

Lead Tidbit cont. from Front Page

G-d is our senior partner. We are the junior partner. We remain faithful to Him and He will always be on our team. We do what He wants us to do. We try not to do things that He has told us not to do.

There are documented cases of our failure due to our going against His instructions.

And, B"H, there are documented cases of wonderful victories because we have lived up to the agreement.

Very important: we must not take credit for success when it is not warranted. We must acknowledge His participation in our victories.

But we need to understand when we have done our share and can also take a victory lap. And this includes acknowledging the credit due to others who have properly and successfully teamed up with G-d.

There is a Chanuka song that begins with MI Y'MALEIL... One version seems to overdo our human share in the glory of victory. Another version, the "frum" one, gives all the credit and thanks to G-d.

Both versions are lacking the true understanding of our partnership agreement. Saying hip, hip, hooray for the Chashmona'im - as well as Kol HaKavod Tzahal in our time - without thanking G-d for our success and for those who were instrumental in achieving the successes - is to miss the point. And those who credit only G-d do not understand this marvelous partnership .

grandmother brought identical dolls for the two girls and offered Rivka first choice.

WORD of the MONTH cont. from p.2

A weekly TT feature to help clarify practical and conceptual aspects of the Jewish Calendar, thereby enhancing our appreciation of G-d's gift to us of HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem...

Rosh Chodesh Tevet will be on Thursday and Friday. (Roughly, 3 of 4 years, Tevet has two days R"Ch; about 1 of 4 have a single day. K'seder and Shaleim years mean 30 days in Kislev and 2 days R"Ch Tevet. Chaseir years mean 29 days and 1 day R"Ch.

הַמוֹלֵד יִהְיֶה לַיְלִיל חֲמִישִׁי (Wed. midnight), בְּשַׁעַת שְׁתַּיִם-עֶשְׂרֵה בְּלֵילָה,
חֲמִישִׁים וְתֵשַׁע דְּקוֹת וְעֶשְׂרֵה חֲלָקִים.

which is Thursday, Dec. 17, 12:39am

רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ טִבַּת יִהְיֶה בְּיוֹם חֲמִישִׁי וּבְיוֹם שְׁשִׁי
הַבָּא עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לְטוֹבָה:

She look repeated back and forth between the two dolls and apparently found no differences. She looked up at her grandma and said: I'll take Devora's. But seriously, folks... Parents and grandparents (aunts and uncles too) have to be very careful not to cause jealousy among siblings to rear its ugly head. This does not necessarily mean identical presents, but it means thinking carefully and acting wisely.

Although it is Chanuka, there is an interesting connection between the sedra and Pesach. (And, one stanza of Ma'oz Tzur is about our Egyptian experience.) K'TONET PASIM, the coat which Yaakov gave to Yosef, the coat that caused the brothers to be jealous of Yosef, is described differently in various sources. Rashi links the term PASIM to the colorful dyed wool known as KARPAS. Well, there is a Pesach connection, but what's the point? The point is that KARPAS - in addition to many other symbolisms and thought-triggering reminders - reminds us of the coat which caused the jealousy which led to the sale of Yosef into Egypt which subsequently brought Yaakov and the whole family down to Egypt and into oppression and slavery. On the night we celebrate our redemption from Egypt, we give more than a passing thought to that which brought us down to Egypt in the first place. This is a heavy, serious task for a tiny sprig of celery which has already reminded us of so much.

Levi - Second Aliya || p'sukim - 37:12-22

The brothers are tending sheep near Sh'chem. Yaakov sends Yosef to them. A stranger (some say, the

angel Gavriel) helps him find them.

(In the whole story of Yosef and his brothers, one can see that G-d has a plan which proceeds with the unknowing help of the brothers and other individuals. And yet, each person involved acts of his own free will, and is therefore accountable for his actions.)

When the brothers see Yosef coming, they (some say, Shimon and Levi) suggest killing him. Reuven talks them out of it by suggesting that they not spill his blood, but throw him into a pit instead. The Torah testifies that Reuven really intended to save Yosef.

A point must be made about the concluding pasuk of this Aliya, which gives credit to Reuven for saving Yosef. Commentaries say that Reuven could have talked the brother out of the whole thing; instead, he suggested the snake-and scorpion-infested pit. And, Yosef wasn't saved. Nonetheless, Reuven is credited for his intention to save Yosef.

Rashi says that Reuven truly intended to come back and save Yosef - that's good - but his reason was that he, as oldest, would be blamed for anything that happened to Yosef - that's not really a nice reason. Nonetheless, he gets the credit for the good deed he planned on doing - even though it wasn't accomplished AND even though his motives were not pure. This gives us something to think about. How much credit must there be for proper motives, and for actual success.

Shlishi - Third Aliya 14 p'sukim - 37:23-36

When Yosef arrives, the brothers remove his coat and throw him into a deep pit. The brothers sit to eat. (This is considered a sign of callousness towards their brother and what they have done.) When a caravan of Ishmaelites approaches, Yehuda suggests that it would be wrong to kill Yosef (Reuven's intentions notwithstanding, the brothers expected Yosef to die in the pit); they should rather get rid of him by selling him into slavery. Through a series of transactions, Yosef ends up in Egypt as a slave to Potifar. When Reuven returns to the scene and discovers Yosef missing, he rends his garment and expresses his distress to the others. The brothers slaughter a goat, smear Yosef's multi-colored, striped coat in its blood, and send it to Yaakov to identify.

SDT: Commentaries point out that just as Yaakov had deceived his father with a goat and a garment (goat & coat), so too was he deceived with a goat and a garment. The dish prepared by Rivka for Yaakov to serve his father was made from goat-meat. Rivka dressed Yaakov in goat-skins and in Eisav's special garment (which some say was stolen/taken from Nimrod and that it was the original leather garment that G-d had made for Adam and Chava). The brothers took Yosef's special garment - the K'tonet Pasim - and smeared it with goat's blood. This is a stark example of "Mida k'neged mida" - measure for measure, mentioned

earlier.

Yaakov is inconsolable. (This is considered an indication that Yaakov subconsciously knew that Yosef was alive; one naturally accepts consolation for the dead after a time, but not for the missing - think about the families of Israel's missing soldiers; the rest of us cannot imagine their anguish.)

Because of Yosef's story, Vayeishev is designated each year as SHABBAT SH'VUYEI V'NE'EDAREI TZAHA"L - the Shabbat for Israel's captives and missing.

