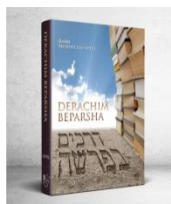


## דרכים בפרשה וישב-חנוכה

R' Mordechai Appel, an alumnus of Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim, is the author of DERACHIM BEPARSHA and a member of the Toronto community.



### ויהי בעת ההוא ירד יהודה מאת אחיו

*It was at that time that Yehudah went down from his brothers (38:1)*

The Midrash (Rabba 85:1) relates that during the time in which the brothers were involved in the sale of Yosef, Yosef himself was busy doing teshuvah; Reuven also busied himself with teshuvah, and Yaakov as well. At the same time, Yehudah went out to find a wife and HaShem was “occupied” with creating the light of Moshiach. Although it would seem strange that Yehudah chose this moment to look for a wife, the Midrash relates that HaShem knows the thoughts of man (Yirmiyah 29:11) and why Yehudah chose this moment. As a result, HaShem responded by creating the light of Moshiach (which indeed came from Yehudah).

The Rebbe R'Binim of Pishischa (with Kotzker Rebbe's explanation) explained that at every moment a person must make a *cheshbon hanefesh* to see what can be rectified. He could have just given up, but rather than throwing in the towel, Yehudah understood that he must begin anew, starting with the very first mitzvah in the Torah of *Peru u'revu* – getting married and having children. In this merit, Moshiach was created.

We can add to this based on Chazal quoted by Rashi at the end of Parshas Toldos: On the day that a person gets married, there is complete forgiveness for their *aveiros* (Basmas, daughter of Yishmael is called Machlas to teach us about the *mechila*). This may have been Yehudah's motive in getting married at that point. Now, armed with a wife as an *eizer kinegdo*, helping to keep him in check, he was ready to start over with a clean slate.

In Parshas Vayeira, we learn that when the wife of Lot turned back towards Sedom, she became a pillar of salt. She was specifically told, *המלט על נפשך אל תביט אחריך*, *Flee for your life! Do not look behind you (19:17)*. However, she was unable to control herself. During

their escape, *ותבט אשתו מאחוריו ותהי נציב מלח* - *His wife peered behind him and she became a pillar of salt (19:26)*. The Nesivas Shalom explains that she was allowed to close the book on her previous chapter in life. It was time to move on and not look back. A new chance was being given. But she was unable to make the best of it; she could not make a clean break with her past. She just had to look back again.

The most famous question regarding Chanukah which is attributed to the Beis Yosef is of course: why do we commemorate the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days by celebrating for eight days? If there was enough oil for one day, then the miracle was only for seven days. There are hundreds if not thousands of reasons that have been offered over the years. The Kotzker Rebbe answered it as follows: When the Chashmonaim entered the Beis Hamikdash, they were met with a terrible sight. Everything was in ruins and the mizbayach was cut up in pieces. The loss seemed insurmountable and the willingness to pick up and begin anew normally would not have been there. The very fact that they were willing to search for even one solitary cruse of undefiled oil was in itself a tremendous miracle which is the first day's celebration. On top of that, there was the second miracle of seven extra days of remaining lit.

*Bayamim Haheim*- in those days, Klal Yisroel was given a chance to start anew amidst their lowest point. Sure, there were many excuses to just give up, but instead, the Chashmonaim grabbed the opportunity, and for this, we have the Yom Tov of Chanukah.

*Bizman Hazeh*- There are different times in our lives that HaShem throws opportunities our way for a clean break. Chanukah is one major time during each year that such a chance is given. The sefarim Hakedoishim tell us that Chanukah is a Rosh Hashana of sorts. It is a chance for each person to make a break and start brand new. May we be zoche this Chanukah to rededicate ourselves to HaShem Yisborach in the same manner that the Chashmonaim did? No matter how low a person is, a new chance is being offered.

***A freilichen Chanukah and a wonderful Shabbos,***

**מרדכי אפּעל**