בית יעקב דגור
ברוקלין ניו יורק

אורות הפרשה

Inspirational Lessons from the
Teachings of our Rebbes

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A publication of
Bais Yaakov
D'Chassidei Gur
Brooklyn,
. N.Y

פרשת וישלח תשפ"ז

Issue
300

לעילוי נשמת
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קליין
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נלב"ע בשם טוב כ"ג כסליו תשע"ג לפ"ק
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(ירושלים)

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זמנים לשבת קודש

	Lakewood	Monsey	Staten Isl.	Brooklyn
הדלקת נרות	4:15	4:12	4:13	4:12
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הדלקת נרות	4:00	4:21	4:22	3:42	3:42
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The Power to Daven

It was a few months after the horrors of Simchas Torah תשפ"ד, October 7, 2023.

The Israeli Army was fighting against the terrorists, trying to locate and save the hostages and attempting to dismantle the underground network of tunnels in Gaza.

And then it happened.

It was towards the end of the day, and shekiah was rapidly approaching.

IDF soldier Malkiel Ben Yosef, who was with his platoon in the central Gaza town of El-Bureij, realized that he hadn't yet davened Mincha. It was his last opportunity to daven; if he waited, he would miss davening Mincha altogether.

His platoon had halted, so he took the opportunity. As he recalls, "I stood to daven, facing Yerushalayim, and while I was davening, I saw movement in an open field nearby where engineering vehicles had just passed. About 10 to 15 yards away, I saw something metal moving as it emerged from the ground.

"At first, I didn't understand what the movement was. I thought it might be an animal or something. After a second, I realized someone was coming out of the ground with an RPG [rocket-propelled grenade]..."

There is a fascinating *Medrash* on this week's *parshah* (בראשית רבה עו, א) wherein Rabi Pinchos said in the name of Rabi Reuven, "There were two people to whom Hashem made a promise and yet, despite His promise, they remained afraid. These

two people were: the chosen one of the *Avos*, Yaakov Avinu, and the chosen one of the *Neviim*, Moshe Rabbeinu."

The *Medrash* explains that in last week's *parshah*, Hashem promised Yaakov, "וְהִנֵּה אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ – Behold, I am with you" (בראשית כח, טו). Later, in this week's *parshah*, we find that Yaakov was very scared: "וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד – Yaakov became very frightened." What did he do? The Torah continues by telling us that Yaakov davened to Hashem: "וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֱלֹקֵי אָבִי אַבְרָהָם וֵאלֹקֵי אָבִי יִצְחָק... הַצִּילֵנִי נָא – Yaakov said, 'the G-d of my father Avrohom and the G-d of my father Yitzchok... please rescue me" (בראשית לב, ח - יב).

Yes, despite the fact that Hashem had promised Yaakov, "I am with you," Yaakov became afraid and begged Hashem to save him from Eisav.

What really happened here?

The Sefas Emes (תרמ"ד) writes that he heard his *zeide*, the Chiddushei Harim, speak with tremendous wonder and amazement about Yaakov Avinu. He said that, in truth, Yaakov Avinu believed in Hashem's promise with complete *emunah*. However, he understood that despite Hashem's promise to watch over him, according to *teva*, he was still in great *sakanah*. Therefore, Yaakov Avinu felt that it was important for him to daven.

In this way, Yaakov Avinu teaches us that whenever a Yid is in an *eis tzara* – a terribly difficult or dangerous situation – he is *obligated* to daven. Hashem *wants* him to daven! He is supposed to daven even if he *knows* with absolute certainty that he will be saved.

Hashem wants us to do our part. When we are in a difficult situation, Hashem waits for our *tefillos*. Yaakov understood this, and even though he never doubted that Hashem would help him, he still davened with tremendous *kavanah*, as if his life depended on it.

The Rebbe *shlita* (תש"פ) takes this idea one step further, saying that it is indeed the right thing to daven even if you know Hashem will help you. Furthermore, the Rebbe tells us we learn from here that Yaakov Avinu wanted Hashem to save him from Eisav *davka* as an answer to his *tefillos*, rather than because of the original promise Hashem gave him.

Why?

We all know the *Chazal* that says, "מַעֲשֶׂה אָבוֹת סִימָן לְבָנִים – Whatever happened to the *Avos* is a *siman* that the same will transpire for their future generations." The *Avos* were preparing the way for us.

