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**A Rabbi on a**

**Special NATO Mission**

**By Rabbi Shlomo Simon**



**Rabbi Dr. Guy Matalon**

 A few weeks ago, our distinguished colleague, Rabbi Dr. Guy Matalon, Director of the Mechina Program [at Ohr Somayach Yesihva in Jerusalem], received an invitation to lecture at the NATO Defense College (NDC) in Rome, Italy.

 The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established in 1947, soon after WWII, as a defense pact consisting of 10 European nations, the United States and Canada. Its initial purpose was to present a unified defense against future attacks by Germany and the Soviet Union.

 Over the years, NATO has expanded its membership to 30 nations, including Germany and a number of former member states of the Soviet Bloc. The NDC was established in 1951 by then General and future President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

 In its mission statement, General Eisenhower set forth a number of goals, one of which was to “prepare selected officers and officials for important NATO and NATO related multinational appointments.”

 In preparing those officers and officials, it was deemed necessary to teach them about the major religions and their impact on world history and on contemporary political and military realities. The invitation to Rabbi Dr. Matalon to present a dissertation on Judaism to the College came as a seemingly fortuitous combination of unrelated circumstances.

 For the past number of years, the Israeli diplomat, Dr. Hillel Newman, a religious Jew, had given the yearly lecture to the group. Recently, the Israeli Foreign Office named Dr. Newman as its Counsel General in Los Angeles. He was not able to travel to Rome for the lecture this year, and he called a close friend from his yeshiva days to fill in for him.

 That friend, a very prominent Rav involved in kashrut in Israel, lives next door to Rabbi Matalon. The lecture was to be in English, and since the Rav’s English was not very fluent, he suggested to Dr. Newman that his good friend and neighbor Guy Matalon would be eminently qualified for the job.

 Rabbi Matalon has a Ph.D. from New York University in Medieval Jewish and Islamic Thought, and is the Director of the Mechina Program at Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem. Dr. Newman contacted the College and they agreed to invite Rabbi Matalon to give the lecture and appear on a panel with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and Islam.

 The lecture took place during the last week of October. A funny thing happened on the Arkia flight to Rome. Rabbi Matalon’s chevrusah (Torah study partner) is a pilot for Arkia, and Rabbi Matalon wondered whether he might be the pilot for his Rome flight! He was not, but his chevrusah contacted the pilot and co-pilot for that flight to tell them about their special passenger. Rabbi Matalon was invited into the cockpit, and, to his surprise, he discovered that the co-pilot, Akiva Brown, had been a student at Ohr Somayach 23 years earlier. A small world.

 The lecture was very well received by the participants. The imam, an Italian representing Islam, was particularly impressed. He expressed the hope that the two of them could work together promoting warmer relations and better understanding of Judaism and Jews among the Muslims of Europe and the Middle East.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Vayeitzei 5782 email of OHRNET, the Ohr Somayach Torah Magazine.*

**Parshas Vayeshev:**

**I Never Promised**

**You a Rose Garden**

**By Rabbi Bentzion Shafier**

**Founder of TheSmuz.com**



“*And they sat to eat bread, and they lifted their eyes and saw a caravan of Yishmaelim coming from Gilad, and their camels were carrying spices, balsam, and birthwort to bring down to Egypt*.” — Bereishis 37:25

**The Most Difficult Period in Yosef’s Life**

 Yosef was about to begin the most difficult period of his life. His own brothers left him to die in a pit of scorpions. He would soon be sold numerous times as a slave, then he would spend twelve months being hounded by the wife of his master, followed by imprisonment in a dank, dark dungeon where he would not see the light of day for twelve years. Clearly, Yosef was heading for hard times.

 Rashi tells us that this posuk shows us the great reward that is given to tzaddikim. When Yosef was bound and sold as a slave, the wagon that took him down to Egypt was carrying spices that emitted a fragrant smell, as opposed to the normal cargo that gives off an obnoxious odor. Clearly, HASHEM loved the tzaddik and arranged for something out of the ordinary to protect him.

 The obvious question on this Rashi is that if the Torah wants us to show the reward for tzaddikim, it could have done a much more convincing job by saving Yosef from this entire event. If HASHEM is watching the tzaddikim, then why couldn’t He just save Yosef from all of the suffering that he was about to endure?

**A Comfortable Pillow in the Ambulance**

 This is comparable to a situation in which a man is in a catastrophic car crash that breaks almost every bone in his body. The Hatzalah crew rushes to the scene, puts him on a stretcher, and as they are speeding to the hospital, his friend riding with him says, “Look how HASHEM watches over you. They even put a comfortable pillow under your head.”

