

A Taste of Text: Source based learning for Shabbat

*This weekly sheet is brought to you by **Rabbi Dr. Moshe Freedman** of the **New West End United Synagogue** in conjunction with **Shapell's/Darché Noam***

PARSHAT MIKKEITZ

DVAR TORAH: USING OUR EYES

Chanukah is unique among the holidays in that its mitzvot require using our eyes, our vision. Two halachot reflect this. As we light the Chanukah candles we sing, “... ואין לנו רשות להשתמש בהם אלא לראותם בלבד ... it is forbidden to derive benefit from the candles, we are only to look at them.” There is also a halachah (though it is not often applied in our era when, thank G-d, almost every Jew has a place indoors to sleep and candles are inexpensive) that “הרואה נר חנוכה מברך” – someone who isn’t lighting his own candles still makes the blessing “שעשה ניסים” when he sees Chanukah candles (Shabbat 23a).

Looking at our Chanukah candles not only reminds us of the Chanukah miracle in the Menorah of the Beit Hamikdash; it also reminds us of the new perspective it gave to those who lit it. Our ancestors were taught that the one tiny container of oil they found had within it the potential for eight days of lighting. What appeared to be an insignificant quantity was revealed to be more powerful than originally imagined. That same lesson was part of the miraculous victory of the Chashmonaim in the war, as the רבים, the many, were given over into the hands of the מעטים, the few. Divine Quality triumphed over Greek Quantity.

The Gemara (Shabbat 22b) tells us that for generations, the נר מערבי, the western light of the Menorah in the Beit Hamikdash stayed lit miraculously. Even though it contained the same amount of oil as the rest of the candles (the half log needed to stay lit all night), it stayed lit, miraculously, until late afternoon. That light testified that the Divine Presence rested within the People of Israel in the Land of Israel. That daily miracle was renewed when the Chashmonaim lit the Menorah at the re-dedication of the Beit Hamikdash. When we look at our Chanukah candles, we are also reminded that our world is animated and permeated by the shine of the Divine Presence, the Shechinah.

The Chanukah candles teach us to get beyond the superficial, beyond deceptive appearances, and look at the inner side of the world, the Divine Presence within it. This lesson in perspective and vision can also be applied to people, where we are extremely inclined to follow external appearances, superficial impressions, and use all sorts of quantitative measuring sticks of height, weight, age, intelligence, power, and money.

But the Talmud (Nedarim 49b) tells us to get beyond them. It relates how a gentile matron saw the saintly Tanna Rabbi Yehudah, whose face was shining. She was sure that she had caught the sage while drunk. So she accosted him, “You teach Torah while drunk?!” He responded: “I drink very little wine – a little bit for Kiddush; and when I drink the four cups on Pesach my head hurts until Shavuot. But חכמת אדם תאיר פניו – the wisdom of a man illuminates his face’ (Kohelet 8:1).”

On the very next page of Masechet Nedarim the Gemara tells the story of how the daughter of the wealthy Kalba Savua married the poor and unlearned shepherd Akiva and was disowned by her father. But, with her encouragement, he began learning Torah, and eventually developed into the nation’s Torah leader. These two women stand in stark contrast. Whereas the gentile matron looked at a tzaddik and saw a drunk, Rabbi Akiva’s wife looked at a poor unlearned shepherd and saw the great Rabbi Akiva. The Chanukah candles tell us to look inside the individual and see the “נר ה' נשמת אדם – Hashem’s candle, the Divine soul” (Mishlei 20:27). Whatever we look at – people, nature, history, the events in our lives – the Chanukah candles tell us to get past the superficial and look deep within.

SOURCE GUIDE: THEY DRANK TOGETHER

Even before revealing himself to his brothers, Yosef shared a meal with them, gave them presents, and “וישתו וישכרו עמו” – They drank and got drunk with him.” Rashi quotes one of the Tannaim, who infers from this verse that for twenty-two years both Yosef and his brothers refrained from drinking wine. Many commentators ask: Why did Yosef’s brothers allow themselves to drink wine at that meal? This source guide is based on three answers.

A. Why Did the Brothers Drink?

When he saw that the brothers brought Binyamin with them, Yosef ordered that a feast should be prepared:

<p>1. Bereishit 43:34 He had portions brought to them from before him; and Binyamin’s portion was five times theirs. And they drank and became intoxicated with him.</p>	<p>בראשית מג:לד וַיִּשָּׂא מִשָּׂאת מֵאֵת פְּנֵיו אֲלֵהֶם וַתֵּרֶב מִשָּׂאת בְּנִימִן מִמִּשָּׂאת כָּלֶם חֲמֵשׁ יָדוֹת וַיִּשְׁכְּרוּ וַיִּשְׁקְרוּ עִמּוֹ.</p>
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Tannaim infer that only at that meal did Yosef and the brothers drink wine (see also Bereishit Rabbah 92:5):

