

PARSHAS VAYEISHEV

By HARAV YAAKOV FEITMAN

KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

Last week we discussed some of the things we can learn from Yaakov Avinu in our long sojourns in various exiles. This week we turn our attention to the trials and tribulations of Yosef at the hands of his own brothers and later in Mitzrayim. It seems that as the generations move on, Klal Yisrael suffers from both internal and external miseries. However, when we examine Yosef's agonies and torments, it becomes clear that Hashem calibrates and limits each step only to that which is absolutely necessary for the fulfillment of his – and our – ultimate destiny. This lesson begins at the pivotal moment when Yosef is sold by his brothers. Rashi points out (37:25) that a miracle occurred when the Arabs who buy Yosef turn out to be carrying sweet smelling spices rather than their usual foul malodorous cargoes. Many meforshim raise the obvious issue that with all of Yosef's travails – being sold to lowly idolatrous pagans, torn away from the holy house of Yaakov Avinu, placed in constant danger of painful death – the least of his worries is the relative fetidness of the atmosphere around him. Yet, the Nesivos Sholom points out, every detail of Yosef's pain has been carefully assessed. Whatever is unnecessary – such as the stench of naphtha – will not be imposed upon the tzadik. Furthermore, Rav Yitzchok of Vorke explains, all of Yosef's distress is directed toward the body. However, evil smells, which affect the soul (Berachos 43b) will not afflict him so that his spiritual life will be protected.

Perhaps one of the take-aways of this eternal lesson is that Hashem always gives us the opportunity to grow in *ruchniyos*, even under the most dire of circumstances. Jews baked matzos in Bergen-Belsen, lit Chanukah candles in Buchenwald, built Succos in Auschwitz and wrote incredible Chidushei Torah in the Gulag. In each of these horrific circumstances, Yidden found opportunities for growth and strength, just as Yosef did throughout his ordeals. To return to the Nesivos Sholom's approach, the Torah (37:35) reveals that Yaakov Avinu could not accept consolation upon Yosef's apparent death. What was Hashem's purpose in this extended mourning on the part of Yaakov Avinu? Hadn't he suffered enough? The great Slonimer Rebbe answers that if Yaakov had indeed comes to terms with Yosef's demise and stopped thinking about him for a moment, Yosef would not have been able to survive spiritually in that amoral jungle. However, now that Yaakov continued the connection with his lost son, his tefilos and kedushah stood Yosef in good stead on the long road to becoming the viceroy of Egypt and eventual host of Klal Yisrael in Goshen. Some (see Yagdil Torah, page 398) even relate Yosef's ability to resist the wife of Potifar (*Vayema' ein*) flowed from Yaakov Avinu's refusal to accept the finality of his death (*vayema' ein* 37:35).

Surely Jewish history is rich and replete with strange juxtapositions. Yet, we rarely discover until much later what has sustained us and protected our identity from the darkness of golus. However one thing has become incredibly clear. Hashem is with us wherever we go. He suffers with us and celebrates with us. But above all, he never abandons us. When the Greeks tried to make us assimilate, the bright flames of the Menorah restored our tired souls and warmed our frozen hearts. Let us use Chanukah to thank Hashem for every moment.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS AND A FREILICHEN CHANUKAH

HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5779

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We continue this week with questions and answers about Chanukah

Question: Must one wear a hat and jacket to kindle the Chanukah neiros?

Answer: It is not a halacha but it is a commendable custom (see Orchos Rabbeinu 3:16:47; Ohr Yisrael, page 140:4).

Question: At what point in saying the Berachos do we begin lighting the candles?

Answer: There is a significant difference amongst the Poskim in this matter. The Rama (676:2), Maharil (145) and many others hold that one should recite all the Berachos and then light. However, the Avudraham in the name of Rabbeinu Yonah (quoted by the Bais Yosef 676:5) holds that we begin lighting right after the first beracha, light all the candles and then recite the rest of the Berachos. Interestingly, Rav Chaim Brisker followed this second opinion only from the second night on.

Question: If someone's wife lit for him on the first night, such as if he was travelling on a plane all night, should he make a Shehechyanu on the second night, since he is lighting for the first time that year?

Answer: No (Mogen Avrohom 676:2, Halichos Shlomo 16:12). However, Rav Elyashiv (Mevakshei Torah 3:205) holds that after lighting he should make a Shehechyanu on a new fruit and have in mind the Chanukah neiros.

Question: If someone is lighting in Shul and is only lighting for himself at home (such as an unmarried bochur), should he repeat the Shehechyanu at home?

Answer: The majority of Poskim (see Zera Emes) hold that he should not. However, Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe 1:190) holds that he should repeat the Shehechyanu.

Question: May a child light the Menorah in Shul?

Answer: This, too, is a major machlokes. The Klausenberger Rebbe (Divrei Yetziv 2:286), Rivevos Ephraim (2:82), Minchas Yitzchok (6:65) and many others hold that *maaseh katan aino klum* – the actions of a child have no validity. However, the Az Nidberu (5:37), Rav Sternbuch (Teshuvos Vehanahagos 1:397) and many others hold that if necessary, a child may light in Shul.

Question: Why do we light in the morning as well in Shul but not at home?

Answer: There are several reasons: 1). Because in Shul there is a greater *pirsumei Nisa* by day than at night in Shul since we do not need the light except for the spreading of the word of the miracle. However, at home the neiros will not be noticed as much as in Shul (Nehar Mitzrayim 12). 2). To fulfill the opinion of the Rambam that in the Bais Hamikdash they lit the Menorah by day if the candles had gone out (Rambam, Hilchos Temidim Umusafim 10:12). 3). Since in many Shuls the Menorah is extinguished at night before it has had a chance to burn for more than half an hour, we complement the night lighting with the morning to the point of it being lit for at least half an hour.

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