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VAYIGASH

8th TEVET 5777

Shabbat begins: 15:53

Shabbat ends: 17:02



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
DIRECTOR, TAL

What Makes A Leader?

The eleven sons of Yaakov stood accused and threatened before one of the most powerful men in the world, the Viceroy of Egypt - a regime not known for compassion or forgiveness. They had to make a decision, and their options, though seemingly straightforward, were actually quite complex. Binyamin had been "caught" (in reality set up by Yosef) stealing the cup of the Viceroy and his brothers were faced with several possible choices. Self-preservation would dictate that they part ways with their brother Binyamin just as they did with Yosef years ago; however, their present situation seemed much more complicated. The only reason Binyamin joined them in Egypt was to serve as proof that they were, in fact, brothers, and not spies. Like true brothers, they could close ranks and follow Binyamin wherever fate took him, be it incarceration or even death, and demand that they all be treated as one family, sharing the same fate. Perhaps gambling this option would convince their Egyptian tormentor that they have been speaking the truth, that they were, in fact, brothers, and that they should all be set free?

Their other option would be to choose the opposite path offered to them by the Egyptian justice system, and simply walk away, washing their hands of their brother, the last remaining favoured son of the favoured wife - Rachel.

Faced with this quagmire, Yehuda suggests a third solution - a solution that seems, given his personal track record, completely uncharacteristic and unexpected. Yehuda suggests that he and Binyamin change places: Binyamin will go home to his father, while Yehuda will face a life of servitude. This is the Parasha that Yehudah becomes the leader of Klal Yisrael.

Many years earlier, shortly after the sale of Yosef, the Torah relates how Yehudah 'went down from amongst his brothers' (38:1). He was the one that suggested Yosef should be sold. The brothers had listened to him as the official leader, and thus the buck lay on him as to Yosef's doom and Yaakov's ultimate pain.



The turning point in Yehudah's life came when his daughter in law Tamar, chose not to openly embarrass Yehudah. Rather than publicly exposing Yehudah as the father of her yet unborn twin babies, she sent a cryptic message that hinted at the identity of the father. Only Yehudah could decipher this message and once he realised, he exclaimed "Tsadka Mimeni" - she is more righteous than me. With his announcement despite the embarrassment of being wrong he transformed himself into a selfless individual who focussed on the bigger picture.

This story grew on Yehudah, eventually developing into the leader that was able to sacrifice himself into slavery in place of Binyamin.

This is the making of a leader.

Let's take two wonderful concepts from our sages that help fortify this idea.

The Mishna in Keilim 17:13 speaks of how all sea fish skins can be used to make pure vessels. The only exception is the Kelev Mayim - literally the 'sea dog' loosely understood to be something like a seal or a sea lion. The Mishna asks why? And explains that it escapes to dry land when being chased. Thus it is no longer considered a sea animal and takes on the status of a land animal whose skin is considered impure.

Rabbi Gifter Z'l asked why, if the animal spends most of its life in the water, do we place so much emphasis on where it goes when it is being chased. Surely its status should follow the majority of its life in the water. Why base its status on the rare occasions it is being chased?

Rabbi Gifter offers an awesome understanding.

Where we go to and how we act under pressure tells us who we really are. No one's essence is defined by what do as second nature. It's great we do good acts so well. But that doesn't define us. What defines us is when we are being chased, when the heat is on, where do we run to and how do we react?

Let us look at a further idea that enhances this awareness.

The Gemara in Menachot (29a) cites a Braytawich lists three things Moshe found difficult to understand, and which the Torah therefore describes with the word "zeh", to indicate that Hashem showed Moshe with His finger: 1. The Menorah; 2. Rosh Chodesh (the New Moon); 3. The eight forbidden Sheratzim (rodents). Tosfot adds that the Half a Shekel coin was also difficult for Moshe to comprehend.

Looking at these commandments in the Torah and their wording the Vilna Gaon offers a brilliant interpretation.

What's the first letter of those three words? Menorah - Mem, Sheratzim/Shekalim - Shin, Rosh Chodesh - introduced by the Torah with the word Hachodesh - Heh. Together they spell the name Moshe!

How we respond in a difficult situation defines our



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essence.. Furthermore, looking at the last three letters of these words we note that they also spell Moshe!

The true sign of who you are is how you respond to any given situation, from beginning to end.

If it worked for Moshe Rabbenu surely it will work for us.

How we do when we hear news, when we find ourselves in tough situations, the changes that we make, tells us who we are.

