



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ו כסלו תשפ"א – 12th December 2020 - Volume 13 - Issue 22

## News This Week

### מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Simcha and Channa Shadmi on the engagement of  
Abi to Benzy Levy

### Children's Channukah Party

This years Channukah party will be held over zoom. Look out for  
details in the Shabbos Channukah pack!

### Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrzeit this  
week:

Sun, 27th Kislev - Linda Ross for her Father

Tues, 29th Kislev - David Issler for his Father

Fri, 3rd Teves - Peter Nissen for his Father

## Chanukah – A Conduit for His Light

Rabbi Pinchas Winston (Torah.org)

So his brothers said to him, "Will you reign over us, or will you govern us?"  
And they continued further to hate him on account of his dreams and on  
account of his words.. (Bereishis 37:8)

IN LAST WEEK'S parsha, once Ya'akov overcame the angel of Eisav, there was  
a "chayn of 36 on the 25th." Rashi says it. Well, actually, he doesn't say it  
quite like that. Rather, Rashi quotes the verse from Hoshea, "He strove with  
an angel and prevailed over him; he wept—becha—and supplicated him—  
vayitchanayn lo" (Hoshea 12:5). But you could read "becha" as "b'Chof  
Heh—on the 25th, "vayitchanayn—there was a chayn," of "lo—of 36." An  
allusion to the 36 candles we would eventually light over the eight days of  
Chanukah, the holiday of chayn, which begins on the 25th day of Kislev?

Too far-fetched?

And even though Ya'akov did defeat the angel, it was at a cost. The angel was  
able to damage the back of Ya'akov's leg, his gid hanashe, which is forbidden  
to a Jew to this very day. So, unless you can find a butcher willing to remove  
it for you, you can forget about having a sirloin steak. They usually sell that part  
of the cow to a gentile.

So he did not leave the battle unscathed. He limped away. But then the verse  
says, "And the sun rose for him—vayizrach lo—when he passed Penuel..."  
(Bereishis 32:32). "What shone for him?" asked the Maharil. "Lo' shone for  
Ya'akov Avinu," the Maharil answered, that is, the 36 candles of Chanukah,  
and it healed him. That's why the Torah soon after says that Ya'akov arrived at  
Shechem "shalaim—complete."

Even more far-fetched?

So was the idea of electricity 50 years before its time. And air flight? They  
thought the Wright brothers were very wrong brothers. But we see now  
clearly that the problem had never been with the idea of electricity or air  
flight. It had been the people whose imaginations could not yet grasp the  
feasibility and inevitability of both, and so it was with many other amazing  
inventions over the course of thousands of years.

Likewise, if a person thinks that the holiday just happened to stumble into  
history 36 centuries from Creation, they've got the wrong idea. Since Creation  
Chanukah was a holiday waiting to happen. Does a person's soul come into  
being only when a baby is born? The soul was there long before the body  
it was born into, just waiting for a body of its own to be created so it could  
have a "vehicle" of its own to express itself.

It's as if Chanukah was traveling "underground" since Creation, and just finally  
came to the surface after the Chashmonaim rebelled against the decrees of  
the Greeks and miraculously defeated their much larger army. It's as if the soul

of Chanukah finally found a body to occupy and make itself known in the  
world as an independent being.

This makes sense too. The Ohr HaGanuz, the light G-d made on the first day  
of Creation and subsequently hidden, is the basis of the holiday of Chanukah.  
The Talmud Yerushalmi says that it shone for Adam HaRishon in Gan Aiden  
for 36 hours before being hidden. Somehow through the lighting of the 36  
candles of the menorah over the eight days of Chanukah, the learning of the  
36 tractates of the Babylonian Talmud, or by hanging around one of the 36  
righteous people who access this light daily, we too can access that light  
again.

Indeed, lighting the menorah may only be a rabbinical mitzvah, but it is  
one even G-d Himself fulfills. According to the Zohar, when we light our  
menorahs, G-d lights His, except that His doesn't exactly look like ours. Rather,  
G-d's "menorah" is a high level of supernal light that we do not usually access  
on our own, but which G-d causes to flow down to us during Chanukah,  
resulting in a tremendous influx of divrei Torah.

