

# SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

VAYESHEB/HANUKAH

DECEMBER 7-8, 2012

24 KISLEV 5773

Hanukah will be celebrated from Saturday night, December 8 until Sunday, December 16.  
Rosh Hodesh Tebet will be celebrated on Friday, December 14.

**DEDICATIONS:** Mabrook to Sherri and Victor on the birth of baby Joseph! Abal 120 happy and healthy years

## FRIDAY NIGHT

- Mincha at 4:10 – Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat and Arbit (Candle Lighting: 4:10)

## SHABBAT SCHEDULE

- Shharith: 9:00 - Benai Asher Youth Program 10:45 – 11:45 Mincha at Noon or following Kiddush Kiddus given by Mr Jack Brach and family of Brach's supermarket in honor of the community
- Shabbat ends at 5:10 - Return for Arbit and Havdala at 5:30

No Movie Night this week instead join us to Light the Menorah  
Motzaei Shabbos, December 8th 7:00 PM  
Light the Menorah in front of - Country Boy Bakery - 256 Park Avenue  
Donuts, Hot Cocoa, Music, Prizes

**WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE** Shharit Sunday 8:00, Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)

Learn to Speak Hebrew! We have started a class weekdays immediately following shacharit for 5-10 Minutes. We will speak Hebrew. Improve our vocabulary and learn the basics of grammar. Everyone is invited!

We want to thank Rabbi Colish for helping to organize - Spread the Warmth  
Chanukah Program in Long Beach  
Sunday, December 9, 2012 , 3:30 p.m.– 5:15 p.m.  
Young Israel of Long Beach - 120 Long Beach Boulevard, Long Beach NY, 11561

Join UJA-Federation of New York for a meaningful and fun community-wide Chanukah celebration. Together, we will work on arts and crafts projects, enjoy a **MAGIC SHOW**, and spin the dreidle. Immediately followed at 5:15 p.m. we will go to City Hall and come together at Kennedy Plaza to light the menorah, dance, eat and distribute the toys to all kids.

Thank you to the following organizations for their participation in this program:  
Sephardic Synagogue of Long Beach, Bach Jewish Center, Young Israel of Long Beach,  
Temple Israel of Long Beach, and Temple Emanu-El of Long Beach.

The Sisterhood is planning to help with the refurbishing of the childrens' room. We are using the proceeds from the High Holiday greetings fundraiser. Many of you still owe the \$18.00 you pledged in September/October. Would you please send in the money to Rebecca or Ida as soon as possible. Anyone else who would like to contribute \$18.00 to this, kindly give your check to Rebecca or Ida.  
Thank you all very much.

please reply to  
[ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com)

**Take a peek into Kosher  
 Culinary Arts School in  
 Jerusalem with my daughter  
 Mikhayla who is going through  
 a rigorous 6 month program.  
 bitebymebymik.blogspot.com**

Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979  
 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic  
 Frame at 4PM – Please join us!  
 212-289-2100

### Editors Notes

Every once in a while we have the sliver of hope that there really can be unity among the Jewish people. Over the course of the last month, we've worked with everyone to assist people hurt by the flood. We've been doing projects in Long Beach for the first time in as long as I can remember and inviting, the Modern Orthodox, The Sephardim, The Yeshivaish, The Chabad, The Conservative and The Reform to join us. We've seen funding from the left leaning liberals to the right most conservatives. And its really been the silver lining in this dark cloud.

But Jews rarely get along for more than a nanosecond. And just around the time we read about the brothers selling Joseph and the disunity that led to our slavery in Egypt, we see the same disunity raise its ugly head.

A large liberal Synagogue on the Upper West Side sent out this note: "The vote at the U.N. yesterday is a great moment for us as citizens of the world," said the e-mail, which was sent to all congregants. "This is an opportunity to celebrate the process that allows a nation to come forward and ask for recognition."

They want to celebrate what Israel and The US states is a travesty?

And it only gets worse. With the announcement that Israel wishes to build 3000 new homes between Jerusalem and Maaleh Adumim, the world turned against Israel including a very vocal and liberal Jewish voice. I think people are so brainwashed by the media barrage and words such as "Palestinian Territory" and "illegal settlements" and "retaliatory behavior by Israel". We hear again and again how horrible Netanyahu is and we begin to believe what is repeated and we join the chorus of critics. We end up agreeing with the New York Times that American Jews no longer back Israel. We fulfill CNN's prophecy. We battle each other often ignorant of the facts.

Nir Bakat is the mayor of Jerusalem and I found his recent comments very interesting in light of my experience with our own mayor Bloomberg a few weeks ago.

It was right after Sandy and the streets of Far Rockaway as in much of Long Island and areas along the shore were pitch black. There was looting and the danger that comes with it especially when help was not easy to call as cell phones had no service. Knowing that Friday night presented additional problems, we met with The National Guard. They offered to send patrols to watch and protect the area. They had the vehicles. They had the soldiers. They had the communications. But what they didn't have and what we couldn't get was permission from the Bloomberg administration to put soldiers on the ground. The city insisted that the local police could handle it. Any mayor wants to think that he knows what's best for his city and more times than not they do.

Speaking in Herzliya at a conference on the subject of affordable housing, Mayor Nir Barkat told the audience: "We need to connect the E1 area to Jerusalem without any reservations at all, even with the world pressuring us not to do so. I certainly back the prime minister's position on this. I don't know of any city in the world whose regulator is the U.S. president." reported Rachel Hirshfeld.

Reacting to Israel's new construction plans, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, "Let me reiterate that this administration—like previous administrations—has been very clear with Israel that these activities set back the cause of a negotiated peace."

