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המאור

Light reading  
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## Not Surrendering to a Victim Mentality

### Tiferes Shlomo on the Parsha

After the sale of Yosef, the Torah digresses to tell us about events in Yehudah's personal life, concluding the birth of Peretz and Zerach.

The Midrash teaches that at the time the brothers sold Yosef into slavery, Yosef was occupied with his fasting and sackcloth. Reuven was involved in his fasting and sackcloth... Yaakov was involved in his fasting and sackcloth. What was Hashem doing? He was creating the light of Moshiach.

What is the connection between the fasting, sackcloth and mourning and the creation of the light of Moshiach?

The Tiferes Shlomo presents an explanation, based on the principle in Jewish philosophy that nothing can emerge to its full actualisation without there first being an absolute state of negation (העדר) and nothingness. The absence itself serves as the cause of the creation that follows it.

We see this at the beginning of Creation. The creation of light came as a result of the darkness that preceded it. Like the act of Creation, the existence of any light that Hashem showers on a person, only comes when it is preceded by a state of darkness.

This is the inner meaning of the suffering of Exile. It is only through this darkness that Hashem will save us and bring us to the greater light of Redemption. This is why the Neviim liken Golus to the birth pangs of labour which proceed the birth, which represents the Geulah.

The birth of Peretz and Zerach allude to Moshiach; Peretz being the ancestor of Moshiach and Zerach meaning to shine, representing the light of Moshiach.

In the depths of great darkness, when the entire family of Yaakov were suffering, then "the light shone in the darkness for the upright", as Hashem brought forth the light of Moshiach.

Yosef had every reason to throw in the towel, give up on life and be angry at the world. He suffered setback after setback, disappointment after disappointment.

He lost his mother at a young age and was despised by his own brothers who socially excluded him. So great was their hatred and jealousy, that they decided to kill him, throwing him into a pit. After deciding that they could not kill him, they sold Yosef in to slavery.

Yosef arrived in Mitzrayim as a lowly slave, far away both physically and spiritually from his father's home. Away from his family, alone and left to fend for himself at the tender age of 17.

Yosef worked diligently and brought prosperity to his master's house, earning his praise and honour. He was elevated to become the overseer of the entire household and all of his masters affairs.

When the wife of Potiphar tried to seduce Yosef, he could have easily succumbed. Here he was, a 17 year old boy living in a place of immorality, far away from his family. No one would know. But Yosef had a deep sense of right and wrong and could not bring himself to sin against his G-d or his master.

But his decision and self-restraint did not bring him reward. He was falsely accused by the wife of Potiphar and found himself in prison. Even though his master knew the truth, he blinded himself to it and Yosef was stripped of his honours and labelled a sinner.

Again Yosef could have given up and resigned himself to his sad predicament. He had done nothing wrong, he was innocent and now he was languishing as a prisoner.

After all that he had been through and at each of his misfortunes, Yosef could have lost hope and fell into the depths of depression and despair, believing things would never get better and that he was destined to fail. He could have seen the entire world as out to get him. He could have allowed himself to rebel and sin and blame it on his circumstances and mistreatment. Yosef would have been the classic example of the mindset of a victim mentality.

But Yosef did not give up. He worked hard in the prison, with a positive and joyous disposition. His charm earned him the favour of the officers and he was entrusted with overseeing all of the prisoners.

But one final insult was yet to come. Yosef went out of his way to help the chief butler, with the favourable interpretation of his dream. The butler promised to remind Pharaoh about him and help secure his release, but on his release, deliberately forgot his promise, leaving Yosef to languish in prison for another 2 years.

Whilst perhaps not as traumatic as Yosef's life, we all experience ups and down in our lives. We suffer setbacks and disappointments in different areas of our lives, including our careers, financial standing, health and family problems. Like waves, they may come one after another, leaving us little time to breath and re-compose in between. These experiences may lead us to give up, lose hope and see ourselves as victims and even drive us to negative and harmful behaviours that we may justify.

By looking at Yosef, we can learn how to ride the waves of our challenges and never give up.

