

THE CLANTON PARK HERALD

A monthly newsletter, intended to provide timely and pertinent information to *shul* members

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From the Rav...

IT'S NOT ABOUT GETTING BY

The facts of the Chanukah story are, of course, well known. We know that a minute amount of appropriate oil was all that remained for the rededication of the *Menorah*. We know that the minute amount of oil miraculously lasted for eight days; time enough for new oil to be processed. We know that Chanukah is our eight-day commemoration of that ancient miracle.

Yes, what actually occurred on Chanukah is quite clear. The objective of those occurrences is, on the other hand, much less clear. This lack of clarity is brought into full focus by a question that is posed by the *Pnei Yehoshua* on the *Gemara, Shabbos* 21. The *Pnei Yehoshua* there takes note of the halachic principle of *tumah hutra (or dechuya) be'tzibbur*, of the halachic suspension of purity rules if and when most of the Jewish community is in a state of impurity. The Chanukah story came on the heels of a period of *beis ha'mikdash* disruption, a period in which *beis ha'mikdash* purification rites had been suspended. The majority of the community had, during this period of disruption, slipped into a state of *tumah*. Given that sanctions against impurity should not have been in place, impure oil should have been an acceptable alternative for *Menorah* lighting. If impure oil would have sufficed, then the miracle of making that little bit of pure oil last for eight days was, strangely enough, wholly unnecessary. Why would Hashem have set an unnecessary miracle in motion?

The *Beis Ha'Levi* questions the necessity of this miracle from a different vantage point. He takes note of the simple fact that wicks of different widths produce very different levels of light. A thick wick will draw a lot of oil and will thereby create a larger, more intense flame. A thinner wick, will, on the other hand, draw less oil and will therefore produce a smaller, less intense flame. The standard *beis ha'mikdash* menorah wicks were most certainly quite thick; there was, of course, an overriding desire to produce large, beautiful flames. But it didn't have to be that way, did it? The Torah makes no mention of wick dimensions or of flame intensity; thin wicks would have sufficed. And so, even without a miracle, the extant one-day supply of oil could have lasted eight days. All that was required was for the menorah dedicators to craft thin wicks that would

have only burnt 1/8 the usual amount. The menorah would have continued to function, albeit in a less than ideal way, and the miracle would have been unnecessary. Why then did Hashem set an unnecessary miracle in motion?

The *Beis Ha'Levi's* answer is yes, that could have been done. Yes, we could have used thinner wicks, yes, that minute amount of oil could have lasted for the full eight days, and yes, we could have gotten by with a smaller flame. But that would have been just getting by and we weren't interested in just getting by. We wanted to perform an ideal, superlative *mitzva*. And because it was so very clear that we were aiming for the superlative, Hashem responded with a miracle that allowed that superlative to become our reality. The *Pnei Yehoshua's* question suddenly falls by the wayside, doesn't it? Yes, *tuma'ah hutra be'tzibbur* would have allowed us to get by with impure oil. But that would not have been the superlative menorah lighting that we were aiming for.

It's not only about the menorah, is it? It's about the sad fact that so many people just get by in life's spiritual arenas. People get by in *davening* and in learning and don't stop and think of ways and of strategies for making their *davening* and their learning better and more meaningful. People get by in *tzedaka* without bothering to do the research necessary to ensure that their *tzedaka* dollars are properly channeled.

So different than the material arena, isn't it? We do the utmost to ensure that we don't just get by in our career development; we aim for success. We try not to get by in what we eat; we aim for something palatable. We're not satisfied with getting by in any of life's other material arenas, are we? Let's apply similar effort to the spiritual arena as well and perhaps effort channeled in that direction will lead to a whole new set of Chanukah miracles and to the *bi'as go'el tzeddek*.

A *Freiliche* Chanukah



Mazel Tovs

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Chaim Oliver, on his marriage to Mindy Halper of Thornhill. Mazel tov, as well, to Chaim's mother, Sheila Oliver.

Carol Brown, on the marriage of her daughter, Batya Brown, to Rudy Bromberg of Toronto.

Chaim and Tovit Rubin, on the birth of their son, Avraham Eisan.

Professor Paul and Rochelle Socken, on the birth of a grandson to their children Deborah and Shlomo Weissmann.

Moshe and Frances Goldstein, on the birth of a grandson, Binyamin Zev, to their children Naomi and Odom Gardin.

Condolences

Michael Frohwein, on the passing of his brother, Tzvi Frohwein in Eretz Yisroel.

Heartfelt Thank You and Appreciation

The family of the beloved late Ruth Kirsh (Rachel bat Mordechai) z"l, wishes to express a heartfelt thank you to the members of the *shul* for all the warm thoughts, comforting words and kind deeds during our time of grief and sorrow.

We wish to extend a very special expression of gratitude and appreciation to Rabbi Weber for all his time in providing us much guidance and comfort during this difficult time.