 One would have the right to ask, “If HASHEM is concerned with this person’s well-being, then why didn’t He arrange for the drunk driver who hit him to crash into a pole instead of his car? Save him from the ordeal; don’t give his broken neck a comfortable pillow to lie on!”

**Some Life Situations are Inevitable**

 The answer to this question seems to be that there are certain situations in life that are **unavoidable**, not because HASHEM isn’t capable of preventing them, but quite the opposite, because HASHEM orchestrated them according to the needs of that person or that generation.

 Yosef was to be sold as a slave and in that state, brought to Mitzrayim. As the prelude to his future, the future of his family, and the future of the Jewish nation, this was a vital ingredient. Ultimately, for his destiny and for the good of the Jewish nation, this situation needed to happen. It was part of the master plan.

 However, even within the difficult times, HASHEM showed loving kindness to Yosef. He had to be sold as a slave, but why should he suffer unnecessarily? The Arabs normally carried petroleum; why should Yosef have to suffer the offensive odor? For that reason, HASHEM arranged something very uncharacteristic: the caravan was carrying perfume and not oil.

**All Suffering is Carefully Weighed and Measured**

 There is a great lesson for us to take from this. In life, we will suffer through many situations, trials and tribulations. Not only are they are part of life, they are needed – for us, for our growth so that we can reach the purpose for which we were put on this planet. In that sense, they are inevitable, not because HASHEM is uncaring, but because we need them. They are for our good. In the scheme of life, they serve us well, but with them comes some suffering. The amount of suffering that a person experiences on this planet is weighed, measured and administered in exact dosages. The pain is delivered precisely and exactly, not an iota more and not an iota less. We get exactly the measure we need.

 Many times, it is clear to see that HASHEM is bringing pain, preplanned and preordained, right to my doorstep. But it is hard to see that it is for my good and that HASHEM is doing it out of loving kindness.

**Seeing the Kindness in the Torture**

 When I discover the **kindness within the torture**, when I find the “**comfortable pillow in the ambulance,**” this can change my perspective on the entire situation. It reminds me that HASHEM cares for me and has brought about this event for my good. I may not see it as good, I may not understand how it is for my best, but it is clearly orchestrated by HASHEM.

 I see that HASHEM has gone out of His way – if it could be – to make part of my situation more comfortable. This shows me the great love that HASHEM has for me. It allows me to know that **just as the pillow was planned out of love**, so too were the rest of the circumstances. This viewpoint colors the entire situation in a different light, allowing me to understand that it was brought by HASHEM, and despite the pain and suffering, it is something that I need for my good.

*Reprinted from the current website of TheShmuz.com*

**The Best Defense**

**By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser**

 The Jewish community of Chernobyl was facing a serious wave of anti-Semitism. The Satan had made many strong allegations against the Jewish people in the heavenly court. He eventually gained credibility, and a harsh judgment was pending against the community. Even the *malach*Michoel, the advocate for the Jewish nation, had no immediate defense to offer.

 At that time the great rabbi of Chernobyl said: There are certain *mitzvos*that a Jew performs that have the power to cancel their *aveiros.*For instance, when a Jew celebrates the mitzvah he is fulfilling – like a *bris milah,*a *pidyon haben,*a marriage – and makes a lavish feast, he is filled with joy for the mitzvah that he has merited to fulfill. Did you ever see a Jew make a celebration when he committed a sin? He has absolutely no joy at all. In fact, he regrets that he allowed temptation to overwhelm him and to cause him to sin.

 “This was a winning defense,” said R’ Mordechai of Chernobyl, “for when the Jewish people celebrate the mitzvah, not only is a *malach*created from the mitzvah itself, but a *malach*is also created from the joy and great happiness they have for the mitzvah. These *malachim*accompany the Jewish people and protect them from harm.

*Reprinted from the November 19, 2021 website of The Jewish Press.*

# Rav Avigdor Miller

# On Delaying Marriage



 **QUESTION:** **How does a girl know when she’s ready for marriage?**

 **ANSWER:** Now there are girls who say, “We’re not ready for marriage,” and therefore they postpone.  But they have to know that by postponing they become less and less ready.  And I’ll explain that.

 Nobody is ever ready for marriage.  Even Yankev Avinu, when he was told by his parents to go and take a wife in Padam Aram, he stopped off for a short visit of fourteen years in Yeshiva Shem v’Eiver.