SDT: Rashi gives us another aspect of the "Measure for Measure" punishment of Yaakov. The pasuk says that he "mourned for his son MANY DAYS." Rashi says that it was 22 years! Yosef was 17 when he was sold. He was 30 when he stood before Par'o. That's 13. Seven years of plenty and the first two years of famine before father and son were reunited. That makes 22 years that Yaakov was without Yosef. This, says Rashi, is the exact length of time that Yaakov was away from Yitzchak. It includes the 20 years with Lavan, a year and a half in Sukkot, and six months in Bet El before Yaakov returned to his father's house. Remember that Yaakov had various good excuses, nonetheless...

The measure for measure idea continues to the next generation. Baal HaTurim points out that just as Yehuda asked his father HAKEIR NA, recognize this garment as Yosef's, so too was he asked HAKEIR NA by his daughter-in-law Tamar. He was deceived exactly the way he deceived Yaakov. And there was a goat and garment in the Yehuda-Tamar story too. See further.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya

30 p'sukim - 38:1-30

[P> 38:1 (30)] Subsequently, Yehuda leaves home and befriends an Adullamite named CHIRA.

SDT: Why is the story of Yosef interrupted to tell us about Yehuda's situation? Rashi tells us that Yehuda was no longer looked up to by his brothers. After they saw the terrible effect on Yaakov of the Yosef business, they blamed Yehuda for not talking them out of the whole idea. Hence the term "And Yehuda went down from his brothers..." has a double meaning.

There he meets and marries the daughter of Shu'a, who bears him three sons. He marries off his eldest, Er to Tamar. When Er dies, the next brother Onan, marries his brother's widow. The Torah tells us that Onan refused to have a child with Tamar, because that child would "belong" (so to speak) to Er. This, G-d took seriously (so to speak) and Onan also dies, Tamar is left to wait for the third son, Shela.

Then Yehuda's wife dies. Yehuda travels to the area where Tamar lives. When she hears of his impending arrival and realizes that she has not been given to Shela yet, she disguises herself. Yehuda, thinking she is a prostitute, sleeps with her. She asks and receives three items as security that he will send her payment (a goat). When it becomes known that Tamar is pregnant, Yehuda is summoned. Assuming that she has acted sinfully, he is prepared to have her punished. Tamar produces the

three items and announces that she is pregnant by their owner.

SDT: The Gemara teaches that one must avoid embarrassing another at all costs - it is better to be thrown into a fiery furnace than embarrass someone. We learn this from Tamar, who did not denounce Yehuda, even though she would have been considered guilty of immorality had Yehuda not owned up to his actions.

[Commentaries explain that prior to Matan Torah, any close relative could take the childless wife of the deceased; after the Torah was given, only a brother qualifies for YIBUM.]

Yehuda recognizes that he is the guilty one, not Tamar, and he admits it. She gives birth to twins (one extending his hand first, the other actually being born first). They are named Peretz (ancestor of King David) and Zerach.

Note the repeat of the confused firstborn theme. It pervades the Book of B'reishit.

OBSERVATION... Yaakov deceives his father with a garment (Eisav's) and fans the jealousy of his son's against Yosef with the "coat of many colors". He is deceived (and devastated) by that same coat when the brothers bring it back to him all bloodied. Yehuda is "troubled" by his garment which he gave to Tamar as one of the three securities for his promise to pay her with goats. (P'tilim, says Rashi, refers to Yehuda's cloak.) Yosef, the victim (but not completely free of guilt in the matter) has his coat grabbed by Potifar's wife. Yosef leaves it in her hands as he runs from the house; the coat becomes the damning piece

of evidence against him. Interesting, no?

Chamishi - 5th Aliya 6 p'sukim - 39:1-6

[S> 39:1 (23)] In "meanwhile back at the ranch" style, the Torah returns us to the story of Yosef. Yosef serves in Potifar's house and brings success to his master. He is well-liked by all, and is given much responsibility. Then the Torah makes a point of telling us that Yosef was very good-looking.

SDT: *The Midrash says that Yosef was aware of his looks and became too comfortable in Potifar's house. Things were going well, he had good food and drink, and he began "curling his hair". G-d (so to speak) said to Yosef: Your father is in agony over your disappearance and supposed demise and you are enjoying yourself? I shall make things rough for you too.*

SDT: *The portion of Yosef in Potifar's house is juxtaposed to the episode of Yehuda and Tamar, and is further linked because the parsha of Yosef is S'tuma, meaning it continues on the same line (in a Sefer Torah) as the previous parsha (Yehuda & Tamar) ends. The standard explanation is that the sale of Yosef caused Yehuda to lose the respect of his brothers. Rashi gives another, intriguing, explanation. He says that it is to equate Tamar and Potifar's wife - both of whom acted "for the sake of Heaven". Potifar's wife, says Rashi, saw via astrology that she was destined to have descendants that came from Yosef. She thought that she was the one to produce them and so she tried to seduce him. She was just a bit off; it was, in fact, her daughter As'nat that would bear*

Yosef's children.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya 17 p'sukim - 39:7-23

Potifar's wife casts her eye upon Yosef. She repeatedly attempts to seduce him. His constant refusal angers her.

She grabs him on a day when no one else is in the house. Yosef flees, leaving his coat behind. (This is the second time his coat has been left in the hands of others!) Potifar's wife denounces Yosef to all who will listen, and Potifar has no choice but to have Yosef imprisoned. (He probably believed that Yosef was innocent, so at least he didn't have him killed.)

G-d "favors" Yosef in prison, and Yosef becomes well-liked and respected there too. Even in his troubled circumstances, Yosef is watched over favorably by G-d.

SDT: *Commentaries see the episode of Potifar's wife as an appropriate punishment for Yosef: (a) having been vain about his good looks, (b) having reported to his father that his brothers had been "lifting their eyes" to the local girls, and (c) experiencing libelous accusations against himself, as he had reported the "evil-doings" of the brothers to their father. Baal HaTurim adds that Yosef spent 10 years in prison corresponding to the 10 brothers he reported on.*

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 23 p'sukim - 40:1-23

[P> 40:1 (23)] The last portion of Vayeishev tells of the dreams of the wine steward and the baker, both of whom had been imprisoned by Par'o for misdemeanors. Both dream on the same night and awake in morning very agitated. After Yosef interprets the wine steward's dream in a positive manner, the baker asks Yosef to interpret his dream as well. Yosef predicts death for him. Both dreams come true: the wine steward is restored to his position of honor and the baker is hanged. Yosef asks the wine steward to remember him to Par'o, but he forgets Yosef and his promise to him.