The Rebbe teaches us that this is why Yaakov Avinu specifically wanted Hashem to save him from Eisav in answer to his *tefillos*, so that it should act as "מַעֲשֶׂה אָבוֹת סִימָן לְבָנִים" and stand for us throughout the generations.

In truth, the very fact that Yaakov Avinu was the one who instituted the *tefillah* of *Maariv* teaches us this lesson as well. Why? What is so unique about *Maariv*? *Maariv* is unique because it is the *tefillah* said at night, when the world is dark and seems black and scary.

Yaakov Avinu was looking to give the Yidden – **all** the Yidden of **all** future generations (yes, even us!) – the means to daven and the ability to accomplish great things with our *tefillos*. He wanted to ensure that Hashem would listen to our *tefillos* and neutralize any difficult *gezeiros* in the *zechus* of our *tefillos*!

This is why he instituted *Maariv*.

Yaakov Avinu knew that very difficult, dark, and bleak times would come for his children during the long *galus* of Eisav – Edom. He knew that we would suffer, and suffer terribly.

What did he do? He wanted to empower us *Yiddelach* to tap into the *inyan* of *tefillah* and pave the way for us to be able to daven to Hashem, beg Him, and invoke His *rachamim*, no matter where we are.

"At that second, I shouted for everyone to pay attention because the guys there weren't far from me, and I started shooting at him. I realized he was a terrorist who was heading towards the rest of the force. I later realized that he didn't know I was there on the side. As soon as I shouted, he turned towards me with the RPG, and my friends and I managed to take him down before he could fire," Ben Yosef said.

Yes! Malkiel Ben Yosef and his entire platoon of soldiers were saved because he stopped to daven Mincha. The power of tefillah! The power the Avos instilled into their children to turn to Hashem when in a sakanah, davening and being answered!

That is why, the Rebbe concludes, Yaakov Avinu davened Maariv; he *davka* preferred not to rely on Hashem's promise to him, even though he believed *b'emunah sheleimah* that the promise would be fulfilled. Yaakov wanted to help **us**! He wanted to imbue within his children and all future descendants the *koach* to daven

to Hashem in an *eis tzarah* in a way that Hashem would listen to their *tefillos* and grant their *bakashos*.

Yaakov specifically did this before meeting with Eisav because he understood that *galus* Edom – the *galus* under Eisav – would be very long and bitter, and he wanted to prepare us, his children. He wanted to empower us not only to be capable of withstanding the *galus* but, even more, to be able to daven in a way that would cause Hashem to send His *yeshuah* through our *tefillos*.

May it be very soon. ▪

Hashem Wants Our Action

R' Nachman,* a very poor Yid, lived in the Beis Yisroel section of Yerushalayim. Before Yom Tov, one of the *chessed* organizations would drop off a few boxes at his home filled with basic necessities for the Yom Tov; some chicken, fish, soup, and a few salads. It usually wasn't enough for all the days of Yom Tov, but it was generous. Every last bit of food in those boxes was necessary and utilized.

And then it happened.

It was only a half hour before Yom Tov.

Suddenly, the typical hustle and bustle was interrupted by an unusual knock at the door.

Opening the door, R' Nachman saw a very poor man standing there, his eyes cast downward.

Too embarrassed to even look R' Nachman in the face, the Yid whispered, "Perhaps you can help me and give me a bit of food *l'kavod* Yom Tov? Maybe a slice of fish? A piece of *schnitzel*? My house is empty, and Yom Tov is almost here."

The desperation in his voice was clear; in all truth, it is a rare occurrence for someone to knock on a door so close to the start of Yom Tov to beg.

R' Nachman wanted to help. He wanted to help so badly, but what could he do? He himself did not have enough for Yom Tov!

With great pain he replied, "I really want to help you, but I simply don't have anything extra to give. I don't even have enough for my own family, and whatever I have, I also received from *tzedakah*."

But his words fell on deaf ears.

The poor man just stood there; he wasn't going to take "no" for an answer.

Not knowing what else to do, R' Nachman decided, "You know what? I will try to find something for him."

Instructing the man to wait, he turned and went back inside his house to check the refrigerator.

Perhaps he could find *something*....

