

THE KTM DAF PARASHA

BRINGING A TASTE OF ISRAEL TO MONTREAL



UPRISING

BY RAV ARI FAUST (ROSH KOLLEL)

There is a moment in every Jew's life when we are confronted with the tension between survival and identity. It is the silent test

that asks: will I bend to the pressures of the world around me, or will I stand firm in my faith, values, and heritage? This question is not abstract; it is woven into our history, from the earliest days of the Jewish people to the challenges we face today. Time and again, we see a clear thread: the Jewish people endure not merely through adaptation, but through steadfast devotion to our identity.

Every Shabbat we bless our children, saying (Bereishit 48:20),

יְשַׁמְדֵךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּאַפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה

May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe.

At first glance, it may seem routine, a ceremonial wish. But the Torah gives us a profound model: Why not bless our children like Avraham, Yitzchak, or Yaakov? Why not Moshe or Aharon? One answer is that Ephraim and Menashe were the first Jews born in exile. Raised in Egypt, amidst the grandeur and power of a foreign empire, they inherited not only Yoseph's prominence as viceroy but also the spiritual and ethical legacy of their forefathers. Yet they maintained their Jewish identity. Princes in a palace, surrounded by luxury and alien culture, they did not succumb. Their lives teach us that Jewish survival is never merely about existing; it is about flourishing as Jews, even when the environment seeks to dilute or erase who we are.

This lesson begins with Yoseph himself. Even in the perilous circumstances of Potiphar's house, Yoseph's identity remained unshakable. Potiphar's wife identifies him as an "Ivri" - a Hebrew - showing he remained steadfast far from home and family. Potiphar himself noted that "God was with" Yoseph (Bereishit 39:3), and Rashi points out:

This comes to teach that God's Name was regularly spoken by his mouth.

Every observer saw that God was with Yoseph. Yosef didn't hide his identity and values, he exuded them. When he stood before Pharaoh, he did not abandon his belief; he declared (Bereishit 41:16),

אֱלֹהִים יַעֲנֵה אֶת שְׁלוֹמִי כְּרָעָה

God will see to Pharaoh's well-being

Yoseph's life demonstrates that even when surrounded by power, temptation, or danger, Jewish identity is not something to hide. It reveals itself through faithfulness, integrity, and courage.

Yoseph's sons, Ephraim and Menashe, inherited this legacy from their father. Their steadfastness in a foreign land plants the seeds for the Jewish principle of mesirut nefesh for identity. From them, we learn that the secret to Jewish survival is the active perpetuation of traditions - we do not conceal our identity, nor apologize for our beliefs. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, zt"l, reminds us: "Non-Jews respect Jews who respect their Judaism." Integrity is magnetic; remaining true inspires admiration even among those who do not share our faith.

This principle is vividly reincarnated in the story of Chanukah. The Hasmonean revolt under the Seleucid Empire was extraordinary, not only because a small group of Jews defeated a militarily superior force, but because they fought to maintain their faith and traditions against systemic eradication. As Caroline Simning notes:

...the resistant actions of the Maccabees were driven by their adherence to Judaism. The Maccabees were not resisting Hellenization itself... but severe imperial ordinances that impeded adherence to the Torah... politics and religion were one and the same for the Judahites in antiquity.

The revolt was remarkable because the Jews refused to accept cultural and religious impositions. They celebrated who they were, and they fought for it.

This courage echoes throughout our history. Centuries after the Hasmonean revolt, in 1943, trapped in unimaginable conditions, Jewish fighters staged the most significant battle against the Nazis to that point; the Warsaw Ghetto uprising was second only in scale to Stalingrad. Their uprising was not merely military; it was a declaration of identity and human dignity. In darkness, they refused to vanish quietly, asserting the enduring power of Jewish faith and perseverance.

The Hasmonean spirit, the courage of Yoseph and his sons, and the heroism of the Warsaw Ghetto converge in the resilience of the Jewish people in Israel today. When terror strikes, Israelis respond not only with security measures but with acts of unity, kindness, and faith. Communities come together, volunteers serve, and prayers fill the streets. Each act affirms that identity is never merely survival, but flourishing in faith and community.

