

מאת מו"ה ברוך הירשפלד שליט"א
ראש כולל עטרת חיים ברוך קליבלנד הייטס

one is careful to use only the *Shamash*, one is allowed, to make use of that benefit (6). The prohibition is on all the *Chanukah* lights (not the *Shamash*) including the additional lights that are added each night (7), the lights that are in shul (8) even in the morning when there is no *beracha* recited over them, and even lights that are kindled by a *katan* (minor) for *chinuch* purposes (9).

- 2) Warm oneself or any food item from the heat of the *Chanukah* lights.
- 3) Eat a meal, even a *mitzvah* meal, using the *Chanukah* lights.
- 4) Use the lights to recite the blessing, "בורא מאורי האש" in the *Havdala* after *Shabbos* (10).

It is Permitted to:

- 1) Briefly look up in a *sefer* a short *halacha* relevant to the *Chanukah* lights (11).
- 2) Read the text of "תורת הלל" (12) by the *Chanukah* lights.
- 3) If the electricity went off and the house is in total darkness, save for the light of the *Menorah*, one is not required to keep his eyes closed and bump into things (13).

The Poskim Debate:

- 1) Whether one may take a picture of a person using the *Chanukah* lights as background to improve the picture (14).
- 2) If the *Chanukah* candles give off a good scent, can one consciously enjoy the smell (15).
- 3) If one is permitted to benefit from the lights after the first half hour. From the *Mishna Berura* (16) it seems that one should be stringent.

(1) משנה ברורה תרע"ג (2) שם (3) שם (4) א"ח תרע"ג (5) שם (6) ביאור הלכה שם (7) מ"ב תרע"ג (8) שם (9) ש"ת מנחת שלמה בנחמב (10) א"ח תרפ"א (11) שערי תשובה תרע"ג (12) ש"ת שח יצחק שם" (13) שער הציון תרע"ג (14) אור ישראל דף קצב (15) ע' מ"ב דרשו תרע"ג (16) תרע"ב

הלכה למעשה A SERIES IN HALACHA LIVING A "TORAH" DAY

Forgotten and Little Known Halachos and Customs (59) Laws of Tashmishei Kedusha (cont.). When we began discussing the laws of *Tashmishei Mitzvah* and *Tashmishei Kedusha*, we said that one can use *Tashmishei Mitzvah* for his own needs, as long as he does not do anything to despise the *mitzvah* - ביאי מצוה. This concept is also relevant to the laws of *Chanukah*. There is a prohibition to derive benefit from the light of the *Chanukah Menorah*. There are 3 reasons for this:

- 1) It is an embarrassment to the *mitzvah* to count money, perform menial tasks, etc. by the light of the holy *Menorah* (1).
- 2) If one uses the lights for his own benefit, it might appear to others as if he lit them for his own needs and not to commemorate the *Chanukah* miracle (2).
- 3) The sages decreed that our *Menorah* should be like the *Menorah* in the *Bais Hamikdash*, for which we were prohibited to use for our personal needs (3).

The following are the laws of this prohibition. Some of these laws apply because of the first reason mentioned above, and some apply because of the second and third reasons. For brevity's sake, we will not detail which activities go into which reason.

It is Prohibited to:

- 1) Count money, read a note or book by the light of the *Menorah* if the room is somewhat dark (4). The reason why we light an extra light called the *Shamash* and we situate it a bit higher than the other lights on the *Menorah*, is so that just in case one will derive any sort of benefit from them, we can say that it came from that extra light (5). In fact, if

הוא היה צמר....

Chacham Yaakov Chayim Sofer ZT"l (Kaf HaChayim) would say:

"The final words of *Parshas Miketz* give us a path with which we can come before the Almighty. Yosef told his brothers: *'And you will go up in peace unto your father.'* Based on the *Mishna in Avos* (שלוש), *'and on peace (דין) and on judgment (אמת)'* *The world stands on three things; on truth (א-י):* *'The world stands on three things; on truth (אמת)'* contains the identical letters as *'אמת'* (truth), *'על'* which connotes going up to *Beis Din* (דברים כה-ז) for judgment, *'לשלוש'* which means peace. Thus, one who is stringent in these three areas of his life, can be assured that he will come *'אל אביכם'* to the warm embrace of a Father Who loves His son dearly. "

R' Menachem Nochum Twersky ZT"l of Chernobyl (Meor Einayim) would say:

"A person who is careful to fulfill the *mitzvah* of kindling the *Chanukah* lights will merit to have sons who will sit and learn *Torah* and light up the world. Why? Because, as *Chazal* tell us (שבת כא:), the proper time of day to light the *Menorah* is 'עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק' (when people stop walking in the marketplace) and if one merits to have a son who sits in the *Beis Medrash* and leans *Torah* all day, undoubtedly he will not be found walking in the marketplaces. Therefore, one who takes care to light on time will have children who will become great *Torah* scholars."

A Wise Man would say:

"Some day you will find out that there is far more happiness in another's happiness than in your own."

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שקיעת החמה ליום השבת - 4:29

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שבת קודש פרשת מקץ - שבת חנוכה Shabbos Parshas Miketz - Shabbos Chanukah

כ"ז כסלו תשע"ד - November 30, 2013

טיב התבלין

הגה"צ רבי גמליאל הכהן רביצביץ שליט"א
ראש ישיבת שער השמים בירושלים ע"ה"ק

ויאמר אלהים ישראל אם בן אפוא זאת עשו קחו מומרת הארץ והורידו לאיש מנחה

מעט צרי ומעט דבש נכאת ולט במנים ושקדים וגו' (מג. יא) - דברי שלום ואמת

ומסופר על דהה"ק מין הבעל התניא ז"צ, שכידוע נהגו תלמידי הבעל שם טוב לחזר רבות על הפתחים עבור מצות פדיון שבועים. כי בימים אלו היו רבים שלצורך פרנסתם חכרו בית מוזה מאדוני הכפרים, והללו היו אכזריים גדולים, וכשלא היו בידי המוזה לשלם את דמי החכירות, היטיל אותו האדון המדושע לתוך בור צר, והבררים היו ממש פיקוח נפש, ולא הינחו להם לצאת עד שקבלו צדיקים אלו על עצמם לסלק החוב.

