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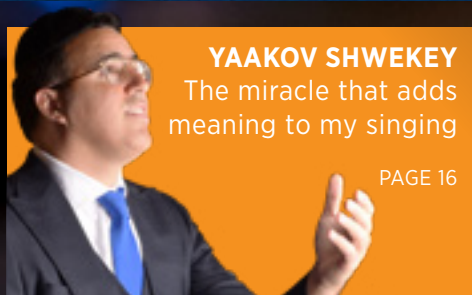
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YAAKOV SHWEKEY

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meaning to my singing

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TARAGIN**

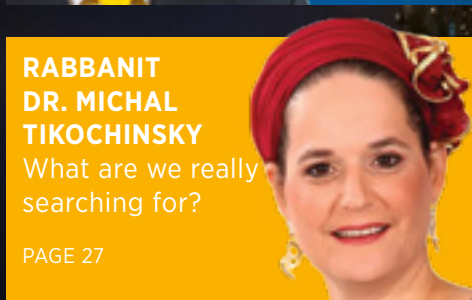
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חנוכה שמח!
Happy Chanukah!



לעילוי נשמת מנחם (מני) קלאוזנר ז"ל
IN MEMORY OF MENNY KLAUSNER Z"l

Rabbi Elan Mazer



Making Your Dreams Come True

We are currently in the middle of the three-parasha saga of Yosef and his brothers. The dream motif flows through the entire story with three different sets of dreams. Each one of these sets contains two dreams and Yosef goes through a gradual process to learn how to deal with the dreams he receives.

The first dreams are his own, at the beginning of Parashat Vayeishev. Next are the dreams he hears in jail from the butler and the baker, and then he hears Pharaoh's two dreams about the cows and the stalks of wheat.

It is fascinating to see how Yosef reacts to each of these sets. The first time, when he 'receives' his dreams, all he does is tell them over to his brothers.

The next time, with the butler and the baker, he doesn't just hear the dreams and tell them over; he interprets them. He tells the dreamers what their dreams mean and what is going to happen.

With Pharaoh's dreams, Yosef rises to the next level. He hears the dreams, interprets them, and then does something very interesting. He gives unsolicited advice on how to act on his interpretation, proposing that Pharaoh appoints someone to manage the national food bank.

Yosef takes an active role and reacts to the dream.

But that's not all. Later, when his brothers come down to Egypt, they bow down to him. The verse says "he remembered the dreams" (Bereishit 42:9) and Rashi confirms that with the brothers bowing down to Yosef, the dreams have come to fruition. The Ramban says no, that's not what happened. In the dream there were 11 brothers who bowed down to Yosef but here there were only 10. So Yosef concocted a plan to ensure that his 11th brother, Binyamin, could come down to Egypt and bow down to him as well, so that the dream could come true in its entirety.

Whatever Yosef's reasons, we see here a fourth level of dealing with dreams. Yosef doesn't just tell, interpret or act, but now he takes a proactive role in bringing the dream into reality. Yosef sees that dream, not as a prophesy of what will happen, but rather as a mission to be accomplished.

However, there is something else going on here too.

Every time Yosef moves up a level in his 'dream development course,' the name of G-d becomes more prevalent. When Yosef relates his own dreams, he doesn't mention G-d at all. When he interprets the butler's and baker's dreams, he mentions the name of G-d, and when he starts being more active, with Pharaoh's dreams, he invokes the name of G-d again and again.

There's a lesson here. Usually we say that the more active we are, the less

G-d is involved. Yosef teaches us that it's exactly the opposite. The more active you are in life, the more you are able to see G-d in this world. The more active you are, the more G-d is active within your life too.

Being passive is saying the G-d is something separate from me. He looks down on me, He creates the situation and I have to deal with it. Yosef says no. G-d giving us dreams is not Him telling us 'I'm dealing with your life so step aside,' rather it's G-d saying 'I want to be a partner in your life.'

The miracles of Chanukah are a manifestation of this very same ideal.

In *Al HaNissim* we thank G-d "for the miracles and the redemption..." – i.e. for what He did for us, but then we add "*ve'al hagevurot*" – for the courage, the mighty deeds.

But wasn't it the Maccabees who showed the courage? Why are we praising G-d for their mighty deeds?

Because believing that G-d does things for us is not about removing ourselves from the story. It's about actively putting ourselves in it. As we thank Him for the miracles, we also thank Him for the courage He gave us to become active partners with Him in those very same miracles.

Rabbi Elan Mazer is the National Director of Mizrachi Canada

Rabbi Doron Perez



CHURCHILL AND THE Hasmonean Spirit

On August 20th, 1940, Winston Churchill, the newly elected British Prime Minister, made a speech to the British Parliament in the midst of the Battle of Britain, soon after the swift fall of France. Hitler was attempting to gain supremacy by destroying the Royal Air Force (RAF), employing massive aerial bombing, and launching a land invasion of the British Isles. This would give him total domination over Europe. About 2,500 RAF pilots heroically defended Britain during those months and somehow managed to hold off and repel the German onslaught.

In his famous speech to the British Parliament, Churchill declared: "*Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.*" These courageous pilots became popularly known as 'The Few.'

We can also say this about Chanukah and the Hasmoneans. Never in the struggle for Jewish survival was so much owed by so many to so few. They are the 'The Few' of our people.

One Man, One Family

Our Sages describe the Chanukah story as the victory of "the few against the many."¹ Indeed, one man, Matityahu the Priest, and his five sons: Yehuda, Shimon, Yochanan, Elazar and Yonatan – one small priestly family known as the Hasmoneans – changed the course of Jewish history forever.

The events took place 2,300 years ago yet continue to echo into eternity. It was a time of Greek world domination, global acculturation and the assimilation of the citizens of conquered nations and minorities throughout the Empire. Judea, the Jewish province, was no exception. The Jewish people were in grave danger of losing their national and spiritual identity and, G-d forbid, vanishing as a distinct culture from the stage of human history.

Had this small Hasmonean family not placed its finger into the dike, standing firm against the raging waters of cultural assimilation, the flame of Torah and Jewish destiny may very well have been extinguished. They

displayed an almost superhuman courageousness and faith in the face of impossible political and military odds. They rebelled against the harsh decrees of the Seleucid Greek King Antiochus Epiphanes, who threatened to uproot every last vestige of Torah observance and Jewish custom. This small group of believers grew in number, sparked a revolution, revived a Jewish political sovereign state, brought cultural independence to Judea, rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem and removed all traces of idolatry. They succeeded in not only stemming the tide, but in reinvigorating the Jewish people's belief in themselves and in G-d, enabling them to overcome the military, political and cultural onslaught of the world's leading superpower.

Sadly, Matityahu died only a few months after the rebellion began: "*And the days of Matityahu drew near...*"

¹ *Al HaNissim* prayer we say in the Amidah and in Grace after Meals.

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Torat HaMizrachi

he was about to die and his son Yehuda rose up in his stead... King Antiochus sent 40,000 footmen and 7,000 horses to go into the land of Judah and to destroy it.”² Yehuda and his men were heavily outnumbered by about 20:1, and his untrained men faced legions of the best-equipped military force on earth. Four of the five brothers would die yet the few miraculously prevailed.

What was the source of their strength?

On the eve of what seemed like a hopeless, suicidal battle, Yehuda made the following speech to his soldiers:

“And Judah, who was called the Maccabee, said: ‘Victory in battle emanates not from the multitude of numbers but rather in the strength given from Heaven. They come unto us with forms of insolence and lawlessness to destroy us and our wives and children, but we fight for our lives and for our law. It is better for us to die in battle than to look upon the terrible decrees of our nation and sanctuary. Nevertheless, whatever the will of Heaven be, so shall it transpire.’”

Yehuda displayed unshakeable conviction in his mission. He believed that the quality and depth of one’s faith were more significant than strength in numbers. With a passionate belief in a Higher Power and a lofty cause, harnessed with courage and commitment, one can prevail over seemingly impossible circumstances.

Perhaps this explains why the Sages³ chose to focus on the apparently insignificant miracle of the oil burning for eight days as opposed to the

more impressive and miraculous life-and-death military victory over the Greeks.⁴

Fire and light represent the essence of the Chanukah story – the realm of the spirit. More than any other physical phenomenon, they are ethereal and intangible. Almost metaphysically, they behave in a contradictory dual fashion, as both waves and particles. They reflect a meeting point between Heaven and Earth, natural and supernatural. Having pure oil transcending the laws of nature for eight days is significant. The Maharal explains that the number seven signifies the natural world while the number eight the supernatural.⁵ The fact that the oil lasted for exactly eight days – no more and no less – further indicates that something ‘other worldly’ was at play. Chanukah is a rendezvous between the deepest reservoirs of human resilience and Divine inspiration and intervention. It celebrates the immeasurable and indomitable strength of the spirit.

The Hasmonean Spirit in Our Times

We live in a privileged generation which has seen a remarkable revival of the Hasmonean spirit. After the Shoah and the destruction of almost the entire Yeshiva world, we have witnessed two miraculous rebirths. One, over the course of a few short decades, a handful of Torah leaders rebuilt the world of Torah study into arguably the largest cadre of yeshiva students in the history of our people. And two, a small band of Zionist pioneers eked out the miracle of modern-day Israel from a desolate

Ottoman Palestine – reviving a nation, reclaiming a land, rebuilding a country, revitalizing a language and reigniting our spirit.

The twin rebirths of Torah and Israel continue to highlight the remarkable relevance of the Chanukah story to our tempestuous times. They illuminate the essence of the Jewish experience, whether as a people or as individuals: with a tenacious, burning belief in G-d, in the justness of the cause, and in the necessity and privilege of Jewish destiny, the realistic and improbable becomes the miraculous and the possible.

² This and the following quote are from the First Book of the Maccabees.

³ Shabbat 21b.

⁴ Indeed, the Maharal of Prague (Ner Mitzvah, 2, Chanukah) posits that Thanksgiving and Hallel are instituted when the Jewish people are miraculously saved from a collective life-threatening situation (such as the Maccabees against the Greeks) and not when afforded the opportunity to fulfill a mitzvah (lighting the Menorah). This is also evident from the Al HaNissim prayer which highlights the enormity of the military victory and makes no mention at all of the oil. Furthermore, we could add that the oil miracle was not that impressive compared to the 10 ongoing miracles in the Temple (Avot 5, 7). Additionally, the Menorah could have been lit from impure oil if no pure oil had been found. In short, the miracle of the oil was relatively unimpressive, seemingly unnecessary and certainly not a basis for fixing a festival.

⁵ Tiferet Yisrael 2.

Rabbi Doron Perez is Head of the Mizrachi World Movement

המזרחי HAMIZRACHI

Dedicated to Ari Fuld z"l, our next HaMizrachi will bring you the miraculous story of the Land of Israel which has come alive, become revitalized, and is once again "giving forth her fruits."



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This Land is OUR LAND

"We have not taken a foreign land, we do not hold the property of others. Rather, the Land is our ancestral inheritance taken from us lawlessly. When G-d gave us the strength, we returned it to us." (Maccabees 1:15:33-34)

This was Shimon HaMaccabee's response to Antiochus, who had demanded that the Maccabees cede territory to him.