Why 36 centuries late? The truth is, we see that Torah was "accepted" in stages.  
We received both the Written and Oral Law at Mt. Sinai, but only willingly  
accepted the written portion. We had to be "coerced" into accepting the  
oral portion of Torah, and only willingly accepted it during the time of the  
Purim miracle. But after that, what else was there to accept of Torah?

Surprisingly, the answer to that question is in this week's parsha, or at least it  
begins to be answered. That answer will be finalized in the coming parshios,  
especially by the end of Sefer Bereishis. It has to do with the resolution of  
the conflict that occurs between Yosef and his brothers, which is clearly far  
more profound than just sibling rivalry, and which resurfaces again during the  
time of Chanukah.

Kabbalah explains that the brothers corresponded to Torah Sh'b'ksav, the  
Written Law, and that Yosef corresponded to Torah Sh'b'al Peh, the Oral Law.  
One would think that two portions of Torah should complement one another,  
not fight each other. But if they truly complemented each other, then why  
would the Hellenists accept the Written Law and not the Oral Law as well,  
and everyone else who has done the same until this day?

That's easy. Though the Torah mentions all 613 mitzvos, it does not detail  
them, especially the mitzvah of Shabbos. There are 39 creative activities  
forbidden on Shabbos, and a myriad of details to go with them. That's part  
of the Oral Law, not the Written Law, making Shabbos far more restricting

## Davening Times

### פרשת וישב

פרשת וישב	מברכין טבת, שבת חנוכה
Zman Shabbos & Lighting	3.34pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	3.39pm
Shacharis - Hashkomo	7.40am
2nd Shacharis	9.30am
סוף זמן ק"ש	10.01am
1st Mincha	1.30pm
2nd Mincha	3.38pm
Motzei Shabbos	4.48pm
Ovos uBonim	6.03pm
Sun	7.10am / 8.10am / 9.30am
Mon / Tues / Thurs / Fri	6.40am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Wed Rosh Chodesh	6.40am / 7.00am / 8.00am
Mincha	1.15pm
Mincha & Maariv	3.35pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

than people interested in being part of the gentile world want to accept. The Written Torah only alludes to many mitzvos. The Oral Law details them exactly.

Furthermore, the Written Law is exactly that, written. It is hard to deny its tradition when so many earlier versions exist and say the same thing. But the Oral Law is a tradition passed down from generation to generation, its veracity based upon the accuracy of the people transmitting and interpreting it. What if they erred?

That's an important question, a vital one in the time of the Chashmonaim. At the time of Purim, prophets still were around. At the time of Chanukah, the Roman exile was only beginning, and it would last a long time, spread the Jewish people out like never before, and impose incredible hardships on the nation, especially as Christianity and Islam began to take control over the world. How could Torah survive in such a spiritual void?

Only with the help of G-d. It wasn't important that everyone had such direct Divine intervention in their lives, but it was important that the Torah leaders did. Without Ruach HaKodesh, Divine Inspiration, the Oral Law, and then the Written Law, would not stand the test of time. They are eternal and would always continue, but the people who learned them would become less and less, until none existed at all.

Furthermore, if the people stopped believing that their leaders had such help from Heaven, then they would stop believing in them and the Torah they passed down to the next generation. That too would spell spiritual and then physical doom for the Jewish people because, as the Talmud states, the world depends upon the Jewish people's acceptance of and living by Torah. And with prophecy long gone and redemption seemingly far off, that would have become the inevitable end of the Jewish nation.

So what did G-d do? With Yosef and his brothers, He created a scenario that seemed as if G-d was not involved in history, allowing Yosef's brothers to sell him and create family pandemonium. In the time of Mattisyahu Kohen Gadol, it was the Greeks who were able to seemingly act with impunity, giving the impression that G-d had abandoned His people.

Then came the revelation: "I am Yosef!" and the brothers reeled from having so badly misread the situation for 22 years. They had assumed that G-d had left history in their hands, and they made decisions that they thought move it in the direction they saw fit. Instead, they saw Yosef and the fulfillment of his dreams, and realized that G-d had been there all along, using them as pawns to move history as He saw fit.

When the Chashmonaim defeated the Greeks against all odds, this was tantamount to Yosef's revelation. It was G-d saying to the nation: Even in this time of intense hester panim when it looks as if I am nowhere to be found, I am as close as ever, guiding and supporting your leaders so that they in turn can protect and guide you. As long as you know this, Torah will survive even in the darkest parts of exile.

