



DVAR TORAH VAYEISHEV



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Ruchnius: Our Identity

The parsha records Yosef's two dreams that he related to his brothers. In the first dream Yosef was with his brothers binding sheaves in the field when suddenly Yosef's sheaf rose and stood upright. The brothers' sheaves then gathered around and bowed to Yosef's sheaf. The brothers responded "Are you going to rule over us? Are you going to dominate us?" The Torah tells us that they hated him even more because of this dream.

Yosef then related a second dream. The sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to him. After this dream the Torah says that the brothers were jealous of him.

The Beis Halevi asks why was the reaction to the first dream one of hatred but the reaction to the second dream of jealousy? He explains that the first dream, which took place in the field with bundles of grain, represented parnasah. It hinted that the brothers would one day need Yosef's help to sustain themselves. The second dream, which involved the sun and the moon, represented ruchnius, which is beyond the physical world. It revealed that Yosef would reach a higher spiritual level than the rest of his brothers.

Based on this the Beis Halevi explains the different reactions. Financial status does not define who a person is. That is why in the first dream the Torah does not say that they bowed to Yosef himself. They bowed only to his sheaf. The sheaf is not him. For this reason the Torah describes hatred rather than jealousy. The holy Shevatim would not be jealous of physical possessions, which do not elevate a person. But they realized that they would one day depend on him for parnasah, and this caused animosity.

Ruchnius, however, does define who a person is. When someone pursues ruchnius it changes that person completely. In the second dream the sun, the moon, and the stars bowed to Yosef. This reflected Yosef's spiritual greatness, the level that would later earn him the title Yosef HaTzadik. This aroused jealousy, as the Shevatim were jealous of the spiritual greatness that Yosef was destined to reach.

The upcoming holiday of Chanukah carries the same message. The Greeks promoted a life built on physical values and tried to draw the Jewish people into that worldview. Klal Yisrael resisted by holding onto Torah and mitzvos. Chanukah reminds us that what defines us is our inner world of ruchnius and not the physical culture around us.

May we all merit to strengthen that sense of identity as we enter the days of Chanukah and to focus on the parts of life that reflect who we truly are.

HALACHA CORNER

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PRACTICAL HILCHOS CHANUKAH



1) Neiros Chanukah-

Where:

In Chutz La'aretz we light inside our homes by a window facing the street.¹

What:

Using olive oil is preferable. If not available, any wick and oil or candle that can last a half hour is acceptable.² Electric lights do not commemorate the miracle and no bracha is recited.³

When:

The Shulchan Aruch rules that the ideal time begins at tzeis hakoachavim⁴ (Some say this is the same time as one finishes Shabbos, while others say it is 13 halachic minutes after shkiyah which ranges from 10-15 minutes). The Mishnah Berurah⁵ cites the Rambam who argues that the ideal time begins at shkiyah. Some poskim⁶ advise lighting between 20-30 after shkiyah to satisfy both views, as the candles will burn during a time acceptable according to all.

If one is pressed for time, one may light after plag hamincha.⁷

Who:

Ashkenazim: every male lights one candle per night.⁸

Sephardim: the head of the house lights one candle per night.⁹

Single women who live alone are obligated to light.¹⁰

How:

On the first night we recite 3 brachos: Lehadlik ner shel Chanukah, She'asah nisim, and Shehechiyanu. On the remaining nights, we recite only the first two.¹¹

All brachos are recited before lighting. If one forgot a bracha and is still lighting, one may still recite all the brachos. If one finishes lighting all candles, only the last two brachos may be recited.¹²

After lighting, we recite Haneiros Halalu.¹³

2) Al HaNisim-

We insert it in Shemona Esrei and Birchas HaMazon. If one forgot and has not yet said Hashem's Name in the bracha, one may insert it. If one already said Hashem's Name, then in bentching it is said in the Harachamon, and in tefillah it is said in Elokei Netzor before Yihyu Leratzon: "Harachamon Hu ya'aseh lanu nisim veniflaos keshem she'asisa la'avoseinu bayamim haheim bazman hazeh, bimei Matisyahu..."¹⁴

3) Hallel-

We recite the complete Hallel all eight days with a bracha.¹⁵ Most poskim hold that women are exempt.¹⁶

4) Krias HaTorah-

We read the Parshas HaNesi'im.¹⁷ Sephardim begin with Birchas Kohanim.

5) Fasting and Eulogies

Fasting and eulogies are forbidden.¹⁸

6) Melacha

Women have a minhag not to do heavy work such as sewing, knitting, and laundry while the candles are lit.¹⁹ Most poskim²⁰ permit light work such as cooking and baking. This commemorates the special role women played in the miracle, which came about through Yehudis.

7) Seudah

Making a seudah is optional. If one sings and says divrei Torah, it becomes a seudas mitzvah.²¹

8) Traditional Foods

We eat dairy²² and fried foods to commemorate the miracles of the Menorah and Yehudis.

1. Rema O.C 671:7
2. S.A and Rema O.C 673:1
3. Meorei Eish 85:2
4. S.A O.C 672:1
5. 672:1
6. Chut Shani Chanukah 318 citing Chazon Ish
7. S.A O.C 672:1
8. Rema O.C 671:2
9. S.A O.C 671:2
10. S.A O.C 675:3
11. S.A O.C 676:1-2
12. M.B 676:4
13. S.A O.C 676:4
14. S.A and Rema O.C 682:1 and M.B 682:4
15. S.A O.C 683:1
16. Halichos Shlomo Chanukah 17:6 and Kovetz Teshuvos 3:105
17. S.A O.C 684:1
18. S.A O.C 670:1
19. S.A O.C 670:1
20. Rav Shmuel Wosner, Rav Chaim Kanievsky and Rav Nissim Karelitz
21. S.A and Rema O.C 670:2
22. Rema O.C 670:2