

וכל שמונת ימי חנוכה הנרות הללו קדש הם

ל"ג שרה שיינדל בת אריה משה

עֵפֶרֶת הַשָּׁבוע

A Weekly Torah Publication from the students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

פרשת מקץ
שבת חנוכה

Special Chanukah Edition

שבת מברכים טבת

כ"ח כסלו תשס"ה

December 11, 2004

Candle Lighting: 4:11

שמע Latest: 9:29

שחרית Latest: 10:16

הבדלה Earliest: 5:17

This week's edition of
ATERES H^ASHAVUA
is sponsored by
MR & MRS ALAN JAY GERBER
in memory of her mother's
second *yahrtzeit*
שבע שולה
בת משה דוד הלוי ע"ה
כ"ד כסלו

FACTS ON THE GROUND

by Rabbi Pinchas Chatzinoff
Mara d'asra of Tifereth Zvi Yeshiva Minyan in Cedarhurst, NY; author of *Imrei Fi al HaTorah*

The mitzvah of *Ner Chanukah* is unusual in that it requires that even a poor man struggle to acquire the funds necessary to perform the mitzvah. Many *Rishonim* and *Poskim* explain that this requirement expresses the unique primacy of publicizing the miracles of Chanukah ("*pirsum ha'nes*"). The *Avnei Nezer* adds that while normally our inability to perform a mitzvah due to circumstances beyond our control does not deprive us of the reward for that mitzvah ("*machshava tovah mitztaref lema'aseh*" - a good intention is viewed in Heaven as achieving fruition), such is not the case with *Ner Chanukah*. He views one's failure to kindle the Chanukah lights, irrespective of any justified reasons for that failure, as a loss of the potential merit of the mitzvah.

Why is it that the concept of "*machshava tovah mitztaref lema'aseh*" does not apply to the mitzvah of *Ner Chanukah*? One reason why this may be so may flow from an understanding of just what a miracle represents. A *nes* itself reflects Hashem's decision not to be bound by the laws of nature, but instead to override the natural order by which He normally governs Creation in order to

achieve His will. The "facts on the ground" present no obstacle to Hashem's performance of a supernatural miracle. The *Ribbono shel Olam*
(Continued on page 3)

This week's edition of
ATERES H^ASHAVUA
is sponsored by
Avraham & Leah Farber
in honor of the
birthday of their son
SHIMON

LIGHTS... ACTION!

Reuven Davies, 12th Grade

The wording of *Al Hanisim* has raised questions for years. A particular part is that of the explanation of restoring the *Beis HaMikdash*. It states that, "*Your children cleaned your temple and all its areas, and they lit lights in your courtyards*".

The basics of Chanukah are well known by all of us. We are celebrating the miracle of the oil which instead of lasting for only one day, lasted for eight. Following this comes the famous question asked by the *Beis Yosef* and others. The fact is, the miracle of the candles burning only applies to seven days - not eight! The *Yom Tov* of Chanukah should therefore only be for seven days!

To add to this question we have the writing of *Al Hanissim*. When we rekindled the menorah we lit it in the *Beis Hamikdash* didn't we? Why then do we say, "*and they lit lights in your holy courtyards*". Where do we ever see anybody lighting candles in the courtyard of the *Beis Hamikdash*!

My ancestor, the *Chasam Sofer* answers this famous predicament as follows. When the Jews overcame the Greeks; they came to the *Beis Hamikdash* and found it in ruins and torn apart. This was only the beginning however, - it was full of idols and other horrible images as well. To light the Menorah inside this domain was considered improper. Rather, we can infer, they removed the Menorah from the *Beis Hamikdash* and lit it up in the courtyards of The *Beis Hamikdash* and in the beginning paths of *Yerushalayim*. This in the end turns out to be good since the miracle obviously got more attention outside where everybody could see it.