היה זה באחד המקומות שמרן הבעל התניא הגיע לאסוף כספים למטרה נשגבה זו, והתענין אצל מעריציו על העשירים שבעם, כי חפצו היה לקבל תמיכות הונות, ולסלק את החובות תיכף ומיד, הללו נקבו בשמות כמה נכבדים אשר יש לאל ידם לענין סכומים אדירים לטובת הענין.

בין אלו האנשים אשר הציגו בפניו, היה היה יהודי אחד שכגודל עושרו היה גודל קמצנותו, ולא היה נושא לאיש, יהיה מי שיהיה, ולכולם לא נתן כי אם פרוטה עלובה, וכשנקבו בשמו לפני דהה"ק, הוסיפו ואמרו לו, כי עדיף שלא לדרוך על סף ביתו, כי מלבד הביון שיווצר מחמתה, לא יהיה מזה שום תועלת.

אך דהה"ק בחר דוקא בן לילך אצל יהודי זה, ואכן הלך אצלו וסיפר לפניו את המקרה, לפיה נמצא כעת יהודי נמוק בבור וחייז תלויים לו מנגד, ומוכרחים לחלצו ממצבו העגום, ואכן כפי שהבהירו לו מקודם, נטל העשיר מטבע עלובה והעניקה לדהה"ק.

דהה"ק לא נרתע מקל זה שעמד מולו, ונטל המטבע מידו בסבר פנים יפות, והרעיק עליו ברכות לרוב על נתינתו, ופנה ללכת לדרכו, והנה ברידתו מהבית, נשמע קול העשיר הקורא לדהה"ק, ובקשו שיעלה שוב לביתו, דהה"ק נעתר לבקשתו, וכשעלה נתן לו העשיר עוד נתינה עלובה, אך יותר מעט מקודמה, שוב הרעיק עליו דהה"ק ברכות לרוב, ופנה שוב לדרכו, והנה חוזר הלילה, ושוב חזר העשיר וקרא את דהה"ק ובקשו לחזור, וכשחזר נתן לו נתינה יותר גדולה מקודמה, ושוב העניק לו דהה"ק את ברכתו, כך חזר המחזה הזה שוב ושוב, דהה"ק פונה לדרכו ובעל הבית חוזר וקורא, כאשר מפעם לפעם הגדיל נתינותיו, מנתינות זעומות עבר לנתינות הגנות, עד שבפעם האחרונה פתח מגירתו, ואמר לדהה"ק, רבי אני איני יודע כמה אתה צריך, טול אתה כפי הצורך לך, ואכן דהה"ק נטל את מלוא הסכום שהיה זקוק לו לצורך הענין, וברכו בחום על המצוה הנשגבה לה זכה, ומאותו יום נפתח סגור לבו של העשיר, והתחיל לחלק סכומים אדירים לצדקה.

מקרא זה יש לנו ללמוד את הדרך בה ראוי האדם להכניע את הרשע, ולהחזירו למוטב, דהנה יעקב כששמע מבניו את כל הקורות אותם במצרים, עדיין לא ידע שזה האיש שנטפל עליהם הוא יוסף בעצמו, והיה סבור שהוא גוי צורר המכוון לצערם, ואף על פי כן לא דרש מהם לצאת בחרב וחנית נגדו, ועל אף שהיה להם כוחות אדירים כמבואר במדרשים שהיה בכוחם לכלות את כל מצרים בנקל, וגם היה הצדק עמם, כי הלוא נטפל עליהם בעלילת שוא, עם כל זה לא בחר יעקב בזה הדרך, והעדיף להשלים עמו מתוך הכנעה ונתינת מנחה.

וכן אנו רואים לאורך כל הפרשה, שמד כשבאו אחי יוסף, והעליל עליהם העלילה, לא רגזו עליו, והשיבו מתוך הכנעה (מב. י יא) לא ארזנו, ועבדיך באו לשבור אוכל...כנים אנחנו, לא היו עבדיך מרגלים, וכן בבואם שנית למצרים קדו והשתחו לו, וכל דבורם עימו היה מתוך הכנעה. וכן נהג גם יעקב עם עשיו, כפי שרואים בפרשת וישלח (לב. יד) ששלח לו דורן מקודם, ובהפגשו עמו הדברה להשתחות לפניו שבע פעמים, ובה הצליח להכניעו, כפי שפירש רש"י (לג. ד) שנתגלגלו רחמי כשראוהו משתחוה כל השתחויות האלו.

ודבר זה הוא לימוד לדורות, כי לפעמים מודמן לאדם לראות בקלקלת חבירו, ומוטל עליו להוכיחו על מעשיו, אף על פי כן עליו לראות להוכיחו מתחילה בדרכי נועם, ולא יזכירו בדברים קשים, כי האמירה בלשון רכה מועיל הרבה יותר מדיבור קשה, כי דיבור רכה מרצה את האדם ומהפך את דעתו, והוא בעצמו מתחיל להבין שעליו לשפר מעשיו, אבל בדברים קשים כופה את האדם לשנות מעשיו גם אם אינם לפי רצונו, אך בסופו של דבר אינם משפיעים על מהות האדם, ונשאר עדיין ברשעו, וכשלא יהיה מי שיכוף אותו ישוב לסורו.