<p>2. Shabbat 139a Rav Melai said in the name of Rabbi Yitzchak of Magdalah: From the day that Yosef was separated from his brothers he did not taste wine – as it is written, “On the head of the nazirite among the brothers” (Bereishit 49:26). Rabbi Yossi son of Rabbi Chanina said: Even they did not taste wine, as it is written, “They drank and became intoxicated with him” (Bereishit 43:34). Apparently, until now they had not drunk. And the other view holds that they had drunk but just had not become intoxicated.</p>	<p>שבת קלט. ואמר רבי מלאי משום רבי יצחק מגדלאה: מיום שפירש יוסף מאחיו לא טעם טעם יין, דכתיב, “ולקדקד נזיר אחיו” (בראשית מט:כו). רבי יוסי ברבי חנינא אמר: אף הן לא טעמו טעם יין דכתיב, “וישתו וישכרו עמו” (בראשית מג:לד). מכלל דעד האידנא לא. ואידך – שיכרות הוא דלא הוה, שתיה מיהא הוה.</p>
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We can understand why **Yosef** drank wine that afternoon. He was united with Binyamin; he could foresee the moment when he would be united with his father. But why did his **brothers** allow themselves to drink? Didn’t they refrain from wine because of the sale of Yosef? They did not know that Yosef was actually sitting with them, so they should have continued to refrain from wine.

B. Gur Aryeh: When Wine Enters, the Secret Comes Out

The Maharal (Harav Yehudah Loewe, זצ”ל, 1525-1609), in his commentary on Rashi, offers an answer:

<p>4. Gur Aryeh on Bereishit 43:34 They had not drunk wine and he had not drunk wine. Why, though, did they drink now? Since they did not know that he was Yosef why did they now drink wine? It is too forced to maintain that because of the honor of Yosef’s royalty they did it (this is actually the Maharsha’s explanation in his commentary on Shabbat 139a). If that is the case, you would need to say that they drank with no other honored person until now. Furthermore, it is more distinguished for them to say that they are mourning over their brother and therefore refrain from drinking wine. Rather, we answer as follows: They were wondering what Yosef wants from them. “He is an important minister and yesterday considered us spies. Now he is drinking with us. But we are still, in his eyes, spies. That is really why he wants to drink with us, for ‘When wine enters, the secret comes out’ (Eiruvim 65a). He wants to catch us saying something revealing; that is his intention.” They (the brothers) therefore said, “If we do not drink he will say that they do not want to drink because they are afraid of revealing their secret. On the contrary, we will drink and become intoxicated,</p>	<p>גור אריה על בראשית מג:לד לא שתו הם יין והוא לא שתה יין. קשה, דלמה שתו עכשיו? כיון שלא ידעו שיוסף הוא, למה שתו עכשיו יין? ודוחק לומר מפני כבוד המלכות של יוסף עשו זה. אם כן צריך אתה לומר כי לא שתו עם איש נכבד עד היום. ועוד, כי יותר כבוד היה להם כשיאמרו מתאבלים אנחנו על אחינו ואין אנו שונים יין. ויש לתרץ כי היו מתמיהים מה היה יוסף רוצה - שהוא שר וחשוב? אתמול החזיק אותנו כמרגלים - ועכשיו שותה עמנו. אלא עדיין אנחנו בעיניו מרגלים, ולפיכך הוא רוצה לשתות עמנו יין, כי “נכנס יין יצא סוד” (עירובין סה.). ויתפוס אותנו בדבור אחר, כך הוא כוונתו. ואמרו הם - אם לא נשתה יאמר לך אין אתם רוצים לשתות שיראים אתם כי תגלו סוד שלכם, אדרבא - נשתה עמו יין ונשכר ולא ישמע מאתנו שום דבר ונצא מהחשד שלו, לפיכך שתו עמו ונשתכרו עמו.</p>
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and he will not hear from us anything suspicious." Therefore they drank and became intoxicated with him.

By drinking, and becoming intoxicated, they would prove they were not spies and remove suspicion.

C. Kav Chen: No Need to Refrain from Drinking Anymore

Harav Noach of Karov, זצ"ל (1794-1855, disciple of the Chozeh of Lublin), offers an answer that solves another difficulty with our verse. Why, he asks, does the Torah speak about their drinking in the verse about Yosef's gifts to Binyamin? He introduces his explanation with a description of true teshuvah:

5. Kav Chen Parshat Miketz

For when a man wants to do complete repentance, he must totally abandon his sin. He must look into and understand the cause of the sin, and even the cause that brought on that cause. For everything has a cause and the cause of a cause. He should distance himself from all of the causes – even the cause of the cause of the sin, even if it involves refraining from permitted things. Through this he will distance himself from and totally uproot his sin and will not return to it. After that, when the man sees that the sinful nature has gone, he can return to the middle path. Then, only forbidden things will remain forbidden; and he can once again permit himself to partake of that which is permitted

קב חן פרשת מקץ

דהנה האדם כאשר רוצה לשוב מחטאיו בתשובה שלימה, צריך לעזוב את החטא מכל וכל ויעיין וישכיל בסבת החטא והסיבה אשר הביאה את סבת החטא. כי לכל דבר יש סבה וסבה לסבה. וירחיק עצמו מכל הסיבות, גם מסיבת סיבת העבירה, הגם שהם דברים המותרים. ועל ידי זה יתרחק ויעקר ממנו החטא לגמרי ולא ישוב אליו עוד. ואחר כך כשרואה האדם שנעקר ממנו טבע החטא לגמרי אז יחזור לאחוז במדת המיצוע. ויאסור עליו את האיסור ויתיר את המותר לו ...

