



TAL

MIKEITZ- CHANUKA 5775

THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

Chanukah Presents!

Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



The delicious smell of doughnuts is in the air, and the beautiful candles across the community are alight as we delve into oil for the next eight days, sharing songs and presents with our loved ones.

The story is told of a grown up Jewish man, spoiled by his mother and still living at home.

Chanuka arrives and she gives him a beautifully wrapped present. As he opens it, he is happy to see that she has bought him two sweaters.

The next day he decides to proudly wear one of the beautiful sweaters.

As he comes down to breakfast his mother stares at him with a grumpy face.

"What's the matter?" she asks, as her eyes roll.

Startled, the man replies, "what's wrong, Mother?"

She approaches him and says, "What's the matter with the other sweatshirt I got you! Didn't you like the other one?"

Sometimes we are spoiled for choice; at other times it is difficult to please everyone, but what's behind the (not so ancient) custom to give out presents on Chanuka?

After being in jail for ten years, Yosef was finally approached with a way out.

Two of the King's officers were jailed with him, awaking with troublesome dreams.

Yosef interprets these dreams, telling the butler that in three days he would be returned to his initial post and "you will place Pharaoh's cup in his hand

as was the former practice..."

[Bereishit 40:13].

These words seem to be superfluous! What do they add? What do they teach us?

Rabbi Akiva Eiger sent a letter to his son, in which he suggests a novel and insightful interpretation. Yosef tells the butler that he will be returned to his position and once again be Pharaoh's butler. When the butler heard those words, what went through his mind? Was there a great sigh of relief? He might have been slightly happy, but then once he thought about it he was worried;

"What will be if something will fly into the cup again? My hand will be shaking so much that I will never be able to pour a cup of wine for the king again! Good, I got my job back, but how will I cope?"



To address that fear, Yosef responded: "You will have your job back AND you are not going to have to worry because it is going to be K'Mishpat haRishon – exactly like it was before. Why is that? It is because the whole incident of the fly falling into the cup

was not your fault – it will never happen again! The only reason the fly fell into the cup is SO THAT you should be here in the dungeon with me, SO THAT you will be able to tell Pharaoh what a great interpreter of dreams I am, and SO THAT I will be able to get out of jail because of the good words you put in for me with Pharaoh!"

Many are the thoughts in the hearts of man, and G-d's plan is what always finally emerges. (Mishlei 19:21)

From the young age of 17, Yosef was enslaved in Egypt. He had been a salve in Potiphar's house, a prisoner, and this week is brought in front of the mighty King of Egypt Pharaoh.

Yet one thing remains constant in all his ordeals – G-d's Name is constantly on his lips.

Rashi explains the phrase, Ki Hashem Ito (39:3), "Hashem was with him," as Shem Shomayim Shagar B'fiv, "The Name of Heaven was fluent in his mouth," to mean that he would regularly refer to Hashem in conversation.

In a land of many gods, Yosef was able to infuse everyone he saw with the knowledge of the Only One Almighty G-d.

Potiphar now knew there was an Elokim; the butler now knew there was an Elokim.

Finally after twelve years in prison, Yosef gets his break in front of the King. Pharaoh is the god of Egypt; he is mighty and powerful.

Yet when Yosef is brought in front of him, he is not in fear or awe – rather, he recognises Pharaoh as another piece of the puzzle, bringing G-dliness to the world.

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Even though Pharaoh compliments him, saying, "I have heard you know how to interpret dreams", Yosef answers, "Biladay, Elokim Yaaneh Et Shalom Pharaoh" (41:16) – "It is Hashem that controls the world and can enable interpretation of dreams." Eventually, many years later when Yosef reveals himself and sends a message to his father, he says, "Koh Amar Bincha Yosef Samani Elokim Le'adon Lechol-Mitzrayim" – "G-d has granted me jurisdiction over the whole land of Egypt." (45:9) Our Sages interpret this homiletically to mean that Yosef was saying – "Sam Ani" – I have put – "Elokim" – G-d

Almighty – "Le'adon" – as a Master - over the whole land of Egypt. The whole of Egypt now knows and understands that there exists such a concept of One G-d. Through Yosef's actions and his personal conduct, the whole world could now see and learn about Hashem. Chanuka is a time when the Greeks wished to cut us off from our past and to infuse us with their understanding of the world – no One G-d, no real spirituality in the world. We fought back. But to fight back, you need to realise where it all emanates from, search out the source.

A present isn't just created. There is an idea; there is action of buying and sending. When you receive a present, you start to think "how kind!", and you search back to find who was the giver, in order to thank them. Light enables us to see; it shows the way. At the darkest time in the year, we shine the lights of the Menorah. Chanuka is that time when we search back and reconnect to our G-d, recognising all that goodness He has bestowed upon us. Chanuka Sameach!