 And the question is:  Who gave him a license to do that?  Where is the kibud av v’eim?  He was told by his parents to take a wife, not to go to the yeshiva.  The answer is that although he was a young man in his late sixties already at that time, Yaakov understood that it’s too early to get married.  He had to prepare for such a career.  So for fourteen years he prepared.  Like the gemara says, ילמד תורה ואחר כך ישא אשה. If it’s possible to do that, you prepare.

 However, you have to know that when it comes to ourselves nobody will ever prepare himself properly. Because if you’ll be fourteen years in the yeshiva, by that time no girl will take you unless you go to the old age home. And you want to have children too.  And therefore, it’s unadvisable to wait until you’re ready.

**A Perfect Way for a Girl to**

**Sabotage Her Marriage Prospects**

 A girl who will wait till she’s ready for marriage will never get married.  Besides the fact that nobody will take her, she won’t take anybody else because she’s too smart.  She’ll see everybody’s faults.

And therefore, while she’s young and innocent and dumb, that’s the best time to get married.  That’s the best time to get married because she’ll do it without asking too many questions. And that’s the only way to do it because nobody ever discovers the right party entirely.  Everybody will discover after marriage that it’s the wrong person.

 Of course, you should never say it.  All your life you have to say, “You’re the right one.”  All your life you have to sing songs of praises to your spouse and say, “Hashem guided my footsteps.” Because actually that is the right one.

**Marry While You Are**

**Young and Still Able to Adjust**

 Nobody is ready to face all the tests of this world.  And therefore, as soon as a person is able, he or she should get married because while you’re still young, while you’re still able to adjust, you’re not set in your ways, that’s the time when you’re able to weld yourself together with another personality.

 After a while, you become a tough customer.  You have to have things just this-and-this way that you do them.  Each party likes his or her own ideas and his or her own ways and you’ll need a great deal of heat in order to weld them together – and it’s not available.  So therefore, waiting is never advisable.

*Reprinted from the November 14, 2021 email of Toras Avigdor (Tape 447)*

**Rabbi Berel Wein on**

**Parshat Vayeshev 5782**



 The story of Joseph and his brothers reveals both the strengths and weaknesses of mortal beings and a family structure. Parents, in a perfect world, do not have favorite children. All their children are their favorites, in their minds and hearts. However, in the imperfect world that we live in, favoritism within a family is a norm and not an exception. For whatever reason – and it is usually an emotional and even irrational one – favoritism within a family is a fact of life and common in the human experience.

 The issue is not the favoritism itself, but, rather, how the parents and the other members of the family deal with this situation. A great deal depends upon the attitude of the child that is being favored.

 In this week's Torah reading, Joseph flaunts his status as being the favored child of Jacob. It is not so much that the brothers resent the specialness displayed by Jacob as he relates to Joseph, for they realize that Joseph is a person of physical strength and attraction, filled with great spiritual and creative values. They even do not begrudge him his status as being the favorite of their father. What they do object to, and most vehemently react to, is the way Joseph chooses to publicly display his favored status in their faces and to their detriment.

 One need not demean others to establish one's own greatness and talents. Every person is entitled to great dreams but may not to use them publicly as a weapon against others. And it is this vicious pattern of behavior exhibited by Joseph that the brothers object to, and eventually feel mortally threatened by.

 At the end of this wondrous story related to us in the Torah, the brothers and Joseph will come to terms with his uniqueness and favorite position in the family. Joseph will wisely refrain from relating to them his dreams of success, nor attribute his position of power over them to that of entitlement, but rather, as being G-d's servant in bringing about salvation for all concerned***.*** The brothers, for their part, will realize that their actions were unjustified and extreme regarding their treatment of their brother.

 All parties concerned will be forced to take a step back and readjust their thinking as to their reaction regarding the favored status of Joseph. It will take decades and a great deal of pain and suffering on the part of all of Jacob's sons to face up to the reality of their past behavior towards one another. But the greatness of our forefathers, who created the tribes of Israel and the Jewish nation, lies in their honest assessment of their past behavior, and their attempt to begin again with a new and different attitude towards each other.

 There will be lingering doubts and fears, of course, for the past never disappears, but in the Torah readings during this coming month, the crucial moral lesson about being honest regarding our past, and being better people regarding our future, will be driven home to us.

