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**Why Prince Harry and Meghan Markle Should Have More than Two Children**

**By Jeff Jacoby**



*Our world has serious problems. Having more babies can help solve them.*

If he's lucky, Archie Mountbatten-Windsor may get a sibling. But he's definitely not getting more than one.

That's according to his father, Britain's Prince Harry, who avowed in an interview with the legendary primatologist Jane Goodall for the new issue of *British Vogue* that he and Meghan Markle plan to have no more than two children. That isn't because they've always craved a cozy family of four. It's because they think that having more in an era of climate change would be environmentally greedy and irresponsible.

"Two, maximum!" Harry replied when Goodall remarked that the couple should have "not too many" kids.

"We are the one species on this planet that seems to think that this place belongs to us, and only us," said the prince, quickly noting that *he* doesn't think so: "I've always thought this place is borrowed. And, surely, being as intelligent as we all are ... we should be able to leave something better behind for the next generation."

As several observers [promptly noted](https://twitter.com/piersmorgan/status/1156311503781318657)**,** If Harry really wanted to reduce his carbon footprint, he could start with his current lifestyle.



**"**To make any difference to planet Earth," wrote John Vidal in the Guardian, Harry and his family "really must stop taking those private jets to Jamaica, the luxury safaris in Botswana, the weddings in Montego Bay, the impromptu winter getaways in Tromsø, the 'babymoons' in Australia and New York, the downtime on Mediterranean islands, and the quick flights to Fiji."

But not having (more) children? That's no way to save the world.

One of the saddest phenomena of our time is the way childlessness is being promoted as a virtue.

In an Instagram video in February, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said that climate change makes it "legitimate" and "moral" for young people to question whether it is "still OK to have children." On HBO's Real Time, Bill Maher extolled millennials "for doing something right" – having fewer children. "I can't think of a better gift to our planet than pumping out fewer humans to destroy it," he said to cheers and applause.

Just last month, entertainer Miley Cyrus ranted in a foul-mouthed interview with Elle magazine that the earth is "exhausted" and "can't produce" and is not worth bequeathing to children. "Until I feel like my kid would live on an earth with fish in the water," she declared, "I'm not bringing in another person to deal with that." Hundreds of women have joined Birthstrike, a group for those who have decided "not to bear children due to the severity of the ecological crisis." Those are just a few examples of the trend; there is [no shortage](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ashsanders/birth-strike-no-kids-climate-change-population) of others.

I acknowledge the anxiety and alarm that many people feel about the environment. But if they want to make the world better, the way to do so is not by depriving it of more children.

It is an inescapable fact of life that to be born is to suffer, to struggle, and to stumble. There has never been an age in which that wasn't true, and people in most ages have contended with far more daunting fates than a warmer climate: war, famine, slavery, poverty, plague. Not having children may spare theoretical offspring from inheriting a world with terrible problems. But it also denies the world [the ultimate resource](https://amzn.to/2KbS3pY) for fixing those problems – human intelligence, imagination, and grit.

The [Talmud records](https://www.sefaria.org/Sotah.12a.10?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en) that when the enslavement of the Hebrews in ancient Egypt grew unbearable, their leaders advised couples to stop having babies – why raise more children to face a life of slavery? Eventually one of those leaders was persuaded he was wrong, and that childrearing should go on even in the teeth of murderous oppression. So he and his wife had another baby. That baby, named Moses, became the liberator who led his people to freedom.

**More people make the world a better place.**

Every time parents bring children into a world where things have gone badly wrong, they improve the odds that there will someone to help set things right. In addition to [all the other reasons](https://www.wsj.com/articles/yes-we-really-do-want-to-have-a-fifth-child-1535122603) to have children, there is this soaring utilitarian reality: More people make the world a better place.

The number of human beings has nearly [quadrupled](https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/world-population-by-year/) over the past century, and mankind is flourishing as never before. People live longer, healthier, and more comfortable lives. They are better fed, better housed, and better clothed. Age-old evils – slavery, genocide, child mortality, illiteracy, world wars, deaths from natural disasters, and absolute poverty – have been dramatically curbed, if not yet vanquished altogether.

Thanks to advances made possible by human innovation, insight, and effort, fearful threats have been quelled and deadly diseases cured. From agriculture to air travel to the abundance of consumer goods, the lot of ordinary men, women, and children has improved beyond anything even the most utopian optimist could have forecast in 1920.