The lesson continues. A great darkness fell before Chanukah this week when a festival in



TORAH תורה
מִצִּיּוֹן MITZION

KTM MONTREAL

**MIKETZ - CHANUKAH -ROSH
CHODESH
30 KISLEV 5786
20 DECEMBER 2025
LIGHT CHANUKAH CANDLES
BEFORE SHABBAT CANDLES
CANDLE LIGHTING: 3:54 P.M.
HAVDALAH: 5:04 P.M.**

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**KTM STANDS WITH THE
COMMUNITY OF SYDNEY,
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FALLEN AND PRAY FOR THE
COMPLETE RECOVERY OF THE
INJURED.**

Bondi Beach, Australia - one of the first public celebrations this year - was attacked. But the response is clear: we do not shrink from the light, even in danger. History shows us what to do in darkness. From Yoseph, we learn never to conceal traditions or beliefs. From Ephraim and Menashe, we see the power of steadfast identity. From the Maccabees, we inherit the imperative to fight for faith. From the Warsaw Ghetto fighters, we learn courage in the face of annihilation. From modern Israel, we witness resilience and the power of living as Jews with pride, compassion, and community.

Every generation faces challenges, but the message is constant: we endure and thrive when true to who we are. Jewish identity is not a luxury or convenience; it is the source of our strength. Standing up for our faith, values, and heritage defines us - and it will continue to sustain us, no matter the trials.



THE PLURALITY OF THE CHANUKAH LIGHT

BY EVYATAR KERNER

There is something deeply unusual about Chanukah - something that does not occur in any other mitzvah in the Torah. You see, in all mitzvot, there is a familiar concept of *hiddur mitzvah*: beautifying the mitzvah, enhancing it, investing up to a third more in its performance. This is admirable - but it does not change the essence of the mitzvah itself. The obligation remains the same.

Chanukah, however, is different. Here we encounter entire levels of mitzvah performance: The basic obligation, *mehadrin*, and *mehadrin min haMehadrin*. This is not merely "doing the mitzvah more beautifully" - it is a fundamentally different mode of fulfilling it.

That alone is striking. But it is only the beginning. The Torah establishes a foundational principle (Vayikra 24:22):

משפט אחד יהיה לכם

One law shall there be for you

Halachic life is built on uniformity, stability, and a shared obligation. A mitzvah cannot be something that everyone performs however they wish; the system depends on coherence and consistency.

And yet, two festivals seem to shatter this principle entirely. Purim and Chanukah. Some celebrate Purim on the 14th of Adar, others - who live in walled cities from the time of Yehoshua bin Nun - on the 15th. The Mishnah records no fewer than five different possible days for the reading of the Megillah!

Then on Chanukah the mitzvah itself fractures into three legitimate forms - one candle per household, *mehadrin*, and *mehadrin min haMehadrin*. Different people, different levels, one mitzvah.

What is happening here? Why are these festivals allowed to violate the basic principle of *mishpat echad*?

Rav Kook offers a breathtaking insight. Chazal understood the rabbinic festivals as

signals from Heaven. Something about the very nature of the miracles told them: Here, the rules are different. Here, variation - between people, places, and circumstances - is not only permitted, but essential. Why? Because these festivals were born not at Sinai, but within history itself. Not through a single, universal revelation that binds all generations equally, but in the midst of war, revolt, crisis, and survival. Divine revelation entered the world through human struggle. And precisely because of that, these festivals contain a flexibility—room for gradation, growth, and personal expression.

On Chanukah, this concept reaches its apex: *mehadrin min haMehadrin*. It's not the same mitzvah performed on different dates, but the same mitzvah performed completely differently by different people depending on the circumstances.

But why Chanukah in particular?

Here we reach the heart of the story: The miracle of the oil was, in truth, entirely unnecessary.

Yes - unnecessary.

The Gemara in Shabbat (21b), as explained by the Pnei Yehoshua, asks the obvious question: Why was the miracle needed at all? The Jewish people were in a state of *ones* (duress) - all the oil was impure. Halachah is clear: in such circumstances, one may light with impure oil, for *טומאה הותרה בציבור* (Temple service can be performed in a state of impurity when the majority of the people are impure). Even if they insisted on olive oil - they had it. It was merely impure.

So why the miracle?

The answer: to reveal how deeply God loved them.

The Hasmoneans were under no obligation to search for pure oil. They could have lit immediately, fully within halachic parameters. But they refused to settle. They wanted the purest expression of the mitzvah. They were willing to exert themselves - to give of themselves - for that aspiration.