Much of the Torah is about the Jewish struggle to return to and settle in Eretz Yisrael. But perhaps it is only after the return from the first exile and the Maccabean struggle for independence that we fully appreciate the eternal nature of our relationship with the Holy Land.

Ancestral Inheritance

Jews may have been exiled and our Land may have been taken from us – first by the Babylonians and then again by the Romans – but it remained ours because it is our ancestral inheritance. This is the way G-d described the Land of Israel to the Jewish people while they were still slaves in Egypt – *v'natati lachem morasha* – I have given the Land to you as an inheritance. (Exodus 6:5)

Morasha actually means something you pass on to the next generation. Even before arriving in Israel, the Jewish people owned it in a way that they could bequeath it to future generations. This is why upon entering the Land it was apportioned,

not only to those alive upon entry, but also to those who had received the promise in Egypt.

Taken Lawlessly

Tosafot (Bava Batra 44b) explain that, even in exile, all Jews own a portion in the Land of Israel. Even though the Land had been physically taken from us, the law is that 'land cannot be stolen.' (Sukkah 30b)

When G-d Gives Us Strength

Ultimately, what makes the Land our ancestral inheritance and not that of other nations, is that G-d destined it for us. Shimon HaMaccabee hints to this by emphasizing that the retaking of the Land is not the result of brute force or political opportunity, but G-d giving us the strength and capability.

This claim is supported by Rashi's first comment on the Torah: "...If other nations accuse the Jews of being thieves for taking the Land of the seven nations, they should respond by explaining that all the Land belongs to G-d. He created it all and gives it to whom He sees as deserving. Just as He once gave it to them, He now took it from them and gave it to us."

Living in a period where almost all Jews lived far from Israel and where Muslims and Christians were battling for its control, Rashi foresaw a time when Jews would return to Israel, control it and be accused of thievery. Rashi sees G-d's choice to begin the Torah with the Creation narrative as a rebuff of these attacks. We are

here because G-d put us here. Our mandate comes from Him.

As we know, despite Rashi's foresight, much of the world (especially those who do not recognize G-d as Creator) does not accept his argument. Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook said that Rashi's explanation aims not to convince others but to fortify our own confidence in our claims to Eretz Yisrael. This is implied by the verse Rashi quotes: "The basis of His actions, He explained to His people."

Although we may not be able to convince others of our Divinely-destined ancestral home, our faith in this fact should buttress our confidence in the face of such claims.

Shimon HaMaccabee knew this well. This Chanukah let us too remember the heavenly historical basis of our return to and relationship with our Land and may it give us the strength to continue its redemption with G-d's help and through our own efforts.

¹ "According to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit" (Numbers 26:55), which teaches that the Jewish people would inherit Eretz Yisrael according to the names of their fathers ie those who left Egypt (Bava Batra 117).

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In Those Days at THIS TIME

Let us set the scene. The Hasmoneans are living in the second century BCE under Seleucid rule. Although there is a Mikdash, it is not nearly as magnificent as King Solomon's was, and Antiochus Epiphanes has transformed it into a pagan temple! Chaggai and Zechariah, the prophets of 520 BCE, had foretold of a beautiful Temple and a Divinely-guided political apocalypse that would place the ruling empires at Israel's mercy. Where was all that now?

Chaggai had called out to the political-military governor, Zerubavel ben Sha'altiel, and the High Priest, Yehoshua ben Yehotzadak, on the 24th of Kislev, "*Yom Yesod Heichal Hashem*" – the day of establishing the foundations for the Second Temple.

He told them that to ensure agricultural success (primarily that of the olive tree, harvested at that time), they must continue to rebuild the Temple. He also cried out to Zerubavel to lead the people to war, promising him victory and the establishment of monarchy. Sadly, Zerubavel did not heed Chaggai's words and these inspiring promises were not fulfilled in his time.

Fast forward 300 years.

The Hasmoneans clearly feel Chaggai's words reverberating in their hearts and minds, perhaps even girding themselves with the written scrolls of his prophecies as they go out to battle in the hills of Binyamin and Yehuda. They recall the Divine promises of victory over strong empires and succeed in launching the battles that Zerubavel had failed to fight.

Proof of their fulfilling these prophecies may be evident in their assuming the rights of monarchy as promised to Zerubavel. Even greater proof is their rebuilding of the altar and re-inauguration of the Temple on the anniversary of Chaggai's prophecy – the 24th of Kislev!¹

However, the Hasmoneans did not just rededicate the altar as Chaggai had implored in his Kislev prophecy. They insisted on lighting a makeshift Menorah as further manifestation of other prophecies fulfilled – those of Zechariah, Chaggai's contemporary.

He too encouraged Zerubavel to continue building the Mikdash and to initiate a war that would end with a miraculous victory! Zechariah envisioned various images, including a Menorah bordered on each side by an olive tree. His accompanying angel explained to him that,

לא בְּחֵיל וְלֹא בְּכֹחַ כִּי אִם בְּרוּחִי אֶמַר ה' צְבָאוֹת...

"Not by might nor by strength but by My spirit, said the L-rd of Hosts..."²

Zerubavel's victory will not be due to any military advantage, but rather to the spirit of G-d as represented by the lights of the Menorah! On either side, the two olive trees represent the king and prophet, both anointed with oil, who will assist in leading the people religiously and nationally.

The Hasmoneans interpreted their miraculous military victory as the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy three centuries earlier. As they rededicated the Mikdash to express the fulfillment of G-d's promises, they demonstrated that the source of

their strength was the Divine spirit, represented by the Menorah. (Indeed, the Menorah still serves as the symbol of Israel's government and sovereignty today!)

That is why we celebrate Chanukah on the 25th of Kislev, commemorating the miracle of the military victory and the eight-day rededication of the Temple on the anniversary of Chaggai's Kislev prophecy, and that is why we light the Chanukiah just as the Hasmoneans lit the Menorah, to symbolize the spirit of G-d in Zechariah's prophecy.

Prophecies are not oracles of what will be, but what may be if we choose to respond and write history with the Almighty Himself. Yes, Chanukah is a time to remember the prophecies fulfilled through the Hasmonean response but it is also a time to recall those prophecies yet to be fulfilled... and ask ourselves how we can respond today.

¹ This explanation is found in Maccabees 1, 4 and in the Scholion – a commentary on Megillat Ta'anit. Following the rededication of the altar, they celebrated the *miluim* ceremony of Chanukat HaBayit for eight days, from the 25th, parallel to the holiday of Sukkot they were not able to celebrate earlier in Tishrei (as recorded in Maccabees 2, 10).

² Zechariah 4, 6-7 – Haftarah of Shabbat Chanukah.

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Rena Ariel



Just *one* Candle

The experience of G-d's withdrawal (*hester panim*) is familiar to many of us. Who hasn't confronted a reality of terrible, unbearable pain? Who hasn't struggled with profound questions surrounding difficult life situations? Who hasn't experienced pain with no meaning, suffering with no purpose?

That is how we felt after our 13 and a half-year-old daughter, Hallel Yaffa, was murdered in her bed at home in broad daylight just two and a half years ago. A pure, beautiful child; the victim of pure, brutal hatred.

Days when everything was despondent, the world dark.

We called her Hallel because she was born soon after Chanukah, when we sing Hallel every day, adding praises to our light and joy.

Chanukah arrives at the end of Kislev, during the shortest days of the year, and when the moon is almost invisible, fading before it reappears. It is the only holiday celebrated at the end of the month, rather than the middle, when the moon's light is brightest.

The Midrash (Avoda Zara 8a) explains Chanukah's original background as associated with the time of Creation. Adam was conscious of the experience of G-d's contraction (*tzimtzum*) and withdrawal (*hester*) due to the shortening day. He feared it was in punishment for his sin. He was in a state of existential dread of destruction and annihilation until he witnessed the light of dawn.

A sliver of light. Sudden understanding. That is the purpose of Chanukah. The obligation to find the small spark of light, not in an illuminated world, but in a dark one. Good doesn't appear only as a powerful spring-like revelation, but from an opposite, winter-like place. We all have moments of darkness in our lives, within us, where we need that small, barely flickering candle.

The Hallel prayer, too, does not only contain moments of climactic joy; it includes the verse: "The bonds of death encompassed me, the anguish of the grave came upon me."

We can also identify this duality in the famous dispute between Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai concerning how many candles we light each night.

Do we begin with one small candle and allow a process of intensification? Or perhaps the opposite – in the war against darkness, should we use all the light from the outset? As we know, we act like the former, like Beit Hillel.

There are times when we can barely grasp even one candle.

How difficult it is to shield that flame so it doesn't blow out. And how even more challenging it is to allow it to light the way.

How can we make that candle meaningful, transforming a life of fate into a life of destiny?¹

Following Hallel's murder, we searched for new meaning for existence. How could we transform the memory of our Hallel into a living

entity? After all, that is the secret of the Jewish holidays. Historical memory translated into daily action. The past is channeled through the present for the benefit of the future. The holidays not only illuminate the past but demand a pulsating spiritual life in the present.

We found part of our meaning by building "Kerem Hallel" (Hallel's Vineyard) – an area of our home filled with vines and grapes, which symbolize deep roots in the Land and the sanctity and blessings of wine. It is an area privileged to have received Ya'akov's blessing to Yehuda and from then until now has produced fruit in abundance. Vines gripping the ground symbolize our victory and resilience in the face of suffering and pain.

We found another small candle too, a small flame that disseminates light – "Pirkei Hallel," a book for bat mitzvah girls and their mothers, which enables them to embark on a shared journey; a book written in tears that illuminates Hallel's sparkling personality, intended to inspire the 12-year-old reader.

Perhaps it is only because we find the strength to light our own one small light that we are able to shine outwards, give praise and publicize our miracles.

¹ A concept expressed by Rav Soloveitchik.

Rena Ariel is the mother of Hallel Yaffa, who was killed by a terrorist in 2016

Rabbi Chanan Morrison



Style versus Content

After the Flood, Noah blessed his son Yefet: "May God expand Yefet, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem." (Genesis 9:27)

What does this blessing mean? Why should Yefet live in Shem's tents?

The Sages noted that Yefet was the ancestor of ancient Greece. As such, Yefet's blessing relates to the special accomplishments of the Greeks, especially in the realm of the arts and aesthetics (the name Yefet is related to the Hebrew word *yofi*, meaning beauty). As the Talmud states in Megillah 9b: "May the beauty of Yefet reside in the tents of Shem."

The blessing links Yefet and Shem together through the cultures of their descendants, Greece and Israel. Yet the relationship between these two nations was never simple. We know from the story of Chanukah that these two civilizations clashed violently during the Second Temple period. How then can the beauty of Greek culture reside harmoniously in the tents of Israel?

Studying Greek Wisdom

On the one hand, the Sages placed no explicit prohibition against studying Greek philosophy. They were content to give general guidance, such as Rabbi Yishmael's instruction to his nephew: "Find an hour that is neither day nor night, and study Greek wisdom at that time" (Menachot 99b).