Parenthood isn't for everyone. But the human race needs more people, just as it always has. If you're alarmed by the state of the world, bring more children into it. There's no telling how humanity may be blessed tomorrow from the babies you raise today.

*Reprinted from the August 5, 2019 website of Aish.com This article originally appeared in the Boston Globe.*

**The Shmuz onParshas Ve’eschanan**

**Cognitive Restructuring**

**By Rabbi Bentzion Shafier**

**Founder of TheShmuz.com**



“*Do not covet the house of your neighbor. Do not covet the wife of your neighbor; his slave and maid servant, his ox, his donkey, and all that belongs to your neighbor*.” – Shemos 20:14

The *Even Ezra* explains that people are perplexed by this *mitzvah*. How is it possible not to desire that which I find beautiful? The Torah can forbid actions or of speech, because I can to control my behaviors. But desires dwells deep within a person. They are a function of the inner condition. I didn’t ask for them, but they are here. How can the Torah command me not to want?

The *Even Ezra* answers with a *moshol*. Imagine, he says, that a simple villager were to see a princess passing in a procession. He may find her very beautiful, but he would never fantasize about marrying her. She is so far removed from his social status that the idea of taking her as a wife is out of the realm of the possible. He wouldn’t even dream about it. If the idea would ever cross his mind, he would quickly rebuke himself, saying, “Am I insane? Do I dream about sprouting wings and flying?”

So too, the *Even Ezra* explains, when a person understands that HASHEM runs the world and sets forth the right woman for the right man, he will never desire that which isn’t his because he knows that it is impossible for him to have it. It is so impossible that it would be akin to a sane individual dreaming about growing wings and flying.

The *Even Ezra* is teaching us a fundamental concept in growth: that we can shape our very reality.

**Changing Standards of Beauty**

As an example: there was a time in history when being overweight was considered a sign of dignity. For millennium, people barely had enough to eat. The only ones who could afford enough food to be heavy were the wealthy. As a result, if a man was corpulent, it was a sign of wealth and distinction. For that reason, in many cultures it was considered a sign of beauty for a woman to be heavy. A woman of distinction was large, and the larger, the more distinguished.

That isn’t our reality today. Rather than utter those dreaded words, “She is overweight,” a *shadchan* will use fifteen euphemisms. “I mean she is average.” “She has wonderful *middos*, a special *chen*, great *yichus*. . . ” Anything to avoid saying that the young woman is heavy.

Why is that we now loathe what many societies once considered desirous? The reason is that beauty is a function of perception. Young men are cultured, often from a very young age, that a certain standard is appealing. That is the desired state. That is how their sisters look, that is how they mothers rate attractiveness and beauty, and their reality is shaped by what others accept as the standard.

The point is that what is considered attractive is not hard-wired at birth; it is learned, often shaped by what others consider desirable. By nature the human desires, but the *object* of his desire is shaped by external factors and perceptions.

This seems to be the point that the *Even Ezra* is sharing with us: that we can shape our very reality. That which I desire will only be within a specific range of things, and it must be possible to be had. If I were to focus on the fact that HASHEM truly is in charge, I would understand that it is literally impossible to for me to have the life situation that my friend has.

His money, his job, his house, and his wife were all set by HASHEM – and there is nothing in my power to change that. Once I comprehend this, my desire for the object begins to wane. It enters into the realm of the impossible. It will just never happen. And so, I no longer desire it. Much like the villager would never dream of sprouting wings to fly, it’s insane.

**Living the Good Life**

This concept is very relevant to us as we live in times when the media sells the image that you can have anything, and not only can you have it – you need it. Only when you acquire the home on the beach, the exotic vacation, the luxurious car, will you be truly happy.

Constantly feeding a hunger and appetite for more and more, we are swept into new levels of hungers and desires, desires for things that yesterday we didn’t even know existed. Needless to say, if a person buys into this, he will never be happy. No sooner does he acquire that level of luxury than a new one is thrust into his view, so he is ever hungry, always needing more and more.

The *Even Ezra* is teaching us that the key to happiness is understanding that HASHEM is the one who metes out life situations: which house, which wife, which field. It is all set by HASHEM, and that reality is something that is in my power to set. I don’t have to be shackled to a false perception. No one forces me to accept an inaccurate sense of how the world functions. I can control my perception of life, and thereby shape my reality.

