

קהל שערי תורה
 CONGREGATION SHAAREY TORAH
THE SHTIEBLE
 98 WEST END AVE BROOKLYN NY 11235

SHABBOS VAYISHLACH

18 Kislev - December 5

R' Moshe Plutchok - מרא דאתרא שלימ'א -
 R' Akiva Eisenstadt - ראש כולל

Dedicated by Menachem & Bina Braunstein in Memory of their Grandparents:

הרב משה בן הרב יששכר בעריש זצ"ל
 מרת יענטע בת ישראל חיים ע"ה
 הרב יעקב אריה בן הרב שבתאי זצ"ל

Candle Lighting:	4:10 pm
Mincha/Kabalas Shabbos:	4:20 pm
Shacharis:	8:45 am
Shiur Halacha:	3:30 pm
Mincha/Seudah Shilishi:	4:00 pm
Maariv:	5:18 pm
Shabbos Ends:	5:28 pm
Avos U'Banim:	6:15 pm

Weekday Schedule

Shacharis

Sunday 8:00 am

Monday - Friday 7:00 am & 7:45 am

Minch/Maariv - 4:15/4:30 pm

Mishna Brurah Chaburah M-F 6:30 am

Talmud Shiur M-F 7:00 am

Night Kollel Mon & Wed 8:00 pm

Torah Tuesday Schmooze 8:00 pm

A Project By The Manhattan Beach Community Kollel

MITZVOS: BEHIND THE SCENE- "Chanukah"

BY R'AKIVA EISENSTADT

It is that time of the year again! The Chanukah holiday season is in the air and the festive spirit of this holiday permeates our homes. We begin to plan the family parties, the latkes, the sufganiyot, the presents and, hopefully, discuss the miracle of Chanukah. In our Shuls and Yeshivos deep and philosophical questions about the underpinnings of Chanukah are being discussed long into the night. Let us consider some of these questions and hopefully come to a resolution that allows us to understand Chanukah in a whole new light.

The Gemarah (Shabbos daf 21b) asks a seemingly simple question. "Mai Chanukah?" ...What is the essence of Chanukah? The Talmud proceeds to tell us about the Syrian-Greeks violating the Beis Hamikdash, desecrating the vessels and causing all the oil to become impure. When the Chashmonoim defeated the Syrian-Greeks and conquered the Temple they only found one pure jug of oil by which they were able to light the menorah for only one night. The oil lasted eight days, thus the miracle and essence of Chanukah. There is hardly anything mentioned in the Gemarah about the incredible, and obviously, miraculous victory in war against the enemy. Why?

What is curious is that we recite another prayer which conveys the miracle of Chanukah; "Al Hanisim" in both Shemoneh Esrai and Birkas Hamozon. "Al Hanisim" expresses the tremendous victory against the Syrian-Greeks. Hashem, in his mercy, stood with us and gave over the massive and militarily superior Greek army into the hands of the weaker and undermanned Jewish resistance. The battles were won against all odds and it is obvious that the victories were caused by Hashem's divine intervention. There is a mention of the lighting of the lights, yet there is no mention about the eight day miracle of the menorah. Why?

The Maharal of Prague asks another very pointed question. The Talmud in Berachot (daf 54b) tells us that there are four categories of people that need to thank Hashem. One who goes to sea or travels in the desert and survives, one who is released from prison and one who was sick and is healed. These people were in circumstances that were dangerous, Hashem saved them, and now they have an obligation to Thank Hashem for their salvation. (Case in point: we

recite a Birchas Hagomel after we fly in a plane over the ocean). What is the great miracle of the lights lasting for eight nights that we now have to thank Hashem for eight days with Hallel and Hodaah? What was the great salvation that obligates us to light the menorah as a "thank you" to Hashem? If someone was not able to perform a Mitzvah and by the grace of Hashem he is able to perform it now do we say that this requires a tremendous thank you? Even though the lasting light was miraculous it isn't something that should obligate us to recognize it as the essential miracle of Chanukah.

