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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Mikeitz ✍️ Rabbi Yitzi Simcha

A Breach of Trust

There is a yesod I heard from my Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Elya Svei shlita, that when an extremely large event occurs in the world, it is to teach Klal Yisroel a lesson. Recently, the business world was rocked by one of the largest scandals in history. It would be fitting to attempt to derive a lesson from such a disturbing event.

In this weeks Parsha the Midrash brings a Possuk in Tehillim (Perek Mem). “Ashrei Hagever asher som Hashem Mivtacho, V’lo Phanah el Rehovim V’satai Chazav.” “Praiseworthy is the man who has made Hashem his trust and did not turn to the arrogant and to those who stray after falsehood.” The Midrash continues “Ashrei Hagever . . .” is referring to Yosef. “V’lo Phanah el Rehovim . . .” – because Yosef asked the sar Hamashkim to think of him and mention him to Pharaoh, Hashem added another two years to his prison sentence. On the surface, this Midrash seems contradictory. Originally, it lauds Yosef as a man of extreme trust in Hashem and refers to him as the one who made Hashem his trust. But in the next sentence, the Midrash mentions a defect in this trust. Instead of trusting in Hashem, Yosef asked the sar hamashkim to help him.

The Bais Halevi explains the Midrash with a powerful Yesod. In truth, it is ideal for a Jew to trust in Hashem for everything without the need to do anything on his own to ensure that his needs are taken care of. That is the optimal level of Bitachon. But since Hashem knows it is very hard to attain such a level, he allows us to engage in a certain amount of Hishtadlus to take care of our needs as we try to teach that highest level. It follows that the amount of permitted Hishtadlus is not the same for everyone. The higher the level, the less Hishtadlus is allowed.

Yosef was on an extremely high level of Bitachon, as the beginning of the Midrash testifies. As a result, even the minute Hishtadlus of asking the Saar Hamashkim for assistance was not allowed and was punishable.

We find this concept later in the Parshah as well. Yaakov tells the shevatim to bring Yosef a gift of “a bit of balsam, a bit of honey etc.” It is difficult to understand why Yaakov instructed that the gift should include only “a bit” of these items.. If you’re sending a gift to make a favorable impression on a ruler, shouldn’t you send a lot of whatever you’re sending? Imagine showing up to the president with a bottle of wine the size of a shot glass! It’s laughable! Based on the Bais Halevi quoted above, we can answer that Yaakov knew that on his Medreiga of Bitachon he was allowed to do only so much. Any more would be a breach of his trust in Hashem.

Giants like the Avos knew what level they were on and therefore knew how much hishtadlus is allowed. We don’t. But we do know one thing. There is no justification for attempting to reach our goals by blatantly violating everything our Holy Torah stands for: emes. Honesty and truth. Therefore let us all look at ourselves and try to make sure we are doing our appropriate Hishtadlus. And let us make sure it is a Hishtadlus that Hashem can look down upon and approve of.

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HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

Shabbos Chanukah

Rabbi Akiva Niehaus

Erev Shabbos

The correct order:

On *Shabbos Chanukah*, the *menorah* is lit on Friday afternoon because it may not be lit on *Shabbos*. Some *Poskim* say that the *menorah* should be lit after lighting the *Shabbos* candles due to the principle that the more common *mitzvah* is performed first (*Rashba Siman Elef 70*). However, the *halacha* follows the opinion of the *B'hag* that the *menorah* should precede the *Shabbos* candles (*S.A.* 679).

Various reasons are given for this *halacha*. Some explain that the last *melacha* (work) done before *Shabbos* should be lighting the *Shabbos* candles. All other *melacha*, including lighting the *menorah*, should be done before (*Ran Shabbos 10b*). This reason applies to men and women alike. The *B'hag* himself provides a different explanation. If one were to light *Shabbos* candles first, it may be considered to have accepted *Shabbos*, thus prohibiting him to light the *menorah*. Therefore, the *menorah* is lit first.*

Based on this last reason, the *Mishna Brurah* (*s.k.* 1) writes that if the *Shabbos* candles were accidentally lit first, a remedy may be available. If a man lit the *Shabbos* candles, he is permitted to light the *menorah* because most *Poskim* hold that when a man lights *Shabbos* candles he has not accepted *Shabbos* (unless he specifically intended to do so). However, if a woman lit the *Shabbos* candles, the custom is to consider this an acceptance of *Shabbos* and she is therefore prohibited to light the *menorah*. If she needs to light the *menorah* afterwards (*e.g.*, there is no man to light the *menorah* in the house), her only remedy is to ask someone that has not yet accepted *Shabbos* to light the candles on her behalf and to recite the first *bracha* of *I'hadlik* for her (provided, of course, that it is not yet *shkiya* - sunset). [She may recite the other *brachos* herself.]

The Correct Time to Light:

The common custom is to light the *menorah* immediately prior to the lighting of the *Shabbos* candles, with the *Shabbos* candles being lit at the regular time (18 or 20 minutes before *shkiya*). If one is running late and the *Shabbos* candle lighting time is rapidly approaching, the woman of the house may start lighting the *Shabbos* candles after one *Chanukah* candle has been lit (Harav D. Zucker *shlita*). Although some *Poskim* say that the *menorah* must be lit within 30 minutes of *shkiya* (*Moadim U'zmanim* 2:152), others say that the *menorah* may be lit anytime after *plag hamincha* provided that the *Shabbos* candles will be lit immediately afterwards (*IG"M O.C.* 4:62). However, one must be careful not to light the *menorah* before *plag hamincha* (which is at 3:29 p.m. in Chicago). If they were lit before this time, they must be extinguished and relit with a new *bracha* (*Kaf Hachaim* 679:5).