This brings us to another amazing and profound point. The amount of oil needed to keep the flame of a candle nice and bright outside is a good
(Continued on page 5)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Facts on the Ground</i>	1
<i>Lights... Action!</i>	1
<i>In-Depth Focus on Greatness</i>	2
<i>Stories of Tzaddikim</i>	3
<i>Rav Kook on Chanukah</i>	5
<i>Minhagim of Chanukah</i>	6
<i>Gematria</i>	7
<i>Emes L'Yaakov</i>	8

This week's edition of
ATERES H^ASHAVUA
is sponsored by
the Somerstein family
ל"ג נ' ווילצא
בת ר' משה צבי ע"ה

IN-DEPTH FOCUS ON GREATNESS by Avi Lieberman

RABBI AVRAHAM YITZCHAK HAKOHEN KOOK ZT'L
16 ELUL 5625 / SEPTEMBER 7, 1865 – 3 ELUL 5695 / SEPTEMBER 1, 1935

- Avraham Yitzchak was born on Thursday, 3 Elul in the town of Greiva, Latvia to Reb Shlomo Zalman and Pera Zlata Kook. He was recognized as a true genius from early childhood.
- As a young bachur in yeshiva, he applied himself not only to gemara, but studied Tanach, Jewish Philosophy and Hebrew language as well.
- In 5645 (1884) he learned for a year and a half at the famed Volozhin yeshiva, which at that time was headed by Rav Naftali Tzvi Berlin - the "Netziv".
- In 5646 (1886) he became engaged to the daughter of the Aderes; Rav Eliyahu Dovid Rabinowitz-Te'omim.



Rav Kook in Switzerland

- After his engagement at the age of nineteen, Avraham Yitzchak arrived at the famed Volozhin Yeshiva, and by that time spoke Hebrew perfectly and used every opportunity to do so.

- Under the influence of his Rosh Yeshiva Rav Nosson Tzvi MiBerlin zt'l, also known as the "Netziv," Avraham Yitzchak grew in Torah and became engrossed in kabbalah, Jewish thought and devoted prayer.

- In 1888, Rav Kook served as the rav of Zimel for seven years, until he moved to Boisk, Lithuania, where he was the rav until 1904.

- During his time in Zimel, Rav Kook's first wife died. His father-in-law, the *Aderet*, convinced him to marry Raize-Rivka, daughter of the *Aderet's* twin brother.

- It was in Boisk that he published his first essay, encouraging Jews to move to Eretz Yisroel and build the land. From his younger years, his friends would attest that Rav Kook had a deep love for the Holy Land and dreamed of the day he would live there.

- In 1904, Rav Kook moved to Eretz Israel and became Rabbi of Jaffa and its surrounding agricultural communities.
- It was in Eretz Yisroel that Rav Kook spread his belief that every Jew has a portion in the Holy Land, and labeled this era the "*As'chalta De'Geula*" or the Beginning of Redemption.
- At all times Rav Kook desired to keep peace between the religious and irreligious segments of the community, while trying to preserve and teach that authentic Judaism cannot be abandoned without abandoning the very soul of the Jewish people.



Rav Kook in London



During his journey to America

- In the *shmitah* year of 1909, when controversy broke out as to whether the Jews should be allowed to work the land, Rav Kook published the *Shabbos Ha'Aretz* in which he discussed the *heter mechira*.

- In 1914 Rav Kook was invited to the Agudath Yisrael convention in Europe and went with the hope of convincing the leaders to take a more positive stance in regard to his projects in Eretz Yisroel.

- While in Europe, World War I began and Rav Kook could not get passage back to Israel. For more than a year he resided at the house of Avraham Kimche in Switzerland and spent most of his time writing.

- From 1915 to 1918 Rav Kook was appointed as temporary head of the "Machzeike Ha'Das" congregation in London.

- Rav Kook was present at the announcement of the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917, which was the first document recognizing the need for a Jewish homeland.

- In 5679 (1919), Rav Kook returned to *Eretz Yisrael*. In Teves of 5680, he accepted the position of Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim.
- Rav Kook used to wash his hands before eating fruits of Eretz Yisroel, because he so cherished the sanctity of the produce of the land.

(Continued on page 4)

does not *ch"v* desist in His grand and miraculous intervention by invoking the excuse that such Divine acts are in opposition to "the natural order". Perhaps in appreciation for Hashem's "no holds barred" approach to our salvation, we must publicize the miracle by not being stymied by our own circumstances, by our "facts on the ground." Thus, we are obligated to pursue this mitzvah publicizing the miracle with even more than the usual vigor.



Rabbi Pinchas Chatzinoff

Yosef HaTzaddik reflected this same determination. He did not simply interpret the Paroah's dreams of cows and grain, and relate his interpretation of the details of the devastating famine to come. As my *rebbe*, Rav Nuchim Kornmehl *zt"l* pointed out in his "*Tifereth Zvi al HaTorah*", Yosef had his own vision of how to override that expected devastation, and he struggled to save the world from what might have seemed to others as inevitable. The dreams notwithstanding, Yosef refused to be shackled by the "facts on the ground" of the foreseen calamity, but instead became a man of action, rescuing Mitzrayim from destruction.

