



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

## LATEST NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

### Mazel Tov!

Mazel Tov to Aryeh & Annette Kahan on the occasion of their son, Mikey's, Bar Mitzvah last Shabbos.

Mazel Tov the Rov and Rebbetzin on the occasion of their Grandson's Bar Mitzvah in London this Shabbos.

Families David and Dresner invite the Kehilla to celebrate the Vort of Sherelle and Avi on Sunday 21 Dec. '08/24 Kislev 5769, 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., at Aish, 15 Bury New Road (near Milky Dream).

### Chanuka/Holiday Minyanim

Throughout the Chanuka and holiday period we will be holding two minyanim for Shacharis, at 7.10am and 8.20am and a single, early, minyan for Maariv. There will be no late minyan for Maariv.

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### The Kiss of Dot

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

Often, it is hard to discern between acts of good intent, and of good intent mired with selfishness. This week we read two similar stories that are in reality very different and have very different endings. Tamar was the wife of Yehudah's son, Er. When he died, Yehudah gave her his next son, Onan. Tamar knew that she was destined to mother the seed of Yehudah, and that seed would eventually father King David. But Onan died too. And Yehudah refused to give her his last son Shailah. The custom in that day was that as long as the widow was not totally relinquished from the deceased's family, she would not be allowed to marry an outsider. Tamar was desperate for Yehudah's seed. She hid her face, dressed as a prostitute, and seduced Yehudah himself. Yehudah, unaware of who his courtesan was, reacted in horror when he was told that Tamar was with child. "Take her and have her put to death," he ruled. Tamar's plans were almost for naught. She would never bear the seed that she envisioned.

The wife of Potiphar also had a vision. She saw in the stars that she and Yoseph would breed greatness. She tried to seduce him. She too wanted to fulfill her vision. But Yoseph refused time and time again. He finally fled together with her visions.

Rav Yeruchom Levovitz asks a powerful question. Both of these women had visions, and though their methodology was unconventional, why is there so much disparity as to their status? Tamar is viewed as the righteous woman who desperately wanted a child from Yehudah. She is known as the Mother of The Kingdom of David. Yet the wife of Potiphar is treated as an adulterous two-timer who tries to seduce Yoseph and then throws him into jail. In what way is she so different than Tamar?

*Rabbi Boruch Ber Lebowitz, Rosh Yeshiva in Kaminetz, Poland, had a difficult time getting his older daughter married off. When an outstanding student of his accepted a marriage proposal, Reb Boruch Ber was overjoyed. He knew this young man to be a both a scholar and gentleman. As engagements in those days would*

*endure for a long time, he suggested to the young man to continue his studies, uninterrupted, in a distant city.*

*One could not imagine the shock Reb Boruch Ber had when two months later a package arrived. In it was the watch and other gifts that Reb Boruch Ber had given the young man on his engagement. An enclosed note tersely stated that for personal reasons the engagement was off. The bride and her parents were both devastated.*

*A few years later Rabbi Lebowitz called in three of his closest students to a private meeting. "I'd like you to read this letter and tell me if I have infected it with my personal pain," he told them. The students read the letter and stood in awe. A community was seeking a recommendation concerning an applicant for a rabbinical position there. The scholar had learned in Kaminetz and asked Rabbi Lebowitz for a letter of recommendation. The candidate was none other than the formerly engaged student. Rav Lebowitz wrote a beautiful letter, flowing with praise, but was worried that perhaps his personal bitterness may have dulled the response. He called his best students to approve. They knew of the incident and were amazed by the praises Rabbi Lebowitz had written.*

Rav Yeruchom explains: every action has a litmus test that reveals true intentions: Failure.

When one fails does one look to heaven and say, "G-d, I tried to do the job my way. I failed. Now it is up to you. "Or does one scream and curse and perhaps even maim and destroy to get his way? Many people begin noble missions, but when they fail, personal vendettas arise.