Rashi tells us that Yosef was to spend another two years in prison for relying on the Wine Steward to get him out of prison. This raises the question in our minds of the line between BITACHON, trust in G-d, and HISHTADLUS, effort a person expends to get himself out of a tough situation. Could it not have been viewed that G-d set up the whole dream situation with the Wine Steward and the Baker, so that Yosef would do exactly what he did, and the Wine Steward would then be in a position and willing state of mind to help Yosef and put in the good word to Par'o? Why is Yosef faulted for taking the opportunity to try to get out of prison via the Wine Steward, when one can claim that G-d had sent the Wine Steward to Yosef (so to speak) for exactly that purpose.

It is possible that the spiritual level of Yosef required different behavior than would be reasonable and proper for "the rest of us".

Or... it is possible that under the circumstances, namely that Yosef had just credited G-d repeatedly for his ability to interpret dreams, that the Wine Steward received the "wrong message" from Yosef when Yosef asks him to remember Yosef favorably. Maybe like: "Hey, your G-d can interpret dreams but can't even get you out of this dump without you asking me for a favor". Maybe there is a Chilul HaShem factor to consider here. The specific situation can sometimes dictate or indicate that a specific behavior is called for, even though in other circumstances, the opposite behavior would be appropriate.

Maftir in 2nd Torah 17 p'sukim - Bamidbar 7:1-17

The reading is from the beginning of the Bamidbar 7 (Parshat Naso), with the description of the dedication of the Mishkan, almost a year after the Exodus. The reading begins with the anointing and sanctification of the Mishkan, its furnishings, and vessels, and the gifts of the Leaders of the Tribes to the families of Levi for the transport of the dismantled Mishkan.

It concludes with the gifts and offerings of Nachshon ben Aminadav, leader of Shevet Yehuda (first into the Sea, first in the dedication of the Mishkan), on the first day of Dedication, the first

day of Chanukat HaMizbei'ach.

Some shuls begin the reading of the first day six p'sukim earlier, to include the portion of Birkat Kohanim in the Chanuka reading. The reason (or one of the reasons) is to identify and acknowledge the Chashmona'im as Kohanim.

Haftara - 21 p'sukim Zacharia 2:14-4:7

The special Haftara for Shabbat Chanuka (this year, we must call it the haftara of the first Shabbat Chanuka) is "borrowed" from B'ha'alo't'cha, the Menora being the obvious connection. Chanuka has parallels throughout history.

The opening words of the Haftara are G-d's promise to dwell among us. This is the purpose of having built the Mishkan and the Beit HaMikdash in the first place, and this is the purpose of rededicating it, as we did on Chanuka.

The Haftara contains the vision of olive oil miraculously flowing into the gold menora flanked by olive trees. This vision matches so much of the Chanuka story.

It is also the basis of the emblem of the State of Israel. This is particularly significant in light of the interpretation of the vision. The message to the king, to Jewish leaders in general, is that our success is not measured by might and power, but rather by the spirit of G-d. This was an important

message for the Chashmona'im and it remains a vital message for the leaders of the modern State of Israel.

There is also an implied criticism in the Haftara that can apply to the Chashmona'im's taking the kingship to themselves. We must learn from the negative as well.

FROM THE VIRTUAL DESK OF THE OU VEBBE REBBE

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and the Israel Center.

Q *I always forget whether on Motza'ei Shabbat of Chanuka, we are supposed to light the Chanuka candles before or after Havdala.*

A We will see that it is not the end of the world that you forget. Let us first understand the issues, which revolve around the question of which halachic rules of precedence take precedence when they compete with each other.

The Terumat Hadeshen (I, 60) says that on Motza'ei Shabbat of Chanuka, we light the Chanuka candles before we do Havdala (after doing a basic Havdala in Sh'moneh Esrei). The reason is that we are interested in delaying Havdala, since it ends Shabbat and it is good to have an excuse to push off Shabbat's end. This concept is found in a few contexts. One is in the gemara in Pesachim (105b), which says that at the end of Shabbat, if one has only one cup of wine to be used for either bentching or for Havdala, he waits until after bentching on it to then use it for Havdala. The gemara explains that we anyway want to delay Havdala so that Shabbat does not look like a burden to us. This also explains why, when Yom Tov falls on Motza'ei Shabbat, we recite the b'racha on Kiddush before the one for Havdala (see Rashbam, Pesachim 103b). The Beit Yosef (Orach Chayim 681) cites the

Trumat HaDeshen and also an Avudraham who argues. In the Shulchan Aruch (OC 681:2) he seems to pasken like the Trumat Hadeshen, saying that in shul we light the Chanuka candles first.

However, not everyone agrees. The Taz (681:1) says that the above concept of precedence is overcome by a more weighty consideration: TADIR V'SHE'EINO TADIR, TADIR KODEM (the more regular practice comes first). A famous application of that rule is that Beit Hillel cites it as one of the reasons that during Kiddush, we recite the b'racha on the wine, which is made any time one drinks wine, before the b'racha for Kiddush of Shabbat (B'rachot 51b). We even find this rule regarding Chanuka, as we layn the reading for Rosh Chodesh before that of Chanuka (Tosafot, Shabbat 23b- see there a few possible explanations).

An interesting question of precedence arises in Z'vachim (90b). Is the more common korban brought before the more holy one? The Rambam (T'midin 9:2) understands that the gemara never resolved the issue, and therefore one can do whatever he wants on the matter.

Regarding Motza'ei Shabbat, the Trumat HaDeshen brings another example of pushing off Havdala: we do S'firat HaOmer before Havdala. However, the Taz says that there is a

difference. If we do S'fira first, we will be pushing off the ending of Shabbat. In contrast, since it is forbidden to light candles on Shabbat, lighting Chanuka candles is anyway a way of ushering out Shabbat.

The Taz concedes that regarding Havdala and lighting in shul, the minhag is to do the Chanuka candles first. However, he felt that regarding the house, one should practice what he considered more halachically sound - that (the tadir) Havdala should precede. There may even be reasons to distinguish between the two venues. The Pri Megadim (ad loc.) says that after already having partaken in Havdala in shul, the idea of delaying Shabbat's exit has less weight. Others say that specifically in shul, where many people are found, the pirsumei nisa (publicizing the miracle) element pushes us to hasten the lighting. (There is logic in the opposite direction, which we will not get into.)

It is hard to determine which opinion is correct, so what should one do halacha l'ma'aseh? In shul all agree that we light the candles before Havdala. At home, the prevalent Sephardic minhag is to switch the order and do Havdala first (Kaf Hachayim 681:4; Yalkut Yosef, Moadim p. 236). For Ashkenazim, there is no clear ruling, and the consensus is that one can rule either way (Bi'ur Halacha to 618:2). The minhag may lean in the direction of doing Havdala first.

It seems that a whole lot of people have your minhag: they don't remember what their father did or what they did in years

past, and do first whichever one is ready first. That ends up being quite reasonable. [Ed. note: See Chanuka POP (pull-out pages) for more on this topic.]