Not only this, as the Pri Tzaddik explains, it is the Oral Law that fosters and feeds a close relationship with G-d. It is not only the key to properly understanding the Written Law, but it is how we allow G-d to emanate His light into the world through us. It is the Oral Law that turns us into a conduit for the Ohr HaGanuz, which is the basis of the Oral Law, as the Midrash Tanchuma explains.

G-d Himself gave the Written Torah at Mt. Sinai, so there was no disputing its authenticity. The prophets proved themselves to have a direct connection with G-d during Purim time, and that gave the Oral Law the same status as the Written Law in the eyes of the people who lived at that time. But it was the clear hand of G-d in the military victory, and then the miracle of the oil, at a time when there was no prophecy that showed that G-d is with the transmitters of the Oral Law even during non-prophetic era.

From that point on, it has been a matter of each individual Jew making a point of learning this for him- or herself. The tools we need to stay linked to both the Written and Oral Laws at this time are there, put in place back at the time of the first Chanukah. Every year we light the menorah we are being reminded of this, and inspired to enhance our relationship to both parts of Torah, and G-d as a result.

As the Zohar says, G-d and His Torah are really one. So, when we unify both parts of Torah and make them one, we contribute to the oneness of G-d's Name as well. That is the entire purpose of the Jewish people as a nation, and especially during the darkness of exile. This is what we are supposed to be thinking about when we light our menorahs and access the Hidden Light of Creation.

### Notice the Small Things!

Shlomo Katz (Torah.org)

"Reuven heard, and he rescued him [Yosef] from their hand; he said, 'Let us not strike him mortally!'" (37:21)

Midrash Ruth Rabbah teaches: When one does a Mitzvah, he should do it whole-heartedly. If Reuven had known that the Torah would write, "He rescued him from their hand," he would have put Yosef on his shoulders and carried him to his father. [Until here from the Midrash]

R' Yoel Sirkes z"l (Poland; 1561-1640; known as the "Bach") writes: This is difficult to comprehend! Is it conceivable that a holy Tzaddik such as Reuven would have been motivated by honor?

He explains: The Midrash feels that, at first glance, the words, "He rescued him from their hand," are superfluous. The Torah just as well could have said: "Reuven heard, and he said, 'Let us not strike him mortally!'" The "superfluous" words "He rescued him from their hand" teach that Reuven did not, in fact, intend to do any Mitzvah by saving Yosef. Rather, Reuven reasoned: "I am the firstborn, and I will bear the brunt of the blame if Yosef is harmed." Therefore, Reuven rescued Yosef. But, says that Midrash, G-d can read man's innermost thoughts, and He knows that, had Reuven realized he was performing a great Mitzvah, he would have done it with great enthusiasm and attention to detail. He even would have carried Yosef on his shoulders back to Yaakov—not for honor, but because that is the proper way to perform a Mitzvah. (Meishiv Nefesh: Ruth 2:14)

R' Mordechai Rokeach z"l (1902-1949; rabbi of Bilgoraj, Poland; father of the current Belzer Rebbe), citing his ancestor R' Shulim Rokeach z"l (1781-1855; first Belzer Rebbe), explains the above Midrash as follows:

When one does a good deed that is not expressly required by the Torah, he should do so as discretely as possible. That will help him avoid haughtiness and focus on doing the deed purely for the sake of Heaven. This is what the first part of the Midrash means when it says: "When one does a Mitzvah, he should do it whole-heartedly," i.e., with a pure, undistracted heart.

On the other hand, when one does a Mitzvah that is written expressly in the Torah, there is no need to keep it private. Since everyone is obligated to do that same thing, doing it publicly will not be a cause for haughtiness. [One does not usually hear someone brag that he put on Tzitzit or Tefilin, for example.] Thus, if Reuven had known that the Torah would write, "He rescued him from their hand," as if it is an explicit Mitzvah to do so, he would have performed that good deed more publicly, even putting Yosef on his shoulders and carrying him to his father. (Parashat Mordechai)

Chanukah  
on our 22nd Anniversary

Lookout for the Zoom Chanuka party details for Sunday in your Kiddush Box