We see the same alacrity and zealotry in mitzvos in Avraham Avinu. The *Shem MiShmuel* marvels at how Avraham Avinu went to the *Akeidah*, ostensibly to slaughter his beloved son, and took firewood up the mountain with him. Why didn't Avraham just wait until he arrived at the top of Har HaMoriah, and if there would be no wood, well, then there would be no *korban*! Avraham would then have been *patur*, and no sacrifice of Yitzchok would have been necessary! We see from Avraham's preparation of firewood that he was not looking for excuses, nor did he want to avail himself of exemptions. He wanted to fulfill Hashem's will, and he was prepared to bring about the reality – the "facts on the ground" – necessary to accomplish the *ratzon Hashem*.

May Hashem empower each of us with that unwavering drive, and may we pursue and achieve our *mitzvos* in the face of any obstacles. Our burning desire to accomplish our goals in *mitzvos* will illuminate our lives, and be its own *pirsum ha'nes* of the miracle of the flourishing of Torah in our day!

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

In Bergen Belsen, on Erev Chanukah, a selection took place. Early in the morning, three German commandants dressed in their festive black uniforms and - in visibly high spirits - entered the men's barracks. They ordered the men to stand at the foot of their wooden bunk beds.

The selection began. No passports were required, no papers were checked, and there was no roll call and no head count. One of the three commandants just lifted his index finger and pointed in the direction of a pale face, while his mouth pronounced the death sentence with one single word: "Come!"

Like a barrage of machine-gun fire came the German commands: "Komme, komme, komme, komme, komme." The men selected were marched outside. S.S. men with rubber truncheons and iron prods awaited them. They kicked, beat, and tortured the innocent victims. When the tortured body no longer responded, the revolver was used...

The random selection went on inside the barracks and the brutal massacre continued outside of the barracks until sundown. When the Nazi angels of death departed, they left behind heaps of hundreds of tortured and twisted bodies.

Then Chanukah came to Bergen Belsen. It was time to kindle the Chanukah lights. A jug of oil was not to be found, no candle was in sight, and a

menorah belonged to the distant past. Instead, a wooden clog, the shoe of one of the inmates, became a Chanukah; strings pulled from a concentration camp uniform - a wick; and the black camp shoe polish - pure oil.

Not far from the heaps of the bodies, the living skeletons assembled to participate in the kindling of Chanukah lights.

Reb Yisrael Spira, the Bluzhover Rebbe, lit the first light and recited the first two brochos in his pleasant voice, and the festive melody was filled with sorrow and pain. When he was about to recite the third brocho, he stopped, turned his head, and looked around as if he were searching for something.

But immediately, he turned his face back to the quivering small lights and in a strong, reassuring, comforting voice, chanted the third bracha "*Blessed are You, Hashem, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.*"

Among those present at the kindling of the lights was a Mr. Zamietchkowski, one of the leaders of the Warsaw Bund. He was a clever, sincere person with a passion for discussing matters of religion, faith and truth. Even here in camp at Bergen Belsen, his passion for discussion did not abate. He never missed an opportunity to engage in such a conversation.

(continued on page 6)

- When the institution of the Chief Rabbinate was set up in 1929, Rav Kook was elected to be the Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Eretz Yisroel, a post which he held until his passing.
- One of the most important contributions that Rav Kook made to the world of Torah, aside from his writings, was the setting up of a yeshiva in Yerushalayim devoted to higher learning, which has become known as 'Mercaz Ha'Rav' (Ha'Rav is a shortened phrase used to this day to refer to Rabbi Kook.)



- The main function of his yeshiva was to produce rabbonim and leaders for Jewish communities.

- Rav Kook authored over twenty different *sefarim*, ranging from halachah to Jewish ethics and philosophy.

- One of his most famed works was his Halachah Berurah; a commentary on gemara which presents the final halacha on every debate as formulated by

the Rambam and the Shulchan Aruch.