Regarding the education of youth, however, the Sages were more circumspect. They feared that the outward appeal and beauty of Greek wisdom would lure the next

generation away from their fathers' faith. Thus they forcefully declared: "Cursed be the one who teaches his son Greek wisdom" (Bava Kama 82b).

The language of this decree specifically forbids teaching Greek wisdom. In other words, it is permitted to study it, but not to teach it. Young students must first acquire a solid basis in Torah, and only then will they be able to discern the difference between the Torah of Israel and the philosophy of Greece.



Style versus Content

We find that the Talmud makes a second distinction regarding Greek culture. "Greek language is one thing, but Greek wisdom is another" (Bava Kama 83a). The intent of this statement is to differentiate between style and content.

Greek wisdom, as a philosophy and an outlook on life, profoundly detracts from the sacred and defiles the holy.

The Greek language, on the other hand, poses no challenge of ideas and beliefs. Greek is a rich and

sophisticated language, and is an appropriate vehicle through which to express our thoughts and ideas. The external language does not influence or harm the inner content.

We have no need to borrow from the content of foreign cultures when our own traditions are so rich and stimulating, ennobling both the individual and society as a whole. But we may adopt from other peoples that which adds external beauty and elegance. Even after the culture clash with Hellenism, the Sages still taught that it is fitting to adopt stylistic enhancements – "May the beauty of Yefet reside in the tents of Shem."

This approach is not limited to ancient Greece, but is true for all foreign cultures. It is not inappropriate for us to utilize the innovations and talents of other nations. After all, the focus of the Jewish people is primarily on inner matters, on ethical and spiritual advancement.

Even for the construction of the holy Temple, we find that King Solomon turned to Hiram, the king of Tyre, for his workers' expertise in cutting down and preparing the wood, "for we have none among us who knows how to hew timber like the Zidonians" (Kings 1 5:20). Solomon used artisans from other nations to chop the wood and quarry the large stones for the Temple. But after these external preparations, it was the Jewish people who secured the Sanctuary's inner holiness.

Rabbi Chanan Morrison is the author of several books on Rav Kook's writings www.RavKookTorah.org



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COULD TODAY'S SECULAR JEWS BE CONSIDERED HELLENISTS?

Many years ago I took part in an academic conference (with religious and non-religious participants) that dealt with the significance of Chanukah in modern times. Among the speakers was the late Prof. Yishayahu Leibowitz. He argued that the secular members of the audience were not much different from the Jewish Hellenists at the time of the Hasmoneans.

He said that contemporary non-observant Israelis have adopted a foreign culture completely opposing Jewish values, particularly with regard to mitzvah observance which, according to him, defines Jewish identity and without which there is no difference between a Jew and a non-Jew.

He cited three particular areas:

1. *Family Purity* – ignoring this area of Judaism means that Torah-observant Jews cannot marry a non-observant partner, just as we are forbidden to marry non-Jews.
2. *Eating and Drinking* – religious Jews cannot eat in their homes because they do not keep kosher, and therefore they are similar to non-Jews.
3. *Shabbat* – Since the non-observant desecrate the Shabbat, we regard them as “apostates for the whole Torah,”¹ and we should keep away from them as much as possible.

Was he right? Is there really no difference between the average secular Jew in 21st century Israel and the Hellenists at the time of the Hasmoneans?

On the surface, just as the Hellenists adopted the Greek way of life and left the path of Torah and *mitzvot*, so the secular in our times identify more with Western European culture than they do with the faith of their ancestors.

Hence just as the Maccabees declared a horrible war against those same Hellenists, we too should wage war against secular Jews today. And if we can't actually fight a physical war, we should at least have no contact or connection with them.

This of course is extreme, frightening and unacceptable logic.

Yes, it is understandable if we simply compare the externals without considering the internal aspects of the matter, but fortunately, we are living in post-Rav Kook times. His personality, teachings and actions helped save Am Yisrael from baseless hatred and life-threatening divisiveness.

One of the major distinctions Rav Kook raises is between a Jew who does not observe the details of the *mitzvot* and one who actively and emotionally detaches himself from the Jewish people. This nuance completely undermines the attempt to compare modern-day secular Jews to the ancient Hellenists.

Rav Kook explains² that in most generations, if the people live as they should, learning Torah and observing *mitzvot*, they will receive Divine spiritual and material blessings, and if, G-d-forbid, they sin, the generation is punished.

However, in the generations of *Geula*, Redemption, Divine accounting is more complex. Bnei Yisrael were redeemed from Egypt even though they were trapped in the 49 gates of impurity, because of the unique internal content inherent in every single Jew – “You are all beautiful my beloved, there is no defect in you.”³

With that perspective, Rav Kook identified contrasting trends in our own generation. On the one hand, a departure from Torah and *mitzvot*, but on the other, many thousands have given their lives – and are prepared to give their lives – for the redemption of Israel and its Land. A devotion originating from their untainted Jewish souls.

The Hellenists fully cooperated with the enemy and wanted to uproot and blur Jewish identity. Their desire was to assimilate the Jewish people within the Greek Hellenistic culture. In contrast, our *chiloni* brothers and sisters – secular, non-observant Jews, are dedicated to the Jewish people and to Israel. And they are even prepared to die for those ideals if need be.

¹ See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 72:2: “One who desecrates Shabbat in public is like an idol worshipper in everything he does.”

² In a letter to the Ridbaz (Rabbi Ya'akov David Wilovsky). See Igrot Vol. 2, Igeret 4155.

³ Song of Songs 4:7.

Rabbi Itamar Cohen is Head of Mechinat Magen Shaul, the pre-military yeshiva academy in Nokdim

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Rabbanit Sharon Rimon

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon



EIGHT DAYS OF MULTIPLE MEANING

The festival of Chanukah was instituted following the Hasmonean's victory over the Greeks, as described in the first Book of the Maccabees. These events occurred after the Tanach was completed, and so Chanukah does not appear in the Tanach.

However, the date of the 24th of Kislev, the eve of Chanukah, does appear in the Tanach, as "the day when the foundations of the Sanctuary were laid;"¹ the day upon which they began to build the Second Temple.

The prophet Chaggai rebukes the people for not yet having built the Mikdash (Temple), and encourages them to do so despite the great challenges involved. In the context quoted above, he prophesies that in merit of laying the foundations for G-d's Sanctuary, the Almighty will bless the people with material-agricultural abundance.

So it is no coincidence that the re-dedication of the Mikdash in Hasmonean times also occurred on the exact same day that they began to build the Second Temple.

The Mikdash stands at the heart of the Chanukah miracle. It is supposed to be a spiritual center for all nations, and the light of the Menorah, shining outwards from within, is meant to illuminate the whole world and spread faith in G-d.

Am Yisrael's ability to bring oil and light the Menorah – and hence become partners in disseminating faith in G-d throughout the world – has tremendous significance.

Therefore, it is again no coincidence that the lighting of the Menorah is central to the Chanukah story, as is the finding of the oil and the subsequent miracle. Jews throughout the centuries have lit Chanukiot at the entrance to or inside their homes throughout the generations, symbolizing the continuation of this dissemination of the light of faith all over the globe.

The Hasmoneans' dedication of the Temple also symbolizes the power of the Jewish spirit. Am Yisrael were facing the danger of cultural assimilation, and up rose Matityahu and his sons to declare "Whoever is for G-d, join me," just as Moshe Rabbeinu declared at the Golden Calf.²

The battle against idol worship and cultural-religious assimilation started immediately after the people received the Torah and has continued throughout history. It happened during the reigns of kings Yehoash, Chizkiyahu and Yoshiyahu, during which there was a major religious revolution, which included a cleansing of the Temple and the Land from idol worship, and it continued in the days of the Hasmoneans, who were forced to fight the Jewish Hellenists.

This is Am Yisrael's perpetual struggle: to uphold its spiritual identity and resist the adoption of foreign cultures; a struggle we are all very familiar with today as well.

Not only that, but the Maccabees' war against the Greeks also carries a powerful message. It was a war of

the few with makeshift weapons against the many with the most advanced military technology. In this war it became unquestionably clear that victory had nothing to do with physical might but with G-d's power.

The same idea appears in Gideon's war against Midian, in which G-d asks Gideon to go out to war with a small army, and promises him: "...through the three hundred men who lap shall I save you and I shall deliver Midian into your hand,"³ and again when Saul's son, Jonathan, goes out to fight alone against the Philistines: "...for nothing prevents G-d from saving, whether through the many or through few."⁴

Therefore, Chanukah is not just an historical commemoration of a specific war in which the Jewish people conquered its enemies, but a festival with multiple and rich spiritual meanings, containing the solid foundation blocks for the heroism of the Jewish spirit, faith in G-d, and the dissemination of that faith throughout the entire world.

¹ Haggai, 2:18.

² Exodus 32:26.

³ Judges 7:7.

⁴ Samuel 1, 14:6.

Rabbanit Sharon Rimon teaches Tanach and is Content Editor for the Herzog Tanach website: www.hatanakh.com/en

CANDLE LIGHTING ON A PLANE

We're flying to Israel for Chanukah but we're leaving a few hours before sunset and arriving the next day. We'll be on a plane all night. How should we light candles?

1. Is there a *mitzvah* to light candles on a plane? 2. Can one light in the airport? 3. Does lighting electric bulbs count?

Lighting in the house

There is a special law of "one who sees" with Chanukah lights, i.e. even someone who does not light their own candles can make a blessing (שְׁעָשָׂה נֶסִים, and שְׁהָחִינוּ on the first night) upon seeing someone else's candles (Shabbat 23a). Tosafot (Sukkah 46a) explains that this law of "one who sees" was only instituted regarding the Chanukah lights because one needs a 'home' to fulfil the *mitzvah*.

A homeless person is also obligated to light candles, since the *mitzvah* is incumbent on everyone, but he cannot fulfill it because he doesn't have a home.

Some later *poskim* say that the *mitzvah* is to light *davka* in a home. Therefore, a person should strive to observe the *mitzvah* even when not in his own home but in another 'home' (Maharsham, Rav Zvi Pesach Frank, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rav Elyashiv and others.)

Is a plane considered a home?

The Maharsham writes that covered boats or long-distance trains are

considered homes and one can light Chanukah candles in them. But it appears we can't apply this to a plane, because the plane is in the air (i.e. can't stop like a boat or train), and is also more of a temporary abode. For example, one thing that defines a home is sleep (see Biur Halacha 677, and Chovat Hadar Chanukah 1:12), and since one doesn't sleep in normal fashion on a plane it is hard to say that a plane is considered a home.

Can one light in an airport?

Even the person who lights in shul needs to light again in his home (Rema and Mishna Berura 671:7). This proves that having a home is not enough, but that the person lighting the candles must have some connection to that home. Thus if a person sleeps in a house for one night, he can light there. One cannot fulfill the *mitzvah* in an airport because there is no connection between the lighter and this 'home.'