Barkat said he was surprised by the overtly negative and hostile reaction of European countries, including Britain, France, Sweden, Denmark and Spain, summoned the Israeli ambassadors in their respective capitals to protest the plans.

"When the world talks about a freeze in Jerusalem, I ask, a freeze on what? On the billions we invest in east Jerusalem? Should we stop construction for Arabs, Christians or Jews? Or does someone mean that when an entrepreneur approaches me, I should, heaven forbid, ask him what religion he subscribes to so he can receive a permit to build in Jerusalem? That would be horrendous and it negates even U.S. law," he said.

On Tuesday, government secretary Tzvi Hauser responded to the international criticism. "If someone thinks that Israel will avoid building in neighborhoods in its capital city due to reprimands or pressure, that person does not fully grasp

Israel's interests in the region," he told *Kol Yisrael* radio. "We are not talking about a little stone in the desert. We are talking about Jerusalem."

It's understandable that being barraged by the media, people may not see the complete picture. It's important that we help.

After all, the brothers only see the true picture when Joseph reveals himself (in a couple of weeks) and states, I am Joseph. Had someone been around to help them get the rest of the story they might have acted differently and that would have changed the history of the world.

Take a look at the following letter I saw submitted to the British Foreign Secretary by Mindy Weisenberg, a woman I believe is or was the director of Emunah in Britain.

**Dear Mr Hague.** You have stated that if Israel tries to defend its population through a ground offensive in Gaza 'it risks losing the sympathy of the international community.' Let me tell you something about the sympathy of the international community Mr Hague.

My father was liberated from Buchenwald concentration camp in 1945, having lost his entire family but gaining the sympathy of the international community at the time. After 6 million Jews had been annihilated at the hands of the Nazi regime, the international community had plenty of sympathy for the Jewish people. There is always plenty of sympathy for victims. Israel doesn't need the sympathy of the international community. What it needs is to defend its citizens. When as a tiny country it gained its independence in 1948 it had to absorb 800,000 Jews who were thrown out of Arab

lands in the Middle East, and it did so without fuss and with dignity giving them shelter and a place of security in which their children could grow up to become productive citizens. When Jordan, Egypt and Syria tried to destroy Israel in 1948 and again in 1967 they took in hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs, but did they give them dignity or shelter? No they left them to rot in refugee camps in order to maintain a symbol of grievance against Israel and use them as a political tool against the Jewish state. What has arisen in those camps is a complicated situation, but it is what has led to Gaza today.

So don't lecture Israel on international sympathy Mr Hague. Not when Israel has just sent in 120 truck loads of food into Gaza to feed the Palestinian people there, because their own leadership is more interested in using its population as human shields, launching rockets against Israel from within major civilian centres.

Don't lecture Israel on international sympathy Mr Hague. Not when Israel targets with as much military precision as it can, only terrorists and their bases, trying its utmost to prevent civilian casualties.

Don't lecture Israel on international sympathy Mr Hague. Not when the Palestinian media deliberately uses images of victims of the Syrian civil war and presents them as casualties in Gaza to gain international sympathy.

Go read your history books Mr Hague, go see that since the beginning of the twentieth century all the Arabs wanted to do was destroy Israel. Go look at the country of Israel now since the Jews have established a state there. Go read what advances in science, medicine, biotechnology, agriculture, high tech Israel has developed, and dedicated that

knowledge to making the world a better place for humanity. Can you imagine any other country that after 60 years of continuously being under attack could have achieved so much.

So Mr Hague don't lecture Israel on international sympathy. Israel will do whatever it takes to defend itself from outright attack on its citizens, whether it be from Hamas, Hizbollah, Iran or any other country or terrorist group that attacks it.

And if it loses the sympathy of the international community so be it. We don't need the international community's sympathy. We don't need another 6 million victims.

### **Kabbalah Lights Kabbalistic Insights into Parashat (Weekly Portion) Vayeshev**

Our Parasha opens with Yosef, the apple of his father's eye, experiencing two dreams. In the first dream, he and his brothers are gathering grain from the field. The sheaths of the brothers rise up from the ground where they lay, and bow down to Yosef's sheath. When they hear the dream, the brothers are not pleased.

In the second dream, the sun, moon and stars bow down to Yosef. Yosef tells this second dream to his brothers and they are even more displeased. The brothers become concerned that perhaps Yosef subconsciously seeks to usurp the role of kingship from Yehuda, and take it for himself. Yaakov, Yosef's father, chastises Yosef but takes a "wait and see" approach.

Later in the parasha, Yosef is sent by Yaakov to meet his brothers in Shechem. The brothers strip him of his coat, throw him into a pit, and later sell him to passing merchants. Yosef ends up as a slave in Egypt.

The parashah closes with Yosef in jail in Egypt, where he has risen to the position of chief guard, despite being imprisoned there himself. One morning, he sees two of the other prisoners – the palace butler and the imperial baker. The look dazed. Yosef inquires, and they say that they had puzzling dreams the previous night. They tell the dreams to Yosef, and he interprets them. The butler is subsequently reinstated, and the baker is hanged, precisely as described by Yosef.

We all dream. Some dreams are memorable, while others are quickly forgotten. Where does dreaming come from? Is there any significance to a dream? Does interpretation of the dream have any effect on outcome in life?

The Ramchal (Rabbi Moses Chaim Luzzato, Kabbalist, 1707 - 1746) in his *Sefer Derekh Hashem* (The Way of G-d), gives a Kabbalistic answer to some of these questions.