- Rav Kook was the source of much controversy, yet always stood up for what he believed in. He was beloved by all gedolim, and many tzaddikim when visiting Eretz Yisroel would go to speak in learning with him.
- Rav Kook always held gedolim in high esteem, and would put on his Shabbos clothing when meeting them. Some of his close friends were Rav Aryeh Levin *zt'l*, the great kabbalist Reb

Shlomo Elyashiv *zt'l*, Rav Yechezkel Abramasky as well as others.

- When Rav Kook lived in Zaumel, he once spent an entire month in the town of Shevel studying kabbalah with Reb Elyashiv. On one occasion years later, Reb Elyashiv commented, "No one is going to tell me who the rav is and what he's all about. What do you know about him? We spent entire nights together [learning Torah]."



- Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook passed away several days before his seventieth birthday on Sunday, the third day of Elul, 5695, after serving as Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim for sixteen years, and for many years as the Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Eretz Yisroel.

- After Rav Kook's death, his only son, Rav Tzvi Yehuda (1891-1982) took over as Rosh-Yeshiva of Mercaz Ha'Rav.

- It is due to Rav Tzvi Yehuda's credit that so many of his father's works have been published. He devoted time to compiling, editing and footnoting the compositions and letters of his father. Some of the most famous works are *Oros Hakodesh*, *Iggros Ha'Rayeh* and *Oros Ha'Teshuva*.

- As we benefit from the devotion and *gadlus* of Rav Kook to this very day, let his dream of the final redemption finally come into fruition.

◆ Rav Kook had extreme respect for his parents. One time during Soccas, Rav Kook held a reception for the British High Commissioner in his succah. In the course of the event, the rav's father walked in and out of the succah three times; and each time, the rav rose to his full height in honor of his father.

Another time, the rav was in the middle of speaking when his father entered the room and sat down. Overwhelmed by the reverence he had for his father, the rav just stood there silently for a few moments, unable to utter a word.

◆ When Rav Kook's mother passed away in 5691 (1931), he cried bitterly and inconsolably throughout *shiva*. One of the distinguished guests who came to visit him during this time tried to console him, saying, "Why do you cry so much? Your mother was privileged to a long life, and she even merited to see her son crowned with the title 'Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim'."

"I have received many titles of honor in my lifetime," replied Rav Kook, "but there is one that only my mother gave me."

"Which title did she bestow on you?" asked the distinguished man curiously. "She was the only one who called me, 'My Child'."

◆ A vocal group of Orthodoxy Jews vociferously opposed Rav Kook, and would often publicize posters along the city streets, attacking the Chief Rabbi and discrediting his authority.

One day Rav Kook returned from a *bris mila* in Yerushalayim's Old City, accompanied by dozens of students. Suddenly a small group of hot-headed extremists fell up the rabbi, showering him with waste water. The Chief Rabbi was completely drenched by the filthy water. Emotions soared, and tempers flared.

By the time Rav Kook had arrived home, news of the attack had spread throughout the city. Prominent citizens arrived to express their repugnance at the shameful incident. One of the visitors was

(continued on page 5)

REUVEN DAVIES (continued from page 1)

deal more than inside, since outside it is exposed to the elements. When the oil for the Menorah lighting had originally been measured and placed into bottles, it was done so under the premise that the candles would be lit inside the walls of the Beis Hamikdash, where its flames would not be subject to any bad weather. This means even the first night was a miracle, because the oil should not even have been sufficient for the night alone!

Now our answer is unfolded. The Chasam Sofer further tells us the meaning of the above section of the "Al Hanisim" tefilah: *"And they lit candles in your holy Courtyards"* - pay special

attention to the fact it says courtyard and not inside the Beis Hamikdash. It indeed was lit outside because of the temple's unclean state. They therefore established these eight days of Chanukah

To expand our horizons, one can say the miracle of Chanukah was much more than a bottle of oil lasting longer than it should, but was rather the victory of the Jewish people over the nations; or the Torah over secularism. The Greeks, as can be seen from their culture were much like the conquistadors to the Native Americans. They were open-minded, intelligent nations that only wanted to enlighten the Jewish nation with "the truth". This

(continued on page 7)

FOCUS ON GREATNESS (continued from page 4)

the legal counsel of British Mandate. He advised Rav Kook to press charges against the hooligans, and promised to ensure that they would be promptly deported from the country.

The legal counsel was astounded by Rav Kook response. *"I have no interest in court cases. Despite what they did to me, I love them. I am ready to kiss them, so great is my love! I burn with love for every Jew."*

Such was Rav Kook's attitude, shortly after the humiliating act.