Lighting electric bulbs

Even if it was halachically permissible to light in a plane, it is obviously not a practical option. The only acceptable solution is through electric bulbs. However, it seems that one actually needs fire for lighting and not just light. Therefore, fluorescent, PL or LED bulbs, none of which have a filament, are not fire at all, and so are definitely disqualified. Regarding filament bulbs, there are differences of opinion whether the burning metal filament is considered fire (see Mitzvat HaReayah of Rav

Kook, Orach Chaim 673, and others). Indeed, most *poskim* say one cannot use them, although Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichot Shlomo 15:3), holds that when there is no other option one can light with a flashlight that has a filament.

Practical Halacha

Since there is a doubt whether one can light in a plane, and another doubt whether electric bulbs are permitted, one should take a flashlight with a filament (or an electric Chanukiah) to fulfil the *mitzvah*, but should not make a blessing.

If other members of the family have remained at home, they can light for those on the plane, who are then exempt from lighting (Shabbat 23a, Shulchan Aruch 677:1). Husband and wife can light for each other, but parents lighting can also include their children (who live with them.) And if the children are lighting in their parents' home while the parents are flying, they are considered the parents' *shlichim*.

The *mitzvah* of Chanukah is "very well loved" (Rambam, Hilchot Chanukah 4). Am Yisrael do not easily relinquish this *mitzvah*, wherever they may be.

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon is Head of Mizrahi's Shalhevet Educational Advisory Board, Chairman of the Halacha Education Center and Rabbi of Machon Lev



Chanukah HINTS

Hundreds of years after we lost our independence, there were different customs in Babylon and in Eretz Yisrael regarding how much of the Torah to read each Shabbat. In Eretz Yisrael they would read the entire Torah over a period of three and a half years. Today we adopt the Babylonian custom, in which we read the whole Torah once, from beginning to end, from Simchat Torah to Simchat Torah.

According to that custom, now common in Jewish communities all over the world, it turns out that we read Parashat Mikeitz almost every year on Shabbat Chanukah, the *parasha* containing the dramatic story of Joseph meeting his brothers in Egypt before they discover his true identity.

Over 1,900 years of Exile, our ancestors sat in the snow or in the desert or in the ghettos and often searched for Chanukah hints in the *parasha*. Why did this specific *parasha* merit a reading on Chanukah?

וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף אֶתָּם אֶת בְּנֵימִין וַיֹּאמֶר לֵאשֶׁר עַל בֵּיתוֹ הִבָּא אֶת הָאֲנָשִׁים הַבִּיתָה וְטִבַּח טִבַּח וְהָכֵן כִּי אֲתִי יֵאָכְלוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים בְּצִהְרֵיָם.

Within this verse (Genesis 43:16), the words וְהָכֵן טִבַּח contain all five letters of the word חֲנֻכָּה one after the other.

Furthermore, the words טִבַּח טִבַּח remind us of the words in Maoz Tzur, לַעֲת תִּכְבֵּן מִטִּבַּח.

Yet that's not all. The gematria (numerical value) of the word טִבַּח is 19.

The gematria of וְטִבַּח טִבַּח is therefore $19 + 19 + 6 = 44$, the number of Chanukah candles you'll find in the box!

Later, when Yosef and his brothers are sitting down to eat, Yosef knows exactly in what order to seat them, from the oldest to the youngest. There are no donuts or latkes on the table, but nevertheless the Jews found a connection to Chanukah (43:34):

וַתֵּרֶב מִשָּׂאת בְּנֵימִן מִמִּשָּׂאת כָּלֶם חֲמֵשׁ יָדוֹת.

Binyamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's portion. Rashi explains that Binyamin received his portion, Yosef and Osnat's (Yosef's wife) portion and the portions of their sons Ephraim and Menashe – חֲמֵשׁ יָדוֹת.

What's the Chanukah connection? On Chanukah, we add the *Al HaNissim* prayer to Birkat HaMazon, in which we thank the Almighty for the Maccabee's victory over the Greeks and we mention five יָדוֹת there too:

מִסֵּרֶת גְּבוּרִים בְּיַד חֲלָשִׁים. וְרִבִּים בְּיַד מַעֲטִים. וְטִמָּאִים בְּיַד טְהוּרִים. וְרָשָׁעִים בְּיַד צַדִּיקִים. וְיָדִים בְּיַד עוֹסְקֵי תוֹרָתָךְ.

This indicates that when Yosef and his brothers finished their meal, they recited the Birkat HaMazon for Chanukah!

On Shabbat Chanukah afternoon, we usually read the start of the next *parasha*, Vayigash, in which the drama reaches a peak, and Yehuda, the brothers' representative from Eretz Yisrael, faces up to Yosef and refuses to leave Binyamin in Egypt. 'Put me in

jail if you want, but you must let Binyamin go back to his ageing father in Eretz Yisrael.'

And then Yehuda answers Yosef's question: הֲיֵשׁ לָכֶם אָב אוֹ אָח, "Do you have a father or brother?"

But many years later, someone explained the question like this: Yosef was stuck in Egypt while Yehuda had returned there from Eretz Yisrael. Said Yosef: "Tell me, Yehuda, what have the Sages in Eretz Yisrael decided about how to light Chanukah candles?"

הֲיֵשׁ לָכֶם א-ב או א-ח.

In other words, do they act according to Beit Hillel, in which we light progressively upwards, 1-א on the first night, 2-ב on the second, and so on, or do they act according to Beit Shammai, who said that on א, on the first night, we light ח, eight lights?

To which Yehuda replies, יֵשׁ לָנוּ אָב יָקָן – in other words, we act according to Beit Hillel (1-א on the first night, 2-ב on the second, and so on), and the יָקָן also refers to Hillel HaZaken, Hillel the Elder, who was the Head of the school of Beit Hillel.

Maoz Tzur, the dispute about the proper order of lighting candles, Birkat HaMazon and Yosef and his brothers celebrating Chanukah in Egypt... all in the Torah portion we read almost every year on Shabbat Chanukah... chance or miracle?

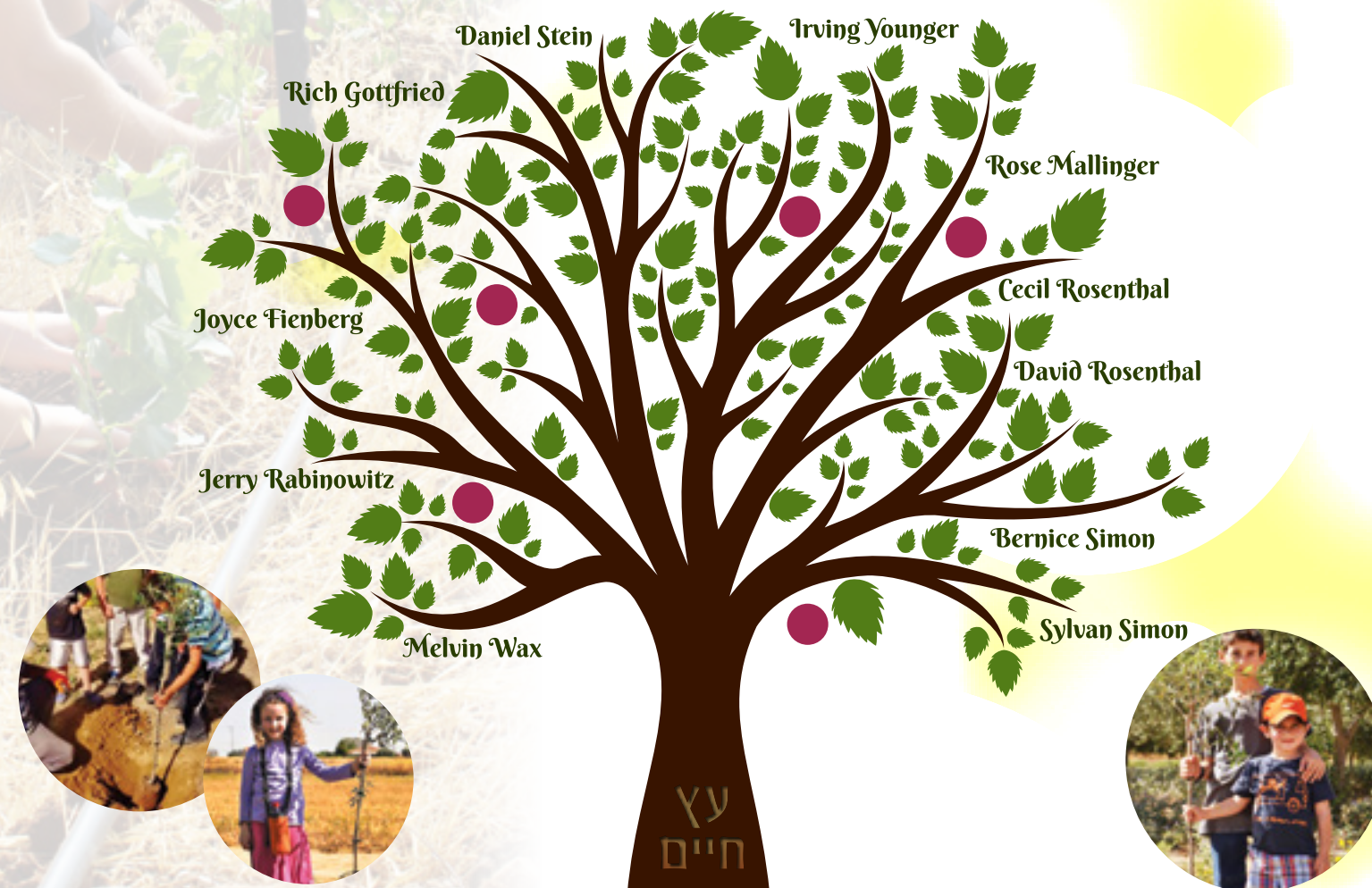
Dr. Avshalom Kor is an Israeli linguist and expert on Hebrew grammar and semantics

Photo of Dr. Avshalom Kor: Roy Achion



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Coming Back from the Dead

Rabbi Yehuda Glick
Member of Knesset

On Wednesday evening, October 29, 2014, I gave a speech entitled "Israel Returns to the Temple Mount" at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem. Palestinian terrorist attacks had been on the rise and the US and UN were siding with the Palestinians.

After the speech, I left the building accompanied by two friends. Suddenly, a man wearing a motorcycle helmet approached and said to me, "Are you Yehuda Glick? I'm sorry, but you're an enemy of Al-Aqsa, I have to."

Before I could ask "Have to what?," the man shot me four times in the chest at point-blank range, before speeding away on his motorbike. The security forces gave chase and he was eventually killed in a shootout with police. Meanwhile, Palestinians in the Old City set off fireworks in celebration and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas sent a letter of condolence to my assailant's family.

I was rushed to hospital. After several surgeries and heavy sedation, I fought for my life for almost a month, with my late and beloved wife, Yaffi, always by my side.

My chances of survival – and living a normal life – were minimal.

But G-d had greater plans.

I'm still here.

In 2015, I was placed 33rd on the list of Likud candidates. It seemed highly improbable I would be called upon to serve. But in a landslide victory, Likud won 30 seats. I was still on the outside but three Likud MKs resigned over the next year and I became a Member of the Knesset, the parliament of the State of Israel.