Tamar failed, and when Yehudah sentenced her for becoming pregnant from out of the family she did not embarrass him by pointing an accusatory finger. She just showed two items he left

## The Week Ahead

### שבת פרשת וישב

Candle Lighting	No later than 3.35pm
Mincha	3.40pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
<b>סוף זמן ק"ש</b>	10.14am
Mincha 1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> Minyan	1.30pm / 3.45 pm
Rov's Mishnayos Shiur	4.15 pm
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	4.50 pm
Ovos Ubonim	5.50 pm

### Chanuka Times

Shacharis Sunday - Friday	7.10am/8.20am
Mincha & Maariv Sun - Thurs	3.40pm

Please note: no late minyan for Maariv

behind and said, "I am pregnant from the owner of this staff, seal and wrap." Fortunately, Yehudah admitted his folly, and she was spared. Her children were King David's grandparents.

Potiphar's wife's vision ended as Yoseph fled. She could have said, "G-d, I tried to fulfill the dream, now it's up to you." (It actually was, as Yoseph married her daughter!) She didn't. She reacted with a vengeance and accused him falsely. Yoseph was sent to prison. Potiphar's wife is forever branded as an evil temptress.

Sometimes the experience of failure destroys the nobility of mission. Only those acts that are bred with purity of purpose remain unscathed. They continue to flourish with honor in the face of adversity. Ultimately, they succeed, and we reap the fruits of that success for years to come.

### **Oh Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel!**

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

I can recall shrinking in shame when in public high school choir we would sing the one token Jewish song, "Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel". It always seemed embarrassingly unsophisticated and who amongst us knew it wasn't? So now, years later, maybe we can indulge ourselves with a brief appreciation of just how not silly that little dreidel is.

Our sages say, "If we are not prophets, we are the children of prophets." That means that if loyal Jews over the course of many generations have engaged in a given practice, there must be some extremely deep reason. Any thing deemed "classic" usually has an appeal to all ages and types. Both a child and an elder must be able to appreciate it on his own level. So it is with the dreidel.

On the most infantile level it is a spinning top that captures the child's imagination by its color and gyro abilities. The next oldest child may be fascinated by the opportunity to play a game and collect nuts and/or pennies. That's great. A slightly more mature youngster may already begin to appreciate the letters on the dreidel, NUN, GIMEL, HEY, SHIN. Kids spend months in kindergarten learning to distinguish between a NUN and a GIMEL. It's a little like the difference between a slightly high-heeled shoe and a flat heel. It takes some training to spot it quickly enough to read well. Then the budding scholar will report that the letters stand for, NUN-Nes, GIMEL-Gadol, HEY-Haya, SHIN-Sham: "A great miracle happened there!" How might the seasoned scholar view this simple child's game?

The Bnei Yisaschar teaches that the letters on the dreidel hint to the entirety of Jewish History. Represented there are the strategic forces of the four exiles. What is an exile? How does it begin? When does it end? The Jews are sitting in Israel with a Temple and a G-d and all is well until we start to wonder if maybe the idolatry of Babylonia is not just a bit more spicy and fun. Before long this curiosity becomes a national obsession till a horde of idol worshippers descend upon us and dominates for a time until we "get it".

What does it mean to "get it"? Someone told me that his father once caught him smoking in the garage. He wisely did not take the cigarettes away? He bought a carton and made him smoke continually until his face turned green and he was coughing violently. After that he never wanted another cigarette.

When the dreidel drops, one culture asserts its influence and a class in exile "X" has begun. NUN is for Nefesh, the soul. The Babylonians who destroyed the first temple tried to enforce that Jews should bow to their idols in order to contaminate the soul of the people. The end of that 70 year period was dominated by the Persians and it was the wicked Haman's wish to destroy every man woman and child physically and therefore the next letter is GIMEL, for Goof, the body. The letter SHIN or SIN as it can be pronounced when the dot is on the left-side, stands for Sechel- Intellect. The Greeks wished to offer a competitive culture with the rigors of science and literature to replace Torah learning and the catharsis of sport and theatre to supplant prayer and kindness. They were largely successful at seducing the minds of many a Jew till the heroes of the Chanukah story prevailed. Then we confront the letter HEY- which is for HaKol, everything. Rome, Edom introduced nothing new. They incorporated the worst of the others. Therefore for the duration of this brutal 2000 year old exile we have met the likes of the Spanish Inquisition where the Jewish Soul was tested with the demand to be obedient to some idolatrous form. Then