And God responded with two seemingly unnecessary miracles. The first: They found a single flask of pure oil. They did not have to find it - but they searched, and they did.

The second: The oil burned for eight days. It did not have to. They could have used new oil the next day. Yet the miracle continued. From here, Chazal derived the two higher levels of mitzvah performance:

Mehadrin corresponds to the first miracle - using olive oil specifically, mirroring the Hasmoneans' refusal to accept anything less than purity.

Mehadrin min haMehadrin reflects the second miracle - adding light each day, extending the miracle across the entire festival. Just as the oil did not run out, we do not allow the light to plateau. We increase it, day by day, turning Chanukah into a living narrative of ever-expanding illumination.

This is the secret of *mehadrin* on Chanukah.

Precisely when we are not obligated, precisely when the halachah would allow us to do less - that is when we choose to do more. When we search for something better, purer, truer; when we give of ourselves not because we must, but because we want to - then a light descends that did not need to descend, and miracles that did not need to happen, happen.

And that is why only Chanukah has *mehadrin min haMehadrin*.

Because here, there is space to want more. To add light. To continue forward - not out of obligation, but out of desire.

PARNASS HAYOM: KISLEV

3 KISLEV | Adrienne and Shlomo Drazin, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his grandmother, Bertha Sand z"l

17 KISLEV | David Zukor, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Leslie Zukor z"l

18 KISLEV | Chaviva Lifson, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her mother, Sandra Katz z"l

20 Kislev | Susan Lieberman and family, in honour of the Yahrzeit of her husband, Aron Lieberman z"l

22 KISLEV | Alex Spira, in honour of the Yahrzeit of his father, Abraham Spira z"l



HALACHIC Q&A

BY RABBI YOSEF ZVI RIMON - NASI, WORLD MIZRACHI

Question: Why do we light Chanukah candles inside the house and not outside in a time

of danger?

Answer: The reason is simple: saving a life overrides all the commandments, and therefore it is not possible to properly fulfill the commandment of Chanukah lights as determined from the words of Rashi (ibid.) and the Tur (Orach Chaim 671). The Ritva (ibid.) wrote that even when there is no danger to one's life, but there is a risk of anguish or hatred, it is still permissible to light inside.

Rav Kook zt"l also offered a profound explanation. He explains that by placing the candles outside, we share with the world the light of Torah - its commandments, holiness, ideas, and values that we are trying to disseminate. However, at times, the world is not ready to receive the light we wish to transmit. In such times, when evil winds blow in the world, we hold on to our inner light and illuminate the light within our house, within our way of life.

We can add another idea, similar to one found in the Sefat Emet on Chanukah. We aim to disseminate a great light and transmit our messages to everyone. However, in order to influence the external world, we first need to build our internal world - our home. We must gather all of our inner strengths before we can go outside in a serious and profound way.

Question: I know there is a dispute among the Acharonim regarding the Shehecheyanu blessing at home for someone who recited the blessing over lighting the Chanukah candles in the synagogue. What is preferable to do in practice?

Answer: Even someone who lights the candles in the synagogue with a blessing should again recite the blessing "Lehadlik Ner Shel Chanukah" and the blessing "She'asa Nisim" when lighting the candles at home. The reason is that this person has a separate obligation to light at home, and this obligation requires its own blessing; therefore, he must recite these blessings

again (Mishnah Berurah 671:46).

But should he also recite the Shehecheyanu blessing at home? This depends on whether someone who recited Shehecheyanu on the first night without seeing the Chanukah candles fulfills the obligation of this blessing.

According to Rabbi Feinstein (Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 1:180), to fulfill the obligation of Shehecheyanu, one must see candles that are obligatory. Since the synagogue candles are not obligatory candles for him, they do not fulfill the requirement for Shehecheyanu, and therefore he should recite it again at home.

However, according to most poskim, one may fulfill the obligation of Shehecheyanu even if recited without seeing a candle ("Zman Omero Afilu BaShuk," Eruvin 45b). Accordingly, someone who recited Shehecheyanu in the synagogue does not need to repeat it when lighting at home. This is the ruling of Machzik Berachah (671:8), She'elot U'Teshuvot Zera Emet (vol. 3, siman 96), the Mishnah Berurah (ibid.), and Yechaveh Da'at (vol. 2, siman 77).

However, if when lighting at home he is fulfilling the obligation for his wife and household, he may recite Shehecheyanu on their behalf (though it is preferable that they recite it themselves).