ורק כשרואה המוכיח שדבריו הרכים אינם עושים רושם על מהות החוטא, אז ודאי מוטל עליו להוכיחו בדברים קשים, כי מאחר שראה שדבריו אינם משפיעים, וממילא לא יעשו רושם על מהותו, על כן עליו לגעור בו שלפחות יטיב מעשיו שלא לרצונו, אך מתחילה עליו להעדיף לבוא בדברי שלום ואמת.

וכן כשיש לו דין ודברים עם חולת, ויודע הוא שהדין עמו, ויש בידו לכוף את השני ולהכריחו בדבר, אף על פי כן יראה לשלול מתוך הכנעה ובקשה, ולא מתוך כפייה, כי אם יכוף אותו, אז גם אם יוכרח השני למלא דרישתו, יאשר שונאו לאורך ימים רחמנא ליצלו, כי לפי דעתו לא היה עליו למלא אחר דרישתו, אבל כשיסביר לו דעתו בדיבור רכה, אז לרוב יבין השני דעתו ומרצונו ימלא אחריה, ולא יאשר שום קטטה ביניהם.

the forthcoming meeting so that he might celebrate the first night of *Chanukah* in the company of his *Chassidim*.

Suddenly he had an idea. He smiled to himself and left for the commissar’s office. On the way there he took from his pocket his snuff box and began to sniff tobacco without stopping. By the time he reached the commissar, his nose was red and he kept sneezing. Between one sneezing attack and another, R’ Yisroel explained to the commissar that he had a very bad cold and would be unable to attend the evening meeting. The commissar, decorated with many medals, sat behind a huge desk covered with neatly arranged piles of paper. He listened to the rabbi with an obvious expression of disbelief.

“A strange coincidence,” he said while looking straight into the *Rebbe’s* eyes. “Only a few minutes ago another insurance agent was here, an agent with a beard and side locks, and just like you, his nose was red as a flag and he did not stop sneezing. He, too, claimed that he had caught a cold and asked to be excused from tonight’s meeting.”

It was probably the Boyaner Rebbe, thought the Bluzhover thought to himself as he tried to conceal his smile. He composed himself and replied, “It is quite natural for two people to catch a cold at this time of the year.”

The commissar did not reply. He got up from his chair and walked out of the room.

After a short while he returned with a mischievous smile plastered on his face and resumed his seat beneath the huge portrait of Stalin. “Now I understand the cause of your sickness,” he said. “I have just checked my Jewish calendar. Tonight is the Jewish holiday of Hanukah and the kindling of the first light. Rabbi, you should have known better. In Russia, when concocting a story, one should make sure it is a solid one.”

R’ Yisroel paled at the thought of being caught red-handed and what the possible consequences for his “crime” would be. But then, the commissar relaxed his expression and lowered his tone. He said, “A word of advice, if I may? One can never be sure who is hiding behind the uniform of a Soviet commissar. If another commissar were sitting in my chair, you and your other sneezing friend would be nursing your colds in the Siberian plains. However, I am the son of the *shochet* of Mezhibuzh. Go home and kindle the first light of *Chanukah*.” **(Heroes of Faith)**

משל למת הדבר דומת

בשעמדה מלכות יין הרשעה על עמך ישראל להשכיחם תורתך ולהעבירם מחקי רצונך (על הניסים)

משל: The Greeks forbade Jewish study, but Jews without *Torah*, as Rabbi Akiva famously said, are like fish without water. Accordingly, Jews would mask their *Torah* study gatherings by playing with a *dreidel*, a spinning top. Should any Greek soldiers walk in on the forbidden study groups, all they would find was a den of top-spinners instead of a group of lawbreaking scholars. Traditionally, playing games on *Chanukah* became popular in part because of the custom to refrain from working while the *Chanukah* candles burned. Spin-offs from the *dreidel’s* roots include a card game known as *Kvitlach*, a game of wits and winnings.

When the **Rebbe of Shinov, R’ Yechezkel Halberstam ZT”L**, was a young boy, he once came to the local *Beis Medrash* to study in the afternoon, while he waited for his father, the holy **Sanzer Rav ZT”L**, to come home and light the *Chanukah* candles. He immersed himself in his studies and his sweet child-like voice wafted throughout the large study hall. At one point, as he was reviewing a particularly difficult *Gemara*, he was unable to discern *pshat* in the *sugya* (understanding of the topic) no matter how hard he tried. He pored over countless *seforim* hoping to find a commentator who would relieve him of his difficulty, but to no avail. He was at a loss and could not go on.

Just then, another youngster walked into the *Beis Medrash* and came over to Yechezkel, explaining that they needed one more person to fill out their *Kvitlach* game, and

was he interested in joining. Yechezkel wasn’t thinking about card games and answered that he first needed to understand the *Gemara* he was learning before he would play anything. His friend then asked what was his question and upon hearing it, he immediately dispatched the problem with a brilliant answer - on the spot!

The future *Rebbe* was in shock, but he quickly recovered and said to the other boy, “It is clear to me that the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) put that amazing answer on the tip of your tongue just to try to draw me away and get me to play *Kvitlach*. There can be no other explanation. Therefore, I am telling you now, that I will never play that game in my life, because it is obvious that the *Satan* maintains an over-powering control over it - and one must stay away from it!”