When we are awake, and in control (we hope) of our faculties, the higher levels of our Neshama (soul) are active. When we sleep, the lower levels of the Neshama, the Nefesh Bahamit (lit. animalistic soul) stay with our body. The higher levels go up to Heaven. In Heaven, the soul has several errands to perform. Firstly, the soul gives a full account of the day's activities to the Heavenly court. Second, it is renewed and cleansed in preparation for another day of earthly existence.

The Neshama, freed of its bodily attachment, is now free to roam about in the Heavens. The Neshamot of the extremely righteous, like the Arizal, are given their choice of which

Heavenly Yeshiva they want to learn in. There, they learn the secrets of creation, and the laws that govern earthly and Heavenly existence. Other Neshamot (souls) are permitted access to Heavenly chambers where future events are planned. Upon its return to the body, the soul projects what it has learned onto the screen of the imagination. We experience it as dreaming.

Does this mean that all dreams foretell future events? Can the content be taken literally? The Ramchal explains that the dream content is also influenced by other factors. For instance, if a person's thoughts have been dwelling on a particular idea all day, these issues will be seen at night in a dream. In contemporary psychology this might be called wish fulfillment.

In dreams, the content is also distorted. Ramchal says that humors in the blood affect the content of a dream. Thus the delicious (we hope) meal you had for dinner alters the symbolic representations in your dream. In addition, your degree of religious and spiritual purity affect dream content and symbolic representation. Our sages say that there is no dream without some false material in it.

Back to our parashah. Yosef's brothers thought that the dreams reflected wish fulfillment. In their opinion, Yosef spent all day musing about being King. As such, he was guilty of treason against his older brother, and deserving of death. Throwing him into the pit was a small fraction of the punishment he deserved. On the other hand, Yaakov, who knew his son better than the brothers did, believed that Yosef was indeed destined for greatness.

Fast forward to the end of the parashah, where Yosef correctly interprets the dreams of the butler and the baker. The Zohar and the Arizal say that Yosef had a special talent. He could not only interpret dreams correctly, but also his interpretation would affect the future. This was true even if he intentionally gave an erroneous interpretation.

The Gemarah (Berakhot 58) tells a story of a goy who had this same power. He foretold good interpretations for those who paid his fee, and bad ones for those who didn't. Unfortunately for those who didn't pay, they suffered from his unkind words.

Our sages say that all dreams follow the interpretation. Clearly, this refers to the interpretation of someone with the gift for doing it. In this day and age, people with these powers and abilities far beyond normal are indeed very rare.

### **Gematria from the Parasha**

When Yaakov heard that Yosef had dreamed that the sun, moon, and stars would bow down to him, he (Yaakov) chastised his son.

"Will I, your mother and your brothers prostrate ourselves before you", (Genesis 37:10)

he said. Rashi, on that sentence points out that Yosef's dream could not possibly come true. Rachel, Yosef's mother had already died several years earlier.

If we look at the words of the sentence in Hebrew, we see that it says:

"... ma hachalom haze asher chalamta? Havo ..." (Genesis 37:10).

What is this dream that you have dreamed? Will I, ...

Let's extract a few letters to see a hidden message or two. Starting from the letter r (Resh) in asher, and ignoring vowels, we have RCHL MTH, which in Hebrew spells out the words Rachel Metah (Rachel is dead).

Starting from the H of havo, and counting backward 156 letters, we encounter another H. Another 156 back is an L, and another 156 back is a B. Putting the letters together, and adding some vowels, we get BiLHaH, the maid of Rachel who raised Yosef as her own son after Rachel died. Herein is the hidden message from Yaakov to Yosef.

The number 156 is significant. YOSeF is spelled Yod (10), Vav (6), Samekh (60), Feh (80), totaling 156. The message about Yosef's mother Rachel, and his "adoptive" mother Bilhah is only decoded if we use the gematria of Yosef's name as the key.

### Minhagim – Customs

Sometimes a person has a dream that really bothers or scares him, and he is concerned for the future. If this occurs, he can do one or both of the following.

1. Taanit Chalom – A voluntary one-day fast.
2. Hatavat Chalom I – A prayer said during the blessing of the Kohanim during Shacharit, the morning prayer.
3. Hatavat Chalom II – A special prayer said by ten pious friends in the presence of the dreamer.

Doing any of these has a positive influence on the way the dream expresses itself, even if not interpreted.

### Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: In the year 2216, Yakov was settled in Canaan. Yoseph was 17 years old and Yakov presented him with the multi-colored coat. Yoseph related his two dreams to his brothers.

2nd Aliya: The brothers conspired to kill Yoseph, but Reuven intervened. He suggested throwing Yoseph into a pit to buy time, during which he would have been able to save Yoseph.

3rd Aliya: During Reuven's absence, Yehudah suggested selling Yoseph into slavery. The brothers presented Yakov with contrived evidence of Yoseph's death, and he was inconsolable.

4th Aliya: The story of Yehudah and Tamar is related. In the end, their first son, Peretz, is the progenitor of Mashiach.

5th Aliya: Yoseph had been purchased by Potiphar and was quickly recognized for his managerial skills and integrity. He was appointed to run Potiphar's household.

6th Aliya: Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce Yoseph, but Yoseph withstood temptation and fled his mistress's presence. He was thrown into the royal prison and was soon chosen by the warden to run the prison.

7th Aliya: Due to his managerial position, Yoseph came in contact with the former royal wine steward and baker. He successfully interpreted their dreams and the wine steward was re-appointed to his position. Yoseph asked the wine steward to intervene on his behalf with Pharaoh. In the year 2227, Yoseph is 28 years old.