Adding Meaning to My Singing

Yaakov Shwekey
International Singing Star

I'm about eight years old, on a summer vacation with my family in France.

A group of us are playing outside on our bikes. I'm sitting on mine, minding my own business, when another boy rides into me and pushes me into a dark alleyway under the building.

Suddenly, I'm rushing downhill and the brakes don't work.

I don't know where I am. It's pitch black, and I can't stop...

My mind is racing with the bike... "Hashem! Please save me! I'll try to be a good boy, do my best. I promise. I want to live..."

David HaMelech says: *לֹא אֲמוֹת כִּי אֶחָיָה וְאַסָּפָר בְּעֵשִׂי יִהְיֶה*. I don't want to die. I want to live because I want to glorify Your Name. Of course as a kid you don't know what that means so you say I'll be a good boy.

And then I crash. Head first into a brick wall.

The next thing I know I'm in the hospital. My sister told me I'd split my head open. When the ambulance arrived they'd said it was an extreme emergency because I was losing a lot of blood. Thank G-d, after surgeries and stitches I was okay.

Shortly after that I decided to start singing. I had a gift and wanted to share it with Am Yisrael and do it in a way that made G-d proud. He'd restored my life and I wanted to make Him proud of me.

You don't realize that as a kid but that's what it was. That was the message. G-d wants you to have fun, have a good time but at the same time he wants you to realize that life is short. To appreciate that every day is a miracle. Every second. Every breath.



One Never Knows

Miriam Peretz
Mother of Two Fallen Soldiers
and Israel Prize Laureate

Operation Defensive Shield (2002). My son, Eliraz, is Deputy Commander of Battalion 51 of the Golani Brigade, fighting in Jenin. Narrow alleyways, booby-trapped houses, Arab snipers on the roofs. Eliraz's team advances deep into Islamic Jihad territory.

Another officer joins him. The terrorists start firing at the house they're hiding in. Eliraz and his men rush outside. A sniper shoots. The officer falls. Eliraz drags him to safety and calls for help. Sergeant Gad Ezra arrives. While they're lifting the officer on the stretcher, the sniper shoots again, this time killing Gad. Eliraz has no time as he sees the sniper aim again. He tries to return fire but his gun jams. Instinctively, he bends over Gad's body, grabs Gad's gun and kills the attacker.

Had Gad not been killed right next to him, Eliraz would have died there on the spot.

יְשׁוּעָתָהּ כְּהִרְף־עֵינַי – "G-d's salvation is like the blink of an eye."

Later, Eliraz goes to visit Gad Ezra's family. He tells Gad's mother, Roslyn, it was her son's gun that saved his life. He shows her the weapon, she strokes the gun strap and asks Eliraz if she can have it.

"Do you know whose gun this is?" She asks him.

"Gad's," said Eliraz, surprised by the question.

"Yes. But it actually belonged to your brother Uriel!"

This was the gun my other son, Uriel, had fought with when he was killed in Lebanon in 1998. It had later been assigned to Gad.

In their deaths, Uriel and Gad had saved Eliraz's life. One never knows how G-d's miracles enlighten our world.



G-d Trusted Me

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau
Former Chief Rabbi of Israel

When I was seven, I was separated from my mother as she thrust me over to the men's side during deportation. "Tulek, take Tulek," she said, entrusting me (Tulek) to my brother Naftali (Tulek) in the knowledge that the men were more likely to survive. Naftali smuggled me into the Buchenwald labor camp since a child my age would have been exterminated on the spot if discovered. I became the youngest and smallest inmate in the camp and my survival over the next year was largely due to Naftali's constant self-sacrifice and protection.

One day, a Gestapo officer rounded us children up, saying we were superfluous to the German war effort. Realizing that the end was approaching, I stood up tall and made the first speech in my life. "It's a mistake to think we're useless," I said in Polish.

I went on to describe how I had worked 12-hour shifts delivering water to the glass factory workers when I was only six years old. "Therefore, you cannot say that we lack working potential," I concluded. Together with a bribe, that speech saved my life and the lives of the other children, at least for the moment.

I was surrounded by corpses for three years. Every morning many people did not wake up. I pushed the wagon of dead to the crematorium each day. Even after liberation, 60% of Buchenwald survivors died of typhus and other diseases before they could even begin to start their lives again.

I was in the valley of dry bones. So when I say "Thank You," I really mean it. G-d performed countless miracles for me. This gives me extra motivation not to waste my life and to do something to justify all the miracles that happened to me. G-d trusted me. I am forbidden to disappoint Him.



Fear No Evil

Natan Sharansky
Past Chairman of the Jewish Agency

In 1977, I was arrested for my Zionist activities in the former Soviet Union, accused of treason and sentenced to 13 years imprisonment. I spent nine of those in the Gulag, including 405 consecutive days in solitary confinement.

The day before I went to Siberia, I received a small book of Tehillim (Psalms) from my wife Avital, who was already in Israel. She'd added a note: "This is the book that has accompanied me over the last year and I sense it's now time to pass it on to you."

I only knew about 1,000 words in Hebrew then, and very few Biblical ones! It didn't matter anyway. They confiscated my Tehillim along with all my other possessions.

After three years of not giving up, I got my book back. And I decided to read it until I understood.

I sat in my cell and tried to decipher the words. Words without form, sentences I couldn't make out from the sea of letters. I looked for words I knew and slowly put things together.

After a lot of effort, the first sentence I managed to fully understand – a chain of 11 consecutive words! – was: *גַּם כִּי אֵלֶּךָ בְּגִיַּת צַלְמוֹת לֹא אֵירָא רָע כִּי* – "Even though I walk in the valley of death I will fear no evil because You are with me."

Who was "with me" in that accursed cell? Avital? King David? The Jewish people? G-d?

All of them. All of them were with me in my cell. I wouldn't have held out so long without them.

And that little book of Tehillim is still with me today. All the time.

This issue is dedicated in memory of *Menny Klausner z"l* (1926–2017)

Menny Klausner was born on Motza'ei Yom Kippur 5687 (1926) in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. After Kristallnacht, his family moved to London. Menny and his wife Edith married in 1951 and in 1997, at the age of 71, they came on Aliyah.

After the Second World War, Menny became very active in the Torah Va'Avoda and Bachad Fellowship Organizations (Brit Chaltzim Dati'im), forerunners of Bnei Akiva in England. He organized and ran many summer camps. He was a member of the Board of Deputies and the Chairman of its Eretz Israel Committee, as well as President of the Hendon Adath Yisroel Congregation.

He became active in the Mizrahi-HaPoel HaMizrachi Federation and served as its Chairman for about 20 years, until his Aliyah.

Menny was a very active member of the World Mizrahi Organization and a member of its Board of Management, a representative and member of the Executive of the Jewish Agency and a member of its Actions Committee as well. He was also on the Board of Management of the Harry Fischel-Ariel Institute in Jerusalem.

In all his roles Menny considered it of vital importance to support the Government of Israel and to defend it publicly without criticism, despite

his occasional differences of opinion with its official policies. He was a great believer in the Greater Land of Israel and in 1975 he was the first person to affix a mezuzah in the Sebastia train station in the Shomron, which later became Elon Moreh.

His children made Aliyah before him, and all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren continue on his path of National Religious Zionism, from which he derived great enjoyment and satisfaction.

He passed away in Petach Tikva on 7th Tevet, 5778/ December 24th, 2017.

May his memory be for a blessing.



Menny with President Chaim Herzog



Speaking at the Mizrahi UK Conference, 1973



Outside the shul in Netzarim, Gush Katif, a few months before the disengagement

Places in Israel

THE HILLS OF *Gofna*

Eve Harow



One of the practical reasons that Modi'in is such a popular city to live in today – many access roads leading to main highways commensurate with its central location in a wide, open valley – actually made it a terrible place from which to wage a guerrilla war. As the Greek Seleucids approached from Antioch in today's Turkey (hence Antiochus Epiphanus, the villain of Chanukah...) nearly 2,200 years ago, the Chashmonaim (Hasmoneans) had to take to the hills.

The Hills of Gofna.

One of Israel's most beautiful areas is tucked into a gorge running on a predominately east-west axis just north of today's well-known route #443 to Jerusalem. Driving past Chashmonaim, Lapid and Kiryat Sefer on #446 one enters the area called *Harei Gofna*, the municipal area of Western Binyamin, stretching from Nili in the west to the mountain pass of Wadi Haramiya on the Patriarch's Route/Road 60 in the east.

The Dolev stream flowing to the Mediterranean Sea provides it with a fantastic amount of underground water, hence springs and pools abound. One can feel the sheltering nature of the area while driving, and sections of a Roman road meander along the valley. Agricultural mountain terracing is everywhere, with ubiquitous olive trees and vineyards (*gefanim*, source of the area's name) clinging to the slopes.

Natural caves in the hills served as burial places during the Hasmonean and Second Temple era (approx. 517 BCE to 70 CE). Here was a center of a Second Temple era olive oil culture that is now making a comeback with new awareness and varieties in Israel. Hence, it is olive oil that naturally frames the context of Chanukah, which celebrates the military and spiritual victory over enemies from within and without.

In ancient days it was a hugely important staple and economic commodity with its uses for food, cosmetics, lamps, trade and religious ritual. The month of Kislev marks the end of the Land of Israel's olive harvest (מִסִּיק), hence the availability of fresh olives to be pressed pure for the Temple's rededication ceremony and relighting of the Menorah as a symbol of political sovereignty and religious freedom in 164 BCE.

Today, Nili, Na'ale, Talmon, Neria, Dolev, Zayit Ra'anana, Nachliel and Givat Harasha (with its incredible view of the coast from Ashkelon to Netanya and Ben-Gurion International Airport) are just some of the modern communities that dot this region. Further north and east are Neve Tzuf and Ateret, and just across Wadi Haramiya is Mount Ba'al Hatzor, where Yehuda HaMaccabi was killed in battle.

Indeed, a visit to Western Binyamin is a step into the world of the few who took on the many, a revolt that ended with a critical century of Jewish sovereignty and, astonishingly, the only

time from the First Temple period until 1948 (5708) that the Jews were in charge of their own destiny in Eretz Yisrael.

Just before Harasha is a hill called Givat HaYekevim. *Yekev* is now synonymous with winery, but it really means a place where liquids are stored and so could apply to oil as well. Marked trails lead to springs and remains of unique ancient oil presses (*batei bad*), underground columbaria (dovecotes; think carrier pigeons, Temple sacrifices, food and fertilizer) and ladders leading into the earth. These go into some of the 31 bell-shaped caves carved out to store wine amphorae during the First Temple period. They were later connected by tunnels and served as secret hiding places from the Romans during the revolts of 66-73 and 132-135. Great for exploration; flashlights recommended.

During Chanukah, the Binyamin Tourism Division recreates the Hasmonean period with mosaic workshops, pottery restoration, mock Jews-Greeks battles and other activities to bring the holiday to life. The sound of children enjoying themselves rings out in the hills of Gofna.