The Maharal answers and provides us with a tremendous insight into the essence of Chanukah. In reality, there were two miracles of Chanukah; the victory of the war and the menorah's oil lasting for eight days. However, the holiday of Chanukah was essentially established to eternalize the victory of the Jews over their enemies. It was to celebrate the winning of a war that should not have been won. Our sages strongly suspected that the Jewish people would not remember that Hashem helped them out in their time of need and may just say that it was their own military prowess and strategic maneuvering that let them win the battles and Hashem had nothing to do with it. This is the reason that Hashem caused another miracle to occur, that of the menorah staying lit for eight days. The miracle of the menorah was engineered to mirror the miracle of winning the war and therefore reveal the true essence of the miraculous victory. That one lone jug of oil was able to last eight days actually mirrored the fact that a lone bunch of Chashmonoim could outlast the great Greek army! That the pure and undefiled oil stayed lit is telling us that the righteous among us bested the evil in this world. The few defeated the many. The military victory was not natural but a divinely inspired and miraculous happening that only could have occurred with the heavenly intervention of Hashem.

When we thank Hashem for the main miracle of Chanukah in the prayer of "Al Hanisim" we are remembering and showing our gratefulness for our salvation at the hands of Hashem from a war that only could have been won with Hashem's help. That is why we mention only the miracle of the war in "Al Hanisim," because that was why the holiday of Chanukah was established. The Gemarah's ques-

tion of “Mai Chanukah” and subsequent telling of the miracle of the light lasting for eight nights is explaining how the miracle was brought out to last an eternity.

Have a wonderful and meaningful Shabbos.

WEEKLY INSIGHTS - PARSHAS VAYISHLACH

BY R' RON FINKELSTEIN

Does the righteous man have fear? Is faith not the healer of all worries? If deep in the heart of man there was concern, alarm, some doubt of what will be - does that not demonstrate somehow a lack of trust in Hashem?

We find in this week's parsha Yaakov's journey towards Israel with his family; yet heading towards them was Esav and his army of four hundred men. The bitterness of Yaakov receiving their father's blessing and the desire for vengeance was still fresh in Esav's heart. With this oncoming standoff the Torah relays Yaakov's reaction: “Yaakov became very frightened, and it distressed him” (32:8).

The conveyance of Yaakov being very frightened is difficult to understand since we saw previously expressed in the Torah “Behold I am with you and will guard you wherever you go” (29:15).

Furthermore we see in the Talmud (Berachos 7a) where it states explicitly that any promise which Hashem makes for the good will never be annulled. In this regard we can ask - if Yaakov already had a commitment from Hashem that he will be protected why would he possibly be afraid? Also since he was afraid as the verse indicates, does this not show some deficiency in his belief in Hashem?

The Rambam (1135-1204) deals with the difficulty regarding the sages rule that a promise of Hashem for that which is good can never be rescinded. He explains (Yesodei Hatorah 10:4) that if the message was given over privately then there is no guarantee that it will be fulfilled, but if it was given publicly then it is guaranteed to be fulfilled. So

we see from this that Yaakov did have a right to feel afraid since his promise according to the Rambam's interpretation was not secure since it was given confidentially.

This explanation becomes difficult in light of the fact that elsewhere such as in Rambam's work of Moreh Nevuchim, he discusses the generalities of prophecy. In his discourse on the subject he brings examples of certain prophets that sinned but were still able to keep their prophecy. One of those examples was Yaakov Avinu who was able to still receive the Divine message despite the fact that he sinned by being fearful of his encounter with Esav. The question then is if in fact Yaakov was right to be fearful since the guarantee of Hashem's protection was given in private and therefore not secure, why would the Rambam then say that Yaakov's fearfulness was a sin?

The answer can be found through making a distinction between belief and reliance in Hashem. The Vilna Gaon (1720-1797) explains that a person can be told of a promise and have belief that it will come true because it was promised, and yet another person can believe that an event may occur even though he was never promised that it would. Here we find the same is true with Yaakov in light of the Rambam's explanation. It could very well have been that Yaakov believed in Hashem's promise but found concern when realizing that there was no guarantee because it was said in private. Yet here is where the transgression actually took place, Yaakov should have had a full reliance on Hashem despite the fact that there was no guarantee.