במשל: The message of *Chanukah* is that a Jew must use the power of *Torah* study to illuminate the darkness that fills the world. But darkness comes in many forms and it is not always clear what is the correct path and how to maintain one’s existence on it. However, one thing is clear: the source of all the darkness is the *Satan*, the *Yetzer Hara* - the *Baal Davar* - who will stop at nothing to draw us away from what is correct and just. He is lurking behind every corner and often approaches us in harmless, sometimes ingenious ways. Let us pray that we have the wisdom to see through his nefarious schemes, which might look innocent on the surface, but in the long run is clearly a very bad idea!

בשמעי זאת, היבנתי מיד סיבת הדבר, והיבנתי שהדבר שיכול להפוך את לבבו, הוא לזכותו בנתינה ולו הקטנה ביותר, ואכן לזאת באתי אליו, ומאחר שזיכיתי אותו במצוות הצדקה נתמעטו הקליפות מעל לבו, ומיד הוכר רישומה, וככל שלקחתי ממנו יותר נתעורר לבו יותר ויותר, עד שנפתח לבו כאולם, כראוי ללב יהודי הפועם בו.

רואים מזה ההפסד הנגרם מדיבור קשה, והתועלת הנמשך מהדיבור בנחת.

מאת הרב שלום פערל שלי"ס א מגיד משרים בק"ס בית שמש

ויאמר פרעה אל יוסף הלום חלמתי ופותר אין אותו ואני שמעתי עלך לאומר תשמע הלום לפתור אותו. ויען יוסף את פרעה לאמור

בלעדי אלוקים יענה את שלום פרעה וגו' (א-ט.א-טו) - עולם הטבע מונהג ע"י ה' יתברך

אם מכוח האלוקים, שהוא המחדש והמשגיה והיכול, והוא יענה את שלום פרעה; כלומר, יתן עזר וסיוע, כי מענה שלום האדם ממנו יתברך, לא מצד הכוכבים והמזלות, וראוי לאדם לשום דברתו אליו, לא אליהם, כענין שכתוב ואל אלוקים אשים דברתי, (– ודברתי היינו 'הנהגתי', וכלומר, **כי הנהגת העולם, אל שימנה לכוחות הגלגלים ולצבא השמים, רק לה' יתברך** [רבינו בחיי, בראשית כ"ב א']), וכו'.

ומזה הוכיד בכאן אלוקים יענה וגו', ועל הכוונה הזאת יזכיר יוסף שם האלוקים תמיד בכל דבריו, וכמו שאמר את אשר האלוקים עושה הגיד לפרעה; ואמר עוד אשר האלוקים עושה הראה את פרעה; ואחר כך אמר כי נכון הדבר מעם האלוקים, וממחר האלוקים לעשותו; שייחס המעשים לאלוקים, כדי לבאר, כי אין מעשה האדם מסורה לכוחות העליונים כמו שהוא סבור, כי אם לשם האלוקים וכו', ולכן פתח בתחילת דבריו ב'לעדי, **אלוקים**, וסיים בסוף דיבורו זממחר **האלוקים לעשותו**, כי היה מדבר עם פרעה הכופר, אודות חידוש העולם במעשה בראשית, ועל כן אחז דרך מעשה בראשית, שפתח ב'ראשית ברא אלוקים; וסיים אשר ברא **אלוקים לעשות**." ומבואר, שעולם הטבע מונהג ע"י ה' יתברך, וא"כ, כמה זה מתאים, שפרשה זו המלמדת שעולם הטבע מונהג ע"י ה' יתברך, נקראת בשבת חנוכה, שבו נוצחו היוונים, שדגלו בשיטה הסוברת שעולם הטבע מונהג מאיליו ח"ו.

בני בינה ימי שמונת קבעו שיר זרצרים

זרים ביד עוסקי תורתך (על הניסים)

“זדים ביד The Festival of *Chanuka*, with its miracle of *Sinners at the hands of toilers in Torah*,” prompts us to give thought to the grave danger for Jewish survival in the movements of “*Misyavnim*.” Greek culture for the Greeks does not disturb the spiritual progress of the Jew. Greek culture when invested into Jewish life, however, strikes at the very foundations of Jewish survival. One should not make the mistake of thinking of “*Misyavnim*” only in terms of those who have alienated themselves from *Torah* and became assimilated into an alien foreign culture. Every adulteration of *Torah* thinking, writes **R’ Mordechai Gifter ZT”L**, is part of the process of *Misyavnim* - the process of becoming “Greece-ified.”

What is the prime ideal of *Torah* living? Is it complete investiture in *Torah* without regard to worldly mundane affairs; or is it the ideal of wordly affairs sublimated by *Torah*? One need not go far to seek the answer. Rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai postulated (ברכות לה) that the ideal of Jewish living is complete engrossment in *Torah*, and as a

והרה"ק הסביר הסיבה שהפך את לב העשיר מן הקצה אל הקצה, כי עשיר זה היה קמצן מתחילה, וכיון שכן כשבא אליו בפעם הראשונה עני, לבקש ממנו תמיכה, נתן לו העשיר נתינה עלובה, וכראות העני את התיחסותו אליו, בערה חמתו למאוד, וגער בעשיר, ולא רצה לקבל את נתינתו, ודבר זה המשיך קליפות על לב העשיר, וגרם לו שיכביד לבו ביותר, וככל שרבו הפניות אליו, רבו הגערות ונתרבו הקליפות, עד שלא היה בכח העשיר לשנות מצבו כלל.