He opened the fridge and... what he found inside was so shocking that he jumped.

His little one-year-old son, Mechel,* was... in... the... fridge. His face was already blue.

R' Nachman grabbed him from the fridge and tried calling his name, but there was no response.

Mechel had lost consciousness.

With shaking fingers, R' Nachman quickly dialed Hatzalah. They arrived immediately and began giving Mechel warm IV fluids. Slowly but surely, they brought him back to life.

The paramedic told R' Nachman that if Mechel had been in the fridge for another five minutes, he would have suffered irreversible brain damage.

Hashem could have saved Mechel in a thousand different ways; He can do anything. But Hashem wanted Nachman to do something on his part that would earn him a *zechus* – something that would enable the *yeshuah* to take place. When Nachman took that action, he enabled the *yeshuah* to happen.

Similarly, Hashem wants us to daven to Him because, through our davening, we are able to bring down the *yeshuah*. He wants action from us!

(*Ki Ata Imadi*) ▪

"Ummmm..."

"Huuuuh??"

"What should we do?" a shocked Miri whispered to Etty.

Etty gulped. "We had better say something. After all, this is getting freaky, isn't it?"

The room was cloaked in heavy silence as clusters of girls looked wide-eyed at each miniature scene. Everyone had been so perfectly and magnificently crafted, yet was marred by imperfections and deformities.

"Look!" Yehudis clasped her hand over her mouth as her face slowly drained of color. "This," her shaking finger pointed to a miniature girl who had one arm dangling, almost completely disconnected at the shoulder, and a head that was sliced down the middle, "is awful!!"

Cries of "Ewww!" and "Disgusting!" came from all corners of the room, while other girls kept covering their eyes with their hands...

A few minutes later, Miri dashed off to the bathroom, where she threw up after seeing a miniature person who was terribly deformed and missing his eyeballs.

A very, very pale Etty finally approached Mrs. Weill. "Um," she began, choking down her nausea, "can we leave earlier than planned? I... I don't really think anyone can handle much more. And we are not making sense out of what we are seeing."

"Was that a slight smile on Mrs. Weill's face?" Etty wondered as she waited for a reply.

"Oh!" Mrs. Weill said. "I guess I'll ask everyone and see what they have to say."

"Girls!" Mrs. Weill's loud voice rang through the room. "Is everyone ready to head back to school?"

The sounds of relief heard throughout the room were answer enough.

"Okay, everyone head to the exit with your partners. And don't forget to say thank you to the people in charge."

It was a conversation between the Chiddushei Harim and his close friend and *talmid*, the Rebbe Rav Henoch of Alexander, a conversation that became very famous. It took place during the weeks when we *lein* the *parshiyos* in Bamidbar about the *Meraglim*, Korach, the *Mei Meriva*, and so on.

The Rebbe Rav Henoch of Alexander bemoaned the *aveiros* of the *dor hamidbar*. Upon hearing this, the Chiddushei Harim exclaimed, "We have no idea of the greatness of that generation! We cannot even begin to imagine their greatness! True, the Torah tells us about their *aveiros*. But look – their *aveiros* became Torah! What becomes of our ***mitzvos***?!"

At the beginning of this week's *parshah*, the Torah tells us, "וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים לְפָנָיו אֶל עֵשָׂו אָחִיו – Yaakov sent *malachim* ahead of him to Eisav, his brother" (בראשית לב,ד). Rashi explains that these *malachim* were "מַלְאָכִים מַמָּשׁ – real *malachim*."

The Imrei Emes explains this Rashi by asking a question – not about the Rashi itself, but about a *tefillah* we say on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

We all know that one of the highlights of the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur *davening* is the *piyut* of *U'nesaneh Tokef*. It is a *piyut* that sends a chill up our spines. It describes the *din* on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, how Hashem sits on the throne of *din*, and how each and every *neshamah* passes by His throne like sheep passing before their shepherd as Hashem decides their fate. One of the interesting things of this *piyut* is that it tells us that it isn't only humans who are *tzittering* – shaking in fear and awe. The *piyut* says, "וּמַלְאָכִים יֵחָפֵזוּן וְחִיל וּרְעָדָה יֹאחֵזוּן וְיֹאמְרוּ הִנֵּה יוֹם הַדִּין – The *malachim* panic; terror and trembling seize them, and they say, 'Indeed, it is the Day of Judgment.'"