*Reprinted from the current website of rabbiwein.com*

**Utilizing Even the Most Mundane of Physical Objects In a Jew’s Divine Service**

**From the Talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

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



 The Maggid of Mezeritch offered the following explanation on the verse in this week's Torah portion, Vayeishev, which reads: "And Yaakov dwelt in the land of his father's sojourning, in the land of Canaan":

 "And Yaakov dwelt" implies the act of settling in, an active investment of one's energies;

 "In the land" alludes to the material realm, to the physical world and its affairs.

In Charan, the Maggid explained, our Patriarch Yaakov involved himself in mundane matters, utilizing simple physical objects in his service of G-d. The Hebrew word for sojourning, megurei, is related to the word agar, to hoard or to store.

 Yaakov's work in Charan consisted of collecting and refining the sparks of holiness that were concealed within the physical world and obscured by its gross materiality. Through his service Yaakov elevated these sparks and returned them to "his Father"---to G-d.

 Divine service of this nature is derived from our acceptance of the yoke of heaven, without consideration for individual understanding.

**The Army of G-d**

 The Jewish people is called "the Army of G-d." A soldier in the army must obey without question. He does not act at his own discretion, nor does his commander explain his reasoning when issuing an order. A soldier demonstrates pure obedience and acceptance of authority; so must every Jew in his G-dly service.

 Yaakov left Be'er Sheva for Charan to begin his work of elevating the sparks of holiness. Yaakov understood that he and Esau could not live in close proximity, but he did not question why he was the one who would have to depart, uprooting himself from a life of Torah study in the yeshiva of Shem and Ever. Rather, he accepted G-d's command without protest, and acted with joy and enthusiasm.

**Serving G-d with True Acceptance**

 For Yaakov, going to Charan represented a very great descent, for it required him to abandon the rarefied world of the yeshiva and involve himself in mundane matters in order to elevate them. Yet we see that Yaakov's spiritual stature was not damaged by this in the least. On the contrary, by serving G-d with true acceptance of His authority, Yaakov experienced a very great ascent, both in the spiritual sense and in the material wealth that he accrued.

 From Yaakov we can derive a lesson for every Jew: When it comes to serving G-d, it is not necessary to look for grandiloquent actions and methods. A Jew's task is to properly utilize even the most mundane of physical objects in his Divine service, elevating the hidden sparks of holiness they contain out of a sense of acceptance of the yoke of heaven.

*Reprinted from Reprinted from the 5757/1996 Vayeishev edition of L’Chaim Weekly, adapted from Likutei Sichot, volume 1.*

**Beautiful Menorah**

**By Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin**

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 Do I need to have a menorah, or can I just light separate lights on a surface? Chazal learn from the posuk “zeh keili v'anveihu – this is my G-d and I will beautify Him,” that one should beautify mitzvos by buying beautiful mitzva items such as tzitzis, lulav, and the like.

 The Gemara says this even calls for wrapping a sefer Torah in beautiful silk fabric.1 One should be mehader to the best ability to have a nice menorah, as this beautifies the mitzva and displays one’s cherishment for it.2

 Poskim write that it is optimal to have a gold or silver menorah, and then the order of preference is metal, glass, or wood.3

 But is it necessary to have a menorah at all? Or is it possible to place candles or cups of oil and light them? According to some, there must be a freestanding base to the menorah—and if you attach the candles to the wall, or carve receptacles in a potato, this does not fulfill the obligation.4

 However, the majority of poskim make no mention of the need for a base, and the implication is that it’s not needed.5

 When using a silver menorah, some insist on putting the oil in the silver and not in glass cups. They argue that if one uses cups, the menorah is not a part of the mitzvah and is not a hiddur. However, others argue that according to the opinion that a base is necessary, the silver menorah serves an important and primary role. This is especially true when the glass cups have a protrusion on the bottom and are incapable of standing on their own at all.

 Moreover, even according to the view that a base isn’t needed, a receptacle isn’t halachically necessary either (e.g. with candles), and the glass cups are no more a part of the mitzva than the silver base.

 In practice, while some are mehader to light in the silver, there is no problem to use glass cups as they are nullified to the menorah that they service,6 their entire purpose is to be in the menorah,7 and they provide a better view of the oil and flame to the onlooker.8

1 .שבת קלג, ב. 2 .ראה משנ"ב או"ח סי' תרע"ג סקכ"ח. סה"ש תש"נ ע' 207. 3 .הובא בשד"ח מערכת חנוכה אות ז'. כף החיים סי' תרע"ג סק"ס. 4 .שע"ת או"ח סי' תרע"ג סק"ח בשם חסד לאברהם, וראה אבנ"ז סי' ת"ק. 5 .ראה שו"ת שבה"ל ח"ח סי' קנ"ז, אז נדברו חי"ג סי' מ"ט. וראה ולקו"ש ח"ה ע' 445( ולהעיר מסידור אדה"ז "לדבק הנרות"(. 6 .שו"ת שבט הקהתי ח"ג סי' ר"א. 7 .הליכות שלמה ח"ב ע' רפ"ה הע 17. 8 .שבט הקהתי ח"ה סי' קיד.