לקחי חיים ודברי התצוררות ופרשיות חשבוע נסדרו עפ"י פרשיות חשבוע

תב כתב דבינו בחיי, "תשמע הלום לפתור אותו-תבין, מלשון שמע ישראל' שהוא ענין התבוננות, כלומר, יש כך כוח ההכמה והבינה לפתור ההלום. בלעדי-השיב יוסף, אין כוח ההכמה והבינה בי, אלא חוץ ממני, וזה שאמר 'בלעדי', כלומר זולתי, 'אלוקים יענה את שלום פרעה; הכול בא מכוח האלוקים, שהוא בעל הכוחות כולו, והוא יעזור אותך מצער החלום ופתרונו'.

וממשיך, ודע, שאני חושב עניין בחלום פרעה **שהוא הולך בשבע על שבע**, ידוע, כי פרעה ועמו הרשעים, מאמנים בקדמות העולם, וכופרים בידיעה ובהשגחה ובחידוש העולם, והיתה דעתם בכל המעשים הנעשים בשפלים, שכולם מסורים למקרים, ותחת ממשלת כוכבי לכת המנהיגים את העולם, ומתוך שהיה נמשך אחר הטבע והחומר יסוד העפר כנרמז בשמו – ש'פרעה' אותיות 'העפר', הראו לו מן השמים שתי חלומות אלו מתוך שני היסודות הכבדים שרה המים והעפר, שבע פרות עולות מיסוד המים, ושבע שבלים צומחות מיסוד העפר, והרמז בהן לעניין שובע ודעב, שהוא מופת על ההשגחה בשפלים וכו', והעניין הזה היה מופת לפרעה מאתו יתברך בעניין ההשגחה, להודיע כי הוא יתברך המשגיח בעולם היסודות והנותן בו שובע ודעב, **وهוא השליט המושל על שבעה כוכבי לכת, ובידו להגבירים ולהחלישם על פי השכר והענוש** וכו'.

ומפני שהיה יוסף יודע אמונתו הרעה הזאת, קפץ בתחילת דברו להוכיח לו שם האלוקים, ואמר 'בלעדי, אלוקים וגו', כלומר, אין חכמת הפתרון מכוחו כי

result, worldly needs will be performed by others. Only under such conditions is *Klal Yisroel* to be considered performing the ultimate will of the Almighty. However, there is an opposing view. Since this ideal is difficult for many to attain, the prevalent formula to be followed is that of Rabbi Yishmael: “*Hanheg bahen minhag derech eretz*” - one must devote of himself to worldly needs as well. Of course, the true crown of *Torah* - *Kesser Torah* - is attained only by those who follow the ideal of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai (**Rambam Hilchos Talmud Torah**).

To make the formula, “*Hanheg bahen minhag derech eretz*” the supreme ideal of *Torah* is false, alien to Jewish thinking. This philosophy is a product of an alien culture which cannot bring itself to recognize Man’s inherent power to become a pure spiritual being. When this becomes the supreme ideal, the ultimate result is the degeneration of the primacy of *Torah* in Jewish life, the removal of the *Kesser Torah* - a people without its crowning glory.

Our entire hope of creating *Gedolei Torah* is nurtured in the ideal of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai. If we, for even one

מעשה אבות... סימן לבנים

בי ארבה לנו הישועה ואין קץ לימי הרעה (פיוט מעוז צור)

The *Chanukah* miracles that we commemorate are a culmination of the persecutions that occurred in 3594-3595, at the hands of the wicked King Antiochus Epiphanes. In the city of *Modi'in*, a Greek officer orders Matisyahu, a member of the *Chashmonai* family, to sacrifice a pig to the Greek Gods, on a newly-erected altar. Matisyahu refuses but another priest, a Jew who had embraced the Greek lifestyle, agrees to do it. Matisyahu is furious and before the priest could begin, he grabs the officer's sword, killing him and the corrupt priest. He tore down the altar, and cried out, "Let everyone who is zealous for *Torah* and supports the covenant, come with me!" With five sons and a few brave men, he led the revolt to end religious persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. After Matisyahu died, his son Yehudah took command and his organized band of fighters became known as "*Maccabim*" (מי כמוכה באילים י-ה) For three years, they battled the mighty Greek army as well as Jewish traitors, until the final battles when the band of 10,000 *Maccabim* faced close to 60,000 enemy soldiers. *Hashem* gave them victory in two battles; the enemy retreated, and the Jews reclaimed Jerusalem and the holy *Bais Hamikdash*. The 25th of *Kislev*, the day they rededicated the Temple, was the same day Antiochus had defiled it with a pig three years earlier. It was then that they found one small flask of pure olive oil which miraculously burned for eight days in the *Menorah*, giving them enough time to press olives and refine new oil.

An amazing tale of self-sacrifice in the face of unadulterated evil is told about **R' Gershon Liebman ZT"l**, *Rosh Hayeshivah* of Novardok in France, the man who was most responsible for the rejuvenation of *Torah* life in France following World War II. During the war, he suffered in the Bergen Belsen concentration camp for close to two years.

Once, while working out in the fields, he was grabbed by an SS man and taken to the commandant's office. He was roughly dragged into a room that that was outfitted with plush carpeting, beautiful paintings and, in the middle of the room, a richly carved, ornate mahogany table. On the table sat exquisite china, elegant silver flatware, and the main course: a large, roasted pig! While all of this repulsed him, the revulsion did not reach its zenith until he noticed the tablecloth. There, spread across the table - beneath the repugnant roast swine - was a *Talis*!

This *Talis*, that was once probably used by a Jew pouring out his heart to *Hashem* with utmost sincerity and feeling, was now a tablecloth for a Nazi to eat a pig! His revulsion was unfathomable; the shock too much to contain. R' Gershon lost his self-control, forgetting where he was and the ramifications of the action he was about to do.