The Imrei Emes (and others) asks: "Why are the *malachim* scared of the *Yom Hadin*? Why are they *tzittering*? Have they done *aveiros*? Of course not! The *malachim* flawlessly perform the *ratzon* of Hashem at every moment. Why are they afraid?"

The Imrei Emes answers that the *malachim* described in *U'nesaneh Tokef* – the *malachim* that are *tzittering* – are not the same *malachim* we refer to when we say that *malachim* serve Hashem with awe and complete *bittul*. They are not *malachim* such as מִיכָאֵל, גַבְרִיאֵל, or אוּרִיאֵל.

The *sefarim* teach us that whenever a Yid performs a

mitzvah, he creates a *malach* through that *mitzvah*. What happens, however, if the Yid did not perform the *mitzvah* with *sheleimus*? Perhaps he had ulterior motives, he wasn't focused, he said a *bracha* without concentration, or he davened while his mind traveled to faraway Timbuktu. What happens to the *malach* created by such a *mitzvah*? The *malach* that is created is a *baal mum* – a *malach* with a blemish. The *malach* may be missing a hand, a leg, a brain, a heart, or any other part, depending on where the *mitzvah* was lacking.

Indeed, whenever a Yid performs a *mitzvah*, a *malach* is created. The question is: what is the quality of that *malach*?

The Imrei Emes explains that it is these specific *malachim* that are *tzittering* in fear. Why? Because on Rosh Hashanah, Hashem judges a Yid's actions, including the quality of his *mitzvos*. The *mitzvos* that were not done *b'shleimus* created these handicapped, "special" *malachim*. They *tzitter* on Rosh Hashanah because they will serve as testimony to the person's *maasim*.

Now, let us pedal back to Yaakov Avinu. Every action of Yaakov Avinu was done purely *l'shem Shomayim*. Therefore, all of his *mitzvos* created "מַלְאָכִים מַמָּשׁ" – genuine and complete *malachim*, not half-created *malachim* missing a foot, an arm, eyes, or ears.

Yaakov Avinu sent those pure, whole, and powerful *malachim*, which were without any *mum* whatsoever, to combat and neutralize the power of Eisav.

The sixth-grade class filed quietly into their classroom. They were still a bit shell-shocked from their trip and wondered, "What type of trip was that, anyway?!"

But no one had the chutzpah to question Mrs. Weill.

When everyone was seated, Mrs. Weill addressed them. "Girls, before we discuss our mysterious trip, I would like to share a story with you about the Belzer Rebbe, Rav Aharon, from when he was a young child.

"The young Aharele had received a watch as a gift. A short time later, Reb Berel, a Belzer chassid, noticed a Yid approaching young Aharele and asking him, 'Can you please tell me the time?'*

"'Of course,' the child answered. 'It is 1:18 and thirty-six seconds.'

"Later, R' Berel went over and asked, 'Aharele, why did you tell him how many seconds had passed?! Were you trying to show off that you know how to tell time?!'

"'I took it upon myself,' the young boy replied, 'that any time an opportunity to do a tovah for another Yid comes my way, I will do it b'shleimus – without missing even the smallest detail.'"

"Now, girls," Mrs. Weill called out, "before I continue, I want to explain one thing: every mitzvah that a person does creates a malach. However, there are various types of malachim. The malach created by young Aharele's chessed – of telling the time to the last second – was a complete malach, a magnificently formed malach with every limb intact. Girls," her voice rose as she gazed out at her students, "do you want to know what type of malach is created when a mitzvah is incomplete?! When we complain about davening? When, instead of thinking about the beautiful brachos we say to thank Hashem for all the blessings He has given us, we simply mumble the words?!"

Pausing, she looked around and saw that their eyes had lit up in understanding. "Yes, girls. A bracha said without thought might create a malach without eyeballs. Preparing chessed packages while making fun of the people who will be receiving them might create malachim with half a head or a dangling arm."

Let's think for a minute about how we do our *mitzvos*. When we do *mitzvos*, do we really do them with all our hearts and souls? Or are we thinking about summer vacation in the middle of davening? If so, the *malachim* created by our davening will also be "on vacation" and not strong enough to help us when we need them!