The Beis Halevi (1820-1892) has a different perspective

of why Yaakov was afraid. He explains that on a practical level Esav was a Rasha and there was a physical danger involved (as Rashi (1040-1135) also conveys Yaakov was afraid of being killed and having to kill). However the Beis Halevi also conveys another danger; perhaps after so many years Esav had a more amicable position towards Yaakov and wanted to approach him civilly. What if at this juncture Esav wanted to reestablish the relationship between them and work on reuniting as a family? It would be in that regard that a greater threat now perched itself. For Yaakov and his family to reconnect the severed ties with Esav, would mean that Yaakov and his family would be exposed to his evil influence. Yaakov was thus fearful and distressed of having the spiritual foundation he had worked so hard to achieve undermined by this nefarious sway. He did not want to put himself in a position of making peace with Esav which also meant having his presence possibly affect his environment. Focusing the attention on Yaakov's concern of being adversely affected spiritually, we find another view on the subject that is presented by our sages. The Talmud (Berachos 4a, Sanhedrin 98b) comments on Yaakov's fright through a different scope.

The explanation from our sages there is that Yaakov may have sinned in some regards and because of it he was now undeserving of Divine protection.

The point brought out by the Talmud is that sin can cause a person to lose his reward. Can we say that Yaakov did not realize how high of a level he was on? Is it possible that he, one of the patriarchs of the Jewish people, was so overly concerned that he may have had a sinned that he was so frightened to lose Hashem's love and protection?

The answer can be found in understanding the heart of a great person. It is our purpose in this world to achieve the maximum that we can and to resist the lure of inactivity and procrastination.

Rabbi Mayer Twerski Shlita explains that Hashem is like a teacher in a classroom and we are his students achieving a B+ grade with minimal efforts. The promise of an A+ doesn't resonate with any incentive for motivation. So what can a teacher do at this point to drive them? He creates a system where the B+ is not a guarantee; they either can do

better or do worse, improve or decline. Facing this alternative the students have no choice but to exert themselves or risk falling behind. The tests that we face in our lives are presented opportunities to achieve. The attitude of one which considers sin as impediment to Divine protection is a vehicle of motivating and driving the spiritual work ethic. This humbling attitude makes one constantly looking to recount his past experience and forces him to make choices for the better regarding his future. We can in this way explain why we say that we travel on the path of life. We either are able to move through the tests we face or regress by choosing to do so or by just standing still, there is no in between.

In light of this explanation that we can understand that the fear and distress was not a lack of faith in Hashem but rather a lack of arrogance of belief in one's own spiritual stature. The concept that is being taught to us in the Talmud is that of Yaakov's great desire to reach the highest of his potential. It demonstrates his inner refinement and diligent work ethic to take nothing for granted. A person should constantly scrutinize over his character and traits. Spiritual excellence is found in the continuous efforts one makes in his self accounting and application to his future conduct and perspective. It is our fear of how we stand in the face of sin that helps us keep on our road of sanctity. Yaakov's perfection was in his honesty in self analysis. He would weigh his deeds and always look to see where he could be and do better. It was because of this honest and humble reflection of self that made him feel he was not worthy of Divine protection since he may have possibly had a blemish in character. It is specifically because of this view that allowed him the ability to become our great father, teacher, and leader.

SHMIRAS HALASHON MINUTE

BY R' SHMUEL FISCHLER

It was kind of ironic to read an article this week about the recent yartzheit of Chedva Zilberfarb a'h. After falling ill, Chedva developed into a pioneer for spreading the concept of Shmiras Haloshon. This was before Shmiras Haloshon became en vogue (which is a good thing! And no, this column is not just to keep with the times.). During the last 2 years of her life she was thirsty for zchusim (merits) and spreading the knowledge about Loshon Hora was her calling. The bottom line is that ignorance is no excuse. When we all get up to the pearly (marble, wooden, whatever...) gates after 120, shrugging our shoulders and looking down at our non-existent shoes will not suffice. Hate to burst your bubble. Unfortunately most of us, including myself, are severely lacking an education in this area. Chedva should be an inspiration for us to at least attempt an improvement of our expertise in the laws of Loshon Hora.

Aside from the overall common denominators of being malicious, harmful, and derogatory, Loshon Hora is broken down into four basic categories:

Loshon Hora- Relating something derogatory about person A to a third party. E.g. "Yishmael is so unorganized. He just can't get it together!"