In one swift move, R' Gershon grabbed the fringed edge of the cloth and yanked the *Talis* right off the table. The china, crystal, silver and most importantly, the succulent main course, went flying through the air, landing in a heap upon the Nazi commandant's lap. R' Gershon grabbed the *Talis* close to him, kissing it, caressing it, and crying. "I am so sorry for the indignity that you had to suffer," he told the *Talis*. "I am so sorry for your disgrace."

R' Gershon was prepared. He waited for that bullet that would end his misery, but he knew that he would die holding the *Talis* in his hands, like *tachrichim* (burial shrouds) giving it the respect it deserved. The commandant was of course furious. He had staged this entire scenario in order to push the Jew over the edge. Let him cringe with revulsion and shame, as his religious relic was defamed in his presence. The Jew, however, did not act according to the script. The *Talis* meant more to him than his life. How could this be?

As was the will of the Almighty, the Nazi did not kill R' Gershon, settling instead on beating him mercilessly for his impudence. The blood flowed from his wounds, but R' Gershon survived. He had preserved the dignity of the *Talis*, the honor of *Hashem*. *Mitzvos* were his life, without which his life was not worth living. (**PureTorah.com**)

On the day **R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel ZT"l** passed away, 11 *Cheshvan* 5772 (November 8, 2011), a large funeral procession left from the *Mir Yeshivah* after the *hespedim* (eulogies) that began at noon, and made its way to the *Har Menuchos* cemetery in *Givat Shaul*. Reportedly, over 100,000 people were in attendance to pay their final respects to the great *Mirrer Rosh Yeshivah*. Many people were crying incessantly and many others were relating stories - in most cases first-hand experiences - about the greatness of the *Niftar*.

During those mournful hours, hundreds of outstanding stories describing R' Nosson Tzvi's diligence, personal warmth, self-sacrifice, and tireless *Harbotzas Torah* surfaced. In one story after another, people described how the *Rosh Yeshivah* inspired thousands of young men to reach heights in *Torah* they had never dreamed possible. How he learned with so many *chavrusos* (study partners) every day and was prepared to help each student reach his fullest potential. How he constantly strove to find ways to increase the immersion in *Torah* and how he would offer monetary rewards for knowing a sizable amount of *Gemara* and writing monthly papers (*chaburos*) on relevant topics. How he instituted a



journeyed back to Canaan, they lodged at an inn. To the brothers' collective horror, when they opened their bags, they found all their money. As they were already under suspicion, they knew they would be accused of theft, and they panicked: "*Their hearts left them; they trembled one to another, saying, what is this that the Lord is doing to us!*"

The *Gemara* (תענית ט.) cites this *posuk* as a source for the famous words penned by *Shlomo Hamelech* in *Mishlei* (יט-ג): "*A man's folly subverts his way, and his heart rages against the Lord.*" King Shlomo observed the widespread, foolish tendency among people to complain to *Hashem* about problems which they brought upon themselves. So often in life, we encounter difficult situations and hardships which we could have avoided if we had acted with greater care and responsibility. And yet, many times, people question the Lord's justice when crisis strikes, as though they expect Him to not only save us from calamity, but also to save us from our own follies and imprudence. *Chazal* point to the brothers' reaction to the discovery of their money. They wailed, "*What is this that the Lord is doing to us,*" despite the fact that they themselves were to blame for this latest misfortune. (**R' D. Silverberg**)

The question arises, why was this misfortune considered the brothers' fault? Why does the *Gemara* assume that they were to blame for the return of their money?

Insight into this Talmudic passage may be gleaned from

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...

ירצת יצירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHILOMO

בהירות

קוה אל ה' חזק ויאמץ לבך וקוה אל ה' (תהלים כו)

Isn't it interesting that *Chanukah*, the holiday of light arrives at the coldest and darkest time of the year? The days are short, the nights are long and the holy lights of the *Chanukah Menorah* remind us that the Jewish people are "למעלה מן הטבע" - above the natural order of the world. In the darkest periods of our history, it was the spark of *emunah*, the belief and trust in *Hashem*, that kept the Jewish people alive. We are steeped in the long, dark and bitter *golus*. Jewish suffering, on a collective and even individual level, is far from ceased. And yes, it is the same spark of faith and connection to *Hashem* that continues to illuminate the darkness of this world.

This past week, here in *Eretz Yisroel*, tragedy struck with the sudden *petirah* of Rabbi Alter Kaufman Z"l from *Beit Shemesh*, who fell off a ladder. I heard an interesting episode that happened the day before he passed away. His daughter was making a coffee and he said to her, "Do you know why we drink coffee? In order to learn a very important lesson. There are four steps to making coffee, and they each combine two opposites. We put wet liquid

the comments of the 13th century Syrian scholar, **Chacham Shet bar Yafet Harofe (Doctor) ZT"l** of Aram Sova (ר' שת הרופא בר יפת), in his **Sefer Chem'at HaChemdah**. He writes: "Because of their fear they did not search (their bags before leaving to ensure they received the correct merchandise), as they wanted to leave hurriedly, saying, 'Perhaps he will change his mind and imprison all of us.'" (As quoted in **Torah Shleimah**)

It was not out of laziness or irresponsibility that the brothers failed to check their luggage before leaving, but rather due to an understandable rush to leave. They were at the mercy of an irrational, suspicious and seemingly delusional Egyptian ruler, and after enduring the grueling ordeal to which he subjected them, including a three-day prison stay, they were in a frantic hurry to return home to bring Binyamin back and have Shimon released. And yet, despite their understandable rush, the Sages still consider their situation a misfortune which they could have avoided through greater patience and prudence.