Once I mature in my thinking, my reality becomes shaped by this world order, and I recognize that things that HASHEM has given me are for my best, and things that HASHEM has allocated for others aren’t just inappropriate for me, they are impossible to obtain. It’s like dreaming about sprouting wings to fly; it can’t possibly happen. Once I fully understand that, I stop desiring what others have and attain a state of peace, tranquility, and happiness with the lot that HASHEM has chosen for me.

*Reprinted from this week’s website on TheShmuz.com This is an excerpt from the*[*Shmuz on the Parsha book*](https://theshmuz.com/product/shmuz-on-the-parsha-book/)*.*

**Bringing the Awareness of G-dliness**

**Into All Aspects of Our Life**

**From the Talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt”l**



This week's Torah portion, Vaetchanan, contains the verse, "And you shall know this day, and take it to heart, that the L-rd is the G-d in the heavens above, and upon the earth below; there is none else."

This recognition of G-d's unity may therefore be divided into three distinct areas: "heaven," "earth," and "there is none else" (which, according to the Midrash, refers to G-d's oneness "even within the very depths of the earth."

Why does the Torah go to such great lengths to emphasize the oneness of G-d? Would anyone seriously entertain the notion that there is another G-d hiding in the murky depths of the sea or in the earth's core? Why is it necessary for the Torah to explicitly command us to "take it to heart?"

Chasidic philosophy explains that this verse not only negates the possibility of another deity's existence, G-d forbid, but rather emphasizes that fact that there is no existence at all besides G-d. G-dliness is the only reality; everything else is an illusion covering up the true essence within.

Were we able to clearly perceive that there is no independent reality except for G-d, we would easily recognize that it is only G-d's constant re-creation of the world, every minute and every second, which sustains both physical and spiritual reality. In truth, "there is nothing else."

Because one may mistakenly think that only spiritual matters are G-dly, the Torah specifically mentions "the earth below." The physical world, with its multitude of creations, is also a vessel for G-dliness, and must be properly utilized in the service of G-d.

This division is also symbolic of man himself: "Heaven" refers to man's G-dly soul; "earth" refers to his corporeal body, the vessel in which the G-dly soul illuminates; and "the very depths of the earth" refers to man's actions.

By stressing this verse, the Torah emphasizes that this awareness of G-d must be brought into all facets of our lives-- spiritual, physical and practical. By recognizing G-d's unity and reflecting it in our every action, we ready the entire world for the complete revelation of G-dliness that will take place with the coming of Moshiach and the Final Redemption, speedily in our days.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Vaetchanan 5753/1993 edition of L’Chaim Weekly (Issue #275), a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.*

**Rav Avigdor Miller on**

**Tefillin for Women**



**QUESTION**: If *tzitizis* and *tefillin* are really so beneficial like you spoke about tonight, why don’t women use them? And what do they have instead?

**ANSWER:** The truth is women do have it, because when men put on *tzitzis* and *tefillin*, they’re not putting it on for themselves. That’s absolutely not true. Every father puts on *tzitzis* and *tefillin* for all of his children and for his wife, too. There’s no question that *tzitzis* and *tefillin* are the property of the *Am Yisroel.*

But, more precisely, the family shares in *all* the mitzvos. So while he’s putting on *tzitzis* and *tefillin* in the shul let’s say, and his wife is taking care of the children at home - somebody has to remain at home; he couldn’t go to the synagogue if she weren’t home - so there’s no question that it’s her *tzitzis* and her *tefillin*too.

That’s the way to understand it. It’s silly otherwise! And when he comes to study Torah in the evening, who will babysit? And therefore, she has one hundred percent partnership in all that he does. And she has an edge on him – she doesn’t have to do it! And still she gets a full partnership in everything that he does. There’s no question that this is the case. I’m not saying this because it’s America or because it’s the spirit of the times; I'm saying it because it's the truth.

However, if that’s the case, then why do we make a *bracha* in the morning שלא עשני אשה – that He didn’t make me a woman? If the woman gets a full share in the work without doing anything what are thanking Hashem for?