The Reed

"One should always be flexible like a reed, and not hardened like a cedar tree. Look at this reed, when the winds blow, it moves with the wind – when the winds are silent, the reed returns to its place... But the cedar tree doesn't stay in its place, rather when the (strongest) Southern wind blows, it is uprooted and turned on its head..." (Avos D'Rabbi Natan, 41)

When we compare the reed to the tree – it seems to be a no-brainer! How can this flimsy 'twig' of a reed stand up to the strength height and power of the cedar tree? This reed, the slightest of winds can make it sway! The cedar tree is immovable!

But of course, when we look a little deeper, we see the most amazing thing! When the Southern wind blows, the chips are down, and the opposition is too powerful – the only way to withstand the onslaught is... flexibility!!! The reed's ability to sway, which superficially allowed us to think "how flimsy!", now allows us to think "how strong!" The reed knows a secret – which is a secret that all serious martial artists know (especially Aikido): In order to win, we sometimes need to 'give' a little. We need to lose this battle to win the war. (In Greek times, when they won the battle and then lost the war, they called it a "pyrrhic victory" – an empty victory.)

"Bitulah Zu Hi Kiyumah" ('setting it aside, can sometimes be its fulfilment').

Chanukah and the Reed

Rabbi Shmuel Kimche



Sometimes – and this is especially true of Torah and Mitzvot – we need to "allow the wind into our airspace" and be like the reed that "bends into the wind", in order to be able to bounce back. Sometimes we need to stop, 'sharpen the saw', and then continue... the stopping to sharpen the saw is only in order to be able to chop the trees down faster.

"What is the secret of their immortality?" How come all Empires rise and fall, but Klal Yisrael manage to last?"

The Jewish People have managed to withstand the test of time. To quote the most famous Mark Twain quote of all time: "What is the secret of their immortality?" How come all Empires rise and fall, but Klal Yisrael manage to last? Obviously the 32 mentions in the Torah of an "Eternal Covenant" have something to do with it, but part of the answer lies in "The Secret of the Reed" and "Chanukah".

Chanukah – a Battle of Cultures

The Greek Conquest is so strange! The Greeks were not interested in destruction, as were the Hamans of Jewish History, nor were they intent on

making life difficult for the Jewish People. They wanted to keep the beauty of the Beit HaMikdash.

So what did Antiochus want? What was his plan? What strange actions of invasion: breaking seals on jars of oil and piercing the Sorek wall (the wall up to which a non-Jewish person could come) 13 times!?!?

The Greeks knew that the only way to destroy Judaism (or the sense of uniqueness about Judaism) was to get the Jewish people to assimilate. Keep your Torah (later with persecution); keep your Beit HaMikdash, but allow it to be a regular "Temple". Become one of us. Become one of the many nations of the world. Join the Olympics. Gymnasiums. Theatres. Become "cultured" like the rest of humanity. "Your oil is regular oil". "Your Temple is a regular temple."

One of the beauties of Judaism is the fact that Judaism adapts to the surrounding cultures. We are writing and reading this D'var Torah in English. We all wear M&S clothes (or at least clothes from the M&S outlet!) We all enter the UK workforce, and share so many similarities with the nations within which we live.

The wind is blowing on the reed called "The Jewish People". The only way to survive a 2000 year exile is to be able

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to 'go with the flow' – to adapt. But what happens when the wind stops blowing? Are we able to go back to our roots? Are we able to return to our rock-solid Jewish identity?

2,200 years ago in Israel, we were unable to. We were assimilated. "Mityavnim". Everyone, that is, except for the one family which managed to return the entire Jewish population to its roots. The Hasmoneans (or Macabees) realised that we were all bending, and didn't know how to

stand up firm. We forgot who we really are.

2015 is no different at all: 50-90 percent assimilation. It's tough going for the Jewish People. It's the first time since Greece that we have been challenged like this to maintain our identity.

The Arizal writes that the celebration of Chanukah is because "Matityahu the Kohen Gadol was metakken (fixed) the middah (attribute) of Hod (glory)." Each description of Hashem's attributes has a different

nuance – "Hod" means "to bend" (we always bend when it comes to 'modim'). However, in Tanach (points out the Pachad Yitzchak, Chanukah #7), we never find the word "hod" alone; it almost always has the word "haddar" added to it. Hod = "to bend", "Haddar = "to return".

Chanukah gives us the strength of the reed – to be able to bend with the "hod", but to know how to return. To come back to our Jewish self identity. Happy Chanukah.

1. What did the fat cows being eaten symbolize?

41:4 - That all the joy of the plentiful years would be forgotten. (Not that the good years would provide food for the bad years.)