We should try to learn from Yaakov Avinu to focus when we do *mitzvos*, strive to do so without our minds wandering all over the place.

Hashem wants us to create "מַלְאָכִים מַמָּשׁ," or the closest possible thing to pure, complete *malachim*, through our *mitzvos*.

Imagine the types of *malachim* we can create – *malachim* that don't have to *tzitter* in fear, and *malachim* that will be able to stand us in good stead and defend us when we need them!

(*Likutei Yehuda Hachadash*) ▪

20/20 Foresight

R' Leibel,* a *yungerman* from Bnei Brak, was living a very "predictable" life.

As a *bachur*, he learned in Yeshivas Chiddushei Harim and then in Yeshiva Sefas Emes. After his marriage, he learned in *kollel*. *Baruch* Hashem, he was blessed with children.

Life was proceeding along a very predictable path.

Then, one morning, his four-year-old son, Avreimi,* woke up complaining, "Totty, things look blurry. I can't see well."

R' Leibel thought that perhaps his son was tired or that a piece of dust had gotten into his eye. He decided to wait and see if Avreimi would feel better the next day. But it wasn't meant to be. The next day, things were worse. Avreimi started crying hysterically, "Totty! Mommy! I can't see at all!"

His parents realized that he wasn't faking; he truly couldn't see. He tried to walk by feeling around with his hands. He literally couldn't see a thing, not even vague shapes. Even more concerning was the fact that his head was hurting him terribly.

"It hurts so much," he whimpered. "It feels like someone put something heavy on my head and it is pressing down on me."

His parents immediately took him to the doctor, but Dr. Rothschild also couldn't figure out what was wrong. After consulting with some other doctors, Dr. Rothschild decided to treat him for a very bad case of sinusitis.

Avreimi took the medication for sinusitis, and the waiting game began.

Would he get his vision back?

The days crawled by, but Avreimi's vision did not return.

R' Leibel and his wife realized it was time to consult with specialists at Beilinson Hospital in Petach Tikva. As they were leaving for the appointment, R' Leibel asked a friend, "Please be *mazkir* my Avreimi by the Rebbe (the Lev Simcha, who was staying in Arad at the time)."

At the hospital, they saw Professor Shalit, one of Israel's most gifted neurologist.

Once he finished examining Avreimi, Professor Shalit, with a very stern expression on his face, told the parents, "I am sorry to tell you this, but I think his blindness is the result of a growth in his head. That growth is pushing against one of the nerves that brings vision to the eyes. We must perform a CT scan to confirm my theory."

There was only one problem.

At that time, CT machines were still very rare. The hospital had only one machine, and it was broken.

Since time was of the essence (as it always is whenever there is a foreign growth near the brain), they could not wait until the machine was fixed. Instead, they explained to the parents that they had no choice but to perform a test that was much more painful and invasive.

Hearing this, R' Leibel told the doctor, "I am sorry, but I cannot consent to such a test until I ask my Rabbi."

Professor Shalit was so far removed from any such idea. He assumed that R' Leibel was going to leave the hospital, hop over to his rabbi in Petach Tikva,

and ask his question.

R' Leibel explained, "My Rabbi happens to be in Arad at the moment. I will consult with him over the telephone."

The doctor was left shaking his head in wonder, as if to say, "Wow! These *Chareidim* are strange."

R' Leibel called, and the Lev Simcha personally answered the phone. (Many years later, when recalling the story, R' Leibel commented with awe, "I still remember the way he said 'Hello' with such simplicity!")

After hearing what was happening, the Lev Simcha countered, "Can a child that young withstand such a difficult test?!" He then wished R' Leibel *hatzlachah*, as if to indicate that R' Leibel **should** go ahead with the procedure.

He returned to the hospital and agreed to the test. As the doctors were preparing Avreimi for the test, they informed R' Leibel, "By the way, if the test proves that your son has a growth, then we plan on operating on the spot to try to remove it."

Once again, before agreeing, R' Leibel ran to the phone and called the Rebbe.

In R' Leibel's own words:

I apologized for bothering him again, but the Rebbe waved away my apology, saying, "It is not a problem at all. Don't feel bad."

As soon as the Rebbe heard the word "operation," I heard him raise his voice and emphatically exclaim, "Nein, nein, nein (no, no, no)! Do not let them operate!"