Rav Kook would say:

"There is no such thing as 'Ahavas Chinam' - groundless love. Why groundless? He is a Jew, and I am obligated to respect him. There is only 'Sinat Chinam' - hate without reason. But 'Ahavas Chinam'? Never!"



Rav Kook on Chanukah



"When the Greeks entered the Beis HaMikdash, they defiled all of the oil. After the Chashmonayim overcame them, they searched and found but one cruse of oil, untouched and sealed with the seal of the Kohen Gadol. The cruse had only enough oil for one day, but a miracle occurred and they were able to light from it for eight days. The following year they established these days as a holiday for praise and thanksgiving." [Maseches Shabbos 21]

There are a few questions that can be asked on the Holiday of Chanukah. Firstly, Klal Yisroel has fought many battles in its long history, some accompanied by miracles (such as the falling walls at Yericho and the standing sun at Givon). Why was only the Chashmonayim victory established as a holiday to be celebrated for all generations?

Secondly, why celebrate a war in which the Beis HaMikdash was defiled and many Jews lost to a foreign culture? Furthermore, why is there no seudah on Chanukah - unlike other holidays - just 'praise and thanksgiving'? Finally, what is the inner significance of the sealed cruse of oil?

The military victories of the Greek empire lead to the spread of Greek culture and philosophy, whose external charm captured the hearts of many Jews. Central beliefs of the Torah and mitzvos were under attack from these new ideas. The danger was so great that there could have been permanent damage to the spiritual state of the Jewish people.

The salvation from this cultural conflict came in the form of a small cruse of oil. The sealed jar represents the innermost root of pure faith, strong and brave in the depth of the Jewish soul. This source of pure holiness protected the Jews in the conflict with Hellenism.

The Chachomim understood that it was fitting to establish a permanent holiday, for the battle against the overpowering Greek culture was not a one-time struggle of the Chashmonayim. The power of the inner oil, undefiled by foreign hands, is still needed to protect and guard the Torah from the challenges of outside ideologies.

The Chachomim also understood that this conflict with Hellenism, despite its disastrous short-term effects, would in the end bestow great benefits. This is an underlying rule of nature: those things which oppose us, and whose very existence appears to be evil, will in the end invigorate the sources of truth and good. Greek philosophy and science, after becoming subdued before the exquisite greatness of the Torah, will serve to further honor and strengthen the Torah and its ideas. Therefore these days are suitable to be established as holiday, despite the difficulties of the Chashmonayim period.

Yet the festival of Chanukah is celebrated without feasting and wine. There were two sides to Hellenism: the intellectual culture of Greek philosophy and knowledge; and the popular culture of physical pleasure and crass entertainment. One might make the mistake that the positive contribution of Hellenism is this delight in wine, parties, and naked wrestling matches. Therefore during Chanukah we celebrate via spiritual vehicles - lights and *Hallel*, praise and thanksgiving. For the true contribution of Hellenism is actually those same intellectual resources which posed such a grave challenge to the Torah in the times of the Chashmonayim. These resources constitute the aspect of Greek culture that in the future will serve as handmaidens for the Torah.

Minhagim of Chanukah

by Yoni Feder

•During Chanukah it is customary to distribute "Chanukah gelt" to the children.

This is because the Greeks wanted to tear the Torah away from Klal Yisroel. Accordingly, it is necessary during these days to intensify honor for the Torah by encouraging the children to study.

•It is customary to mark the four sides of the dreidel with the letters *nun, gimel, hey* and *shin*.

These four letters stand for **נס גדול היה שם**, a great miracle happened there. Also, the numerical value of these four letters is **משיח**.

•The *keriyas haTorah* for the days of Chanukah is comprised of the *parsha* that discusses the *Nesiyim* (princes).

The *parshas haNesiyim* discusses the *korbanos* that were brought during the original Chanukas HaBayis. Thus during Chanukah we had a new Chanukas HaBayis since the Greeks defiled the Beis HaMikdash.

•Not including the *shammash* candle, we light a total of thirty-six candles throughout Chanukah.

There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the candles represent the thirty-six hours that the original light of creation was around before Hashem "stored it away" for the *tzaddikim*. Secondly, the candles also represent the thirty six *masechtos* of Talmud Bavli.

•The siddur of the Arizal HaKadosh brings down to say "V'hi Noam" and "Yoshev Biseiser Elyon" seven times after lighting the Chanukah candles.