Yosef never lost his faith in Hashem. Even as a slave, the name of Hashem was constantly on his lips. Bitachon, trust in Hashem is our greatest anchor and strength when facing life's challenges, knowing that whatever happens comes from Him and that we are in His hands. No matter what we are going through, we know that we are never alone.

Our sages teach that when the wife of Potiphar tried to seduce him and he felt a moment of weakness, he saw the image of his father and this gave him the strength to overcome his struggle. Yosef remembered who he was and where he came from. He remembered that he has a father who loves him and believed in him. This gave him inner strength.

Yosef never gave up. He always tried to make the most out of every situation that he found himself in. He never let his circumstance, be it slave or prisoner define him. With dignity and self-belief, he always strove to be productive and find success.

Despite his own suffering, Yosef was sensitive to the pain and suffering of others. The morning after the chief butler and baker had their troubling dreams, Yosef noticed that they were looking sad. He could have ignored them and felt completely justified. He had his own worries and bitter predicament to contend with. But he reached out to them with empathy, asking if they were okay and how he could help.

Many time the key to our own struggles and the way to find joy and purpose, is by helping and giving to others.

Ultimately Yosef's circumstances changed dramatically. In a short space of time he was freed and elevated, becoming viceroy of Egypt and the saviour of the known world. Retroactively it became apparent that each setback was a necessary step to get him there.

With Bitachon, positivity and determination, we too will emerge stronger and grow from our challenges, advancing towards a brighter future and redemption.

# The Weekly Halacha Analysis

## Lighting Chanukah Candles in Shule

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To commemorate the miracle of Chanukah, the Sages instituted the Mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles. The Mitzvah is described as נר איש וביתו, literally, a candle for a man and his home (household). From this, most of the Halachic authorities learn that the Mitzvah is fulfilled by lighting at one's home. The Chanukah candles should be placed outside of the house on the left side of door.

Chaza"l teach that when it was dangerous to light outdoors, one could suffice by lighting the Menorah inside the house. This became the basis for the practise in Chutz Laaretz of lighting indoors.

The Gemara does not mention lighting the Menorah in Shule. It is not mentioned by the Geonim or by the classic Rishonim; Rif, Rashi, Tosfos, Rambam and Ran.

The custom of lighting the Menorah in Shule is first found in the works of the later Rishonim<sup>1</sup>. Some of the Rishonim support the Minhag whilst others question it. They also present a number of reasons for the Minhag.

From the words of these Rishonim, we find 5 main reasons for the custom of lighting in Shule;

- To be Moitzi guests who stay in the Shule
- To be Moitzi those who do not know how to light themselves
- To sanctify Hashem's name in public
- A remembrance of the Beis Hamikdash – since the Shule is called a Mikdash Me'at
- Pirsumei Nissa – publicizing the miracle.

The Beis Yosef<sup>2</sup> references a number of the explanations of the Rishonim. In the Shulchan Aruch<sup>3</sup> he only cites the reason of the Rivash – Pirsumei Nissa. The Rivash writes emphatically that no one is Yoitzai with this lighting.

### Making a Brachah on a Minhag

A number of Rishonim questioned how we can make a Brachah over what is essentially a Minhag. Some even said that this would be a Brachah Levatalah.

In his Teshuvah<sup>4</sup>, the Rivash brings proof from the 'Half Hallel' of Rosh Chodesh, which is only a Minhag and yet we make a blessing over it. This follows the opinion of Rabbeinu Tam<sup>5</sup> and is the ruling of the Ram"o<sup>6</sup>. A Bracha over Chanukah candles in Shule would be the same.

The Mechaber<sup>7</sup> follows the opinion of the Rambam<sup>8</sup> that we do not make a Brachah on a Minhag and therefore, no Brachah is recited on 'Half Hallel'. However, the Poskim explain that the Chanukah candles in Shule are different as they entail Pirsumei Nissa which warrants a Brachah<sup>9</sup>.

### Where to light

The Menorah in Shule is kindled on the south wall of the Shule<sup>10</sup>. This is to replicate the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash which stood against the south wall of the Kodsh.