The four doctors who were standing there heard the Rebbbe's voice through the phone line and quickly interrupted, "Tell the Rabbi that if we don't operate today, tomorrow may be too late."

Even after hearing what the doctors were saying, the Rebbe insisted, "I am not a doctor; I can wish you hatzlachah, but I am telling you, don't agree to the operation!"

He then hung up the phone, and I was left standing there holding the receiver and hearing a dial tone.

Professor Shalit, in particular, was standing there – totally stunned, angry, and offended.

I could tell what was going through his mind. He was clearly thinking, "Who does this Rabbi think he is? Contradicting me, Professor Shalit, the biggest expert in Israel?"

The doctors were not happy that I would not consent to the operation, but they did go ahead with the testing to try to find out what was going on.

My son was placed under full anesthesia.

A few minutes after the test ended, before the doctors even came out to discuss the results with us, a woman came over and said, "Mister, you shouldn't worry. Your child is fine. There is nothing wrong with him."

"Who are you?" we asked.

She replied, "I am the technician who helped perform the test on your son."

After the test, Dr. Shalit, who was a neurologist, decided to go over the file with Dr. Ben-Sirah, an eye specialist. Meanwhile, I called the Rebbe for the third time and told him that the test indicated it was not a growth. However, Avreimi was still completely blind, and the doctors had no idea what to do.

"By Shavuos, Mattan Torah," the Rebbe replied, "the child will see once again, just like all the blind were healed at Mattan Torah. Chazal teach us that when the passuk says 'וְכָל־הָעָם רֹאִים אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת,' it means that everyone – even the blind people – saw the kolos (because their eyesight was restored)."

The Rebbe told this to us in the middle of Chodesh Iyar, less than three weeks before Shavuos.

Avreimi remained in the hospital.

We were trying our best to care for Avreimi while also being there for our other children at home in Bnei Brak.

A few days later, the doctors informed us that they wanted to perform another diagnostic test on Avreimi.

I knew without a shadow of a doubt that I wasn't going to let them do anything without first asking the Rebbe.

When I called the Lev Simcha, he was very firm in his answer: "Don't touch the child."

The doctors were fuming! They were so angry that they

stopped talking to me. They weren't interested in talking to me or updating me on anything.

They decided that I was just a fanatic and, therefore, did not have the "right" to receive any form of information from them.

The days passed, and before long, it was Wednesday – two days before Shavuos.

When I arrived at the hospital, the staff told me that they needed to increase the dosage of cortisone (a steroid) that Avreimi was getting. Otherwise, he would be in danger.

"Listen," they told me, "we can see that his veins are swelling, and that is NOT a good sign!"

But I wouldn't let them do anything before consulting the Lev Simcha.

"Do not touch the child," the Lev Simcha told me without any hesitation. "By Shavuos, everything will be fine."

The Rebbe had paskened, and I intended to listen, but...

I was in real trouble! The doctors were furious! They were even considering charging me with criminal neglect of my child. After all, I was refusing to allow him to be treated for an obviously serious illness. I cannot tell you how uncomfortable I felt.

That afternoon, when I returned home from the hospital, a friend suggested, "R' Leibel, perhaps you should check your mezuzos?"

Being a sofer, I thought it was a great idea! I immediately took down the mezuzos in my home and began to check them. And then I found it! One of the mezuzos had a clear pessul in it. The words that were passul were "בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ – between your eyes."

I switched the passul mezuzah for a kosher one.

The next day, when I returned to the hospital, I did the same thing I did every time I arrived: I ran to Avreimi's bed and wished him a heartfelt, enthusiastic, "Good morning!"

This time, however, before I could even get the words out of my mouth, Avreimi called out, "Abba! Abba!"

I looked at him, and I could tell that he was actually looking at me!

I cannot describe the feelings that welled up inside.

"Avreimi!" My emotions were bubbling over. "Can you see me?"

"I cannot see you clearly, but I can see something – maybe an outline..."

Wow! He was seeing something! I quickly ran to call the Rebbe. "Rebbe! He is seeing a little bit. Not well, but a little bit!"

"Don't worry," the Rebbe's calm, reassuring voice came through. "He will heal completely. He will see with both his eyes."