We're back where we belong as past, present and future merge in the land given to Binyamin.

Eve Harow is a licensed Israeli tour guide and member of the Mizrahi Speakers Bureau.



Eight Thoughts *for* Chanukah

🕯️ Inspired by Faith, We Can Change the World

When Israel was under Greek rule, Antiochus decided to force the pace of Hellenization, setting up a statue of Zeus in the Temple and forbidding Jews to practice their religion.

This was too much to bear, and a group of Jews, the Maccabees, fought for their religious freedom, winning a stunning victory against the most powerful army of the ancient world. After three years they reconquered Jerusalem, rededicated the Temple and relit the Menorah with the one cruse of undefiled oil they found among the wreckage.

As we say in our prayers, it was a victory of the few over the many, the weak over the strong. It's summed up in a line from the prophet Zechariah: "not by might nor by strength but by my spirit says the Lord". The Maccabees had neither might nor strength, neither weapons nor numbers. But they had a double portion of the Jewish spirit that longs for freedom and is prepared to fight for it.

Inspired by faith, a handful of dedicated people showed they could change the world. So, today, can we.

🕯️ The Light of the Spirit Never Dies

For eight nights we light lights, and make the blessing over miracles: *she-asah nissim la-avotenu*. But what was the miracle of the first night? The light that should have lasted one day lasted eight. There was something miraculous about days 2-8 but nothing miraculous about the first day.

There was no reason to suppose that anything would have survived the Greeks' systematic desecration. Yet the Maccabees searched and found

that one jar. Why did they search? Because they had faith that something would have survived. The miracle of the first night was that of faith itself, the faith that something would remain with which to begin again.

So it has always been in Jewish history. Jews gathered what remained, rebuilt our people, and lit a light that tells us, and the world, of the power of the human spirit to overcome every tragedy and refuse to accept defeat. From the burning bush to the lights of the Menorah, Judaism is humanity's "*ner tamid*," an everlasting light that no power can extinguish.

🕯️ Chanukah in Our Time

In 1991, I lit Chanukah candles with Mikhail Gorbachev, former President of the Soviet Union. For 70 years, the practice of Judaism had been banned in communist Russia. The Germans had sought to kill Jews; the Russians tried to kill Judaism.

Gorbachev had realized that the Soviet system was unworkable. Communism had brought not freedom and equality, but repression and a police state. In the end it collapsed, and Jews regained the freedom to practice Judaism and to go to Israel.

After we had lit the candles together, Gorbachev asked me what we had just done. I told him these lights were the symbol of regained Jewish freedom after the public practice of Judaism had been banned by the Greeks. "70 years ago," I said, "Jews suffered the same loss of freedom in Russia, and now you have helped them regain it. You too have become part of the Chanukah story."

The Chanukah story still inspires, telling not just us but the world that freedom, with G-d's help, will always win the final battle.

🕯️ The First Clash of Civilizations

Chanukah is about one of the first great clashes of civilizations, between the Greeks and the Jews. The ancient Greeks produced one of the most remarkable civilizations of all time, yet they were defeated by the Maccabees. Mighty Greece went into rapid decline while the tiny Jewish people survived every exile and persecution and are still alive and well today.

What was the difference? The Greeks, who did not believe in a single, loving G-d, gave the world the concept of tragedy. We strive, we struggle, at times we achieve greatness, but life has no ultimate purpose. The universe neither knows nor cares that we exist.

Ancient Israel gave the world the idea of hope. We are here because G-d created us in love, and through love we discover the meaning and purpose of life.

Judaism and its culture of hope survived, and the Chanukah lights are the symbol of that survival; of Judaism's refusal to jettison its values for the glamour, immediacy and prestige of secular culture. Then and now.

A candle may seem a small thing but the very survival of a civilization may depend on it.

🕯️ The Light of War and the Light of Peace

There is a very moving and profound law about Chanukah. Maimonides writes that 'the command of Chanukah lights is very precious. One who lacks the money to buy lights should sell something, or if necessary borrow, to be able to fulfil the mitzvah.'

But what if, on Friday afternoon, you find yourself with only one candle? Do you light a Shabbat candle or

a Chanukah one? It can't be both. Logic suggests you should light it as a Chanukah candle. After all, there is no law that you have to sell or borrow lights for Shabbat. Yet the law is you light it as a Shabbat light. Why?

Maimonides: 'The Shabbat light takes priority because it symbolizes *shalom bayit*, domestic peace. And great is peace because the entire Torah was given to make peace in the world. 'The Shabbat light takes precedence because in Judaism the greatest military victory takes second place to peace in the home.

Judaism's survival is because we have always valued children more than generals and peace in the home over military victory. That's our true glory.

🕯️ The Third Miracle

We all know the miracles of Chanukah – the military victory of the Maccabees against the Greeks, and the miracle of the oil that should have lasted one day but burned for eight. But there was a third miracle too, several centuries later.

After the destruction of the second Temple, many rabbis were convinced that Chanukah should be abolished because it celebrated the rededication of the Temple. Without a Temple, what was there left to celebrate?

The Talmud tells us that Chanukah was indeed abolished in at least one town. Yet eventually the other view prevailed, and we celebrate Chanukah to this day.

Why? Because although the Temple was destroyed, Jewish hope was not. We may have lost the building but we still had the story, the memory, and the light. And what had happened once in the days of the Maccabees could happen again. And it was those words, *od lo avdah tikvatenu*, "our hope is not destroyed," that became part of

"Hatikvah," the Hope, that inspired Jews to return to Israel and rebuild their ancient state.

The Jewish people kept hope alive, and hope kept the Jewish people alive.

🕯️ Inside / Outside

There are three lights in Judaism: Shabbat candles, the Havdalah candle, and the Chanukah candles.

Shabbat candles represent *shalom bayit*, peace in the home and inner light. They are lit indoors. They illuminate the sanctity of marriage and the holiness of home.

The Chanukah candles used to be lit outside — outside the front door, as they are in Israel today. The Lubavitcher Rebbe introduced the custom of lighting giant menorahs in public places to bring back the original spirit of the day.

Chanukah candles are the light Judaism brings to the outside world when we are unafraid to announce our identity in public, live by our principles and fight, if necessary, for our freedom.

The Havdalah candle, made up of several wicks, represents the fusion of the two, the inner light of Shabbat, joined to the outer light we make during the six days of the week when we go out into the world and live our faith in public.

When do we bring light to the world? When we live as Jews in private, filling our homes with the light of the Shechina; when we live as Jews in public, bringing the light of hope to others, and when we live both together.

🕯️ To Light Another Light

The Talmud asks: can you take one Chanukah light to light another?

Usually we take the *shamash* and use it to light all the candles. But suppose we don't have one. Can we light the first candle and then use it to light the others?

Rav said no and Shmuel said yes. Normally we have a rule that when Rav and Shmuel disagree, the law follows Rav. There are only three exceptions and this is one. Why did Rav say you may not take one Chanukah candle to light the others?

Because you diminish the first candle (inevitably some wax or oil will spill when you use it) and we don't do anything that diminishes the light of the first.

But the law follows Shmuel. Why?

Think of two Jews: both religious, both committed, both living full Jewish lives. One says: I must not get involved with Jews who are less religious than me, because if I do, my own standards will fall. My light will be diminished. That's Rav.

The other says no. When I use the flame of my faith to light a candle in someone else's life, my Jewishness is not diminished. It grows because there is now more Jewish light in the world. That's Shmuel.

When it comes to spiritual goods, the more I share, the more I have. If I share my knowledge, or faith, or love with others, I don't have less; I have more. Share your Judaism with others. Take the flame of your faith and help set other souls on fire.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks is Emeritus Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth @RabbiSacks · www.RabbiSacks.org

Winners Never Quit

A rising star in the Israeli Air Force, Dror Cohen was an F-16 combat pilot and an instructor in the IAF cadet school. He worked hard and played hard. “I was born to be a winner,” said Dror, with the brash confidence of a young Israeli, “like Tom Cruise in Top Gun.”

But then, one evening, on a routine transfer to another base, his star came crashing down.

The car he was riding in was involved in an accident.

The other three passengers and the driver dusted themselves off and walked away with only minor injuries.

Dror couldn't move.

He was paralyzed from the waist down.

24 years old.

Picking Himself Up

Down but not quite out, Dror was forced to start a new life. He had no choice. Well, not quite true.

“You always have a choice,” says Dror. “Not about what happens to you in life but how you respond.”

And after about a year of denial, depression and defeat, Dror gradually began harnessing his winning spirit to reinvent himself.

“It wasn't easy at all. Being a paraplegic is a big deal but it's really the small stuff that bugs you... like trying to navigate a crowded sidewalk in a wheelchair to hail a cab, or not being able to pick up my little nephew and toss him into the air...”

“At some stage, I was at a friend's wedding one night and all the guys were dancing, drinking and having a good time. I was stuck in my chair, staring at them and sobbing inside, feeling really sorry for myself...”

That wedding married Dror to a new idea.

A new hope.

“It was then I realized that no-one wants to be around someone who's down. No-one likes a loser. So I just shifted focus. I stopped imagining the ‘what-ifs’ scenarios and instead looked for the ‘what cans’. I was a winner again!”

He knew what he had to do.

Dror had been a confessed adrenalin junkie before his accident and so looked for an outlet that could accommodate his new situation.

He chose extreme sports. As one does...

From One Small Cruse of Grit...

“He who dares, wins,” says Dror.

Again, it wasn't easy at all. It was a laborious and tedious process of reviewing the right sport, recognizing his precise disabilities and then tailoring his participation in that particular sport. Trying out new equipment, falling, failing, getting injured... and falling again.

But you can't keep a winner down.

Dror eventually chose sailing as his main challenge.

“Sailing is like playing chess, a real game of smarts... and I just love the sea, the wind and the power of natural forces. They define the conditions and it's up to you to conquer them!”



In 2004, Dror Cohen won the gold medal in sailing (Sonar Class) at the Athens Paralympic Games, along with Arnon Efrati and Benny Vexler, two disabled IDF veterans.

In 2011, they were crowned World Champions.

Since then, he has become an accomplished snow skier, water skier, surfer, diver, rock climber, bungee jumper, race car driver, basketball and tennis player.

He even became the first-ever disabled participant in the Paris-Dakar Rally, the largest off-road rally

in the world covering thousands of miles from France to Senegal.

But that's not all. Dror was one of the founders of Etgarim (challenges), an NGO that promotes outdoor sports for the disabled to enhance their physical, social and recreational wellbeing. And he is also associated with Tikvot (hopes), an organization that rehabilitates Israel's wounded soldiers and terror victims through sports.

And he's very involved with an Israeli start-up, Softwheel, which helps wheelchair users all over the world

enjoy a more comfortable, bump-free ride.

He's married to Yafit; they have twin daughters, and he speaks to audiences around the world, inspiring them (anyone, not just people with physical limitations) to believe in themselves, to dare, and – most importantly – to treasure those little moments.

Run in the Jerusalem Marathon for Tikvot with Mizrachi and Bnei Akiva. See back page for details.