### Haftarah: Amos 2:6-3:8 or Zechariah 2:14 –

This week's Haftarah relates to the theme of Shabbos Chanukah.

At the end of the Babylonian exile, 9 years before the story of Purim (3390-371 b.c.e), 40,000 Jews, lead by Zerubavel and Yehoshua the Kohen Gadol, returned to Israel. They began to rebuild the Bais Hamikdash, but Cyrus withdrew his permission and the construction was halted. Following the story of Purim and a prophecy from Chagay, the rebuilding resumed 18 years later (3408-353).

This week's Haftarah is the prophecy of Zechariah which preceded the inauguration of the second Bais Hamikdash. It describes the status of the Kohen Gadol and the people as seemingly unfit to carry out the service. Hashem (G-d) relates to Zechariah that in fact, Yehoshua and the nation are ready to resume full service in the Bais Hamikdash. The prophecy includes a vision of the Menorah with a continuous supply of olive oil, reminiscent of the miracle of Chanukah

### EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"They sat down to eat food."  
(Beresheet 37:25)

The Torah informs us that after throwing Yosef into a snake pit, the brothers sat down to eat a meal. How could the brothers eat at such a time? The Gemara says (Sanhedrin 63a) that a bet din that was involved in sentencing a person in a capital case is prohibited to eat anything all day. Certainly, as their own brother cried and pleaded for mercy, how could they eat?

The answer to this question is found in some good advice from a great Rabbi. In the Sefer Bene Yissachar the Rabbi says that a man should make certain not to come home famished, as this could bring him to grow angry at his family members. The brothers of Yosef wanted to make certain that what they were considering doing to Yosef was lawful, and they were not influenced in any way by the fact that they were hungry. Therefore, they sat down and ate a meal before deciding his fate.

We must always be aware of what truly motivates our actions and what is really behind our emotions. In the fast-moving lifestyle that characterizes our generation, many of us get far less sleep than our bodies need and many don't schedule meals regularly either. This is wearing to our emotions, weakening our ability to keep anger or irritability in check. While catching a nap before coming home is rarely practical, having a small snack (one that will leave plenty of room for dinner) certainly is an idea worth considering. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

One of the most famous questions in halachic literature deals with the lighting of the Hanukah menorah. We all know that we celebrate Hanukah for eight days because when the Jews rededicated the Temple and were looking for pure olive oil to light the Menorah, they found a jar containing oil to last for one night, and miraculously, it burned for eight. The obvious question is: If so, the miracle was only seven days, being that there was already enough oil for the first day!

Hundreds of answers have been offered. Among them: 1) Winning the war was one

miracle; 2) The finding of the oil should be remembered; 3) Each night only one-eighth of the oil was used up, so it was a miracle for eight nights, etc. A latter day sage, upon seeing all the answers being debated, commented that this fact itself, that the Jewish people are asking and answering about an event that happened more than 2000 years ago, is a miracle and should be celebrated, at least with an extra day of Hanukah.

In all other cultures, holidays are purely symbolic, to remember fleetingly, and if "properly" observed, may cause a hangover. In Torah Judaism, everything that we do has a reason, and our lives therefore are filled with meaning. It is this vibrancy with Torah that has kept us going throughout the ages, while the Greeks, the Romans and other empires faded away into oblivion.

As we stand around the menorah and fulfill this beautiful misvah, let us rededicate ourselves to the ideals that the candles represent, by joining in the activities of the synagogue, thereby meriting His Divine Presence to dwell in our midst, Amen. Happy Hanukah. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

### Rabbi Wein

Life generally and Jewish life particularly, is unpredictable, surprising, mysterious and enigmatic. Yaacov expects that after his encounter with Lavan and Eisav the worst is behind him. But the fun is just about to begin. Who could predict that after the sibling controversies between Yishmael and Yitzchak, Yaacov and Eisav that the greatest sibling controversy in Jewish history would now begin?

All sorts of mysterious and

inexplicable events conspire to bring this story along. Why does Yaacov give Yosef a special tunic and show such favoritism in front of his other children? Why does he send Yosef on such an apparently dangerous mission to find his brothers? Who is the mysterious man that leads into the lair of Shimon and Levi? And why is the final result of all of this the sale of Yosef as a slave destined for Egyptian bondage?

Later in the parsha, how does Yehuda commit such an apparently immoral act and why is he nevertheless rewarded as being the ancestor of Jewish royalty and messianic destiny? And why does Peretz push his way out of his mother's womb ahead of Zerach?

The Torah grants us no answers to any of these fantastic events. Midrash offers various comments and interpretations to help us somewhat understand this chain of events. But at the end of the story, it all remains one great enigma wrapped in heavenly mystery. I am very poor at solving mysteries or explaining very difficult, complex torah issues and biblical narrative. Therefore I content myself with observing in wonder the story that the Torah relates to us.

The prophet Yeshayahu taught us that God's ways are not our ways and that his guiding hand in all human affairs remains invisible, mysterious and most wondrous. This is the basic thrust of how Jewish tradition viewed not only Biblical narrative but all of Jewish and human history.

In our time the Holocaust was unforeseen unbelievable and even after its occurrence it is still subject to denial by millions of people. Who could have imagined a Jewish state emerging in the Land of Israel against internal and

external odds, expectations and predictions? And how, after millennium of Torah tradition and ritual observance would that State bring forth as an apparent bastion of secularism and even atheism?