The reason brought for this is before the Chashmonayim went out to war, they recited these two chapters seven times, and were therefore victorious.

•It is forbidden to make use of the light from the Chanukah candles.

This is so it should be clear to everyone that they are for the *mitzvah* of publicizing the miracle of this

holiday.

•We don't make any mention of Chanukah (or Purim) in the *bracha me'en shalosh* (ex. *Al HaMichyah*).

This is because Chanukah (and Purim) is not mentioned in the Torah.

•There is nothing written about Chanukah in all of Mishnayos. This is because Rabbeinu HaKadosh who wrote Mishnayos was a descendant of Dovid HaMelech. The miracle of Chanukah was performed by the Chashmonayim who took over the kingship, even though they were not descendants of Dovid. Rabbeinu HaKadosh was very bothered by this, and therefore when he wrote Mishnayos through *ruach hakodesh*, left out the miracle of Chanukah.

•It is customary on Erev Shabbos to daven *mincha* before lighting the *menorah*.

The reason for this is because *tefillas mincha* corresponds to the daily afternoon *korban*, and the *neiros Chanukah* are a remembrance of the *menorah* in the Beis HaMikdash which used to be lit after the *korban tamid* of the afternoon.

•Women follow the *minhag* not to do any work while the *neiros* are still lit.

This is so it should be noticeable that it is forbidden to make use of the light from the *neiros Chanukah*. Furthermore, we are afraid that even if they are using a different source of light, that light might possibly get extinguished and they will end up using the light from the *menorah*. The reason that only the women are *machmir* on themselves in regards to this is because the ultimate salvation on Chanukah came out from the acts of a righteous woman.

•It is customary to elevate the *shammash* above the other lights of the *menorah*.

We do this to emphasize that this light is not one of the *neiros Chanukah*. Also, if one must use any

(continued on page 7)

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM (continued from page 3)

As soon as the Rebbe of Bluzhov had finished the ceremony of *hadlakos neiros*, Zamietchkowski elbowed his way to the rebbe and said, "Spira, you are a clever and honest person. I can understand your need to light Chanukah candles in these wretched times. I can even understand the historical note of the second brocha, 'Who did miracles for our fathers in days of old, at this season.' But the fact that you recited the third brocha is beyond me. How could you thank Hashem and say, 'Blessed are You, Hashem who has kept us alive, preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season'? How could you say it when hundreds of dead Jewish bodies are literally lying within the shadows of the Chanukah lights, when thousands of living Jewish skeletons are walking around in camp, and millions more are being massacred? For this you are thankful to Hashem? For this you praise the Lord? This you call 'keeping us alive'?"

"Zamietchkowski, you are a hundred percent right," answered the rebbe. "When I reached the third blessing, I also hesitated and asked myself, what should I do with this blessing? I turned my head in order to ask the Rebbe of Zener and other distinguished rabbonim who were standing near me, if indeed I might recite the blessing. But just as I was turning my head, I noticed that behind me, was standing, a large crowd of living Jews, their faces expressing faith, devotion, and concentration as they were listening to the brachos of the kindling of the Chanukah lights. I said to myself, if Hashem, has such a nation that at times like these, when during the lighting of the Chanukah lights they see in front of them the heaps of bodies of their beloved fathers, brothers, and sons, and death is looking from every corner, if despite all that, they stand in throngs and with devotion listening to the Chanukah blessing 'Who did miracles for our fathers in days of old, at this season'; if, indeed, I was blessed to see such a people with so much faith and fervor, then I am under a special obligation to recite the third bracha."

of the lights for some other purpose, he should use the *shammash*.

•Some use a wax candle for the *shammash*, although they use olive oil for the other lights.

A wax candle is less preferable than an oil lamp for fulfilling the *mitzvah*. By using a wax candle for the *shammash*, it creates a distinction between the *shammash* and the other lights.

•Some shuls omit "*Bameh Madlikir*" on Shabbos Chanukah. In the second paragraph of this recitation, Rabi Tarfon disqualifies all oils for lighting *neiros Shabbos* besides olive oil. However those oils are good for lighting *neiros Chnanukah*. Mentioning this requirement would diminish the honor of Chanukah.

•It is customary to place the *menorah* on the south wall of the shul.

This is in remembrance of the *menorah* in the Beis HaMikdash which stood on the south side.

