuka. Ner, candle, has the gematria of 250 for the eight nights equals 2000. The **25** alludes to chanuka happening on the **25<sup>th</sup>** day of Kislev. The Shiltei Geborim (Shabbos) brings an allusion to (Mikeitz, 43:16) V'tevach tevach v'hachain that means slaughtering meat and preparing it. On Chanuka there is an inyan to have festive meals and thank Hashem for the miracles. In this phrase the last letters spell Chanuka and the gematria of the other letters is 36 alluding the 36 candles lit during chanuka. If you take the gematria of the first two words you get 44 alluding to the 36 chanuka lights plus the eight shamoshim.
2. Osnas, was the daughter of Dena conceived from Shechem. (Pirkei DeReb Eliezer Chapter 38) However, when the brothers threatened to kill her, Yaakov hung a Kemiya around her neck stating: "Whoever marries this girl marries someone from Yakov's family." (Maseches Sofrim) and placed her outside under a bush, into the safe-keeping as it were, of Hashem Himself. She was eventually taken down to Egypt and adopted by Potifar.
3. The Angel Gavriel came and taught Yosef all seventy languages (Gemora Sota 36b). This was in addition to Loshon Hakodesh that Yosef already spoke.

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