Yet all of this has happened, and the wonders of Jewish life continue to expand before our very eyes. Israel has become much more of a Jewish state than a socialist one. Anti-Semitism has never been stronger and yet the Jewish people have never felt as emboldened and strong as it is today.

The enormous rebirth of Torah scholarship and study within the Jewish people the world over and especially here in Israel is perhaps the greatest surprise of our time. All of this should make us wary of expert predictions, all-knowing politicians and other savants who claim to know our future and what is really in our best interests. Mysteries of the parsha are themselves the message of the parsha.

**Sir Jonathan Sacks  
Chief Rabbi of the United  
Hebrew Congregations  
of the Commonwealth**

**The Refusal to be Comforted**

The deception has taken place. Joseph has been sold into slavery. His brothers have dipped his coat in blood. They bring it back to their father, saying: "Look what we have found. Do you recognise it? Is this your son's robe or not?" Jacob recognised it and replied, "It is my son's robe. A wild beast has devoured him. Joseph has been torn to pieces." We then read:

Jacob rent his clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourned his son for a long time. His sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted.

He said, "I will go down to the grave mourning for my son." (37: 34-35)

Why did Jacob refuse to be comforted? There are laws in Judaism about the limits of grief – shiva, sheloshim, a year. There is no such thing as a bereavement for which grief is endless. The Gemara (Moed Katan 27b) says that G-d says to one who weeps beyond the appointed time, "You are not more compassionate than I."

A midrash gives a remarkable answer. "One can be comforted for one who is dead, but not for one who is still living." Jacob refused to be comforted because he had not yet given up hope that Joseph was still alive. That, tragically, is the fate of those who have lost members of their family (the parents of soldiers missing in action, for example), but have as yet no proof that they are dead. They cannot go through the normal stages of mourning because they cannot abandon the possibility that the missing person is still capable of being rescued. Their continuing anguish is a form of loyalty; to give up, to mourn, to be reconciled to loss is a kind of betrayal. In such cases, grief lacks closure. To refuse to be comforted is to refuse to give up hope.

On what basis did Jacob continue to hope? Surely he had recognized Joseph's blood-stained coat and said, explicitly, "A wild beast had devoured him. Joseph has been torn to pieces"? Do these words not mean that he had accepted that Joseph was dead?

The late David Daube made a suggestion that I find convincing. The words the sons say to Jacob – haker na, "do you recognise this?" – have a quasi-legal connotation. Daube relates this

passage to another, with which it has close linguistic parallels:

If a man gives a donkey, an ox, a sheep or any other animal to his neighbour for safekeeping and it dies or is injured or is taken away while no one is looking, the issue between them will be settled by the taking of an oath before the Lord that the neighbour did not lay hands on the other person's property . . . If it [the animal] was torn to pieces by a wild animal, he shall bring the remains as evidence and he will not be required to pay for the torn animal. (Shemot 22: 10-13)

The issue at stake is the extent of responsibility borne by a guardian (shomer). If the animal is lost through negligence, the guardian is at fault and must make good the loss. If there is no negligence, merely force majeure, an unavoidable, unforeseeable accident, the guardian is exempt from blame. One such case is where the loss has been caused by a wild animal. The wording in the law – tarof yitoref, "torn to pieces" – exactly parallels Jacob's judgment in the case of Joseph: tarof toraf Yosef, "Joseph has been torn to pieces."

We know that some such law existed prior to the giving of the Torah. Jacob himself says to Laban, whose flocks and herds have been placed in his charge, "I did not bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore the loss myself" (Bereishit 31: 39). This implies that guardians even then were exempt from responsibility for the damage caused by wild animals. We also know that an elder brother carried a similar responsibility for the fate of a younger brother placed in his charge (i.e. when the two were alone together). That is the significance of Cain's denial when confronted by G-d as to the fate

of Abel: "Am I my brother's guardian [shomer]?"

We now understand a series of nuances in the encounter between Jacob and his sons, when they return without Joseph. Normally they would be held responsible for their younger brother's disappearance. To avoid this, as in the case of later biblical law, they "bring the remains as evidence." If those remains show signs of an attack by a wild animal, they must – by virtue of the law then operative – be held innocent. Their request to Jacob, *haker na*, must be construed as a legal request, meaning, "Examine the evidence." Jacob has no alternative but to do so, and in virtue of what he has seen, acquit them. A judge, however, may be forced to acquit someone accused of the crime because the evidence is insufficient to justify a conviction, yet he may hold lingering private doubts. So Jacob was forced to find his sons innocent, without necessarily believing what they said. Jacob did not believe it, and his refusal to be comforted shows that he was unconvinced. He continued to hope that Joseph was still alive. That hope was eventually justified. Joseph was still alive, and eventually father and son were re-united.

The refusal to be comforted sounded more than once in Jewish history. The prophet Jeremiah heard it in a later age:

This is what the Lord says:  
"A voice is heard in Ramah,  
Mourning and great weeping,  
Rachel weeping for her children  
And refusing to be comforted,  
Because her children are no more."

This is what the Lord says:  
"Restrain your voice from weeping,  
And your eyes from tears,

For your work will be rewarded," says the Lord.

"They will return from the land of the enemy.

So there is hope for your future," declares the Lord,

"Your children will return to their own land." (Jeremiah 31: 15-17)

Why was Jeremiah sure that Jews would return? Because they refused to be comforted – meaning, they refused to give up hope.