Rechilus- Literally meaning 'peddling', this is when one shares a derogatory statement said about an individual. By doing so one is in essence planting the splitting between fellow Jews and inciting bad blood. E.g. "Yishmael, you think Pinchos Zalman Herschel is your friend? He just told me the other day how unorganized and sloppy you are! I'm not saying I agree, I just feel you should know what's being said about you. But you didn't hear that from me ;)

Motzi Shem rah- 'Letting out a bad name', this is understood to mean slander. Slander is when someone relates false derogatory information about a person. E.g. "Maybe the son of that family is not such a good idea for your daughter. I think the dad has a problem with the bottle. You know what I mean? When in truth, that father has trouble keeping grape juice down. Sadly, this is the extent of the definition of Loshon Hora for many. "Of course I wouldn't make something up about someone. That's Loshon Hora! But when someone has a flaw, made a mistake, or is going through a tough time (and it's true), it's important for everyone to know, right? (much sarcasm intended)

Onaas devorim- A personal pet peeve, this is causing pain with words. Whoever penned the saying "Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me" didn't get out much or had one too many wedgies as a child and needed something to help them sleep at night (obviously pre-valium era). In truth, words are tremendously powerful. I've heard many a speech from rabbonim, (R'Frاند comes to mind), highlighting the need for foresight when opening up our mouths. Hurtful words are not exclusive to malicious people. They also come from those who do not utilize their noggin enough. Too many people fail to take the moment necessary to actually process a thought before speaking. It is as if they are so wrapped up in themselves that viewing the perspective of the person being spoken about becomes an impossibility.

We live in a society that promotes self-indulgence and a me-first-second-and third attitude. It comes as no surprise then, that people come into a therapist's office (won't mention any names) and cannot seem to get along with each other or even see another outlook. Whether it be parents, children, spouses, or just acquaintances, we could all benefit from utilizing a little self control and actual thought when speaking. Not only will it minimize the damage control needed in the aftermath, it will automatically improve our relationships. As always, we welcome feedback from positive consumers and those who feel the need to lash out due to a childhood trauma.

Transgression # 2:

One who speaks or listens to Loshon Hora transgresses the Lav of "Lo Sisa Shema Lashav (do not accept a false report)"

Tip of the week:

- Act dumb. Simple as that. This strategy may come more naturally for some. E.g. "So why haven't I seen Daniel around? Is something going on at home?" "Uuuh...I don't know." Sometimes a shrug of your shoulders or blank look (practice makes perfect) will suffice. If you have hard time playing dumb (which btw is a versatile and valuable tool in many situations) or the question being asked is impossible for you not to know "Is your sis-in-law going through a divorce?" then revert to tip from last week.

HALACHIC PERSPECTIVES: "Chanukah" (Part II)

BY R' HESHY KAHAN

With the Chanukah season this year including two Shabbosim it is important to know how the laws of lighting interact with the laws of Shabbos. Questions of some common scenarios may be helpful.

Q: When is the ideal time to light the Menorah?

A: There is a Machlokes Haposkim as to when is the proper time to light. Some are of the opinion that it should be lit as the sun begins to set¹ [shkiyah time], while others hold that one should light by *tzais hakochavim*. R' Moshe Fienstien Zt"l² is of the opinion that the Neiros should be lit 10 minutes after sunset.

Q: What is the proper procedure to do in regards to lighting the Menorah on Motzai Shabbos Chanukah?

A: There are different opinions among the Poskim concerning lighting the Menorah before or after making Havdalah and one should follow whatever Minhag he has as there is whom to be *somech* on in either direction³. If one has no set Minhag he should perform Havdalah first and then light the Menorah.

Q: If a woman is not in a position to hear her husband make the brachos is she still yotzai that night?

A: She would be *yotzai* on the premise of *ishtai k'gufo*⁴. However if she is able to hear him make the brachos over the phone (such as when a woman who just gave birth and is not allowed to have a Menorah in her room, as is the policies in most hospitals), that would be more *halachically* preferable⁵.

Q: When is the ideal time to light the Menorah?

A: While there are various customs upheld by different families, as some light 30 minutes after sunset, while others light 20, in the event that one does not have a particular custom he may light the Menorah 10 minutes after sunset and should have enough oil/candle to burn for around an hour⁶.

Q: When should one light on Erev Shabbos Chanukah?

A: One should light the candles for the Menorah prior to lighting the candles for Shabbos which is approximately 20 minutes before sunset. When one includes the 72 minutes from sunset until the first few stars appear (*Tzais*

Hakochavim), plus an additional half hour after *Tzais Hakochavim*⁷, the sum total of this is around two hours (20+72+30), which is the desired amount of time that the Menorah should be lit on Friday afternoon. The regular B'racha is made even though it is still broad daylight outside⁸. However one should be careful not to light the Menorah prior to Plag Hamincha (approximately 1 1/4 hours before sunset).