•On Chanukah there is a custom to eat foods containing cheese [Ram"a].

This is to recall the salvation that the Jewish People wrought through Yehudis when she fed the enemy Haliphernes foods containing cheese. She thereafter gave him wine to quench his thirst, and he became intoxicated. Yehudis was then able to slay him, bringing deliverance to her people.

•It is customary during Chanukah to eat *latkes* and doughnuts that are either made with or fried in oil.

This custom is in remembrance of the miracles of Chanukah which was performed with oil.

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה לְכָל מִצְרַיִם לֵכוּ אֶל יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר לָכֶם תַּעֲשׂוּ (מא:נה)

by Tzadok Picker

"AND PAROAH TOLD ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF EGYPT, 'GO TO YOSEF, WHO WILL TELL YOU WHAT TO DO'."

This *pasuk* is referring to when Yosef was second in command in all of Mitzrayim, and was in charge of the storehouses of food. Yosef had achieved this high status through interpreting the dreams of Paroah. Through his interpretation of the dreams he learned that the years of plenty will be followed by years of famine. The Egyptians saved up their crops, because of the oncoming famine, but they all spoiled. Only those of *יוסף הצדיק* remained fresh.

The Baal HaTurim says that the words "לכם תעשו" in this *pasuk*, have the same *gematria* as "המילה תעשו", you should do a *bris mila*. Rashi says that Yosef, in the eyes of Paroah and the Egyptians, had the power to spoil crops, and leave his own fresh. Therefore, he must have had the power to kill as well. Being that Mitzrayim was at the mercy of Yosef, he could do whatever he wanted. Most in this situation would ask for riches and wealth. Yosef, on the other hand, only asked for one thing, that they get a *bris mila*. This is what Paroah said, "לכם תעשו", Yosef will tell you what to do, "המילה תעשו", you should do a *bris mila*!

REUVEN DAVIES (continued from page 5)

is a test we have to go through even today. The challenge for the Jews of then and the Jews of now was to understand that being solely and entirely devoted to secular things is worthless and does not enhance the Torah - but takes away from it. Indeed, the Yalkut Shimoni compares the Greek philosophy to darkness. We can possibly take out from this that this is why, as a result of the Jewish triumph over the Greeks, the Menorah was removed from its set position in the Beis HaMikdash and was lit "in the courtyards." Not only is the Torah's illumination self-sufficient and completely non-dependent on the man-made shelter and innovations of secular society and its knowledge; to the contrary - the Torah's light need not be limited to the Kodesh HaKadoshem; it illuminates even in "the streets," outside the so-called safety and man-made walls that guard it. This perhaps is why during Chanukah we find the concept of *Pirsumei Nissa* - of placing the Menorah in a prominent location and allowing its light to illuminate even outside the sheltered confines of the Jewish home. It is a symbol of defeating the enticements and challenges of the Greeks, thereby placing our Torah independently. Knowing clearly that secular philosophy is not needed for our Torah and can be crushed if it imposes itself, we place our menorahs outside so we can be reminded to keep ourselves able and ready to accept the challenge again.

Rav Eliyahu Hoffman brings a question on this point. It seems somewhat ironic that Chanukah, which should be dedicated to celebrating the victory of the purest form of Torah over the contaminating influences of culture and society, seems to have become the aspect of Judaism that, perhaps more than any other, has become intermingled and blended with secular culture. He points out that therein lies the test. He brings a wonderful story to illustrate his point. The Alter of Novardok once said, "Do you know why the Master of the Universe created trains? He did so in order to bring students to the Novardoker Yeshiva!" "But Rebbe," ask one student, "if so, why does the train run in both directions?" "That," said the Alter, "is the test!"

It should hardly surprise us that many have adopted a form of Chanukah which is the complete opposite of what Chanukah was meant to be and stand for. Where there is light, there is always a darkness to combat it. Just like with the Greeks, we now have our own enemies that try to conceal the light. Perhaps, as we approach Chanukah it is appropriate to wonder which "train" we are on and in which direction it is going. We must halt the party for just a moment and see what Chanukah truly is; a beacon of light in a dark world that is flaunted purposely for all to see.



אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

לא יסור שבט מיהודה [בראשית מט:י]

THE KINGSHIP SHALL NEVER DEPART FROM YEHUDAH

One of the *brachos* that Yaakov gave to Yehudah before he died was that the kingdom would always belong to *shevet Yehudah*. The Ramban on this *pasuk* comments that when Bnei Yisroel later accepted kings from other *shevatim*, and did not revert back to *malchus Beis David*, ignoring the command of Yaakov, they were punished. This was also the sin of the *Chashmonayim*. After defeating the *Yevanim*, they kept the kingship in their family, and did not return it to *shevet Yehudah*. Despite the fact that the *Chashmonayim* were immeasurable *tzaddikim*, and if not for them the Torah would have been forgotten from *Klal Yisroel*, they were punished, in that all of them eventually fell to their enemies.



Photograph by Hillel Engel

Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky *shlit"z* at this year's Agudah Convention. Next to him is Rav Aharon Shechter *shlit"z*, Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Chaim Berlin

HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l asks a question on this Ramban. If indeed it was improper for the *Chashmonayim* to take the *meluchah*, why didn't the Chachomim of that generation inform them that they must establish a king from the descendants of David? It is implausible that the Chachomim were not aware of this halachah; why then did they allow this to happen?

Rav Yaakov answers, that obviously the Chachomim were aware of Yaakov's instruction; however they felt that his words did not apply to the circumstances of the time. The second Beis Hamikdash was not built to last forever, but rather was built so that Klal Yisroel could prepare for the long *galus* that was to come. It was during this time that the *mishnah* was written and many *takanos* of Chazal were instituted, all to insure that *Bnei Yisroel* would be able to withstand the *galus*. In order that this important idea not be forgotten, the Chachomim kept several customs of *galus*. The language of the second Beis Hamikdash was Aramaic, the language of *galus*. Additionally, there was no *aron* in the *Kodesh HaKadashim*. Similarly, the Chachomim deemed it appropriate that there not be a king from *shevet Yehudah*, so that the people would not incorrectly presume that the final *geulah* had come. Seeing the *malchus* empty, the *Chashmonayim* took it for themselves. This was contrary to the will of Yaakov, and as such they were punished. However, the Chachomim could not protest, as they did not believe that a king from *Beis Dovid* was appropriate. May we be *zoche* to reach the pinnacle where our generation will merit our final ruler and be ultimately reunited at the Beis HaMikdash with its former glory fully restored.

The Chafetz Chaim was present when Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik; the Beis HaLevi, was invited to become the rav of Brisk. Although this offer was a very prestigious one, Rav Yosef Dov did not consent to their request. When the delegates returned to Brisk empty-handed, the city's leaders sent a second delegation, greater in stature and number than the first. The Beis HaLevi was about to refuse them again, when the head of the delegation suddenly spoke up: "Rebbi, you should know that there are 30,000 people in Brisk sitting and waiting for you! How can you disappoint them?"

As soon as Reb Yosef Dov heard this, he immediately assembled his family. He donned his finest Shabbos garments and gathered his belongings to make the trip to Brisk. He said, "If there are 30,000 Jews in Brisk waiting for me, I must go, even if it's against my will."

When the Chafetz Chaim would relate this story, he would say that if the Beis HaLevi donned his Shabbos garments and went immediately to Brisk because he could not disappoint the Jews who were waiting for him, how quickly would Mashiach come if he saw that all of Bnei Yisroel were truly awaiting his arrival!

This Chanukah, let our true emotions surface, and may our adherence to the Holiday of Lights brighten the exile and redeem us once and for all, speedily in our day. *Frellichin Chanukah!!*

M.A.Y.
of Greater L.I.
516 · 374 · 6465

AteresHaShavua@aol.com

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor In Chief

Avi Lieberman

Asst. Editor

Reuven Davies

Emes L'Yaakov

Ephraim Weiss

Contributing Editors

Yoni Feder

Dovid Gerber

Moshe Golombeck

Tzadok Picker

Yaakov Sonnenblick

Menahel

Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe

Faculty Advisor

Rabbi Shmuel Oratz

We would like to thank
Franklin Printing

for printing this week's
edition of the
Ateres HaShavua.

Steve Zuller
(718)-258-8588

To sponsor an
ATERES HASHAVUA
please contact us at
the Mesivta or
via e-mail

SPONSORED BY

Home & Stone

Brooklyn's premier emporium
for imported and domestic bath
& tile specialties since 1984.

1663 Coney Island Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11230
718.787.1000 www.homeandstone.com

BATH
TILES
HARDWARE
LIGHTING

8