How long should the candles burn?

One must be very careful to use sufficient oil or large candles so that the *menorah* will remain lit for at least 30 minutes after *tzeis hakochavim* (*M.B.* 679:2). According to the *Igros Moshe*, *tzeis hakochavim* is 50 minutes after *shkiya*. Therefore, in practical terms, a *menorah* lit 20 minutes before *shkiya* must burn at least 100 minutes. If one does not have a lot of oil or many large candles, he should make sure to have at least one fire that will burn the entire time. If one did not use sufficient oil or sufficiently large candles to burn for the required time, then he has not fulfilled the *mitzvah* and the *brachos* were said in vain (*Chayei Adam* 154:35). Special attention must be given to those that use the standard colorful *Chanukah* candles because these candles burn for only about 45 minutes, not nearly enough time. This is a problem for adults and children alike, even a young child that has not reached the age of *chinuch* who is reciting a *bracha* (Harav D. Zucker *shlita*). One should therefore make sure to light at least one large candle.

When should *Mincha* be recited?

The *Mishna Brurah* (*s.k.* 2) writes that ideally, it is proper to *daven mincha*

before lighting the *menorah*. In order to accommodate this, some shuls have an early *minyán* for *mincha*. If one is unable to *daven mincha* in an early *minyán*, some *Poskim* advise to *daven mincha* by oneself before lighting the *menorah* (see *Mikor Chaim* and *PM"G A.A.* 671:10). However, most *Poskim* say that if it means missing *tefilla b'tzibur*, one should light the *menorah* before *mincha* (see *Elya Raba* 679:1, *A.H.* 671:26 and *Kaf Hachaim* 671:79). All agree that if it is getting close to *shkiya* one should first light the *menorah* and then *daven mincha* (*Derech Hachaim* 187:3).

What should one do if the candles go out?

If the candles blow out on *Shabbos* then they should obviously not be relit. If they blow out before nightfall some say that they need not be rekindled (*S.A.* 673:2), but others say that it is proper to relight the candles without a *bracha* (*M.B. s.k.* 27). If one has already accepted *Shabbos*, he should not relight the candles himself, but may tell others to do so (provided that they have not accepted *Shabbos* and it is not yet *shkiya*) (*M.B. ibid.*).

When should the special *Chanukah zemiros* be recited?

One should recite *Haneiros Hallolu* as usual, immediately after lighting the candles (*Minchas Elazar* 2:29). Many have the custom, however, to sing *Maoz Tzur* during the *Shabbos seudah*, along with the other *zemiros* (*Leket Yosher* pg. 153).

When should the *menorah* be lit in *shul*?

During the week, the *menorah* is lit between *mincha* and *maariv* (*Rama* 671:7). On *Erev Shabbos* some have the custom to light before *mincha* (*Rama ibid.*), but others have the custom to light after *mincha*, provided that it is before *shkiya* (*M.B. s.k.* 47). All agree that if it is getting close to *shkiya*, one should light the *menorah* before *mincha* (*M.B. ibid.*). The *brachos* should be recited even if a *minyán* is not yet present because there will be *pirsumei nisa* when everyone arrives later (*ibid.*).

Motzai Shabbos

On *Motzai Shabbos Chanukah* one should rush home after *maariv* to minimize delay in lighting the *menorah*. The wicks and oil should be prepared on *Erev Shabbos*, if possible, to avoid unnecessary delay. However, one should be careful not to light the *menorah* before *Shabbos* is completed. This occurs 50 minutes after *shkiya* according to the *Igros Moshe* (*O.C.* 4:62). Additionally, one who waits 72 minutes after *shkiya* in accordance with *Rabbeinu Tam* should do so on *Chanukah* as well (*IG"M ibid.*).

What comes first: *Havdalah* or *Menorah*?

Some *Poskim* maintain that the *menorah* should be lit before *havdalah*, to delay the departure of *Shabbos* as long as possible (*Rama* 681:2, *Chayei Adam* 154:37). [If one forgot to say *atah chonantanu* in *maariv*, he should say, "*Boruch hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol*" before lighting the *menorah* (*M.B.* 681:2).] Other *Poskim*, however, state that *havdalah* should be recited first because it is *tadir* (a more common *mitzvah*) (*Taz, K.S.A.* 139:18, *A.H.* 681:2). The *Mishnah Brurah* (*s.k.* 3) writes that both customs are acceptable and one should follow his family custom.** If one does not have a family custom, he should recite *Havdalah* first (see *Birur Halacha* and *Aruch Hashulchan ibid.*). In *shul*, however, all agree that the *menorah* is lit before reciting *havdalah* (*M.B. ibid.*).

* Some *Poskim* say that if the husband lights the *menorah* and the wife lights the *Shabbos* candles, then the *Shabbos* candles should be lit first (*Meoros Nossim siman* 82). However the custom is to always light the *menorah* first (Harav D. Zucker *shlita*).

** The *Siach Yitzchok* (*siman* 356) states that if many people light the *menorah* in one house, only the *Baal Habayis* may light before *havdalah* if he has such a *minhag*. The other people in the house, however, should light after *havdalah*.

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