So it was during the Babylonian exile, in one of the great expressions of all time of the refusal to be comforted:

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept,  
As we remembered Zion . . .  
How can we sing the songs of the Lord in a strange land?  
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
May my right hand forget [its skill],  
May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth  
If I do not remember you,  
If I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy. (Psalm 137: 1-6)

It is said that Napoleon, passing a synagogue on Tisha B'Av, heard the sounds of lamentation. "What are the Jews crying for?" he asked one of his officers. "For Jerusalem," he replied. "How long ago did they lose it?" "More than 1,700 hundred years ago." "A people who can mourn for Jerusalem so long, will one day have it restored to them," he is reputed to have replied.

Jews are the people who refused to be comforted because they never gave up hope. Jacob did eventually see Joseph again. Rachel's children did return to the land. Jerusalem is once again the Jewish home. All the evidence may suggest otherwise: it may seem to signify irretrievable loss, a decree of history that cannot be overturned, a fate that must be

accepted. Jews never believed the evidence because they had something else to set against it – a faith, a trust, an unbreakable hope that proved stronger than historical inevitability. It is not too much to say that Jewish survival was sustained in that hope. Where did it come from? From a simple – or perhaps not so simply – phrase in the life of Jacob. He refused to be comforted. And so – while we live in a world still scarred by violence, poverty and injustice—must we

### AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

"And his master saw that Hashem was with him; and that all he did, Hashem caused to prosper in his hand" (39:3)

This that Joseph prospered was not merely a gift from Hashem, but it was bestowed upon Joseph because he correctly utilized every circumstance. Instead of becoming depressed and embittered by the un-dreamed of catastrophe, that a darling son of a wealthy father was suddenly snatched from his home and sold as a slave among foreigners, Joseph reacted with exemplary uprightness of character.

He had been brought up to understand that Hashem controlled and devised all circumstances, and therefore instead of falling into the degraded ways of a slave-boy he sought to make the best of his life at every step. He lived even now as a son of Jacob, with all the high aspirations that Isaac and Abraham had transmitted. He was faultlessly loyal to his new master, and everything that he did was performed with diligence and energy, in accordance with his father's ways (see 31:38) of loyal service to Laban. Because all that Joseph did was approved by



Hashem, therefore "all that he did, Hashem caused to prosper in his hand."

But the verse does not state merely that Hashem caused everything to prosper in Joseph's hand, but it states that "his master saw that Hashem was with him; and (his master saw) that all that he did, Hashem caused to prosper." Joseph's success in everything was so phenomenal that even the Egyptian master recognized the hand of G-d. Joseph himself surely understood that his success was solely from G-d, despite Joseph's exceptional talents and his loyal devotion and diligence.

Pharaoh, too, said subsequently: "Could we find anyone such as this, that the spirit of G-d is in him?" (41:38). Joseph was very likeable and very capable. Yet his success in everything was so phenomenal that despite Joseph's talents it was clear that Hashem was prospering his efforts.

This is a model provided by Hashem by prospering the efforts of a conscientious man that:

- A. Fears G-d (as in 39:9) & "It is G-d whom I fear" (42:18)
- B. Possesses good character (as Joseph demonstrated by showing concern for the other prisoners in jail)
- C. Must have Energy in order to accomplish (Joseph was a leader in all stages of his life)

Adapted from "The Beginning" By R' Miller ZT'L

Outline: Response/Improve

So many Calamities recently, including:  
Hurricane Sandy – 30,000 Homes Destroyed; \$46 Billion lost  
Missiles from Gaza on our civilian Brothers & Sisters in Yisrael

Young people with life ending diseases  
Young man dies in his sleep  
People out of work  
Divorces  
Addictions

What/How can we all Respond?  
If only we will all, men, women & children, put a Sedaka Box (Pushka) at our Bedside, on the night table.  
And every night before retiring, put a coin in the Box.  
We will be performing a positive Commandment of the Torah/Hashem, (no less than putting on Tefillin-R' Miller ZT'L).  
We will be doing Hesed, A Pillar which is holding up the World.  
We will be training our children.  
We will increase our love for Jews—"Love your fellow Jew as you love yourself"  
We will receive increased protection from Heaven.  
We will all demonstrate to the Creator that we all take notice of the recent events & Respond.

This is easy.  
Give this a try.  
Great benefit for us All!

The miracle of Hanukkah occurred approximately 22 centuries ago. When the Greek-Hellenistic Empire ruled over Israel, Antiokhos IV the Governor decreed that no Jew be allowed to practice the Missvot of the Torah. This decree meant that the Jews would not be able to keep Shabbat, eat kasher, circumcise their children, celebrate Pesah, Sukkot, Shabuot, Rosh Hashana Kippur, etc. Antiokhos wanted the total spiritual annihilation of the Jews.

The Hashmonaim, a family of Kohanim, served in the Temple in Jerusalem at that time. They were not able to perform the sacred duties required. The duty to light the "Eternal Light" – the Ner Tamid was one of these, since the oil used to light the Ner Tamid had to have the seal of the High Priest and could not be touched by strangers.

On the 25th day of Kislev 3591, the Hashmonaim, with the help of the Almighty, overthrew the Greeks. They reconquered the Holy Temple and found enough "pure oil" to burn for less than one day. Miraculously though, it lasted for eight days, until the Kohanim were able to procure more "pure oil".

The miracle of the oil and the successful military triumph over the Greek empire confirmed the everlasting pact that exists between G-D and the Children of Israel, and restored their freedom to practice anew, the Torah and their sacred religion. They rededicated the Temple and renewed Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel. Once again the spiritual and physical survival of the Jews was assured for eternity. Our sages recognized the importance of this miracle and declared the eight days of Hanukkah as "Days of Praise and

**THE FESTIVAL OF HANUKKAH**  
By Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie

Thanksgiving to the Almighty," and instituted that every Jewish household must celebrate Hanukkah by the lighting of the Hanukkiah for eight days, symbolizing the eight days during which the oil burned miraculously.