I was so thrilled that I ran to look for Dr. Ben-Sirah to share the great news. When the doctor heard what I was saying, he was completely in shock. He literally thought I was nuts.

"Not possible," he exclaimed. "I will come to examine the child myself!"

He didn't hide the fact that he didn't believe me. (After all, how could he believe a "crazy" man who listens to a rabbi instead of the leading experts in the field?)

After examining Avreimi's eyes, the doctor walked out, shaking his head and mumbling, "Impossible. It's just not possible..."

Two weeks after Shavuos, we left the hospital. Avreimi was discharged and returned home with perfect vision.

From that day on, Avreimi saw perfectly. He never even needed glasses!

A few years later, when Avreimi was a bit older, I took him with me on a nesiyah to the Rebbe.

As we walked in together, I told the Rebbe, "This is the child who was blind."

The Rebbe didn't even respond. All he said was, "Fuhr gezunterheit," and he gezeigened me, wishing me well on my trip back home. He didn't want to talk about what had happened or take credit for it.

As for us, we know that whatever comes out of the Rebbe's mouth is true. Guaranteed.

(Kuntres "HaRebbe Zt"l," published in honor of the sheloshim of the Lev Simcha) ▪

Why Does it Bother You?

"וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיֵּצֶר לוֹ" – Yaakov became very frightened, and it distressed him" (בראשית לב, ח).

What was it that distressed Yaakov Avinu? What was causing him pain? The very fact that Yaakov Avinu became frightened of Eisav was what caused him distress!

(Chiddushei Harim)

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For dedications, please contact the school office: 718.338.5600 #650

אור ההלכה

Piskei halacha by the Rav, Harav Hershel Rotenberg shlita

As heard on the Hashmieni Inspiration Line • Halacha Panel

Adapted by Rabbi Naftuli Rosenberg

Halachos of Chanukah (Part 1)

(Reprinted from previous years with important additions and changes)

MELACHAH BEFORE & DURING CHANUKAH *LECHT*

It is important to note that women are obligated to light the menorah just like men. The Gemara (שבת דף כג.) explains that this is because women were also part of the *nes* of Chanukah[1] - אף הן היו באותו הנס - therefore they are *mechuyav* in the *mitzvah* of Chanukah just like men.

#40

May a woman eat after the *zeman* on Chanukah if her husband is expected to come home only later?

Once the time to light the menorah arrives, it is *assur* to eat regularly before lighting. Although a woman has a *chiyuv* to light the menorah, since she is waiting for her husband to come home, he is considered a *shomer*[2], and she may eat even after the *zeman*.

Eating fruit or *Mezonos* up to the size of a *k'beitza* (the size of an egg) before Chanukah lighting is always permitted, even without a *shomer*.

#41

Which *melachos* are prohibited for women while the menorah is burning?

During the first half hour, the *minhag* is not to do *melachos* that are prohibited on Chol Hamoed, such as sewing or washing laundry.

Melachos that do not take time, such as switching on a light or pressing a button, are permitted.

Regarding cooking and baking, which are permitted on Yom Tov but take time, there are various opinions. Some permit any *melachah* that is allowed on Yom Tov, while others permit only the cooking of special Chanukah foods like latkes, and some have the *minhag* not to do any *melachah* that takes time[3]. *L'halacha*, regarding cooking and baking during the first half hour, one should follow one's mother's *minhag*.

After the first half hour, even while the menorah is still burning, all *melachos* are permitted.

CHANUKAH MINHAGIM

#47

Are there halachic issues to take into consideration at family Chanukah gatherings?

Family Chanukah gatherings are permitted.

However, there is an *issur* of *kalus rosh* (lightheartedness, frivolous behavior) in the presence of a woman who is not a halachic *karov* (relative). According to *halacha*, one's mother, sister and daughter are considered *kerovim* (relatives). One's mother-in-law, sister-in-law and cousins are not considered relatives. Thus, according to the Shulchan Aruch, it is forbidden to act with *kalus rosh* in their presence. Making a *vertel* using normal humor is not considered *kalus rosh*. A party involving revelry and unrestrained behavior (צחוק והתפרקות) is *assur al pi halacha* when women who are not *kerovim* are present.

1 Women also suffered under the Yevanim and were saved by the *nes* of Chanukah. Additionally, one of the *nissim* occurred through a woman, Yehudis (Rashi).