Therefore, in practice: someone who lights the candles in the synagogue and recites the blessings should, when lighting at home, recite "Lehadlik Ner Shel Chanukah" and "She'asa Nisim", but does not recite Shehecheyanu. If he is fulfilling the obligation for his wife and household at home, he may recite Shehecheyanu (though it is preferable that they recite it themselves).

Question: Was the song "Ma'oz Tzur" written for Chanukah?

Answer: On the one hand, Ma'oz Tzur refers to all the exiles, and as such could be equally appropriate for Purim or Pesach. On the other hand, the first verse ends with a mention of "Chanukat ha'Mizbeach" (the dedication of the altar), which seems to indicate a more specific connection to the festival of Chanukah itself.

This link, however, may not be entirely definitive. Ma'oz Tzur describes the hope and anticipation of complete salvation, the pinnacle of which is reached only by the rebuilding of the Temple. Therefore, the mention of "Chanukat ha'Mizbeach" may very well relate to redemption generally and not to Chanukah specifically. In any case, we Jews have adopted the custom of singing Ma'oz Tzur on Chanukah (while a similar idea is reflected in saying "Ve'hi She'amda" on the Seder night and in the post-Megillah blessing, "Harav et Rivenu," on Purim).

The reason for this may be that the salvation of Chanukah is concealed. Thereafter, our history, for thousands of years, has been one of latent Divine Providence. At times, this makes it difficult to see Hashem's supervision when examining an individual event. But by appraising Jewish history as a whole - the Exodus from Egypt, Purim, the many wars that we have had to fight, etc. - as a revelation of the Divine Hand, we are able to understand that Divine Providence was at work on Chanukah, too.

The message from the events of Chanukah to future generations reads loud and clear: seek Hashem everywhere, even in the darkest, most hidden corners, for He is there!

Please God, we will continue to work to light the way for others - and to enable them to discover the great light within themselves.

Chanukah Sameach!





THE BEAUTY OF YEFET AND THE TENTS OF SHEM

BY CHAGAI SHREM

Who was Yavan (Greece)? What is the root of the struggle between Israel and Greece? To answer

this, we must go back to the dawn of civilization: Noach had three sons - Shem, Yefet, and Cham and the Netziv of Volozhyn explains that each one is an archetype for types of people in the world - each one represents a different ideal.

Shem represents people who "call in the name of God" in the world - those who engage in matters of faith and Godliness. They reveal God in the world and live according to His Word. Yefet represents people who act according to human values - people who contribute to society and possess human morality, ensuring that life on earth is not corrupt. Cham represents people who live according to their desires. There is nothing else guiding their lives; this is the animalistic side of the human being that leads them.

Yavan is a descendant of Yefet. Thus, the

struggle between Israel and Greece is essentially between a worldview that is satisfied with the human level and that which seeks a higher, divine level. Should one be satisfied with human virtues - material wealth, physical perfection, and human morality - or whether one must strive to live on a higher plane, a divine mode of life.

However, Chazal say in the Gemara (Sotah 49b):

לעולם אל ילמד אדם את בנו חכמה יוונית אבל יכול ללמד את בנו לשון יוונית

A person mustn't teach their child Greek wisdom, but they may teach the Greek language.

What is the root of the difference between wisdom and language? Rav Kook explains that language is the technical form through which content is conveyed - the style. It is a tool, a means. Wisdom, however, is the content itself - the essence, the meaning, the identity. Wisdom defines purpose and mission.

Our identity and values must come only from the Torah, but there is no problem in adopting style. As the verse says:

יֵפֶת אֱלֹקִים לִיֶּפֶת וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶהֱלֵי שֵׁם

The beauty of Yefet dwells in the tents of Shem

When Yefet dwells within the tents of Shem, the style can be sanctified. But if one replaces wisdom - identity - with language and style, and it is no longer within the tents of Shem; when it is detached from its proper context and becomes a goal rather than a means - then confusion arises.

Is a person's worth determined by their economic status, their car, their home, their assets? Have we turned the means into the goal?

This is a struggle that is still relevant today. We must be careful not to replace our divine mission, our identity, and our values. Be'ezrat Hashem, we will increase the light, strengthen our identity, and fulfill our divine mission in reality.

Chag Sameach

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you find 10 differences between these two parsha pictures?