Before his death, Yaakov assembled his sons and blessed them, sharing with each a vision relating to their destiny.

Yaakov told Yehuda that his descendants would possess the sceptre of kingship.

True leaders don't control their people they inspire them to do great things.

It is in this Parasha that Yehudah earned the leadership – Hayta Yehudah Lekadsho Yisrael Mamshelotav – it is when Yehudah made a Kidush Hashem and stood instead of his brother Binyamin rectifying his past

involvement with the sale of Yosef, that he became a Moshel – ruler in Am Yisrael.

We are all leaders in our own right. Whether we lead a company, a team of people, a group of friends, our families or even just ourselves. Yehudah's actions are there to show us we are defined by those tough moments in life when we decide where to run and how to act.

At those times in life be the leader, make the decision, know the way, go the way and show the way.



The Gemara Menachot (43b) brings a famous saying of Rabbi Meir who states: "It is obligatory for every person to say 100 blessings (Berachot) each day."

The source for this 100 Berachot is derived from a Pasuk in Devarim (10:12) "And now, Israel what ("mah") does Hashem require of you, but to fear Hashem your God, to walk in His ways, and to love Him, and to serve Hashem your God with all your heart and with all your soul".

The words used in the above Pasuk "mah" – "what" is explained by the Gemara to also be read as "meah" – one hundred. Thus our Sages understood that the Pasuk was alluding to the requirement to say 100 blessings a day. (Reading the Pasuk as if to say: "And now Israel 100 blessings are what are required of you.")

It is interesting to also note that this Pasuk has 100 letters hinting to this very fact.

The Shulchan Aruch (OH 46.3) and the Rambam (Sefer Ahavah 7) both rule that we must say 100 blessings a day.

The concept and enactment of the 100 Berachot preceded the Gemara to the times of King David. During this period a great plague ensued where 100 people were dying every day. King David tried to discern the cause of this plague and, with divine inspiration, enacted 100 Berachot to counter the 100 deaths. Once implemented, the deaths ceased.

The Hatam Sofer gives an interesting insight into the battle between Yaakov and Eisav's angel in Parashat Vayishlach.

Yaakov Avinu wrestled with the angel of Eisav; it was a tough battle and the Torah records how the angel dislocated Yaakov's thigh "bkaf yerecho". The angel aimed specifically for this point in Yaakov's body as this point symbolised future descendants. His aim was to weaken the future generations of Yaakov.

Yaakov Avinu understood that great calamities would befall Klal Yisrael. In order to counter these curses Yaakov Avinu managed to overcome the angel and demanded a blessing whereby the angel changed his name from Yaakov to Yisrael. The Hatam Sofer explains that the character trait of Yaakov Avinu was Emet/absolute truth. The angel of Eisav wanted to take away the connection of Yaakov with Hashem; to take away the Aleph representing the One G-d. Without the Aleph in Emet – we are left with Met – death. Yaakov responded with strength. His name was changed to Yisrael. If you take the Gematria of Emet – 441 and add the 100 daily Berachot – we get 541 – the exact same Gematria as Yisrael.

The way we are able to cling to Yaakov's character trait of Emet is to add the one hundred daily blessings. When we say these blessings we reinforce our allegiance and servitude to G-d. We become Yisrael of whom even angels are in awe of!

The great virtue of saying 100 Berachot is found in each Beracha we say. When we recite the Beracha we mention "Elokeinu Melech Haolam". Looking closely at the first letters we note that they spell MEAH-100.

Blessings are said with our mouths – in Hebrew - Peh.

The word PEH is spelled with the letters Pey and Hey. The letter Pey is spelled as Pey and Hey numerically equalling 85. And the letter Hey is spelled Hey and Yud equalling 15. Together they amount to a total of 100.

The Megaleh Amukot mentions in Tehillim (100) - "Mizmor Letodah - a psalm of thanksgiving", the Pasuk says "Hodu lo barechu shemo - give thanks unto him, and bless His name" from here we have a duty to praise, exalt and thank Hashem every day.

Furthermore in Tehillim (128:4) the Pasuk says "Hine ki ken yevorach gaver yireh Hashem - Indeed, so shall the man who fears Hashem be blessed". The words ki ken numerically corresponds to 100, moreover don't read "yevorach - he shall be blessed but "yevarech" - he shall bless. The Pasuk can be interpreted as the one who recites 100 blessings is considered a G-d fearing person.

The Da'at Zekenim says the Beracha in the Amida called Modim/ thanksgiving which we recite three times daily, is one of most significant points of the Amida. We thank G-d for all the kindness He has performed for us.