Divrei Menachem

Parshat Vayeishev launches the story of Yosef with a not too complimentary account of the young man. For he is described as a seventeen year-old lad who mixed with the children of Ya'akov's handmaids. Rashi adds that Yosef was childish: he dressed his hair and touched up his eyes to appear good-looking.

No wonder then that at this age Yosef's sense of judgment was wanting. Yosef, it appears, openly tattles on his brothers concerning every perceived wrongdoing.

Rashi (B'reishit 37:2) cites the Midrash: Yosef reported to his father that his brothers were guilty of three sins - they ate the flesh of a living animal, they contemptuously called the children of the handmaids 'slaves', and they were suspected of immoral behavior. Clearly Yosef was wrong for he was punished later in kind: After Yosef was sold, the brothers killed a he-goat for its blood (and did not eat it live); Yosef was now sold into slavery; and when in Egypt, "his master's wife cast her eyes upon him."

Yosef was a Tzadik, yet that came with time. Seeing, it appears, is not always believing. No wonder that the Torah commands us not to go astray after our eyes and our rabbis tell us to judge people (if at all) in their merit.

TRIDDLES

Prizes for best solution sets (when awarded) are furnished by Noam Productions and/or Big Deal.

Last issue's (VAYISHLACH) TRiddles:

[1] Aside from this parsha-break in the middle of a pasuk, Vayishlach is full of partial p'sukim.

This TRiddle was born from the rare "parsha break in the middle of a pasuk" that occurs in Parshat Vayishlach. One can view a pasuk interrupted by a parsha-break as two p'sukim (whether of not they are counted as one or two), but more correctly, as two partial p'sukim. Regardless, that was the lead-in to the TRiddle, which can be simplified as **Vayishlach is full of partial p'sukim**. More accurately, Vayishlach has CHELKI (which means partial) p'sukim - not with the definition of the word but using its gimatriya. CHELKI = 8 + 30 + 100 + 10 = 148, the number of p'sukim in Vayishlach. CHELKI is one of the "SIMANIM" for the sedra, as can be found in many Chumashim at the end of the sedra.

Okay, there's a problem here that we didn't discover until now. It affects - actually, invalidates, this TRiddle and the next one. 148 p'sukim and its SIMANIM are from Vayeitzei - not Vayishlach. The parsha-break in the pasuk is in Vayishlach, but the word CHELKI has nothing to do with the sedra.

[2] The final word makes the count redundant

And here is the other TRiddle that relates to the SIMANIM for the pasuk-count of the sedra. Some sedras have one SIMAN and some have two. Vayeitzei has two. The other is MACHANAYIM, 40 + 8 + 50 + 10 + 40 = 148. MACHANAYIM is the final word in Vayeitzei and the count of the p'sukim. We are one week off on this one too. Sorry.

What bracha do you say on a dreidel?

[3] Don, Zevulun, and Naftali are doubly a part of this

Sometime after the birth of Binyamin, the Torah makes a statement that The sons of Yaakov were twelve. In fact, the statement is the second half of the pasuk that is split by the parsha-break. Dan (whose name we purposely spelled Don - you'll see why in a moment), Zevulun and Naftali were definitely part of the 12, but so were the other 9 sons of Yaakov. What makes these three doubly part of the twelve can be seen by taking the first two letters of Don's and Zevulun's names and the first letter of Naftali's, and put them together to spell DOZEN.

[4] Her half-brother infused with G-d

This one - more than the previous one, can also be for Vayeitzei, but it fits Vayishlach too. DINA's name can be seen as being made up for the name DAN, that's DALET-NUN, with an infusion of the two-letter name of G-d, the YUD and the HEI.

[5] Its final letters are delicious

This refers to the 8-word pasuk within the description of the animal-gifts that aakov sent to Eisev, the pasuk all of whose words end in a MEM-SOFIT, more correctly called by scribes a MEM SATUM, a closed MEM, in contrast to the MEM PATU'ACH, the open - or regular - MEM. Srting the final letters together and we get MMM... which is a sound that conveys the description "delicious". In fact, mm is accepted as a two-letter word in Scrabble competition (meaning it is considered a word according to the OSPD), being an interjection that expresses satisfaction. Just for your information - The first word of the pasuk that follows B'reishit 32:15 also ends with a MEM, giving 9 consecutive words with a MEM. The only example of this in all of Tanach. Bamidbar 29:32 is a 7-word pasuk, all of

Chanuka toy for high school juniors - where?

whose words end in a MEM, and it is preceded by a word ending in a MEM, giving 8 in a row. And D'varim 1:13 starts with the word HAVU which is followed by 8 more words, all of which end in a MEM - and that's it for Tanach.

[6] Left out of his initial message

Yaakov's message to Eisav at the beginning includes mention of his having SHOR, CHAMOR, and TZON. This includes all the kinds of animals in his gifts, except the camels.

Parsha Points to Ponder

VAYEISHEV

1) Why did Yosef's brothers react to his second dream about his dominion over them with jealousy (37:11) and not the first dream (37:8)?

2) Why does the Torah relate that Yosef both FLED and WENT OUTSIDE when fleeing from the temptation of Potifar's wife (39:12)?

3) Why does the Torah refer to Par'o's butler as the BUTLER OF THE KING OF EGYPT while calling the baker simply THE BAKER when describing the fact that they sinned (40:1)?

Parsha Points to Ponder

is prepared by

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Answers are somewhere else in this issue
Look for them, but only after a good pondering

Rabbi Weinreb 's Weekly Column:

Parshat Vayeishev

No Favorites on Chanuka

Envy is surely one of the most insidious of human emotions. It is a self-destructive emotion, because it often leads a person to act against his own best interests, as he attempts to redress the situation that caused him so much envy. It is also damaging to relationships with others, and can have disastrous social effects.

Our sages include envy, along with lust and the search for glory, in their list of items that are sure "to drive a person from this world".

That envy can lead to great national tragedy is one of the lessons of Jewish history. This week's Torah portion describes the deterioration of a family brought about by the envy that Yosef's brothers had toward him. This envy led to the hatred which motivated them to sell him into slavery.

Hatred between brothers, and the consequences of this hatred, is sadly at the root of Jewish history. "Sinat chinam", unwarranted hatred, remains a stubborn problem in the ongoing story of our people.

Interestingly, the Talmud blames Yaakov for the brothers' treacherous deed, and for the future course of the history of his descendants. It comments:

"One should never favor one child over his other children, for it was the mere two shekels worth of silk, which

Yaakov gave to Yosef over and above that which he gave to his other children, that caused the brothers to be envious of him, leading eventually to our forefathers' descent into Egypt."