Sivan Rahav-Meir



Power of the Spirit

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein once said that we can't regard Hellenism as being something bad, senseless and superficial, as we were taught in kindergarten. The Greeks introduced advancement, intellectual wealth, sport, culture and art. So what is the great difference between Jewish culture and Hellenism? Mitzvah. A human being has a task to fulfill. Not only esthetics but ethics. Not only beauty and ornamentation but commitment and hard work.

Not only body, but soul.

Here's one of the most powerful stories I've heard about Chanukah, and the amazing thing is that it happened in our generation!

December 19, 1984. Yuli Edelstein, now Speaker of the Knesset, was sentenced to three years hard labor in Siberia for teaching Hebrew and promoting Zionism.

After the verdict, a cordon of police officers surrounded Edelstein, quickly

escorting him back to his cell. On the way, he managed to shout something to his wife.

What was the one thing so important for him to say?

Not “I love you.”

“Tania, what light is it tonight?”

His wife didn't understand at first. So he shouted it again, “What light is it tonight?”

Only at the third try did Tania understand, and quickly shouted back “Two!” Yes, it was the morning of the first day of Chanukah. Edelstein had already been incarcerated for three months and didn't have a calendar, but he'd heard the judge cite the Gregorian date and calculated that Chanukah was due around that time.

“Not the most romantic statement, I know. I didn't even know if I would ever see her again.”

That night, in his prison cell, Yuli Edelstein managed to scrounge

two matches. He stood by the barred window, devotedly said the blessings “who made miracles for my forefathers in those days at this time,” and “for keeping us alive and existing and bringing us to this time,” and lit the two matches.

“And I stood there, by that window, for a few seconds, until the fire scorched my fingers. I don't know if that was halachically okay but I do know that in those precious moments, a little light really did disperse a lot of darkness.”

Sivan Rahav-Meir is a popular Israeli journalist, broadcaster and author of #Parasha

David M. Weinberg

GUARANTEEING Israel's Security?

When it comes to guaranteeing Israeli security, the limitations – indeed, the uselessness and even venality of international institutions – are painfully obvious.

There is a long and sordid history in which the UN and other international institutions have abandoned Israel, beginning with the UN's failure to uphold Israel's right of free passage through the Straits of Tiran when Egypt's President Nasser closed them in 1967 and the swift departure of UN forces in Sinai when Nasser demanded it so he could attack Israel.

Similarly, the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in Sinai has failed completely to prevent the incursion of Al Qaeda and ISIS into the now-Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, or prevent attacks against Egyptians and Israelis. UN forces on the Golan (UNDOF) mostly fled several years ago when the Syrian civil war heated up and Israel could no longer sufficiently protect them.

UNRWA perpetuates Palestinian dreams of overwhelming Israel with returning refugees and has allowed its facilities to be overrun by Hamas as weapons depots and firing grounds. In the meantime, UNESCO has passed several resolutions denying Jewish history in Jerusalem (essentially, declaring Zionism false and illegitimate), and the UNCHR regularly brands Israeli "practices in the occupied territories" as war crimes.

All of which explains why Israel is never going to entrust its security to any type of international troop force, as has been repeatedly and perniciously proposed by European and American negotiators seeking Israeli withdrawals from Judea and Samaria.

All of which also explains why Israel must continue to take the offensive against Iran's nuclear program, without reliance on international inspectors. UN forces, UN monitors, UN experts, UN diplomats, and even (some) EU and US diplomats simply cannot be relied upon to rigorously rein-in the ambitions of Iran and other bad actors in the region.

Under the terms of the P5+1 agreement with the Ayatollahs (known as the JCPOA), negotiated mainly by the Obama administration, UN inspectors were given the right only to "coordinate" their visits to suspect Iranian sites, "in consultation between Iran and the world powers." Worse still, Iran was given the right to deny and challenge UN requests to send inspectors to suspicious sites. This allows Teheran time to cover up any sign of non-compliance with its commitments.

Then-US Secretary of State John Kerry called this "managed access," which is a weak-kneed euphemism for nowhere, no-time inspections.

Since then, of course, Iran has stymied access by international inspectors to military and nuclear sites, especially the Parchin military base, where Iran clearly was experimenting with nuclear weapons production.

In September, the head of UN's nuclear watchdog agency refused to take at face value evidence presented by Prime Minister Netanyahu about secret atomic archives and warehouses in Tehran. Recall that Israel revealed the existence of Iran's nuclear archive, and in a heroic Mossad operation that will yet be the stuff of movies, heisted perhaps a third of the documents; documents that unquestionably prove that Iran

serially lied about its nuclear weapons effort, and that the effort is merely mothballed, at best.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Yukiya Amano should have acted with alacrity and moved in to capture the remaining documents. But nada. Nothing. The IAEA hasn't even asked to visit the site. Amano has done absolutely nothing to follow-up expeditiously and capture Iran red-handed – before it covers its tracks.

Netanyahu also exposed the existence of a secret atomic warehouse in the Turkuzahbad district of Tehran with nuclear equipment and material. Netanyahu urged the IAEA to immediately send inspectors to the site with Geiger counters. But Amano poured cold water on the prime minister's urgent warnings, and managed only to find time to spar publicly with Netanyahu.

Netanyahu also has revealed Hezbollah's secret sites for building and storing precision-guided missiles in and around Beirut's international airport. But the UN's peacekeeping force in Lebanon, UNIFIL, has been silent about this – as it has been throughout the past 12 years of Hezbollah's military build-up ever since the 2006 Second Lebanon War.

David Ben-Gurion once derisively dismissed the UN as "Oom shmoom" – meaning, irrelevant. He was wrong. It is maleficent.

David M. Weinberg is the Vice President of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategic Studies

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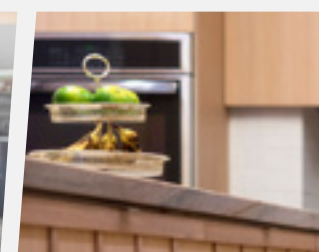
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IS IT HARD TO LEARN HEBREW?

הָאֵם קָשָׁה לְלַמֵּד עִבְרִית?

Editor's note: Our resident, totally unofficial Israeli guide brings you insights into a lighter side of the Israeli experience you won't likely find in the usual news sources. Yaniv will also respond to readers' questions and observations (non-halachic of course). He can be reached at yaniv@mizrachi.org. Enjoy!

QUESTION:

I anticipate making Aliyah soon, but have weak Hebrew skills. Is it hard to learn Hebrew?

YANIV ANSWERS:

First of all, relax. Everything will be *sababa* (that's Arabic, not Hebrew). Globally, Hebrew (Ivrit in Hebrew) is spoken by some 9 million people with 7 million of them living in Israel. Actually, some say Israelis speak "Israeli" – a dialect loosely based on Hebrew. But I am by no means a purist; if I was, I might be working for the Academy of the Hebrew Language. Yes, that's a real place where they decide on the rules of speaking proper Hebrew and create new words to reflect new ideas and avoid a total *balagan* (that's Polish, not Hebrew). At any rate, while Hebrew is the official language of the State of Israel, a great many Israelis speak English (that's English, not Hebrew), or at least understand it well enough to sell you a *shwarma* (that's Turkish, not Hebrew).

Now that you are calm, allow me to reflect on Hebrew – *Lashon HaKodesh*, the Holy Tongue. According to Chazal, Hebrew is the original language of the world; the language Adam and Chava and our three forefathers and four foremothers spoke. The Torah, of course, is written in Hebrew (except for a few words in Aramaic) and Hebrew has always

been a daily language of Jews in Eretz Yisrael.

The return of Hebrew to regular usage is nothing short of miraculous. Show me another ancient, sacred language, with no native speakers, subsequently acquiring several million native speakers almost *bin lyla* (overnight).

Hebrew poses a special challenge for many new *olim* (that's Hebrew, not Chinese), because it's written from right to left. My teacher told me this is because originally the writing was done by engraving on stone tablets with a hammer in one hand and a chisel in the other. With a dominant right hand holding the hammer, the natural direction is right to left.

Hebrew has approximately 80,000 words, less than half the amount of English words. That's why there are so many derivatives of the same *shoresh*, or root word. Such as in these very useful everyday phrases:

גִּנָּן גָּדַל דָּגָן בִּגְן, A gardener grew corn in the garden; or: דָּגָן גָּדוֹל גִּדְּל בִּגְן, tall corn grew in the garden.

The genius took the elevator to bring the leaf up to the attic: הָעֵלֹי עָלָה עַל הַמַּעְלִית לְמַעַל לְהַעֲלוֹת עָלָה לְעֵלְיָה.

We just don't always hear things clearly (Israelis speak like they drive) and we tend to get our genders in a twist too. A friend once lectured to

a group of opticians and spent an hour talking about *adashim* (lentils) instead of *adashot* (lenses). And when my aunt first came to Israel, she was very moved by the fact that all the government ministers were named after Avraham's wife – Sarah Chutz (*Sar HaChutz* – Foreign Minister), Sarah Pnim (*Sar HaPnim* – Interior Minister), Sarah Bitachon (*Sar HaBitachon* – Defense Minister).

Don't get flustered if you don't master Ivrit right away; with time and steady attendance in Ulpan (that is a Hebrew word!) you'll avoid some of the common mistakes people make. I once overheard a young lady say to a bus driver, "Na l'hagid li matay la'ledet," (can you please tell me when I should give birth?) She meant to say "laredet," to get off the bus. The driver scolded her and said, "Aht chayeveit lilmod Ivrit!" (You simply must learn Hebrew!), to which she replied, "S'lichah, aval ani pashut lo g'vina" (I'm sorry, but I'm simply not cheese!). She meant to say, "Ani lo m'vina" (I don't understand).

And the worst thing that can happen?

You'll have to use a *melon*! (*melon* means dictionary; *melon* – believe it or not, means melon.)

Feel free to send me your own personal favorite Ivrit bloopers, or any other perplexing questions you have: yaniv@mizrachi.org

Rabbanit Dr. Michal Tikochinsky



What Are We Searching For?



"And he searched; starting with the eldest and ending with the youngest, and the goblet was found in Benjamin's sack." (Genesis 44:12)

The search for the goblet, ultimately found in Binyamin's sack, was staged. The person who hid it, the searcher and the finder are one and the same. In this case, the aim of the search was to intentionally incriminate Binyamin.

The Tanach also recognizes other types of searches. Lavan's search for his lost idols is a search for something lacking. Saul searches for asses and finds the monarchy.

From that story it is clear that sometimes the searcher is open to change regarding the identity of the object or the thing he is searching for. In reality, the searcher doesn't really know what he's looking for.

Today, searching is what we do on Google. This involves typing in keywords and attempting to fish out the entry we're looking for from the range of results. The more precise the search, the better the results. In this case we sometimes learn what we're searching for from the search itself.

The search in our parasha serves as a paradigm for a completely different type of search. The Mishna in Pesachim opens with the obligation to search for *chametz* by the light of a candle on the night of the 14th of Nissan. The Gemara gives a reason why we must use candles: "Rav Chisda

said: we learn finding [*chametz*] from finding [the goblet] ... and searching from candles [searching Jerusalem with candles]¹, and candles from candle [candle as soul of man]²."³

Rav Chisda creates a chain from the idea of searching for *chametz* by candlelight based on hermeneutic principles of verbal analogy and juxtaposition in the verses he quotes.