The answer is מגלגלין זכות על ידי זכאי – it certainly is a privilege that *you* should be able to do it for your wife. Now, you can’t stay home – you’re not able to nurse the babies. In the olden days there were no bottles, so your wife had to do the job. So somebody had to put on *tallis* and *tefillin* – and you’re the man so you do it. But it’s a privilege, and that’s why the man says that *bracha*. But she gets a full share in all the *mitzvos,* absolutely.

*Reprinted from the August 6, 2019 email of Toras Avigdor (Tape #75 from May 1975)*

**Who's Who?**

RABBI YOCHANAN BEN ZAKKAI lived at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple. Before the actual fall of Jerusalem he hid himself in a coffin and was smuggled out of the city.

He made and was granted three requests of the Roman commander Vespasian: the city of Yavneh to establish a yeshiva; the life of the Davidic heir to the monarchy; a physician to cure Rabbi Tzadok who had fasted 40 years to save Jerusalem from destruction.

The establishment of Yavneh as a Torah center set the stage for the spiritual rebirth of the Jewish people despite the destruction of its physical base.

Reprinted from the archives of L’Chaim Weekly (Va’etchanan 5753)

**Rabbi Berel Wein on**

**Parashat Vaetchanan**

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The Torah reading of this week always coincides with the Shabbat that falls after the fast of the ninth day of Av. Because of the nature of the prophetic reading, it is seen as the Shabbat of comfort and consolation, which are difficult commodities to acquire.

Tragedies are not easily erased from one's mind and affect one's permanent personality and view of life. Comfort and consolation rarely come from outside sources, that are almost completely dependent upon the personality and psychological makeup of the one who has suffered the tragedy.

The Torah is always realistic about human nature and never provides simplistic or instantaneously magical solutions to personal problems and difficulties. Rather, consolation is to be viewed as a process of maturity and development. Tragedies are never really forgotten but they can be sublimated by future events and experiences of life that follow.

The narrative of this week's reading has Moshe attempting to convince Heaven, so to speak, to reverse its decree and to allow him to enter and live in the land of Israel. His request is denied.

The Torah never records for us whether Moshe is truly ever consoled over this event and his fate. Nevertheless, for the balance of this book of Dvarim, Moshe continues to fulfill his mission as the leader of the Jewish people and the greatest of all prophets. Even when one is not completely comforted, one must continue with a positive mission in life and not use the disappointments and tragedies that eventually beset all of us as an excuse for depression.

The Jewish people unfortunately have a long list of complaints, grievances and tragedies that litter our historical narrative. Though we have many great achievements to balance the ledger sheet of history, the ninth day of Av reminded us that we have never been completely comforted and consoled.

Even in our day, the great accomplishment of the creation and success of the state of Israel and the miraculous in gathering of Jews from all over the world to populate our country, gives us hope and stamina to face the future and its challenges. But in no way, does it come to provide comfort and consolation for the destruction of European Jewry in the past century.

It is obvious that tragedy, resilience and accomplishment exist side-by-side within us individually and as a nation. Our great prophets assure us that we will be healed from our wounds and restored to greatness. But, just as one who undergoes surgery and is restored to full health, nevertheless he bears the scars of that surgery for the rest of his life.

So too, comfort and consolation of the Jewish people is not meant to remove the scars of what has happened to us over our long and many times painful history. The task is to move on, and this attitude and behavior eventually brings about healing as part of the process of consolation.

*Reprinted from this week’s website of Rabbiwein.com*

**Thoughts that Count**

Ben Zoma said: "Who is rich? He who is happy with his lots" (Ethics of the Fathers 4:1).

The key that unlocks the riches in all things is the ability to be happy with your circumstances, no matter what they are. This skill lies within every person's reach. It does not depend on the fulfillment of desires, and can be achieved only when one has meaning in one's existence.

Our commitment to the Torah--a sacred, Divine guide to Jewish life--can change the most miserable of fates into a meaningful existence.

*("Ethics From Sinai")*

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**A Person Can Pray**

**For Anything**

**By Rabbi Eli J. Mansour**

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Moshe tells Benei Yisrael in Parashat Va'etchanan, "For who is a great nation who has a god close to it, like Hashem, our G-d, is whenever we call unto Him?" (4:7).

In its plain sense, this verse refers to G-d's constant accessibility, the fact that we can turn to Him in prayer at any time.  Nobody should ever think that G-d has no interest in listening to his prayers except on the High Holidays, or only in the synagogue on Shabbat.