Jerry Kirsh, Nathan Kirsh, Janet Yolleck & family, Reva and Perry Lichtblau & family

Shul News and Rules

Chanukkah Party! ... The *shul* will be hosting an exciting Chanukkah Party at Sueda Shilishis on Shabbos Channukah, December 31st. More details to follow.

Cost of Tikkunim and Seudos Shlishis...

Effective immediately, the price of a morning *tikkun* will be raised to reflect increased food costs. The *shul* does not profit from the morning *tikkunim*, but the current costs do not accurately reflect the true costs of the foods being served. The new costs are: \$75 for a basic *tikkun*, and \$125 for the deluxe *tikkun*, which includes herring. There will also be a mandatory minimum gratuity to the *Shammas* of \$15 for the basic and \$20 for the deluxe *tikkun*.

The *Seuda Shlishis* minimum cost is \$75, regardless of how many people are sponsoring. The minimum cost if there is only one sponsor is \$100.

Youth News

The girls in grades 5 - 8 have been having a blast! Their programming is off to a great start! In November, the girls got together in the *shul* for their first event of the year! They molded and sculpted beads out of clay, then painted them and used the beads to create either beautiful key chains or cool bracelets. The girls all had a great time and it was great to see their creativity! In December, girls in grades 4 through 8 jumped for joy as they celebrated Chanukah. Everyone had a great time at Just Bounce Trampoline Club and finished off the day with delicious Chanukah cookies!

Special thanks to Shira Shields and Aviva Kurtz for their volunteer help with both programs. Save the date: Motzei Shabbos, January 28th, we will be having a double-header with programs for girls in grades 1-4 and grades 5-8. Details coming soon! Looking forward to continuing a great and exciting year!
Rebecca Kurtz

The Bereishis Quiz 3

by Dr. Leibe Warner

- 1) The 25th word in *Chumash Bereishis* gives a hint to Chanukah. What is the word?
- 2) Esav and Yaakov had a grandson with the same name. What is the name?
- 3) Identify a person whose name is mentioned for the first and only time in the same *passuk* that records that person's death.
- 4) The word *Mincha* is mentioned in three situations where it means a gift, and not a *tefillah*. Identify all three instances.

5) Two men each had two sons. The four sons had a total of only two distinct names. Name the two fathers.

6) A father and a son married at the same age. Name them.

7) Where does the number 1000 appear?

8) Where is the colour brown mentioned?

9) In what *parasha* is the name Eliezer mentioned?

10) Identify a *passuk* that has six consecutive words which each start with the letter *aleph*.

Send your correct answers (after *Shabbos*) to bulletin@clantonpark.com, and your name will be entered into a draw for a gift certificate to **Negev Books**. Also, go to the *shul* website to see the answers to last bulletin's quiz.

D'var Torah

What is Humility? – Final Instalment

Ken Stollon

"The man, Moshe, was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth." (Numbers 12:3)

In his *sefer Kabbalat Ol Shamayim*, Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz writes: "No place in the Torah does it state specifically that Moshe was wiser than any man, nor does it say that he was more righteous than any man, nor does it say he was mightier than any man, even though we can deduce from events that he was wise, with the greatest comprehension of any man, and that he was righteous and mighty. But the Torah finds it proper, or necessary, to stress only one thing: that Moshe was more humble than any other man."

What makes Moshe the model of humility?

There are, indeed, many examples of his humility that are brought down by the *meforshim*.

When Hashem first approaches Moshe to free the slaves, he remonstrates with Hashem, asking Him to consider someone else for the task, asking "Mi anochi ki ailech el Paro?" ("Who am I to go before Pharaoh?") and complaining that he is "chvad peh uchvad lashon" ("heavy in the tongue" -- not a good speaker). He focuses on his weaknesses, his flaws, his imperfections, as opposed to his strengths. This, in itself, demonstrates his "shefal ruach" (lowly spirit), but the *meforshim* point out that a further reason for

Moshe's hesitancy in accepting the task was his concern for the honour of his brother, Aharon. Aharon was older, and had been the prophet and elder statesman in *Mitzrayim*, and Moshe was concerned that his own ascendancy to leadership would cause bad feelings between the two of them. Rashi, quoting the *gemara* in *Zevachim* 102a, suggests that Moshe's humility actually costs him the priesthood. Moshe was willing to give up honour, for the sake of not embarrassing his brother. So we see that *sensitivity to the feelings of others* is one of the hallmarks of humility.

A second example of Moshe's humility: he did not react at all to Miriam's slander, and instead of bearing a grudge, he prayed for her *refuah*. One who is truly modest can bear an insult without feeling ill will to the person who insulted him. If a person does not feel that he "deserves" to be held in high esteem by others, he is able to take the loss of esteem in stride. A second hallmark of humility, then, is *the ability to deal with the insensitivity of others*.

The Ramban, in his commentary on *parashas Yisro*, states: "Moshe did not want to mention the fact that he was following his father-in-law's advice in the presence of all Israel, because of his humility, for people would think that, were it not for Yisro's counsel, Moshe would not have needed any assistance from the other judges." Moshe, then, did not want the *B'nai Yisroel* to think that he thought so highly of himself that he did not need any help from others. So, again, a *concern for others*, and what others think about us, is an important characteristic of humility.