Notwithstanding their anxiety and distress, it was irresponsible to leave Egypt before taking the time to look through their luggage. The *Gemara* considers the brothers' crisis as one which they brought upon themselves, rather than a crisis brought on them by *Hashem*. Even in difficult and tense situations, we must make a special effort to act responsibly, to avoid potentially disastrous oversights and mistakes.

on top of a dry solid. We put hot water onto cold coffee granules. We put white milk into black coffee, and we put sweet sugar into bitter coffee. In each step, we transform the dry, cold, dark and bitter coffee into something palatable, moist, heartwarming and delicious! However, although they may be opposites in every way, on each and every one of these, we recite the blessing 'שהכל נהיה בדבר' - EVERYTHING is from *Hashem*!" His daughter will never forget his final message, for it is not just a beautiful idea, it is truly what *Yiddishkeit* is all about.

The word "*Chanukah*" has the same root as "*Chinuch*," and the message of *Chanukah*, bringing light into darkness, is something we should all speak about and give over to our children at this auspicious time. This ability to place our trust in *Hashem* will be the light that illuminates the darkest and most difficult aspects of life and our children will learn to grow immeasurably from these "*lichtiga*" lessons.

And, of course, if you drink Nescafe, remember the "*Nes*" (miracle) that happened on "*Kaf Hey*" *Kislev* and have a beautiful and uplifting *Chanukah*. (Ed. Note:)

moment, lose sight of this ideal in the fear that the *Torah* Jew will be considered an unproductive element in society, we shall lose the very source of Jewish creativity! We shall make of our sons men of stature in the world of trades, vocations, and professions but unfortunately we will deny ourselves the glory of a **Chofetz Chaim**; a **R’ Meir Simcha Hakohen**; a **Chazon Ish**....

When “*Hanheg bahen derech eretz*” denies us the privilege of creative *Torah* giants, this formula then becomes invalid. At the cost of all else we must seek to create *Torah* scholarship in its noblest form. This is what Rav Nehorai meant when he said (קידושין פב): “*I forsake all professions and teach my son only Torah.*”

In the light of *Chanuka* let us see the *Torah* ideal in its true perspective. Then shall we know: “*In Thy light, Hashem, shall we see light.*” (**The Voice of Rav Gifter**)

ובבכה סגולת נר הנוכה תחבמנו באור תורתך (תפילה קדם הדלקה)
The *Medrash* in *Bereshis Raba* remarks that the second *posuk* in the *Torah* - “יחושך על פני תהום” - “*Darkness over the surface of the deep*” - refers to the Greek Empire, which “darkened the eyes of Israel with their decrees.” This association between the Greeks and “darkness” is well established, and emerges from the *Chanukah* story itself: the single jug of pure oil that burned for eight days clearly parallels the victory of the light of Jewish faith over the darkness imposed upon it by the Hellenist Greeks. It is worth noting, however, the precise terminology employed by the *Medrash* in describing the efforts of the Greeks to eradicate Judaism: “*they darkened the eyes of Israel.*” The *Medrash* does not speak of the Greeks creating “darkness,” or making the Jews’ lives “dark.” Rather, they “*darkened the eyes*” of the Jewish people. To what exactly does this refer?

In “*Al HaNissim*,” we mention that the Greeks longed “להשכיחם תורתך” - “*to make them (Jews) forget Your Torah.*” **R’ Chaim Friedlander ZT”L** (**Sifsei Chaim**), explains this to mean that the Greeks attempted to lure *Bnei Yisroel* into cherishing and adopting Greek wisdom and culture in their hearts, and they would thereby make them forget the *Torah*, for forgetting and remembering depend mainly on a person’s desire. Something a person wants and longs for is usually something he remembers well. That in which he is disinterested, he forgets. The Greeks were confident that by bombarding *Bnei Yisroel* with Greek sophistication and “advanced” culture, they could attract the Jews to their side and lure them away from Judaism. They would lose interest in the laws and knowledge of the *Torah*, preferring instead to plumb the depths of the works of Socrates and Aristotle.

As we know from the history of the *Chanukah* story, their efforts on the whole were very successful. However, on *Chanukah* we celebrate the fact that a small jug of pure oil remained - a core group of faithful Jews who rejected and resisted the contaminating efforts of the Greek occupiers, rekindling the darkness that had overtaken the eyes of the Jewish people. They may have “*darkened our eyes*” to an extent, but we overcame them with our light!

וישלח פרעה ויקרא את יוסף ויריצהו מן הבור ויגלה ויחלה
שמלתיו ויבא אל-פרעה וגו’ (בראשית מא-יד)

It took 12 long years of demeaning and demoralizing dungeon life before Yosef was spirited out of the pit that served as his prison. Indeed, a captive in the ancient Egyptian prison system didn’t fare very well, and the filth, grime, starvation and lack of hygiene was a staple of Yosef’s daily misery. However, “שועת ה’ כהרף עין” - “*the salvation of Hashem (comes) in the blink of an eye,*” and the day Yosef was removed from the pit, he was washed up, his hair was cut and he was provided with new clean clothes. His miraculous “rags-to-riches” story is a classic example of how the Almighty watches over even the most downtrodden person and lifts him up to greatness.

In the court of **R’ Itzikel of Pshevorsk ZT”L** it was well known that anyone who needed a ישועה (salvation) from a pressing dilemma, would come to the *Rebbe’s Beis Medrash* and be honored with lighting the *Chanukah Menorah*. However, in Pshevorsk, they did things a little differently. The person who was so honored, would don beggar’s clothing, and as he would approach the *Rebbe*, others would ridicule him, heap scorn upon him and even throw small objects at him, as a form of derision.