#### Selected Laws of Hanukkah

##### 1. How do we celebrate Hanukkah?

Every year on the 25th day of Kislev, the eight days of Hanukkah begin. These days are to be celebrated with happiness and joy, with praise and thanksgiving to the Almighty. Therefore, one may not eulogize, fast or show any sign of mourning during these days, even if it is a memorial day.

While there is no obligation to make feasts or a commemorative dinner, it is fitting to sing Pizmonim and zemirot during the meals on these days. Some homes are accustomed to eat all kinds of pastries such as mamul, gheraibe, karabij, sambusak ,(borekas), sufganiot ,(fried donuts), and dairy foods.

One may not engage in any activity one half an hours before Hanukkiah lighting time, such as eating a meal, studying, or any other activity that might distract one from lighting the Hanukkiah on time.

It is customary for women to refrain from doing housework during the first and last day of Hanukkah and especially during Rosh Hodesh.

It is also customary for women to refrain from doing any work during the first half hour in which the Hanukkiah is lit. Some say that even men should refrain from doing any work during that time, but one may be lenient for men when it is necessary.

Hanukkah presents and gifts are not a Sephardic custom.

##### 2. Who is obligated to light?

Men and women are obligated to light, but they may light for one another. It is the Sephardic custom that the father lights for the entire family. (In the absence of the father, the mother should take the responsibility upon herself to light.) Therefore, children even above the age of bar or bat missva should not light by themselves, although they may participate by lighting the additional candles of a given night (beyond the first candle).

Children under five years of age may light only the "shamash" – the extra candle. Sephardic children in dormitories of high schools, colleges, universities or yeshivot - even in different time zones - that are supported financially by their parents do not have to light their own Hanukkiah. Those wishing to go beyond the required halakha, may light but without the blessings.

If one is a staying as a guest in their friend's home and is not contributing financially towards their stay or is contributing something nominal, he can fulfill his obligation through his friend's lighting, and does not have to contribute towards the oil or candles being used for Hanukkah. Therefore married children who are staying over by their parents or in-laws as guests and are not contributing financially towards their stay, do not have to contribute towards the oil or candles being used and can fulfill their obligation through the household lighting. However, if they choose to, they may light candles without a blessing. If invited to by their hosts, they may

light the candles for that household with the blessings.

##### 3. Where do we place the Hanukkiah?

The Hanukkiah should be placed in open view of as many people as possible. If possible it should be placed on the left side of the door from without; if that is not possible, place it from within opposite the side where the mezuzah is.

If the door does not face the street where people walk, one may put it near the window. This also applies to people living in apartments above the first floor. However, for people living higher than the third floor - if the window is either not in the public view or it is not possible to put it near the window, then the Hanukkiah should be placed on the dinner table, where the family members will notice it.

The Hanukkiah must be placed at least one foot off, and no more than forty feet, above the floor.

All candles must be placed in a straight line, and should be at the same height, except the "shamash". Therefore Hanukkiah that are multileveled may not be used.

##### 4. What kind of Hanukkiah may be used?

Straight Hanukkiah made out of glass, metal, or wood may be used. Hanukkiah made out of clay should be avoided. Any type of oil, wax, or fat may be used to light the Hanukkiah. Olive oil, however, is preferred.

All Hanukkiah should be cleaned every night after usage. An electric Hanukkiah is not acceptable and cannot be used to

fulfill the Missva of Hanukkah. If someone wishes to light an electric Hanukkiah in addition to the regular Hanukkiah he may do so - but without the blessings.

5. How, and how many do we light?

When facing the Hanukkiah, one should place the candles beginning from the right side of the Hanukkiah and start lighting from left to right. When adding a candle each night, it should be added to the left of the candle of the prior day. One then recites the blessings and start lighting the new candle. The lighting must take place where the Hanukkiah will remain; it is not to be moved once lit.

On the first night one candle is lit plus the "Shamash" (the extra candle). On each successive night another candle is added until the eighth night when eight candles are lit, plus the "Shamash" for a total of nine.

It is the custom of some Syrian Jews, descendants of the Franco-Spanish Jews, to begin by lighting the first night with two candles plus the "Shamash" – for a total of three candles, and on each successive night another candle is added until the eighth night when nine candles are lit plus the Shamash for a total of ten.

It is a Sephardic custom to light the candles with an extra candle (ner nosaf) and not to use the "Shamash" at all to light any of the Hanukkah candles. One should be careful to light the "Shamash" after all the Hanukkah candles have been lit.

6. When do we light?

The proper time to light is by nightfall, which is 15 minutes after sunset, with the whole family

gathered together. If by the time the whole family would be gathered is past the designated time to light, then the family should light with the blessings as soon as they can get together. The Hanukkiah should contain enough oil, or wax to burn for 30 minutes after nightfall.

On Friday evening, the Hanukkiah should be lit before the Shabbat candles, thus the Hanukkiah should burn at least for seventy minutes after the proper time for lighting.

On a Saturday night the proper time to light is after Shabbat's end, even though it is already after nightfall. In the Synagogue, the Hanukkiah is lit prior to Habdalah. At home the Hanukkiah should be lit after Habdalah.