Q: When is it appropriate to daven Mincha on Erev shabbos Chanukah?

A: When one lights the Menorah on Erev Shabbos when it is still day but after Plag Hamincha he is showing that from this time and on belongs to the night. If he were to daven Mincha *after* that he is showing that this time of the day belongs to the day, hence creating a contradiction⁹. One should therefore ideally daven Mincha *before* he lights the Menorah on Erev Shabbos¹⁰.

Q: What if there is no minyan available, should one daven alone in order to avoid this previously mentioned contradiction?

A: If the only time one is able to daven with a minyan is with his regular Erev Shabbos minyan (i.e. in the location of his employment there is no available minyan and he is not due to arrive back home in time to find an early Mincha minyan) one should then do so as opposed to davening earlier on without a minyan¹¹.

Q: When lighting the Menorah in a school or public display (i.e. White House Chanukah party etc.) is it permitted to make a B'racha (blessing) over the Menorah?

A: While we do recite the B'racha over the Menorah when lighting it in the synagogue, this is due to the fact that it serves as a remembrance to the lighting of the Bais Hamikdash as well as to be motzai others who would be sleeping in the shul. Therefore most authorities prohibit making a blessing over the Menorah in any setting exclusive of one's home, synagogue or temporary dwelling¹².

Q: At what age would a child be required to light the Menorah?

A: When a child is of chinuch age would be required to light

the Menorah¹³. While the exact age for the Mitzvah of lighting candles varies amongst the Poskim most say that by 6 or 7 the child is ready to light¹⁴. While there are those who state that the child need not light a separate candle for each night (i.e. on day six to light six candles etc.), and that merely lighting one candle each night would suffice¹⁵, it is commendable to have one's child light the most amount of candles necessary to be Yotzai in a most "mehadrin" manner¹⁶.

FOOTNOTES

1. Bh"l 675 D"h Im, Shar Hatzion 672:2
2. Igros Moshe O.C. 4:101:6
3. S.A. 681:2, Taz 681:1
4. M.B. 675:19
5. Oral Psak heard from R' Yitzchok Berkowitz
6. Igros Moshe O.C. 4:101:6
7. S.A. 672:1, Bh"l D"h U'Bilvad
8. Rama 679:1
9. Shar Hatzion 679:7
10. M.B. 679: 2
11. Oral Psak heard from R' Plutchok Shlita
12. Minchas Yitzchok 6:65, Although the Lubavitcher Chassidim are known to make a B'racha in public lighting displays this is usually based in the fact that they are being Motzai someone.
13. S.A. 677:2
14. M.B. 269:1
15. S.A. 671:2, M.B. 677:13
16. M.B. 677:13, Rama 671:2

OMEK HADAVAR: - "Dina & Yosef - A Deeper Connection"

BY R' MOSHE WARSAWSKY

Surely one of the most perplexing stories in the Torah is the story of Dina's abduction. What could possibly have happened to warrant such an unbelievable disgrace to befall the family of Yaakov? Let's begin by simply analyzing some basic components in assembling our storyline. First off we must peer into the beginning of Dina's life. Soon after Dina was conceived, her mother Leah (fearing her sister Rachel's embarrassment) prayed that Dina who was supposed to be a boy, be turned instead to a girl. At the same point in time, Rachel's developing baby was switched from a girl into a boy. Some want to even pose that not only were the baby's genders changed, but that the actual fetuses were transplanted by G-d into the other's place. We get affected in a very deep way by our surroundings, both consciously and subconsciously. We find that while Yosef had some female tendencies (was concerned with the way his hair looked, involved himself in gossip) Dina took on a male characteristic; that of a "yatzanis" (one who ventures outside of the house). While men are inherently equipped to be the hunters/gatherers, women possess the incredible inborn ability to nurture; both roles being predefined by our creator (see "The Hidden Face of G-d" by Gerald Schroeder pg. 143-

145 for an elaborate description of the how we are hard-wired perfectly for the tasks we encounter). So although Dina and Yosef were very much female and male respectively, nevertheless, they inherently possessed tendencies of the opposite gender. This idea will come into focus shortly.