The multicolored garment, with which Yaakov showed special favor to his son Yosef, provoked the envy of the other brothers, and the rest is Jewish history.

This Shabbat we do not only read the Torah portion of Vayeishev. We also commemorate the first of this year's two Chanuka Sabbatot.

Can we discern any connection between the favoritism demonstrated by Yaakov, and condemned by our Sages, and the festive holiday of Chanuka?

I think we can, and I share this admittedly novel idea with you, dear reader.

The central mitzva of Chanuka is, of course, the lighting of candles each of the eight nights. Strictly speaking, this mitzva can be fulfilled by the head of the household lighting a single candle on behalf of the entire family -- "Ner ish u'bayto," a candle for the master of the house on behalf of the entire household.

However, the prevalent custom is that every member of the family, every child and every boarder and every guest, kindles his or her own Chanuka lights. No favorites here. Everyone gets to light a Chanukiya.

Can it be that this custom arose as an antidote to the tendency some parents have to play favorites among

their children? Can it be that the central message of Chanuka is that all children have an equal role to play in this holiday, and, moreover, in the very destiny of the Jewish people?

I have found no source in our literature for this interpretation. But nonetheless, it feels right to me. I personally find it dramatically significant that on the very Shabbat on which we read of how Yaakov singled out Yosef from his other children, we also celebrate Chanuka and light candles in a manner in which no one child is singled out as superior, in which all have an equal share.

The lessons of Chanuka are many, and perhaps in future columns I will explore some of them with you.

But here is a novel lesson, and a very important one. Envy can wreak havoc in a family. One way for parents to avoid this poisonous emotion is by treating all their children fairly and equally, and not by playing favorites.

One of the wise sayings of Ben Sira, the Jewish sage whose work did not quite make it into the Bible, but which has much to teach us, is that "envy and wrath shorten life..."

Wise parents will take this lesson to heart and not discriminate among their children. Instead, they will learn the lesson of Chanuka and give all children an equal role in celebrating this beautiful holiday, the "festival of lights."

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Chanuka!

Spiritual and Ethical Issues in the Bamidbar Stories "He Zealously Made My [G-D's] Rights Valid" (Bamidbar 25:11){1} by Dr. Meir Tamari

Though the persona in the act of zeal described in the story of Pinchas are different from those in the story of Balak and Bil'am, the two stories are conceptually and ideologically linked and intertwined. The act of Pinchas fittingly forms the conclusion of Parshat Balak. Bil'am's aim of destroying Israel through their willing assimilation into a culture of sexual immorality and idolatry, evoked zealotry for G-d that resulted in an act of unprecedented violence and bloodshed; a scenario repeated in later generations.

Much is lost, spiritually and conceptually, when the Tanach is seen as a collection of books, chapters and stories rather than a single whole. The connection is not only through rabbinic teachings and midrashim, but through the text itself, where different personalities, generations and situations share common spiritual roots and religious aspirations.

"Shimon and Levi, Dina's brothers, each took his sword and they came upon the city confidently and they killed every male" (B'reishit 34:25). They were zealous for the honor of their sister Dina as we read in their answer to Yaakov, "Should our sister be treated as a harlot?" But over and beyond that, that text tells us, "The sons of Yaakov were filled with indignation, for Shechem had committed an outrage in Israel by lying with a daughter of Yaakov. Such a thing may not be done." Some commentators see them as referring to a specifically

Jewish standard of morality, whereas others see here a general morality since the nations of the world had all adjured sexual immorality after the Flood, as such immorality had caused that destruction.

"Shimon and Levi are brothers..., in their rage they killed people" (B'reishit 49:5). Generations, indeed in certain cases, many hundreds of years, separate these words of Yaakov regarding those two of his sons from other events in Jewish history, yet their descendants relived them with different motives and results.

Shimon and Levi grew into two tribes of Israel in Egypt, together they were redeemed from there, stood together at Har Sinai and now were poised to enter the Land. At Shitim when Israel sinned before Baal Peor, these two tribes were again involved, yet with conflicting roles.

"Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon HaKohen [of Levi] saw it and he stood up from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand (25:7); the name of the man who was slain with the Midianite woman was Zimri ben Salu, prince of Bet Avot of the tribe of Shimon" (25:14).

Telling his sons what would befall them in the End of Days, Yaakov said of Shimon and Levi, "Into their conspiracy may my soul not enter and with their congregation do not join, O my honor. I will separate them within Yaakov and disperse them in Israel". However,

when Moshe came to bless the tribes of Israel before his death, he changed radically the envisaged future of Shimon and Levi. Here there are five verses praising the loyalty, piety and selfless devotion of the Leviyim to G-d and their fulfillment of their role as teachers and spiritual guides. In contrast, both to the words of Moshe regarding Levi and of Yaakov's blessing of the tribes, in V'zot HaBracha there is no mention even of the tribe of Shimon.

"Moshe did not bless the tribe of Shimon seeing as they preserved in their actions; the whole tribe was later absorbed and assimilated into Yehuda after the conquest of the Land" (Pesikta de Rabbi Kehana). However, regarding Levi we find that it was only that tribe who zealously joined Moshe's war against those who made the Eigel, while here at Shitim it was Pinchas whose zeal for G-d deflected the plague from Israel. The tribe had learnt to do t'shuva and direct their passion, righteous indignation and zealotry solely for G-d, deserving therefore all the blessings that Moshe gave.

Hundreds of years elapsed and generations passed. Israel settled in its Land and prospered under kings and priests but when perversion, immorality and idolatry became rife, zealotry and a greatness of spirit emerged again from the tribe of Levi. Eliyahu HaNavi, prophet of the whirlwind, repeats acts of zealotry and violence during the reign of king Achav, when Israel was mired in the idolatry and licentiousness brought there by Jezebel, the non-Jewish queen. In the Cave at Horev he says of himself, "I was zealous, verily zealous

for the sake of G-d, Lord of Hosts" (Melakhim Alef 19:10). He brought drought upon Israel to awaken them to their misdeeds, he repaired the altar of G-d that had fallen into disrepair, he killed 450 priests of Baal, and reproached the king and queen when they came to the vineyard of Navot whom they had murdered, saying, "Have you murdered and also come to take possession". Eliyahu HaTishbi is Pinchas" (Midrash Shocheh Tov, Tehillim 43).