*Reprinted from the Parshat ?????? 5782 of the Merkaz Anash’s The Weekly Farbrengen edited by Rabbi Shimon Hellinger.*

**Lessons from the Vine**

 And on the vine were three branches (40:10) According to our Sages, the Jews are likened to the vine, the fruit of which "gladdens G-d and man." For within every Jew exists this attribute of "wine" - the innate ability to delight in G-dliness, an inheritance from our ancestors.

 This love for G-d is hidden deep inside, much like the wine is hidden in the grape. Likewise, just as squeezing the grape releases the treasure within, so does personal refinement and self-nullification reveal this inner love and bring it to its potential. (The Rebbe)

 "Yet the Officer of the Cupbearers did not remember Yosef, but he forgot him." (40:23) Our Sages say that Yosef was punished for placing his reliance on the cupbearer to bring about his rescue. Many commentaries ask: Is not a person obligated to make an effort ("hishtadlut") to care for himself and not sit back and wait for miracles?

 R' Baruch Sorotzkin z"l (1917-1979; rosh yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland) answers: The obligation of hishtadlut ends at the moment that a ray of salvation appears on the horizon. As soon as one sees that G-d "remembers" him, one should cease his efforts and rely on G-d. Here, Yosef should have recognized that his entire encounter with the Egyptians and their dreams was for the purpose of causing his rescue; therefore, he should not have asked the Egyptian to rescue him. (Ha'binah Ve'ha'berachah)

*Reprinted from the Parshas Vayeishev 5782 of Why I Matter parsha sheet of R’ Yedidye Hirtenfeld (Young Israel of Midwood) in Brooklyn.*

**Thoughts that Count for**

**This Week’s Parsha**

*Come let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let our hand not be upon him*. (Gen. 37:27)

 According to Jewish law, the sin of kidnapping is punishable by death only if the kidnapper makes his captive work for him and then sells him. Yosef's brothers captured him and wanted to sell him to the Ishmaelites. "Let our hand not be upon him" means "Do not make Yosef work for us." The brothers knew that if they made Yosef work for them, their punishment would be death. *(Yismach Moshe)*

 *The butler was returned to his position...and the baker was hung in accordance with Yosef's interpretation*. (Gen. 40:22-23)

 There were specific clues in the butler's and baker's dreams that led Yosef to correctly interpret them. In the butler's dream, the butler actually saw himself squeezing grapes and serving wine to Pharoah; only a living person can act. In the baker's dream the baker was simply standing--not doing any type of action--while birds ate the bread. The fact that the birds were eating shows that the birds perceived the baker as dead, since a bird will not generally go near a living person, even for food. *(Iturei Torah)*

 *Yehuda took a wife for his firstborn...her name was Tamar*. (Gen. 38:6)

 Yehudah knew that Moshiach would be descended from him. He was in Canaan when he chose Tamar for his son. Yet, the people of Canaan had been cursed to ultimately be slaves to the Jewish people. So how could Yehuda choose a Canaanite woman to be an ancestor of Moshiach? Tamar's family was not originally from Canaan. Therefore, it was acceptable for Moshiach to be descendant of Tamar. *(Ramban)*

 *The butler did not remember Yosef, and he forgot him.* (Gen. 40:23)

 To say that the butler didn't remember Yosef and that he forgot him seems to be redundant. Yosef had asked the butler to mention him to Pharoah in return for interpreting his dream. When the butler failed to return the favor, Yosef realized that he couldn't rely on any human being to help him. He in turn forgot about the butler and put all of his faith in G-d. *(Yalkut Meam Loez)*

*Reprinted from Reprinted from the 5757/1996 Vayeishev edition of L’Chaim Weekly Compiled by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky and printed in Vedibarta Bam*

# The Liberty Hanukah Lamp



**An American bronze Statue of Liberty Hanukah lamp, designed by Manfred Anson, New Jersey, 1986 sold for $11,250 at the Thursday, December 20, 2017 at the Sotheby’s Important Judaica auction**