2 The reason for the *issur* not to eat after the time for lighting the menorah is to make sure that one does not forget to light. However, when there is a '*shomer*' - someone who will remind the other - one is permitted to eat.

3 Since one of the reasons for not doing *melachah* is to make sure that one is careful not to use the light of the menorah, the *minhag* is to refrain from ordinary cooking.

#46

Does one say a *brachah* on donuts in the middle of a Chanukah *seudah*?

If the donut is eaten to satiate hunger, it is considered part of the meal and no additional *brachah* is needed.

However, if the donut is eaten as a dessert when one is not hungry, then when saying *Hamotzi* at the beginning of the meal one should explicitly have in mind to include the donuts.

If one forgot to explicitly have the donuts in mind, one should, if possible, ask someone who did not wash for *Hamotzi* to make a *Mezonos* and be *motzi* them. When this is also not possible, one may eat donuts during the meal without making a *Mezonos*.

#943:

May one warm donuts containing jam or cream on a hot water urn on Shabbos?

Since donuts are a דבר יבש (dry item) that was previously baked, the rule of אין אפיה אחר אפיה (there is no concept of baking after a food has already been baked once) applies; therefore, one may warm them on Shabbos even if they reach the temperature of יד סולדת בו. The jam or cream inside the donuts may also become hot, as they were already cooked during their production.

It should be noted that milchig donuts should not be placed directly onto the urn, and certainly not on a fleishig pot of any sort.

#944:

May one play dreidel for money?

If a parent or grandparent puts the money in the center and everyone wins according to how the dreidel falls, it is permitted *lechatchilah*.

However, one should *lechatchilah* not allow the participating players to provide a sum of money to put in the center, to be awarded according to how the dreidel falls, since there is a *sha'alah* of משחק בקוביא - gambling.

#330:

May one take a picture of a Chanukah menorah while the *lecht* are burning?

Most *poskim* rule that it is permitted. Rav Wosner, *zt"l*, however, was *machmir* that one should not take pictures of the Chanukah *lecht*[4]. Therefore, although it is halachically permitted, it is preferable to wait until after the first half hour.

TEFILLAH

#331:

What should one do if they forgot to say על הניסים in שמונה עשרה?

If one remembered <u>before</u> saying ברוך אתה ה' at the conclusion of the *brachah*, one should stop and return to ועל הניסים, and continue from there (proceeding with ועל כולם and completing the *brachah* as usual). One should be careful, however, not to say Hashem's name for nothing. Thus, if one remembers right after saying the word הא-ל[5], one should complete the phrase before going back to על הניסים. If one remembers <u>after</u> saying ברוך אתה ה', one should complete the *brachah* and not go back at all. Instead, at the end of א-לוקי נצור (before יהיו לרצון), one should say: "הרחמן הוא יעשה לנו ניסים ונפלאות כשם שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה,"[6] and then continue with בימי מתתיהו.

If one remembers only after they have finished davening, they do not daven again.

#45

Are women *mechuyav* to recite *Hallel* on Chanukah?

Lehalacha, women are not *mechuyav* to recite *Hallel*. However, thanking and praising Hashem is very significant, and a woman who has the time and recites *Hallel*, definitely has a *mitzvah*.

#936:

May one sit or lean when saying *Hallel*?

Hallel must be said while standing. It is only permitted to lean on something if it is done in a way that one would not fall if the support were removed.

4 The basis for this *chumrah* is the *issur* to derive benefit from the Chanukah *lecht*, as we say, "ואין לנו רשות להשתמש בהם אלא לראותם בלבד". Rav Wosner held that taking a picture is considered benefiting from the *lecht*, while other poskim rule that this sort of benefit is permitted.

5 The word הא-ל is said twice in the brachah of Modim, "הָאֵ-ל יְשׁוּעָתֵנוּ וְעֶזְרָתֵנוּ סֶלָה, הָאֵ-ל הַטּוֹב." If one remembers after the first הא-ל, one should complete the phrase with the words "ישועתנו ועזרתנו סלה" before going back to על הניסים. Similarly, if one says the second הא-ל, one should complete the phrase with the word "הטוב" before going back to ועל הניסים.

6 This הרחמן is printed in many *siddurim*.