Almost a thousand years after Zimri and the sinning at Shitim, idolatry and sexual immorality were again brought to Israel by a foreign nation seeking to divorce its people from G-d. In those days of the Second Temple, the Greek invaders wished to assimilate the Jews into their philosophy, culture and behavioral patterns. They profaned the Bet HaMikdash, demoralized Israel and sought to destroy Torah. "[But] the hands of the sons of Hashmonai [Mattiyahu ben Yochanan] HaKohanim HaGedolim were strengthened. They killed and destroyed those enemies, saved Israel from their hands and appointed a king from the priests and restored kingship to Israel" (Hilkhos Chanuka 3:1). Again the descendants of the tribe of Levi, in their zeal for G-d, saved Israel: "The miracles that You performed in those days at this season through the Your holy priests" (Al Hanisim).

"How is it that the Kohanim, the descendants of Aharon, who love peace and pursue peace, should be the ones who led the revolt, killed the mityavanim, and fought the wars that broke the yoke of Greece and led to the purification of the Bet HaMikdash? When everybody else was filled with

despair and lost all hope before the evil decrees of Greece, the hearts of the Hashmonai and his sons were filled with zeal and devotion for the Sanctification of G-d's Name. The overflowing zealotry itself was a miracle caused by the pure oil that was in the Heichal so that they came to the miracle of the battles" (Shem MiShmuel).

Chanuka, Eliyahu and Pinchas - zealotry for G-d and for holiness!

CHIZUK AND IDUD

(for Olim & not-yet-Olim)

VAYESHEV YA'AKOV B'ERETZ M'GUREI AVIV. "And Ya'akov dwelt in the land in which his father sojourned" (Bereishit 37:1). Rav Menachem Mendel Kasher, in his Torah Sh'lema, cites a peculiar Midrash on this verse: "Ya'akov said: 'The land that my fathers desired to live in, I won't live in?' ... From here we learn that one who does not live in Eretz Israel is considered as one who worships false gods."

The Midrash appears to be a non sequitur. How does the fact that Ya'akov's father and grandfather desired to live in Eretz Israel make someone who lives outside of Israel comparable to an idolator?


The Midrash is teaching us a fundamental lesson. To have dreams, desires, and priorities that are different from those of the many generations of Jews that came before us is tantamount to heresy. A good gauge of our commitment to true Torah values is the extent to which we yearn for that which our forbears yearned.

For centuries Jews worldwide prayed and yearned for the day that would herald the possibility of returning to Eretz Yisrael. If we do not long for the same, we are forsaking the value system of Judaism.

The Rambam in Hilkhos Melakhim 5:11 states: "The great Sages used to kiss the borders of Eretz Israel, kiss its stones, and roll around in its dust." In this "halakha", the Rambam is teaching us that we are supposed to develop a love for Eretz Israel. Just as those who came before us kissed its stones and rolled around in its dust, so too must we cultivate that love and yearning.

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki, Bet Shemesh

TORAH THOUGHTS as contributed by Aloh Naaleh members for publication in the Orthodox Union's 'Torah Insights', a weekly Torah publication on Parshat HaShavu'a

 **A child's will should not be suppressed, but his willfulness must be.**

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

A Candle by Day • The Antidote • The World Of Chazal
by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

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A wealthy man once approached R' Pinchas of Ositaliah with a request. "Rebbe," he said, "I have a considerable amount of money that I would like to give to the poor. I'd appreciate if you would take that money and distribute it for me."

"But why can't you give it directly by yourself?" asked R' Pinchas. "Why do you need me as a middleman?"

"Rebbe," explained the man, "if I start handing out money, people will become aware of that fact and soon I'll have a never-ending stream of people coming to me for tzedaka. If you give it out, no one will know it came from me, and I won't be pestered."

"If that is your motive," said R' Pinchas, "you have it all wrong. When our Sages talk about the merits of giving tzedaka anonymously, that is because they wanted to prevent the poor from embarrassment, not to protect the wealthy from being bothered. Take your money and distribute it yourself."



Before the Ba'al Shem Tov died, he instructed his Chassidim to choose as his successor a person who would be able to answer the question of how to overcome one's pride.

After his death, the Chassidim went to various prominent people and asked this question. Every person they asked had some type of answer, but none of the answers were satisfying.

Finally, they came to R' Pinchas of Koretz, and after he was asked the question he replied: "I can't answer that question, because I myself have been unable to overcome my own pride."

The Chassidim immediately chose him as their leader.

Al HaNisim

Usually, this column focuses on detail.

Once in a while (and maybe it should be more than once in a while), the goal of "Towards better davening" is served with a look at the whole.

It is well known that the mitzva of lighting Chanuka candles highlights the miracle of the one-day supply of oil that lasted for 8 days - and that Al HaNisim focuses on the miraculous military victory. In Al HaNisim, there is only an almost "by the way" kind of reference to the Chashmona'im lighting NEIROT in Your holy courtyard, and no mention at all of a miracle associated with the lighting.

In the bracha of MODIM in every Amida, among the things that we acknowledge are from G-d and for which we therefore gratefully thank Him, are - "for Your miracles which are with us every day; and for Your wonders and favors at all times, evening, morning and midday."

None of the big, flashy, supernatural, open and obvious miracles are referred to. Only the miracles hidden in nature, disguised as nature (if you prefer that phrasing) - the miracles "which are with us every day".

It seems appropriate then, that our Sages composed Al HaNisim to fit in with the Modim bracha of the Amida and left the PACH SHEMEN miracle for the mitzva of Ner Chanuka. Furthermore, calling our attention to the miracles that some scoffers will dismiss as miracles and attribute to anything but, is a good reminder that our lives are filled with miracles.



We are told in Avot 5:7 that one of the miracles of the Beis HaMikdash was that when all the people stood in the Temple courtyard, it was extremely crowded, without an inch to spare, but when it came time to bow down, there was enough room for everyone to do so comfortably. R' Zevi Tabory explained this simply: "If everyone 'stands up' for his rights, things are very crowded. However, if everyone is willing to 'bend a little' and give way to others, there is enough room for everyone."

THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF JEWISH LAW

Rabbi Emanuel Quint, Dean

Lesson # 502

The Marriage Ceremony

We all attend weddings frequently. Often we are viewers and do not know precisely what we are viewing.

I want to set forth a typical wedding ceremony and explain some of what is happening there. There are many variations depending upon the rabbi and the community from which the bride and/or groom come.

The parties are all standing under the canopy that we refer to as "chupa". They may consist of the bride, her parents, the groom, his parents, also some others who marched down the aisle where that is the procedure that was followed in this wedding. There is also the rabbi who will officiate at the wedding and sometimes a cantor to add vocal music to the ceremony, and other members of the wedding party such as grandmothers and grandfathers, etc.