The door to G-d's office is always open, "whenever we call unto Him." At any time, three hundred and sixty-five days throughout the year, a person can pray. "Behold, He neither sleeps nor slumbers, the Guardian of Israel." Unlike mortal leaders, with whom one must first schedule an appointment – and even then is not necessarily guaranteed audience with them – G-d is available to us at any time, all year round.

But this verse lends itself to an additional interpretation, as well.  It perhaps establishes that just as there is no restriction on when we can turn to G-d, so is there no restriction on the kind of requests one may bring to G-d.

It is readily obvious that we can and must pray to G-d on behalf of those who are gravely ill, for somebody who lost his job and is in dire need of a source of livelihood, or for a person who is searching for a Shidduch (mate).

These are, of course, very serious matters for which one should pray to the Almighty. But can one "inconvenience" G-d for lesser concerns? Is it proper for a person to pray as he drives to the city that he finds a parking spot, or that his child thinks clearly during his exam that day?

Moshe therefore tells us that G-d is close to us "whenever we call unto Him." Whether we pray to Him regarding very critical matters or less critical matters, He listens. There is no such thing as "inconveniencing" the Almighty. To the contrary, one ought to accustom himself to speak to G-d on a regular basis, to bring to Him even simple requests.

When a person adds the words "Be'ezrat Hashem" ("with G-d's help") or "Im Yirtzeh Hashem" ("if Hashem wills it") when he speaks of his plans, he expresses his awareness of G-d's ultimate control over his life. When a person remarks, "I am going shopping this afternoon, G-d willing," or, "With G-d's help I'll be in the city later today," he is in effect saying that he cannot make it to the store or the city without G-d's assistance.

Any one of a wide range of factors can prevent a person from reaching the store or getting into the city; a believing Jew must recall that even these seemingly trivial matters are in G-d's hands, and therefore even these concerns warrant a prayer.

"For who is a great nation who has a god close to it, like Hashem, our G-d, is whenever we call unto Him?" Whatever the issue is, no matter how big or how small, we have unlimited access to G-d's compassion. A Jew can pray for anything, and he can be fully confident that G-d is listening.

*Reprinted from this week’s website of the Edmund J. Safra Synagogue in Brooklyn, NY.*

**More Thoughts on the Parsha**

"For the reward of a mitzva is a mitzva, and the reward of trans-gression is a transgression" (Ethics 4:2).

Reward and punishment are not extraneous treatments given to those with a surplus of merits or sins; they are natural conse-quences of what we do. Do one mitzva, and from Heaven you will be aided to do more; commit a transgression, and forces are set in motion that will "grease the path" for you to commit worse deeds. *(Maimonides)*

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**18 Ways to More Effective**

**Prayer (Part Three)**

**By Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss**



Let us continue our crash course on the art of prayer.  The *posuk* says, “Va’ani sifilasi lacha Hashem eis ratzon – And I let my prayer come before You at a time of favor.”  This posuk clues us in on a great secret:  That we can carve out for ourselves a favorable time for our supplications.

The key to success in this area is to preface our prayers with the performance of a mitzvah. When doing so, Hashem is happy with us because of our mitzvah and therefore He looks more favorably at the request which follows it.

One example of this idea is to give *tzedakah* prior to our praying.  As the posuk teaches us, “Va’ani b’tzedek echezeh panecha – And with charity I come to appear before You (in prayer).”

Some people follow the custom to give tzedakah during *pesukei dezimrah* in *Vay’vorech Dovid*, when they say the verse, “V’atah mosheil bakol – And you rule over everything.”  This was the custom of the Arizal, zy”a.  It is my practice to keep a Rav Meir baal HaNeis *pushka* in my talis bag to ensure that I give some tzedakah before my prayers.

We must note that the word *tzedek* in the aforementioned verse doesn’t refer solely to charity.  It literally means righteousness.  Thus, the Manchester Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Segel, zt”l, zy”a, used to bring his wife a cup of coffee before davening.

This was one of his ways of carving for himself an *eis ratzon*, a time of favor.  He didn’t suffice with this activity alone.  He also studied Masechtas Berachos before davening thereby prefacing his prayers with the greatest mitzvah of all, namely the learning of Torah.