At first glance, Rav Chisda's explanation seems quite convoluted. What is the connection between the prohibition of searching and not finding leaven and searching for the goblet and finding it in Binyamin's sack?

It seems he connected the two because he wanted to explain the concept of searching for *chametz* in somewhat unusual fashion. We normally think we are looking for actual, tangible *chametz*, so that we can burn it. However, it appears that the search for *chametz* is not just to confirm we have no *chametz*, but it has another aim, rather like the search for the goblet in Binyamin's sack.

And we can learn about that search from the candles with which G-d "will search Jerusalem" (Tzeephania 1:12). G-d is searching for the crimes of Jerusalem, and He examines them by the light of the candles. And the candle is the soul of man (Proverbs 20:27). There, in the depths of the soul, lies the candle of G-d – a light of purity and cleanliness. For a person to find this light he must be clean,

with no 'foreign goblet' among his possessions.

Through his associations, Rav Chisda clarifies the search for *chametz* as an internal cleansing, while also helping us understand the search for the goblet.

Yosef is reminding the brothers of what they should be thinking about, i.e. how they became trapped in the impurities of Egypt, and hinting that change for good is not found in the sheaves they have in their sacks but in adjusting their intentions for good. If they would just put their day-to-day food crisis aside, they could then deal with the family crisis of which they were the cause.

Searching is always just the beginning, and we often think we are searching for one thing when in fact we are searching for something else entirely. The search is supposed to lead to a search and that search to another search.

And at the end of the journey, we are supposed to reach the starting point that every searcher is looking for. This is where the light is found, sparkling and shining from the inside out.

¹ Tzeephania 1:12.

² Proverbs 20:27.

³ Pesachim 7b

Rabbanit Dr. Michal Tikochinsky is a lawyer and Head of the Herzog Academic College's Batei Midrash



Talmud Israeli Daf Yomi For US

strengthens Jewish identity and
showcases Israel's unique influences
on the world through the insightful
teachings of the Talmud

FROM THE TALMUD

Masechet Shabbat, Daf 21

What is Chanukah? • When the Greeks entered the Beit HaMikdash, they contaminated all of the oil. The Chashmonai dynasty overcame and defeated the Greeks. To their dismay, they found only one jug of oil with the seal of the Kohen HaGadol, the High Priest, still in place. This was only enough oil to light the Menorah for a single day. A miracle took place and it burned for eight days. The following year, the Sages fixed those days as a permanent holiday to remember this miracle with praise and thanksgiving.



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What Happened to Yehuda HaMaccabee?

Yehuda HaMaccabee was killed in 161 BCE at the "Battle of Elasa," located north of Yerushalayim.

The armies of Bacchides the Greek, with 20,000 soldiers plus 2,000 on horses, against Yehuda HaMaccabee and his 3,000 fighters.

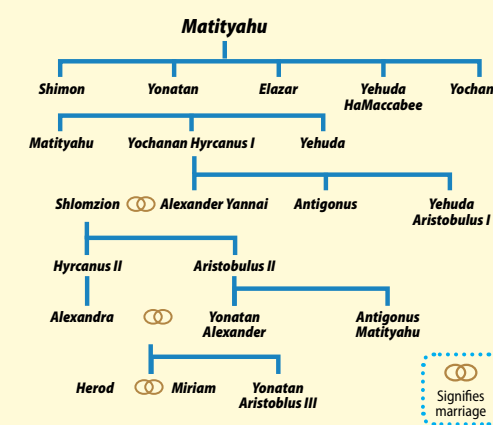
When some suggested to Yehuda that he

should not go out to battle, he answered: "I should not run away from them. If this is the battle of our lives and we die bravely on behalf of our brothers, our honor will not be shamed" (Maccabees I, 9:10).

Yehuda's army attacked Bacchides's army but Yehuda was killed in battle. His brothers took his body and brought it to Modiin for burial. It is written about Yehuda in the Book of the Maccabees: "And they praised him and all of Israel wept over him with great sadness" (Maccabees I, 9:20-22).



Who Were the Chashmonaim?



Signifies marriage



Look closely at the picture and answer the following questions:

1. What event is shown here?
2. When did the event take place?
3. Where did the event take place?
4. Who is the man fighting next to the legs of the elephant?

1. Battle of the Chashmonaim against the Greeks; 2. From 165-167 BCE; 3. In Beit Zechariah – between Yerushalayim and Chevron; 4. Elazar, brother of Yehuda the Maccabee, who was killed during that battle, by the elephant.

Phil Chernofsky



The Enemies Without and Within

We read Parashat Vayeishev either within a few days of Chanukah, on Erev Chanukah, or on the first or second day of Chanukah. Therefore, we cannot separate the content of Vayeishev from the Chanukah story. And we would be wise to learn an important lesson from the parasha-holiday match-up. A lesson vital to Jewish life today.

Eisav wanted to kill Ya'akov. His guardian angel attacked Ya'akov but did not succeed in his goal. Ya'akov walked away limping, but recovered well. Eisav's grandson's nation – Amalek – also attacked Israel and did not succeed at vanquishing us. We are not finished with them yet.

On a different plane, Yosef's brothers grew to hate him. Their first thought was to kill him but they changed their minds and threw him into a dangerous and deep pit. Maybe they didn't really change their minds; maybe they expected the scorpions and snakes in the pit to finish the job for them. But then they decided to dispense with him in a less macabre way. And we know what happened next.

But here's the point. Eisav and Amalek hate Israel. Yosef's brothers hated him.

Yet it's not the same at all.

Fast forward 1,400 years or so to the Chanukah story. Who were the Torah-true Jews fighting? The Yevanim, the Greeks. And who else? The Mityavanim, the Hellenists. So who was the enemy? The Greeks.

And the other enemy? No, we must not use that word. There is a difference. Perhaps antagonists or adversaries? The Hellenists were the Jews who were comfortable not learning Torah, not keeping mitzvot. The ones who probably didn't object too strongly to the ban on Brit Mila and the other restrictive decrees.

In Al HaNissim we thank G-d for "delivering the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the righteous... [and the last one on the list]: "the arrogant into the hands of those who were engaged in the study of Your Torah."

The first several phrases refer to the Yevanim. The last one, to the Mityavanim. They were not wicked. They were arrogant. Misguided. True, they opposed Torah and mitzvot but they were Jewish.

Fast forward another 2,150 years or so. Welcome to today. We have plenty of enemies who seek our demise. And we have many antagonists or adversaries too.

In short, we are still fighting both types of Chanukah battles.

Regarding our enemies from outside, we ask G-d to help us; not only to protect us, but to prevail against our enemies.

With our fellow Jews it is a different story. Whether we are confronted by Jews whose inner-core Jewish soul is so buried under ignorance,

apathy or confusion, or by Jews whose sense of Jewish unity is so blurred by hatred, bitterness or misguided zeal... the bottom line is that we are Yosef and his brothers. We are part of a nation that split into two kingdoms and have yet to be properly reconciled.

And that demands we see each other as fellow Jews. Those who oppose a Torah way of life are not to be destroyed or rejected. We should be aiming to educate them, to win them over, through personal example and accepting them for the Jewish souls they are.

Here's the thing. Whether we like it or not, all of us stand before G-d today. All of us.¹ And may we never make the mistake of lumping all who oppose us, all those who think differently from us, into one box.

This is one timeless lesson of both the parshiot we read at this time of year and of Chanukah itself. A Jew is a Jew and we can, we must, sort out our differences.

¹ A paraphrase of the verse in Devarim 29:9: "You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem your G-d..."

Phil Chernofsky is Educational Director of the OU Israel Center in Jerusalem and Editor of Torah Tidbits



Chanukah

Celebrating the Oral Law

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed



During the time of the First Temple, prophecy was common in Israel and the people were familiar with prophetic revelations and the Written Law. One would have expected that the nation would have been in excellent spiritual condition.

However, while the prophets did have some influence, the three 'big' sins – idolatry, adultery and murder – were rampant, eventually leading to the destruction of the First Temple.

Nevertheless, thanks to the Oral Law, the Sages managed to burn these sins out of the people. How? After the destruction of the First Temple and the disappearance of the great light of prophecy, the time was ripe for the Oral Law. If prophecy was compared to day and sun, the Oral Law was compared to night and moon. In other words, the light of prophecy is much stronger than the light of the Oral Law, but the Oral Law has the power to delve deep into the hidden mysteries of the world and the soul, illuminate the darkness and repair the damage.

Therefore, because prophecy dealt with the big issues, the prophets could not burn out the evil tendencies from their roots in the human soul. It was only during the Second Temple period that the Sages began expanding their involvement with the Oral Law, discussing the ins and outs of the Halacha and determining

rules, safeguards and customs. For example, by instituting fixed blessings and prayers they solidified our permanent connection to faith, from which Israel grew in strength in terms of observing Torah and mitzvot.

Indeed, as a result of the Maccabean revolt, the fire continued to burn in the *Batei Midrash* of the Tanaim and bring light to all of the exiles, bestowing upon Am Yisrael a life of Torah and mitzvot that gave us the ability to survive against all the odds.

And this is the greatest miracle. There is no other nation on earth, that against all the rules of human nature, managed to survive 2,000 years of exile, persecution and wanderings, while the internal vitality of Torah learning continued to flow through their veins; while they built *Batei Midrash* wherever they were, and continued to clarify *sugiyot* with incomparable depth and intensity.

This too is the deeper meaning of the miracle of the oil. Just as the pure oil overcame the laws of nature and burned for eight days until they managed to bring new oil to the Temple, so did the light of the Oral Law – ignited during those days and inspired by the war of the Hasmoneans, kindle and illuminate the hearts of Jews in all of the exiles.

However, despite the rise of the Oral Law, the Maccabees didn't fight for or even dream of the

Final Redemption. There was also no chance they could achieve that, largely due to those Jews in Babylon that did not make Aliyah en masse during the time of Cyrus.¹

So Chanukah is the time we remember the huge contribution of the Oral Law, through which we can live a full Jewish life and maintain a vision of Final Redemption, because the Oral Law can provide us with solutions to all the challenges involved in such a transition.

As well as the light of the Oral Law, it is important to remember the lessons of the first real Aliyah, the Aliyah of the Vilna Gaon's students, who came to Israel to bring the redemption closer and not just to save themselves from the troubles of the Exile.

By deepening our study of the Oral Law and how it relates to running a country that is a light unto the nations, and by making Aliyah to realize that vision, may we merit the Final Redemption speedily in our days.

¹ See Yoma 9b in which Reish Lakish places the guilt for the destruction of the Temple on the shoulders of these Jews. If they had come, the Shechina would have come with them and the vision would have been the Final Redemption, not just providing the conditions to survive by observing Torah and mitzvot.

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed is Rosh Yeshivat Har Bracha and author of the *Peninei Halacha* series

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