The ceremony is nowadays divided into two halves. I say, nowadays, since there was, and in a few rare instances still is, a division of the marriage into two parts that could be days or even months apart. Nowadays they are usually only minutes apart. The first part is known as kiddushin or sometimes called erusin. This is accomplished by the gift of the ring that the groom gives to the bride. For many intents they are now married, however they cannot yet cohabit and if she dies he does not inherit her and he may not attend her funeral if he is a

Kohen. Their relationship can be terminated only by death or divorce.

Very often the cantor will sing "Baruch HaBa" which can be translated to mean: "Blessed is He who has come. He Who is powerful above all. He who is blessed above all; He Who is great above all, He Who is Supreme above all; May He bless the groom and the bride"

As the bride nears the chupa, the groom should take a few steps towards her to welcome her. Then, acceding to local custom, the bride circles the groom. In some societies she circles three times; in some seven times (in a few groups she does not circle the groom). On her circling she is usually accompanied by the mother of the bride and the mother of the groom.

The cantor or rabbi sings "Blessed is she who has come. He who understands the speech of the rose among the thorns, the love of the bride, who is the joy of the beloved ones, may He bless the groom and bride."

The rabbi holds a cup of wine and recites two blessings: (1) the blessing over wine; (2) "Blessed are You Hashem, Our G-d, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and has commanded us regarding forbidden unions, Who has forbade betrothed women to us and permitted women who are married to us through canopy and consecration. Blessed are You, Hashem Who sanctifies His people Israel through chupa (canopy) and consecration."

The groom and bride each drink from the wine.

The bride raises her right index finger to receive the ring that the groom is holding. He then says to her "Behold you are consecrated unto me by mean of this ring, according to the laws of Moses and Israel"

After the ring is placed on the bride's finger, in most communities the ketuba is read aloud. This document contains certain undertakings from the groom to the bride and provides for a certain amount of money to be given to the bride in case of the death of her husband or in case of divorce. The ketuba is not a prenuptial agreement outlining certain penalties that may be imposed if the husband does not grant the wife a divorce if ordered to do so by Beit Din. (Every couple about to get married should consult with the rabbi and discuss a prenuptial agreement!)

The ketuba has usually been signed by the witnesses prior to the ceremony. In some Jerusalem communities it is signed by the witnesses under the chupa when the rabbi gets to that part of the reading of the ketuba when the names of the witnesses are to be called out.

The groom then presents the ketuba to the bride. She in turn gives it to her mother or someone else standing close by, to hold until the ceremony ends when the mother returns the ketuba to the bride. Very often a rabbi will speak a few words to the couple that is getting married.

Another cup of wine is poured and the following seven blessings are recited. They may be recited by one individual or several individuals. If divided up the, first two blessings are usually recited by the

same individual.

(1) The blessing over wine.

(2) Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe Who has created everything for His glory.

(3) Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d, King of the universe, Who fashioned the man.

(4) Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe, Who fashioned the man in His image, in the image of his likeness and prepared for him, from himself, a building for eternity. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who fashioned the man.

(5) Bring intense joy and exultation to the barren one through the ingathering of her children amidst her in gladness. Blessed are You Hashem Who gladdens Zion through her children.

(6) Gladden the beloved companions as You have gladdened Your creature in the Garden of Eden from aforesaid. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who gladdens groom and bride.

(7) Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, Who created joy and gladness, groom and bride, mirth, glad song, pleasure, delight, love, brotherhood, peace, and companionship. Hashem, our G-d let there soon be heard in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem the sound of joy and the sound of gladness, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the groom's jubilation from their canopies and of youths from their song filled feasts. Blessed are You Who gladdens the groom with the bride.

The groom smashes a glass with is right foot. (In some communities right after the

placing of the ring on the bride's finger the groom then smashes a glass.)

Now the bride and groom drink from the wine.

The ceremony is now over.

The bride and groom must spend some time together in a completely private room for a few minutes.

ParshaPix explanations

NOTE: The SHIN on the dreidel (sivivon) that is the bullet of these ParshaPix explanations, does NOT stand for SHAM, "there". Because we are HERE and our dreidels have a PEI for PO (here) instead of a SHIN. So what's the SHIN doing here? It stands for SHABBAT, as in Shabbat Chanuka.

✚ Lower-left is the Davka Graphic of Yosef's dreams. Davka has a great collection of Judaica graphics. Its word processor (is that the correct term these days?) DavkaWriter is what Torah Tidbits are made with, and its Graphics collections are frequently tapped for ParshaPix duty.

✚ There was no water in the pit into which the brothers threw Yosef, but there were snakes and scorpions, one each of which is in the ParshaPix.

✚ The animals you see in the PP are the sheep, as in the sheep that were being tended by Yosef's brothers when he was sent by Yaakov to inquire about their well-being...

✚ The camel represents the passing caravans...

✚ and the goat is, of course, for the goat that the brothers slaughtered to cover-up their terrible deed. It also represents the goat that Yehuda sent to Tamar. Note well that the main animal that is used in the Beit HaMikdash as a CHATAT, a sin offering, is the goat. Communal chatat as well as individual chatat. This includes the two identical goats upon which lots were drawn on Yom Kippur. Yaakov's roles as deceiver (of Yitzchak) and deceiver (by his sons) are both associated with a goat.

✚ Speaking of Yehuda, we have the staff (close, it's a cane), the seal (play on words), and the hooded coat, which is close to the meaning of p'tilecha, that Yehuda gave to Tamar as security for the future payment of the goat.

✚ See the wine and bread, representing the Wine Steward and the Baker, whose dreams were similar, but their interpretations and results were so different.

✚ The snow flake: Twice, once after the brothers saw that Yaakov loved Yosef the most, and once after he told them his dream, the Torah tells us, VAYOSIFU OD SNOW OTO, and they further hated him. (These happen to be the only SNOWs in Tanach. Shoftim 15:2 is close.)

✚ The birthday cake is for Par'o (end of the sedra).

✚ The insignia below the cake is that of the Israel Prison Service. The one who wears this insignia can represent SAR BEIT HASOHAR.

- ✦ That's a butcher in the upper-right. He stands for the SAR HATABACHIM.
- ✦ Below the seal is the symbol for Gemini, the Twins. They represent Peretz and Zerach.
- ✦ The emblem of the State of Israel is based on the description of the Menorah and olive trees by the prophet Zecharia, whose words are read as the haftara for the first Shabbat Chanuka.
- ✦ The covered wagon is borrowed from the pioneering days of the wild west in the United States to represent the covered wagons given by the Tribal leaders to the Mishkan to be used by the Gershon and Merari families for transporting the parts of the Mishkan they were responsible for. Family Kehat did not use wagons, they used shoulders.
- ✦ And how do we know that the wagons were covered? Because they are called in the Torah (the Maftir for the first day of Chanuka), EGLOT TZAV, literally, Turtle wagons. Hence the appearance of our MRMH turtle in the ParshaPix.