Hazal say if one didn't have concentration for the first Beracha of the Avot which is the primary focal point, then Modim with concentration compensates for it. Modim has numerical has a value of 100, we bow down to express a tremendous thank you to Hashem for the 100 gifts he bestows on us every moment.

The Ba'al Haturim illustrates this point of 100 Berachot in Parashat Pekudei. There, the Torah details the construction of the Mishkan with all its intricacies, vessels, curtains and tapestries. The foundation to the entire Mishkan were the Adanim - sockets into which the wooden beams holding up the structure of the Mishkan were placed.

The Ba'al Haturim explains that in total there were 100 Adanim.

Just as the foundation of the Mishkan was 100 Adanim, so too the 100 Berachot are the foundation of our inner Mishkan, and if we wish Hashem to dwell within us, it is optimal to recite each Beracha with great kavvanah.

The purpose of 100 Berachot is to gain Yir'at Shamayim- fear of Heaven.

Rabbi Miller Z'L used to expound that the root word of Yir'ah- fear is Re'iyah- to see. How does a person see Hashem? Through the recitation of 100 Berachot!

Have you seen Hashem lately?

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Leah bat Sarah | Rafael ben Rachel



RABBI YARON JACOBS
Antidote To Exile

Near the end of this week's Parasha, the Torah tells us: "And Yosef sustained his father and his brothers and all of his father's house with bread according to their numbers" (47:12).

It makes sense that Yosef would provide for his family. Why wouldn't he? He was in control of all the food Egypt had stored for the years of famine. Nothing in the Torah is superfluous, so certainly there is more here than meets the eye.

"Hearken, O Shepherd of Israel Who shepherds Yosef like a flock. One Who dwells amongst the Cherubs – show Yourself." (Tehillim 80:2)

All of Israel are referred to as "Yosef" because he nourished and sustained them during the days of famine. (Rashi's Commentary ibid.)

1) Why should Yosef's name be used as a reference to the Jewish people forevermore, when the action he performed to merit such a legacy – providing food for his family – was a one-off achievement?

2) "Hearken... show Yourself": This is a prayer - we're asking for G-d's help. So, surely the fact that we're using Yosef's name as a reference to the Jewish people means that in this way we evoke a specific trait that reflects the actions of Yosef, and in turn, we invoke enough merit to warrant G-d's "Listen... show Yourself" for the nation as a whole.¹

Being that that is the case, why is the fact that "he sustained them and fed them during the days of famine" a merit for the entire nation?

Kabalah teaches that every aspect of the world we see around us - the world we call the "real world" - is merely a physical emanation of a metaphysical reality. Hence

1 The verse uses two names to refer to the Jewish people: Yisrael and Yosef, and from the progression of the verse we see that Yosef is not only just another name to refer to the Jewish people. It is actually superior (at least in the context of the verse) to the name Yisrael. We see this from the fact that the verse first uses the name Yisrael, and only then (as if to say the evocation of this name is not sufficient to arouse the required Divine Mercy and intervention,) the name Yosef.

every physical phenomenon has a spiritual source. It therefore follows that Yosef's ability to physically provide for his brothers in the days of corporeal famine was a reflection of the spiritual sustenance he provided in a time of spiritual hunger.

In the same way that physical famine is a shortage of physical food, spiritual famine is a lack of spiritual nourishment – spiritual darkness. Yosef had the natural ability to overcome that spiritual darkness. He took this quality and imbued it into his family, helped them internalise it and taught them how to use it in time of need. So, in the physical sense – yes, Yosef's provision was an act limited to one physical period of time. In the spiritual sense, however, Yosef's kindness was the "gift that keeps on giving" for all time. A quality that would be a part of the DNA of the Jewish people for eternity.

We now also have the key to understanding why the above verse specifically uses the name Yosef to refer to the Jews. Rashi and Radak tell us in their commentaries on verse 1, that this chapter of Tehillim is a cry for G-d's salvation in times of exile. Indeed, the verse "Oh G-d, return us (to our rightful place), shine Your countenance (upon us) and we will be saved" is repeated three times (verses 4, 8, 20), one for each of the three exiles (Egypt, Babylonia, Rome/Edom). The merit required for our cries, in the bitterness of exile, to reach the Almighty is in the name Yosef, and is the secret weapon he programmed into our ancestors in Egypt.