A newcomer to the *Rebbe’s* court watched this unusual scene unfold before him and couldn’t help but ask the *Rebbe* what it was all about. R’ Itzikel closed his eyes and intoned, “When a person is in dire need of Heavenly salvation, the lower he falls, the greater he is lifted. *Az men varft fun unten, varft men fun oiben!*” (the more [suffering] that is ‘thrown’ upon him down here, the more [assistance] is ‘thrown’ upon him from up above.)

ויחפש בגדול החל ובקמן כלה וימצא הנביע באמתחת בנימן מד-יב)

Yosef treated his brothers harshly when they arrived in Egypt to purchase grain. As the Egyptian Vizier whom his brothers did not recognize, he accused them of spying and demanded that they bring their youngest brother, Binyamin, down to Egypt. Before they left to return home, Yosef instructed his servants to fill his brothers’ sacks with food and return all the money with which they had purchased it. The *Torah* relates that as the brothers

half-day study program in *yeshivah* during the summer break followed by a heavily subsidized trip for relaxation. On and on, story after story, tearful students remembered how R’ Nosson Tzvi, in his tremendously weakened state due to his severe case of Parkinson’s Disease, never stopped learning, growing or building the *yeshivah* he loved so dearly.

One man, though, had a story to tell, but it had nothing to do with learning, *hasmadah* (diligence), or excellence in studies, like most of the other stories being told. This man was quite a bit older and he did not appear to be a student of the *Mir Yeshivah* - of any *yeshivah* for that matter. Nevertheless, he was crying like the others and without provocation, he began to speak. His first words immediately caught the attention of those standing nearby. “The kitchen in the *Mir Yeshivah* is like an extension of the *Beis Medrash*,” he said, tears staining his weathered cheeks. With an opening like that, many people craned their ears to hear his story.

The man began by proudly informing all those around him that he currently works in the kitchen in the *Mir*. It was due to this fact, that he alone knew the details of the story he was about to tell; R’ Nosson Tzvi had been the only other person to know it. A number of years ago, during the *Yom Tov* of *Chanukah*, one of the female cooks in the kitchen of the *Mir*, was inspired to make *latkes* for the entire *yeshivah* body. It was a daunting task indeed, and the exuberant woman slaved over the potatoes and the hot oil for hours upon hours. In total, she made three thousand *latkes*!

The rest of us watched in awe as she worked tirelessly, he said, and when we offered to help her, she refused. This was her *mitzvah*, she said, and she wanted to perform it to the fullest.

Well, it took hours but she finally finished. With much excitement, the woman sent the platters of oil-laden *latkes* up to the main dining room. She was understandably exhausted and soon left for a break. It was a good thing she did. Somehow, she had forgotten a key ingredient in the potato-based holiday delicacy, and after the first few intrepid *bochurim* tasted the *latkes* and realized that they were not very good, nobody took anymore *latkes* from the pan. Can you imagine, three-thousand *latkes* - and no one was eating them!

It was then that the *Rosh Yeshivah*, R’ Nosson Tzvi, happened to walk into the dining room and he saw the large platters of *latkes*. He also saw that no one was eating them and with keen insight and intellect, he understood that all those *latkes* were probably not very good. Something had gone wrong in the recipe. Realizing how painful this would be to the cook, R’ Nosson Tzvi quickly called a nearby caterer and ordered three thousand *latkes* to be delivered to the *yeshivah*, post haste. When they arrived, he paid for them out of his own pocket and very discreetly had the tasteless *latkes* removed and replaced with the new ones.

As the *bochurim* soon began streaming into the dining room to eat dinner, it didn’t take long for the tins of three thousand *latkes* to be reduced to empty platters as word got out that the *latkes* were really very good. The fine young men, who were unaware of the drama behind the *latkes*, were quick to compliment the woman on the delicious *Chanukah* treat she provided, and needless to say, she was more than delighted with their reaction.

“Nobody ever knew what happened and nobody ever found out. I was there,” said the kitchen staffer, “and I saw it all play out in front of my eyes. This is the reason why I love working in the *Mir* kitchen.” The man blinked back his tears, but it was no use. R’ Nosson Tzvi was so beloved and worthy of the same respect, time and compassion, from every individual, just as he was known to provide to his own students.

נר לדגלי דבריד ואור לנתיבותי (תהלים קט)

When **R’ Yisroel Spira ZT”L**, the **Bluzhover Rebbe**, was forced to relocate from Istrik, Poland, to Lvov, it was then under Soviet rule. According to Soviet practice, each person was to be employed in a productive job; otherwise he was classified as a parasite and was liable to be exiled to Siberia. There were no exceptions. All Chassidic rabbis had to find productive positions in the Communist utopia and were forbidden to use the title “rabbi”.

And so, the *Rebbe* of Bluzhov became an insurance agent. At the end of each month, he had to prove that he had earned at least one thousand rubles. In those days the *Rebbe* still had many followers. To produce a receipt at the end of the month for one thousand rubles, together with a list of insured individuals, was no great task for him. In this way, the *Rebbe* was able to satisfy the Russian demands while continuing to serve his *Chassidim*.

One December’s evening, the Russian commissar called for a regional meeting of all insurance agents. Attendance was mandatory. Among the insurance agents was one other *Chassidic Rebbe*, the **Boyaner Rebbe, R’ Avraham Yaakov Friedman ZT”L**. The night of the regional meeting coincided with the first night of *Chanukah*.

It was customary for many *Chassidim* to assemble at their *Rebbe’s* house for the festive kindling of the first *Chanukah* light and for the celebration that followed. The Bluzhover Rebbe searched for any way in which to excuse himself from