Even though he spoke with G-d, even though he could facilitate miracles, and even though he had a special relationship to G-d, Moshe did not "lord it over" the people. He did not see himself as better than everyone else. There are many *midrashim* that discuss the significance of the small aleph in *Vayikra*. The *Baal HaTurim* explains that Moshe, when writing the Torah, wanted to describe G-d's revelation to him with the same uncomplimentary word used for Bilam -- "*vayikar*" -- "and it happened" (neither actively, nor lovingly; it just happened), without an aleph. But G-d instructed Moshe to include the aleph as an expression of his love for Moshe. Too humble to write the whole word "*vayikra*", Moshe wrote the small aleph.

Moshe had good reason to feel superior. As Yirmiyahu says: "let him that boasts, boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am G-d" (Yirmiyahu 9:22). In other words, as Professor Leibowitz says, "a person may boast of his knowledge of G-d, not of his knowledge in general, and not of his might, and not of his

wealth, but of his knowledge of G-d". Who, in all of human history, had a deeper and more intimate knowledge of G-d than Moshe *Rabbeinu*? But the irony is, that it is precisely this knowledge that fosters Moshe's humility. "All the prophets looked through a dark glass – and thought that they saw -- and our teacher, Moshe, looked through a clear glass – and knew that he had not seen Him to His face. He understood that man cannot comprehend G-d because G-d is beyond human comprehension." Rav Chaim Volozhin, in his *sefer Ruach Chaim*, states that it is this quality of self-negation that enabled Moshe to see directly and clearly (*Yevamos* 12:6), to the point that Hashem spoke *through* him ("bo" Bamidbar 12:8), not just *to* him.

Like all prophets, Moshe was ultimately to become an instrument of G-d, a vessel through which G-d transmits His message. The true prophet is ego-less, abnegating himself before the will of G-d. The Ohr Chaim describes Moshe as an "Ish Ha-Elokim" – a man of G-d. He mastered everything out of his fear for Hashem. He devoted his entire being to serving Hashem. This *madrayga* is indeed difficult to achieve. However, it is much less difficult to try to hone our sensitivity to others and to deal more humbly with the insensitivity that others may show to us. Our generation, in particular, is cursed with a sense of entitlement that clouds our judgment in dealing with others. Let us hope that when we ask Hashem everyday in our *tefillos* to be "*mashpil ga'im*" that we are not talking about ourselves.

One final note. Many have asked me why I am writing *davka* about humility, and what credentials I have to write on this subject. I really have no credentials, other than being perplexed at how often the theme of humility comes up in our learning and liturgy, and how little this *middah* seems to be valued in the community and in the world at large.

It is clear to me, though, that a victory for humility is a victory for G-d. There are two ways of looking at the world. There is the G-d-centred approach, which holds that G-d is the ultimate power in the universe, that He pulls all the strings, and that He also guides the course of human history. The other way of looking at the world is human-centric. Here human beings wield the power. The more powerful the individual, the more he is to be feared and respected. By surveying the powerful figures in history -- Pharoah, Nebuchadnezzar, Ceaser, Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Arafat, et al -- we see some common themes emerge. This type of power is born from violence, brutality and fear. There is no place for G-d in a world dominated by these types of tyrants.

In the G-d-centred paradigm, we do well to follow G-d's commandments, to worship Him, and pray to Him.

In the human-centric model, this type of worship is a waste of time; the will to power is supreme. Humility does not have a place. The tyrant is never humble. What results is a world of greed and selfishness, a world where the weak serve the strong.

In the G-d-centred paradigm, humility is a desired trait; charity and selflessness are encouraged and rewarded. How much we are able to help the poor, the weak and the downtrodden is the litmus test of such a society's values.

The G-d-centred paradigm is, of course, the Jewish paradigm; and Moshe *Rabbeinu* is our role model of how, through the *middah* of humility, we can all be conduits for bringing G-d-centred values into this world.

Report from Eretz Yisrael

Submitted by Morris Sosnovitch

The Middle East has been growing date palms for centuries. The average tree is about 18 -20 feet tall and yields about 38 pounds of dates a year. Israeli date trees are now yielding 400 pounds/year and are short enough to be harvested from the ground or a short ladder.

Israel, the 100th smallest country, with less than 1/1000th of the world's population, can lay claim to the following:

The cell phone was developed in Israel by Israelis working in the Israeli branch of Motorola, which has its largest development center in Israel.

Most of the Windows NT and XP operating systems were developed by Microsoft-Israel.

The Pentium MMX Chip technology was designed in Israel at Intel.

Both the Pentium-4 microprocessor and the Centrino processor were entirely designed, developed and produced in Israel. The Pentium microprocessor in your computer was most likely made in Israel.

Voice mail technology was developed in Israel.

Both Microsoft and Cisco built their only R&D facilities outside the US in Israel.

Israel has the highest percentage in the world of home computers per capita. (To be continued...)