There was a large difference between Yosef and his brothers, both in terms of circumstance and occupation:

From when Yosef was sold by his brothers, until the end of his life he was always subservient to a master. In Potifar's house, in prison and even as the Viceroy of Egypt, despite the fact that in all three of those circumstances he had reached positions of great responsibility and power, he remained secondary to a superior figure, unable to assert absolute autonomy. His brothers, however, were free-agents. They decided their own lifestyle. Aside from G-d, no one dictated to them where to go or what to do.

In personal nature, the other eleven brothers expressed themselves in their vocation. They were shepherds. Shepherding is a simple job, it doesn't require tremendous physical or mental exertion. It's the recluse's dream profession. Isolated from the negativities and trivialities of society, one is free to contemplate, and connect with oneself, and indeed with G-d. Yosef, on the other hand engaged in society, he worked his way to high positions in every situation he found himself in. He became the chief of staff in a government minister's household, the most respected and authoritative inmate in prison and, of course, prime minister of the Egyptian Empire. Yet through all this his

fidelity to the Almighty did not waver. He remained steadfast in his devotion to G-d.

His brothers needed the ability to disconnect from the world in order to connect to G-d, which, whilst living in the land of Israel was fine. Yosef however perceived that once living in exile, they would need his ability to simultaneously engage in the spiritual and physical.

To a certain extent, Yosef was very similar to his father, Yaakov. In fact, the Midrash, commenting on the verse "These are the Offspring of Yaakov: Yosef" (Vayeishev 37:2), states "everything that happened to this one (Yaakov) happened to this one (Yosef)". Yaakov too had lived through many years in exile – in Charan. There he was subservient to his uncle and father-in-law, Lavan, and despite all of it he maintained his total devotion to G-d.

However, there was a major difference between the way these parallels actualised in Yaakov and Yosef. Even while in the exile in Charan, Yaakov wasn't completely subservient to Lavan. He was an employee, a paid worker, whereas Yosef was forced into his situation as a slave. Also, Yaakov's job in Lavan's house was as a shepherd! Again, removed from the mundane trivialities of society. The reason for this difference between Yaakov and Yosef was that Yaakov was higher than the darkness of exile. The coarseness of exile had no effect on him, because he was above it, not because he abstained or removed himself from it (as was the case with the eleven brothers). He was a shepherd because he did not relate to the politics and practices of the world around him, not because he was worried it would harm him. He was a man who wrestled with angels, not with the worldly troubles of men.

This was the unique quality possessed by Yosef. He wasn't beyond engaging with the world in exile, but at the same time the world didn't take a toll on his connection to G-d. It was this quality with which Yosef "nourished and sustained them". He engrained within his brothers and their offspring for all generations an immunity to the negativity of exile.

So we cry out to G-d, Almighty:

"Hearken, O Shepherd of Israel"- In our spiritual essence we are like Yaakov/Yisrael who was beyond exile. Therefore we say "Hearken" – yes, G-d is close to us. Our physical exterior, however, is subject to the harshness of exile, so we say "Who shepherds Yosef like a flock..." – invoking the name Yosef, and in doing so evoking from within ourselves the gift he gave us "during the days of famine" – connectedness to the Infinite, even in the lowliest of situations. "Show Yourself" – please "return us (to our rightful place), shine Your countenance (upon us) and we will be saved".

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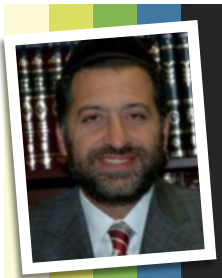
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HALACHA
RABBI ELI MANSOOR

Is It Permissible To Move Shabbat Candles, Even If One Has Not Yet Accepted Shabbat

When a woman lights the Shabbat candles on Friday afternoon, the candles and candlesticks obtain the status of "Muktzeh" and may not be moved or even touched throughout Shabbat. Even after the candles extinguish, one may not move or touch the candlesticks until after Shabbat.

An interesting question arises in a case where a woman lights the Shabbat candles with the intention not to accept the onset of Shabbat. In certain situations, a woman might have to drive somewhere before Shabbat and will not return home in time to light the Shabbat candles before Shabbat begins. It is permissible in such a case for the woman to light the Shabbat candles before she leaves home, on the condition that she does not yet accept upon herself the onset of Shabbat. She may then drive and perform regular weekday activities and accept Shabbat later, at some point before sundown. If a woman lights candles without accepting Shabbat, and she then decides to move the candles to a different location before Shabbat begins, is it permissible for her to do so, or do the candles become "Muktzeh" despite the fact that Shabbat has yet to begin?