The Hanukkiah should burn for at least thirty minutes after nightfall. Therefore, If the candles blew out by themselves before the required 30 minutes after nightfall, one is not required to rekindle them, but one may re-light them by using the "sham ash" or an extra candle only (however not from one of the other Hanukkah candles), without saying the blessings.

Since it is forbidden to use the light emanating from the Hanukkiah even to learn Torah, it is therefore customary to have the "Shamash" candle to serve that purpose, should it be necessary.

If, for a compelling reason, one was not able to light the Hanukkiah on time, or if no one lit the Hanukkiah for him, one may light the Hanukkiah throughout the night with all the required blessings.

7. What are the blessings?

On the first night, before lighting the candles, one should recite the following Berakhot in the order:

1. Barukh Ata.... Asher Kideshanu Bemissvotav Vessivanu Lehadliq Ner Hanukkah. (Note: do not recite "shel Hanukkah")

2. Barukh Ata.... She'asa Nissim Laabotenu Bayamim Hahem Bazeman Haze.

3. Barukh Ata... Sheheheyanu Veqiyemanu Vehigianu Lazeman Haze.

On subsequent nights one should recite only the first two blessings. However, if someone forgot to recite the third blessing on the first night, he may recite it on the second, or any subsequent night.

When someone has finished lighting the first candle, he may not recite the blessings any more for that night. One who has lit candles in the synagogue with the blessings may do so again at home for his household. However, if he lives alone, he should not repeat the blessings of "She'asa Nissim" and "Sheheheyanu" at home, as he has already fulfilled his obligation concerning these blessings.

After reciting the blessings and lighting the candles it is customary to recite "Hanerot Halalu" and "Mizmor Shir Hanukkat Habayit".

8. What do we pray on Hanukkah?

During the entire eight days of Hanukkah, one is obligated to recite the full Hallel with its blessings. "Yehi Shem" is recited in both Shahrit and Minha; Tahanun is omitted.

The paragraph of "Al Hanissim" continuing with "Bimey Matitya" is added during the Amida in the blessing of "Modim" and in the

Birkat Hamazon in the blessing of "Nodeh".

### **Hanukkah Customs of Aleppo Jewry - Jewish Press Profile by Tovia Preschel**

The Jewish community of Aleppo, Syria is one of the oldest in the world. The Jews of that community identify their city as the Biblical Aram Zova and call it in short "Arez". There was a very ancient synagogue in the city which served the community for hundreds of years until it was burned by the Arabs during the anti-Jewish disturbances, which followed the United Nations decision of November 29, 1947 to partition Palestine.

In this synagogue were kept old Bible manuscripts including the famous Aleppo Codex, which was written more than one thousand years ago. During the anti-Jewish disturbances the codex was desecrated and damaged. It is now in Jerusalem.

Great scholars resided in Aleppo. Here taught Baruch Ben Shmuel of Aleppo (known also as Rabbi Baruch of Greece), an early commentator of the Talmud, who came to Aleppo from Southern Europe. Here settled Rabbi Yoseph ben R. Yehuda, a disciple of the Rambam. For him, and such like him, Maimonides wrote his Guide of the Perplexed.

Rabbis and Kabbalists who were active in Aleppo during the last five hundred years include R. Mordecai HaKohen, author of Siftey Kohen, a commentary on the Pentateuch; R. Hayyim Kohen, who wrote Mekor Hayyim, a Kabbalistic commentary on the Shulhan Arukh, and members of the Laniado family, among them Rabbi Shmuel, popularly known as Ba'al Hakelim on account of his Keli Hemda, Keli Yakar, and Keli Paz, commentaries on

various books of the Bible, and Rabbi Rafael Shlomo, author of Beth Din Shel Shelomo (responsa) and HaMa'alot LiShelomo (homiletics).

For a period, Aleppo was a very important trading center. Descendants of exiles from Spain and Jews who had emigrated from Southern Europe, especially from France and Italy were very prominent in the city's commerce. Like many old communities, Aleppo Jews have some unusual customs. On Shavuot, for example they read in addition to the Book of Ruth, the Book of Proverbs (Mishlei).

The descendants of the Spanish exiles who settled in Aleppo used to light on Hanukkah an additional light, which they placed near the Shamash. Their procedure, was as follows: On the first night they kindled one light and two shamashim, on the second night they lit two lights and two shamashim and so forth. On the last night eight lights and two shamashim were kindled.

I heard of this custom many years ago from two Jerusalem Rabbis who hailed from Aleppo. The late Rabbi Ovadia Hadaya, the author of several books and long time member of the Chief Rabbinate of the land of Israel, and the late Rabbi Nathan Salem, whose father was a well known Jerusalem Kabbalist.

They told me of a tradition according to which the ancestors of the Sephardi Jews of Aleppo wandered for months - after their expulsion from Spain - in search of a place of refuge. When finally they settled in Aleppo, they decided to light an additional light on Hanukkah in thanksgiving to the Almighty.

Many Aleppo Jews of Sephardi descent continue to observe this

custom. Even in New York there are families who kindle the additional light. However there are others who stopped keeping this Minhag. "I stopped observing this custom when I didn't find it mentioned anywhere," I was told by the late Rabbi Ezra Attie who headed Yeshiva Porat Yosef of Jerusalem and was a descendant of Aleppo Sephardim.

Another Hanukkah custom of the Aleppo Jews is to light twelve lights every morning, during the days of Hanukkah (but of course not on Shabbat) in the synagogue.

They are called Nerot HaNessi'im - the "Lights of the Chieftains" for on Hanukkah we read from the Torah about the sacrifices offered by the chieftains of the twelve tribes at the dedication of the Tabernacle.

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