2. How did Pharaoh's recollection of his dream differ from Nevuchadnetzar's recollection of his dream?

41:8 - Pharaoh remembered the contents of his dream but didn't know its meaning. Nevuchadnetzar forgot even the contents of his dream.

3. What was significant about the fact that Pharaoh dreamed repeatedly?

41:32 - It showed that the seven good years would start immediately.

4. What does "Tsafnat Panayach" mean?

41:45 - He who explains things that are hidden and obscure.

5. What happened to the Egyptians' grain that was stored in anticipation of the famine?

41:55 - It rotted.



6. What did Yosef require the Egyptians to do before he would sell them grain?

41:55 - Become circumcised.

7. Did Yaakov and his family still have food when he sent his sons to Egypt? If yes, why did he send them?

42:1 - Yes, but he sent them because he did not want to cause envy in the eyes of those who did not have food.

8. What prophetic significance lay in Yaakov's choice of the word "redu" — "descend" (and not "lechu" — "go")?

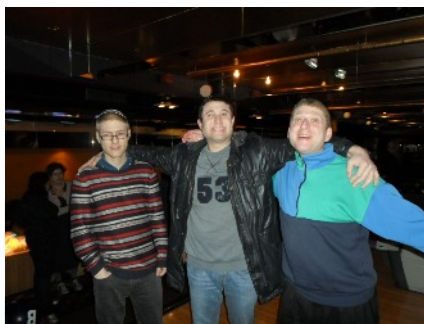
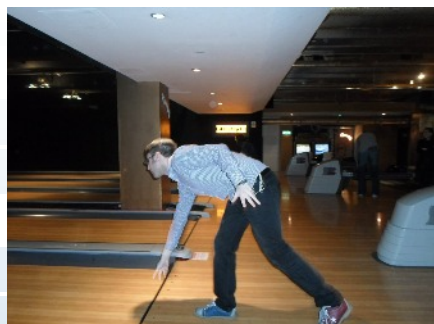
42:2 - It hinted to the 210 years that the Jewish people would be in Egypt: The word "redu" has the numerical value of 210.

9. Why does the verse say "Yosef's brothers" went down to Egypt (and not "Yaakov's sons")?

42:3 - Because they regretted selling Yosef and planned to act as brothers by trying to find him and ransom him at any cost.

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TAL BOWLING ADVENTURE



MAZAL TOV - Rabbi and Rebetzin Bassous on the engagement of their daughter Elisheva to Yamin Elkrief - Yael Yamin-Joseph and Mikey Salem on their forthcoming wedding

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Although publishing Kabalistic works is not a simple matter because it reveals matters that are often best to remain secret, two incidents show that it was clear that the Baal HaLeshem had great Siyata Dishmaya in preserving and publishing his seforim. The first was in WWI when the enemy soldiers came to Shavil, the town of the Baal HaLeshem, and told the people they had 15 hours to leave. The Baal HaLeshem was already 73 years old. With bitter tears he realized that he would not be able to take his not-yet-published writings with him. He then buried them in the ground, as is Kavod for seforim. Years later, when the Baal HaLeshem

took up residence in the city of Hommel and it was impossible to return to Shavil, he told of his sorrow to another former resident of Shavil, Mr. Ben Tzion Nourik, who at that time resided in Riga. With great vigour, Mr. Nourik took up the cause of rescuing the seforim – even sending experts from Riga to Shavil – to recover the buried treasures. This operation was successful and the seforim were returned to their holy owner.

Later on, in the year 1924 when the Baal HaLeshem was already 83 years

Our Chachamim



old and on his way to Eretz Yisrael, he spent a number of days in Istanbul. Upon boarding the ship to Eretz Yisrael, he realized that a set of manuscripts were missing. With a torrent of tears the Baal HaLeshem davened for the manuscript to be returned and moments before the ship set sail, another guest of the hotel he had stayed at came running to the boat with the manuscript.

Halachot Of Chanuka

Rabbi Dov Levy



Halachot - Chanukah

We're moving house during Chanukah. If we move in the evening do we light Chanukah candles in old house or wait to light in our new house?

If you move before nightfall you should light in your new house. However if

you're leaving your old house after lighting time you should light in your old house before you leave.

Can I use Shemita oil to light Chanukah candles?

Shemita oil for Chanukah candles is the subject of much halachic debate and therefore should be avoided. If you don't have any other oil you should consult a Rabbi.

Does someone have to sit by the Chanukah candles for half an hour?

Once the candles have been lit the mitzvah has been done and so everyone is allowed to leave the house immediately. However it is customary to remain near the candles for around half an hour. This time should be used to speak of the miracles which occurred and praising Hashem with stories and song

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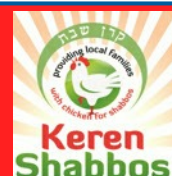
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