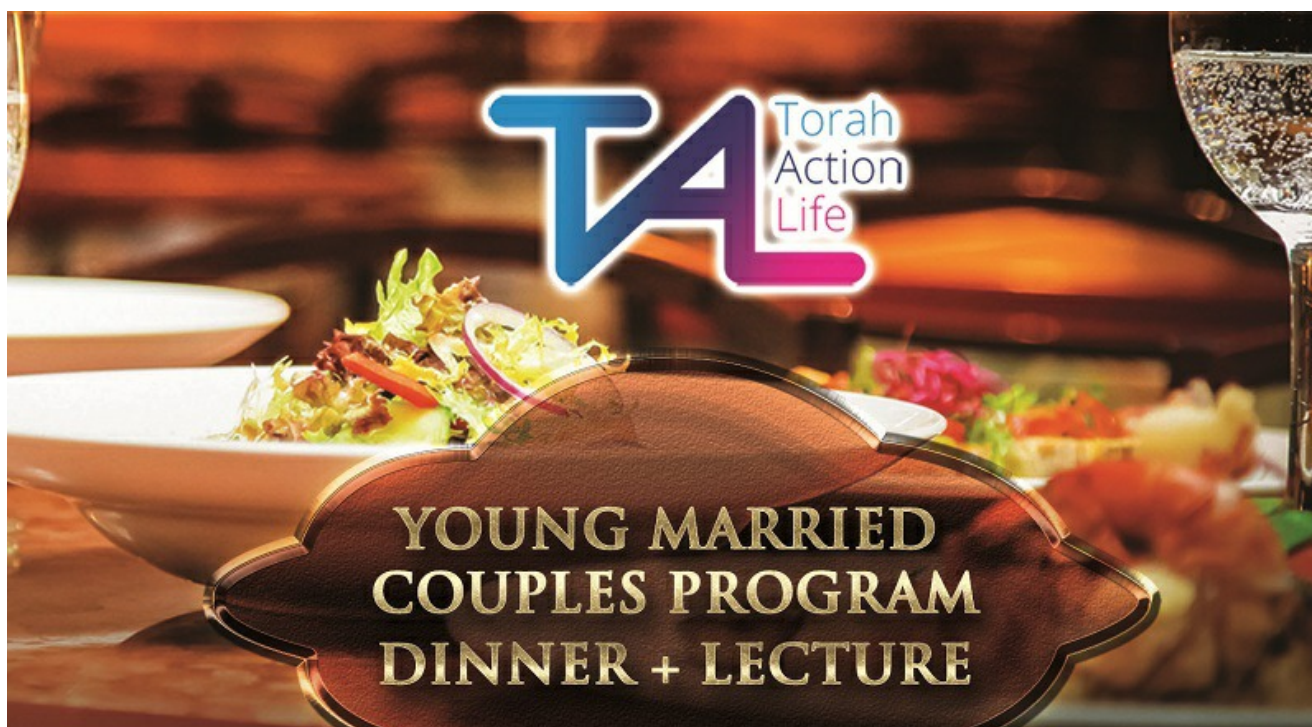
The Bet Yosef (commentary to the Tur by "the Mehaber," Rabbi Yosef Karo, author of the Shulhan Aruch), in Siman 263, comments that he sees no reason to forbid moving the Shabbat candles if one has yet to accept Shabbat. Since the prohibition of "Muktzeh" takes effect only with the onset of Shabbat, so long as a woman has yet to accept Shabbat she may move the candles. Just as she may perform any Melacha (activity forbidden on Shabbat) before she accepts Shabbat, so

may she move the candlesticks until she begins Shabbat.

However, in direct contrast to this remark, in the Shulhan Aruch the Mehaber (263:14) rules stringently on this issue, and forbids moving the Shabbat candles even before one has accepted the onset of Shabbat. Despite the seeming discrepancy between his comments in the Bet Yosef and Shulhan Aruch, this ruling has been accepted as authoritative by several later authorities, including the Peri Megadim (work of Halacha by Rabbi Yosef Teomim 1727-1792), the Ben Ish Hai (Rabbi Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) in Parashat Noach, Halacha 13, and Hacham Ovadia Yosef in Halichot Olam, Helek 3, page 45. Thus, it is forbidden to move or even touch the Shabbat candles even before one has accepted Shabbat.

Summary: Once a woman has lit the Shabbat candles, they may not be moved or touched from that point until after Shabbat, even after the fire extinguishers, unless she made a condition. However, when they are lit it is forbidden for anyone to touch or move them.

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



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