The author describes that Yosef's brothers looked for the source of their sin, selling Yosef into slavery. They found that it was because of their jealousy. But they looked deeper into jealousy and found that its source was arrogance. In order to remedy this, they refrained from drinking wine, which – though it can bring "gladness to man's heart" (Tehillim 104:15) – can also lead to haughtiness if not drunk with the proper mindset. The brothers refrained from wine out of teshuvah:

6. Kav Chen Parshat Miketz

And when they saw that Yosef gave five times more to Binyamin and yet they felt no jealousy towards him – they saw that the source of jealousy and haughtiness had been removed from their hearts. Then they returned to the middle path and no longer refrained from permissible things. Therefore, "They drank and became intoxicated with him."

קב חן פרשת מקץ

וכאשר ראו שיוסף הרבה משאות בנימין ממשאות כולם חמש ידות ולא נתקנאו בו בבנימין אז ראו שנעקר מלבם שורש הקנאה וגבהות הלב. לכך חזרו לאחוז במדת המיצוע ולא אסרו עוד עליהם דברים המותרים. לכך וישתו וישכרו עמו.

D. Kol Simchah: Drinking With Their Brother

Harav Simchah Bunim of Peshischa, זצ"ל (1765–1827, Poland), has a different perspective on why the brothers refrained from drinking wine, and why they drank at that meal with Yosef:

7. Kol Mevasser Part I – Parshat Miketz

16. "They drank and became intoxicated with him" (Bereishit 43:34). The following is quoted in the name of the holy Reb Simchah Bunim of Peshischa, may his memory be a protection for us. He asked – about Rashi's comment that they only drank on that day – why did the brothers drink with Yosef? They did not yet know that he was Yosef. Rav Simchah Bunim answered that they did not refrain from drinking because of an oath, but, rather, because their brother was missing. Because of his lack, their unity was not complete. Now, that Yosef was with them, they felt the unity (even though they did not know it was Yosef), and they therefore drank (quoted by the Mishenet Moseh on Parshat Miketz).

קול מבשר ח"א - פרשת מקץ

טז. "וישתו וישכרו עמו" (בראשית מ"ג:לד). בשם הה"ק רש"ב מפרשיסחא זי"ע, שאמר על פירוש רש"י, שעד היום לא שתו. והקשה, למה באמת שתו עם יוסף? הא לא ידעו עדיין שהוא יוסף? ואמר, מה שלא שתו, לא היה בשביל שעשו נדר שלא ישתו, רק בשביל שהיה חסר להם האח, ולא היה היחוד בשלימות. ועתה, שהיה יוסף עמם, היו מרגישים בהיחוד, ועל כן שתו. [משענת משה פ' מקץ]:

CHANUKAH: NOT JUST PERPETUATION BY RABBI FYVEL SHUSTER

The author of the Kedushas Levi, Harav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov, זצ"ל, asks: Why is it that on Chanukah we have a mitzvah commemorating the physical material that was involved in the miracle? Why do we focus on the oil that was involved in the Chanukah miracle? On Pesach we don't find a mitzvah involving water to commemorate the splitting of the Sea; and we don't find a mitzvah on Purim commemorating the wood of the tree that Haman was hung on. What is special about the Chanukah miracle?

He explains that the miracle of the lights of the Menorah lasting eight days was different in kind from other miracles. Other miracles in Jewish history helped ensure the physical survival of the Jewish People, saving them from danger. That was accomplished during Chanukah when the Jewish People were saved from danger by the miraculous victory in the war.

The miracle of the Chanukah lights came as a response to the Jewish People's desire to fulfill a mitzvah that they were really exempt from. Since they did not have the requisite materials to light the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash, the principle "אונס רהמנא פטריה" – When in circumstances beyond your control you are exempt" (Avodah Zarah 54a) – applied to them.

Nonetheless, הקדוש ברוך הוא, the Holy One, blessed be He, sent the message that true Jewish survival is not simply the perpetuation of breathing Jewish bodies but the perpetuation of serving Jews – Jews serving Hashem through His Torah and mitzvos with all of their hearts and souls.

Perhaps this is why the Rambam says (Hilchos Chanukah 4:12): "מצות נר הנוכה מצוה חביבה היא עד מאד" – The mitzvah of Chanukah candles is exceedingly precious." And perhaps this is also why Rav Huna (on Shabbos 23b) says: "הרגיל בנר" – a person who is careful with the mitzvah of Chanukah candles – has children who are תלמידי חכמים, righteous Torah sages imbued with the spirit of Torah and mitzvos."

שבת שלום ומבורך

*This publication is compiled by the staff and Rabbonim at **Shapells/Yeshivat Darché Noam** for men and **Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya Seminary** for women in Jerusalem. Find out more about the **married couples' programme** and the **Pathways Israel** and **Pathways Plus** programmes offered at www.darchenoam.org +972-2-651-1178, 5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem.*

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