There is an argument whether the Menorah in Shule should be placed with the candles running from east to west or from north to south.

The Ram"o<sup>11</sup> rules that the Menorah should be arranged from east to west. Magen Avraham<sup>12</sup> writes that there are those who place the Menorah facing from north to south. He concludes that each place should follow their Minhag<sup>13</sup>.

The divergent customs are based on a dispute between the sages of the Mishna over which direction the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash faced. Rabbi Yehudah Hanassi (Rebbi) taught that the Menorah faced from east to west. Rabbi Elozor, the son of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, taught that the Menorah faced from south to north.

There are different customs whether the one lighting the Menorah stands on the south side facing north, or whether they stand in the north facing the south wall<sup>14</sup>.

The Menorah should also be lit in a Beis Midrash that is also used for Davening<sup>15</sup>. If the Shule has many Minyanim, the Menorah should be lit in the primary Minyan<sup>16</sup>.

### When to light

The Menorah in Shule is kindled between Mincha and Maariv. It cannot be kindled before Plag Hamincha. If the Shule Davens Mincha earlier, the Menorah should be lit later or before Maariv. The Menorah is kindled before Aleinu, so that it is considered part of the Tefillah.

It is customary for the Menorah to be lit for Shacharis as well<sup>17</sup>. There is a directive of the Rebbe to do this<sup>18</sup>.

### Who can light

Since no one is Yoitzai with the lighting in Shule, it may technically be done by a child who has reached the age of Chinuch<sup>19</sup>. Nonetheless, out

of respect for the community, it is preferable for an adult to light the candles.

### Minyan

Since the lighting in Shule is for Pirsumei Nissa, one should only light with a Brachah if there is a Minyan present<sup>20</sup>. For this purpose, women and children can be counted towards the 10<sup>21</sup>. **No one is Yoitzai with the lighting in Shule and they must light again at home**<sup>22</sup>.

### What to light with

Since the Menorah in Shule is to commemorate the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash, it should be kindled with olive oil<sup>23</sup>. Others specifically use wax candles – preferably beeswax. This was the Minhag in 770.

Magen Avraham<sup>24</sup> writes that the candles should be left to burn until midnight. It is a Hiddur to have candles that burn for the full 24 hours<sup>25</sup>. When leaving candles lit in Shule, all safety precautions should be taken, especially if there are young children around<sup>26</sup>.

1. Tanya Rabbasi 35 Inyan Hadlakas Ner Chanukah, Orchos Chaim Hilchos Chanukah, Kol Bo, Teshuvos Rivash 111
2. Orach Chaim 671
3. Orach Chaim 671:7
4. Siman 111
5. Tosfos Brachos 14a ד"ה ימים
6. Orach Chaim 422:2
7. Orach Chaim 422:2
8. Hilchos Brachos 11:16
9. Based on the Vilna Gaon who likens the lighting of the Menorah in Shule to the reciting full Hallel with a Brachah in Shule on the first 2 nights of Pesach, which the Mechaber himself brings as Halacha.
10. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 671:7
11. ibid
12. Orach Chaim 671:9
13. See Shu"t Chasam Sofer OC 186
14. See Nitei Gavriel Chanukah 40:4
15. Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 671:14
16. Nitei Gavriel Chanukah 40:8
17. Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 620:2. It is interesting to note, that according to the Rambam, the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash was lit during the day as well as in the evening.
18. Yechidus on the 27th of Kislev 5750; Hisvaaduyos p.48.
19. Minchas Yitzchok 6:65
20. Minchas Elazar 2:68. Magen Avraham permits lighting without a Minyan.
21. Rav Pealim 2:62. Since they too qualify for Pirsumei Nissa from the Ezras Nashim.
22. Shulchan Aruch 671:7. If the Shule has an adjoining guesthouse, the guests would be Yoitzai
23. Kaf Hachaim 673:13
24. 670:2; Siddur Yaavetz
25. Directive of the Rebbe. Darkei Moshe 672
26. Parshas Vayeishev 5750; Hisvaaduyos p.51, footnote 69