Section in the journal
of the Edison yeshiva
on Plainfield Avenue

no like father like son

Parsha Points to Ponder

Suggested answers

1) The Ohr HaChayim explains that after hearing Yosef's first dream which described the brothers bowing to Yosef, they assumed this simply related to Yosef's fantasies about ruling over them. However, once his second dream included their father (the sun) bowing to Yosef, they realized that the dreams might contain prophecy, since Yosef never hoped to rule over his father. Thus, their jealousy over what might be a Divine plan for Yosef's dominion began at that point.

2) The S'forno answers that Yosef fled from her quickly to avoid the temptation. However, he did not want to arouse suspicions by running out to the street so he had the presence of mind to walk out the door to the street slowly and without panic. Thus, he both FLED from her while inside and also WENT OUTSIDE in a slower manner.

3) The Kli Yakar teaches that based on the way our Sages explain their wrongdoings this makes perfect sense. The butler's flaw was a fly in the king's cup. A fly can fall into anyone's cup at any time and no one can really blame the butler for this. Thus, this was only a sin for the BUTLER OF THE KING OF EGYPT since the king was extra strict regarding such matters. However, a pebble found in bread is a flaw regardless who the bread is being baked for and, therefore, his sin was simply the wrongdoing of THE BAKER.

RAKEL BERENBAUM'S PORTION OF THE PORTION

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THE MIRACLE OF FAITH IN G-D

One of the things one should do during the time the candles are lit is relate to one's family the miracles that G-d did for us on Channuka. In order to better be able to do that, I decided to take down a copy of the Book of the Maccabees 1 and read the story as it was related by someone living closer to the events than any of us.

The book begins with Alexander Macedon and continues on with the story of "a sinful shoot", Antiochus Epiphanes.

We learn how under Matiyahu the Jews fought the Greeks using guerilla warfare. Then we read on and we see Judah leading his men in full flung battles against the Greek army. They are afraid and say to Yehuda, "how can we, so few in number, be able to fight against so great a multitude?"

Yehuda answers, "It is an easy thing for many to be hemmed in by the hands of a few. There is no difference in the sight of heaven to save by many or by few. Victory in battle does not depend on the size of the army, but rather on strength that comes from Heaven. They are advancing against us, full of violence and lawlessness, to destroy us our wives and our children, and to plunder us. We are fighting for our lives and our Laws. He Himself will

shatter them before us; but as for you, be not afraid of them"(Maccabees 1:3).

We feel the true trust in G-d. In another speech of Yehuda's quoted in the book, he relates how G-d has done this before - it is not out of His power. "Do not fear their number, and do not be afraid of their attack. Remember how our fathers were saved at the Red Sea, when Par'o pursued them with a host. Now then, let us cry to Heaven to see if he will have mercy on us and will be mindful of the testament of the fathers, and will destroy this camp before us, that all the heathens may know that there is One who will redeem and save Israel" (Maccabees 1:4).

But there is a slight difference in the era of Yehuda HaMaccabee from Jewish leaders before him. In the past the leaders were guided by the Urim v'Tumim, and prophets to know if it was wise to fight a battle. For example the prophet Yeshayahu tells Chizkiyahu the King to fight against Ashur, though others advise him against it. And we see that when the spirit of G-d left Shaul he was at a loss whether he should go out to fight against the Philistines or not. He resorted to taking counsel with a witch to bring up the spirit of Shmuel from the dead to consult with (Shmuel Alef 28:3-25).

By the time of the Maccabees there were no more prophets -- things were not so clear. Judah received no direct message from G-d that he would be successful in his battle campaigns. But what Yehuda had was an amazing faith in G-d.

We are in a similar situation today. Around us are many enemies that want to destroy us and at times the situation really looks bleak. We must remember

that what helped Yehuda and his men win all the battles against the Greeks was their unwavering faith in Hashem being with them no matter what the odds.

WHAT'S CHANUKA without a recipe for sufganiyot? Since we defeated the Greeks on Chanuka, here is a Greek Sufganiya recipe. According to Hebrew dictionaries sufganiyot comes from the Greek sufgan, meaning “puffed and fried”. Greek Jews call them zvingous. Zvingous and sufganiyot descend from one of the oldest sweets - the Greek loukomades, a sweet fried dough dipped in a honey-and-sugar syrup. I found this low fat recipe for those watching their cholesterol. Steven Raichlen, an award-winning cookbook author, cooking teacher, and syndicated food columnist. He received the 2001 James Beard Foundation/Kitchen Aid Book Award for his book Healthy Jewish Cooking.

ZVINGOUS

For the syrup:

- 1¼ cups water
- ¼-1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 cloves
- 2 strips lemon zest
- 2 strips orange zest
- 2 Tbsps Cognac or brandy

For the pastry:

- 1 cup water
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp sugar
- 1 cup unbleached white flour

- 2 eggs plus 4 whites lightly beaten with fork or 1 cup egg substitute
- 1 egg white or 1 Tbsp egg substitute, beaten with a little salt, for glaze
- Cinnamon for sprinkling.

For syrup: Boil water with sugar, honey, cinnamon, cloves and lemon and orange zest, until thick - for about 4 minutes. Strain syrup into bowl, and cool to room temperature. Add Cognac, stir and refrigerate. Syrup can be prepared up to a day ahead to this stage.

Boil water with oil, lemon zest, salt and sugar over high heat. Remove pan from heat, and sift in flour. Stir to make thick paste. Return pan to high heat, for about 2 to 4 minutes and cook until dough is thick enough to come away from sides of pan in a smooth ball. Add eggs or egg substitute in 4 batches, beating vigorously until mixture is smooth before adding next batch. It should resemble soft ice cream. Transfer dough to piping bag fitted with 3/8-inch round tip. Pipe 1-inch balls of dough onto nonstick baking sheet lightly sprayed with oil, leaving 1½ inches between each. (This can be done using 2 spoons to drop balls of dough onto sheet if you don't have a piping bag.) Dip a fork in cold water, and with back of tines, smooth top of each ball. Lightly brush balls with egg glaze. Sprinkle sheet with a few drops of water. Bake dough balls until puffed, firm and nicely browned, for 40 to 50 minutes at 400°F. If puffs brown too much before they are cooked through, reduce heat. Remove sheet from oven, and cool for 3 minutes. Using spatula, transfer hot puffs to serving bowl. Pour cold syrup on top, and let soak for 3 minutes. Serve puffs with syrup in bowls. Sprinkle with cinnamon.