Both the Chofetz Chaim and the Sanzer Rav, the Divrei Chaim, zt”l, zy”a, recommend that we don’t rely just on the three formal prayers every day for at those times the *yeitzer hara*, the evil inclination girds itself with all of its might to interfere with our concentration and distract our devotions.

They advise that we ask Hashem for His help at different times scattered throughout the day with our own homemade formulas. We should be on the lookout throughout the day for times of favor caused by a mitzvah which create auspicious zones to petition Hashem.

For example, the Tuvcha Yabi’u says that if we are walking in the street and a scantily clad female passes by us and we overcome the temptation to gawk – thereby fulfilling the challenging mitzvah of *v’lo sasusru acharei levavechem v’acharei eineichem*, not to follow after our hearts and our eyes – that’s a time of favor to ask Hashem for a request.

We might be tempted to lose our cool when we are at home on a Friday afternoon and in the pressure of frenetic Shabbos preparations. However, if we hold back and don’t get angry, that too becomes an *eis ratzon*, a time to turn Heavenward and ask Hashem for what we need.

Similarly, if we are sitting under an umbrella table, by the coffee station at work, jogging with a friend or working out in the gym and we are sorely tempted to share a story which would involve lashon hara or divulging a secret and we mightily abstain, we should grab that sweet occasion to ask Hashem for a request.

This is the reason why our wives, after they kindle the Shabbos candles, pray for children *talmidei chachamim* and that their husband should only have eyes for them. For when they do their special mitzvah in honor of the Shabbos – and set the tone for an aura of warmth and light for the Shabbos day, and they do their part to reignite the light that was snuffed out by Chava when she ate the forbidden fruit and fed it to her husband – it is a weekly special time for her to ask Hashem for everything important.

So too when we are called up to the Torah and we do the very great mitzvah of publically giving honor to Hashem and His Torah, we create such a favorable time with Hashem that we are able to give a *mishabeirach*, a blessing to our families, our ancestors, and our friends in the shul.

May it be the will of Hashem as we continue to learn how to daven better, in that merit may Hashem answer our prayers and may we blessed with long life, good health, and everything wonderful.

*Reprinted from the August 4, 2019 website of Matzav.com*

**‘Man, Oh Manischewitz’: Kosher Food Merger Opens New**

**Chapter for Famous Name**

**By Joseph Berger**



**The kosher supermarket Seasons in Flushing, Queens. Of the planned merger between kosher giants, one industry observer said, “The old-time Manischewitz customer has passed on.” Photo Credit - Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times**

For generations, the name Manischewitz was practically synonymous with kosher foods and wine.

No Passover Seder seemed authentic without its square-shaped, ripple-faced matzo and a shot or more of the syrupy Concord grape wine that many find cloying yet nostalgic. And its slogan — “Man, oh Manischewitz” — was broadcast so ubiquitously throughout the years that it was even referred to on an episode of “Mad Men.”

“For me, putting Manischewitz on the Seder table is like using Yiddish slang in everyday conversation,” Samantha Corbin once wrote in [an article](https://brokelyn.com/the-seduction-of-manischewitz/) for the web magazine Brokelyn. “It’s a celebration of cultural Judaism, a Judaism that can be observant but liberated from religious gravitas.”



**Kayco will acquire Manischewitz’s range of products. Photo Credit - Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times**

But Manischewitz has undergone major shifts. It sold its wine division to what is now Constellation Brands in 1987. It has seen more and more of the kosher market go to its competitor Kayco — the manufacturer of Kedem wines and distributor of most other brands of kosher wine, as well as a bevy of foods. And standard American labels like Wise potato chips have had their foods certified by rabbis as kosher.

Then this week Kayco, formally known as the Kenover Marketing Corporation, announced that it had reached an understanding with the Manischewitz Company to acquire its panoply of products. Those include Manischewitz’s matzos, still the nation’s best-selling brand by far, as well as other foods, and beloved labels like Rokeach and Mother’s. The company’s portfolio will be trimmed down to its Season brand, known for sardines that are popular with non-kosher consumers.

Since by some estimates the two companies make up more than 50 percent of the kosher market, the announcement was seen in the kosher world as the equivalent of General Motors acquiring Ford. In theory, it could raise questions about whether Kayco was becoming a monopoly and what that might mean for kosher food prices, already considerably higher than those of non-kosher equivalents.