there have been the Hitler types that have wanted to eliminate any breathing Jew. Now we face with the "enlightenment" an exile of assimilation whereby the nuances on the op-ed pages are promoted beyond the wisdom of our sages and so we melt into oblivion.

It's no mistake that those letters add up to 358 which spells NACHASH, the primordial enemy, and also MOSHIACH, the climax of history. If only that point on the bottom (that's us) loyally aligns with the miraculous "Hand on High" and avoids toppling again... Oh Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel!

### **Everyday Miracles**

Rabbi Pinchas Avruch (Torah.org)

There is a peculiar contrast between the Talmud's relation of the miracle of Chanuka and that which we emphasize in the "Al HaNissim" addition to the Amidah and Birkas HaMazon. When the Talmud (Shabbos 21b) relates the essence of Chanuka, it skips the entire story of the war against the Greeks and presents the miracle of the lone jug of oil found intact in the Bais HaMikdash which contained one day's oil but burned for eight, until new oil could be produced. In our prayers, however, we thank G-d for delivering the mighty into the hands of the weak and focus on the miraculous military victory, but do not mention the miracle of the Menora. We do declare that in the aftermath of the triumph, "Your children came to the Holy of Holies of Your House, cleansed Your Temple, purified the site of Your Holiness and kindled the lights in the Courtyard of Your Sanctuary; and they established these eight days of Chanuka to express thanks and praise to Your great Name." We reference the candles and the holiday, but do not tie the two together via the miracle of the lights. The sole Rabbinic mitzvah of this festival is the candle lighting to remember the eight day miracle. How can our prayers ignore that? Furthermore the miracle was not eight days, it was seven - the oil found was one day's worth, so that first day involved no miracle. Why is it, too, commemorated?

Rabbi Moshe notes that when we contemplate the miracle of one day's oil burning for eight - that a miracle is G-d's decision to depart from His ordinary standard, known as "nature" - we start to realize the concept that "nature" is really the category of miracles to which we are privy on a regular, daily basis, and that the very flammability of oil is no less miraculous. In fact, the very concept of G-d's creation and the "nature" that comes with it is more miraculous than the rare departures from the norm. The Talmudic paradigm of appreciation of all of creation being truly miraculous was exhibited by Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa (Ta'anis 25a) who, late Friday afternoon consoled his daughter who accidentally bought vinegar instead of oil for the Shabbos lamps. "He who commanded oil to burn will command vinegar to burn," and it did, throughout the entire Shabbos. One is not allowed to derive personal benefit from a miracle - and Rabbi Chanina derived pleasure from the Shabbos lamps - but for Rabbi Chanina, the burning of oil was no less wondrous, so this was not, by his standards, a miracle. For most of humanity, though, they are all miracles: the burning of vinegar, one day's oil burning for eight...and, indeed, the very fact that oil burns at all.

In reality, all eight days the oil burned were miraculous. Thus, concludes Rabbi Feinstein, our prayers need only mention the lighting of the candles. If the liturgy mentioned the miracle of the extended burning of the oil, the miracle of the very flammability is negated. By simply declaring that the Menora was kindled, we give testimony to the miracle of all creation.

The "Al HaNissim" addition is inserted into the "Modim" blessing of the Amidah, which includes our gratitude for "your wonders and favors at all time" - reflexive breathing, a beating heart, five functioning senses, arms and legs that are ready and waiting for my brain's command, just to name a few. The miracles of Chanuka themselves remind us of just how ordinary they really are by compelling us to appreciate the greater miracles from which we derive benefit every moment of every day.