**Manischewitz tried to challenge Kedem’s dominance in grape juice by joining forces with the behemoth Welch’s, but it didn’t quite succeed. Photo Credit - Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times**

Menachem Lubinsky, who runs the annual Kosherfest trade show and publishes KosherToday.com, doubted that Kayco would raise prices excessively.

“It’s a family business and they are sensitive to the market,” Mr. Lubinsky said. “They’re very much under the microscope because people have been raising that very question.”

Both Kayco and Manischewitz declined to elaborate about the reasons for and the terms of the acquisition because the details were not final.

Mr. Lubinsky attributed the planned merger to Manischewitz’s decline as “the old-time Manischewitz customer has passed on.” He called the acquisition a “positive development” because “Kayco’s strong management team will no doubt help grow the brand as it has done with so many other brands.”

Robust growth in the American Jewish community, which numbers more than six million, is taking place among the ultra-Orthodox, which includes Hasidim, and the modern Orthodox. The former group in particular has become more rigorous in its demands for kosher products, preferring those certified by rabbis from its own tribes. Kayco has satisfied that demand.

Until recently, Manischewitz relied mostly on the Orthodox Union, the largest certification organization. It puts its OU seal on 800,000 products in 100 countries, including brands like Hershey chocolate bars, McCann’s Irish Oatmeal and Trader Joe’s tuna fish.



**Masbia soup kitchen in Forest Hills, Queens, took a delivery of surplus food from Manischewitz in July. Photo Credit - Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times**

Menachem Genack, the chief executive of OU Kosher, said price increases were not a given. “There’s still competition out there,” he said. “In matzo you have Streit’s.”

History makes others skeptical. In 1991, Manischewitz was fined $1 million for fixing Passover matzo prices with Horowitz Margareten and Streit’s over a five-year period. A federal grand jury in Newark found that at a meeting at Ratner’s kosher dairy restaurant on the Lower East Side, Manischewitz’s general sales manager had asked counterparts at Horowitz Margareten to duplicate Manischewitz’s proposed price increases for the coming Passover. Horowitz Margareten agreed, and, later, Streit’s did, too.

Manischewitz was founded in 1888 in Cincinnati by Rabbi Dov Ber Manischewitz, who arrived in the United States from Prussia as part of the first wave of Eastern European immigrants seeking to escape pogroms and ingrained poverty. His company was the first to make matzos on roller-coaster-like assembly lines, and they became a Passover standard.

By the 1930s Manischewitz had opened a plant in Jersey City. But in 1990 the company was taken private by Kohlberg & Company, the leveraged buyout firm, for $42.5 million. Other takeovers by hedge funds and private investment firms followed. Today the firm is called the Manischewitz Company. It no longer makes many foods — even its iconic matzos are now made in Israel — but distributes Manischewitz-branded products and an assortment of other brands. Those include Horowitz Margareten and Goodman’s matzos; Rokeach, known for its borscht; Mother’s, known for its bottled gefilte fish; Mrs. Adler’s; and Carmel.

Kayco’s roots are in Slovakia, where the Herzog family had produced wine since the middle of the 19th century, even supplying Emperor Franz Joseph, monarch of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Eugene Herzog survived the Holocaust in hiding and in 1948 reached the United States, where he went to work for a struggling wine company as a truck driver and salesman. By 1958 he was the majority stockholder and soon established the Kedem wine brand. His youngest son, David, and grandson, Mordy, now run the company from Bayonne, N.J.

As Kedem moved into foods, it reached distribution and importing agreements with 150 brands including Yehuda matzos, Empire soups and U-bet syrups. It wholly owns Gefen canned, frozen and packaged foods. Its sturdy profit engine is its Kedem wines division, which makes a sweet kosher wine and the popular grape juice. It also distributes dozens of other imported fine wines from vineyards around the world that can also be used for Sabbath and holiday rituals.

In 2017, Manischewitz tried to challenge Kedem’s dominance in grape juice by joining forces with the American behemoth Welch’s, arranging extra-scrupulous kosher certification and offering steep discounts. But the Kedem habit proved hard to break.

Manischewitz’s loss of market share has benefited some people. Masbia, which runs three soup kitchens and food pantries in Brooklyn and Queens, recently received a trailer-load of donations of potato chips and other products. With Wise potato chips bearing an OU seal, Manischewitz had been unable to sell its chips during the Passover season.

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