The Posuk informs us (34:1) that "Dina went out to look at the daughters of the land." The language used in the Posuk alludes to what was actually occurring. It didn't simply say that Dina was superficially looking into the external way in which these women carried themselves; the Posuk stresses that she went to look "Bivnos Ha'aretz," literally "into the daughters of the land." Dina was really interested in seeing their lifestyles, and she went to peer into that which was foreign to her. In going out to view a lifestyle far removed from that of her father's house, she gets stung by a person (as we'll soon demonstrate) who is the antithesis of anything spiritual.

What's in a name? A tremendous amount lies in how the Torah refers to somebody. One can gain a tremendous

amount by looking into how the Torah introduces someone to us. Let's analyze how the Torah introduces Shechem the first time he is mentioned in the context of Dina. The Posuk says "And Shechem; the son of Chamor the Chivi, Prince of the land saw her (Dinah)..." Every single word here refers to the nature of Shechem; Dinah's abductor. What is a "Shechem"? It is the shoulder. In the human body, the seat of the intellect and more precisely the Neshoma is in the Head. Go just a little bit south of that, we find the neck, which still represents spirituality in our ability to speak, thereby separating us from animals. The first part of our body that represents pure physicality is the shoulder. The abductor of Dina was named Shechem, the perfect representation of what he was, pure superficiality. The next thing the Posuk tells us is that he was the son of Chamor. "Chomer" is another word synonymous with physicality, so now we're looking at Shechem, the purely physical person, son of physicality. The Posuk then takes it a step further to tell us that he was a "Chivi"; the root of this word means snake, the lowest of all the creatures. Finally the Posuk adds on one more attribute to our friend Shechem, that he's the "Nasi Ha'aretz"; not only is he "physicality" the son of "sheer physicality", and lowly like the snake, but he's also the representative of his whole degraded society, the "prince of the land". Obviously a very clear message is being sent here. Dina wanted to see a little bit of the "Gashmius" (physical component) of what exists out there in the world, and on her lofty level opened herself up to being degraded and violated by the lowest of the low. Dina's test was to resist her temptation to venture outside of the safe haven of Yaakov's house. Dina failed her test.

Yosef as we mentioned before is inherently linked to Dina. So much so, that we can even say some of their tendencies reflected each other. Yosef is also tested, but he passes his test. Yosef doesn't succumb to the temptation of Potiphar's wife, and remains steadfast in his faith. Rashi points out however, that HaShem did test him in this way as a result of his involvement with his beauty. Where Dina slipped up, and in doing so opened up the door to assimilation and intermarriage, Yosef closes this door forcefully and gives us the strength to withstand the allure of the outside world that beckons us. Only as a result of Yosef withstanding his test does he get thrown into prison, only to be raised up to the rank of second in command; and given Osnas as a

wife, the daughter that was born from of the union of Dina and Shechem. Yosef insures that none of the children coming out of Yaakov's house will be lost; his name bears tribute to his purpose, to be the "Me'aseph", the gatherer of the other twelve tribes.

It is now with some direction that we can head into Chanukah and recognize why the holiday alludes to Yosef in so many ways (the Greeks represented external beauty, Yosef represents spiritual + physical beauty; the Jews were forced to write on the horn of their oxen anti-God slogans, Yosef is alluded to as the Ox; one of the 3 mitzvos taken from the Jews was the Mitzvah of Milah, which Yosef perfected, etc.). When assimilation is that which the nations strive for, we look to Yosef; the one who gave us the strength to live in foreign surroundings and yet maintain ourselves as servants to G-d and no other. It is he who perpetuates the chain of the Bnai Yisroel the 12 perfect tribes that Yaakov brought into this world. Let it be no wonder that one of the two Messiahs is going to be a descendant of Yosef, and one of his main objectives is to bring us together once again.

ברכות השחר

PART IV

We will now look at the conclusion of the Berachos Hashachar focusing on the Yehi Ratzon and Bircat Hatorah.

-Yehi Ratzon miliphanecha Hashem Elokai Velokei Avotai, shetazlilaini hayom ubichol yom vayom, meazie panim, umeazut panim, meadam ra, miyetzer ra, mechaver ra, mishachen ra, mipega ra, meayin hara, umilashon hara, midin kashe, umibaal din kasha, ben shehu ben brit, uben sheno ben brit – (May it be Your Will that you Hashem, my G-d, and the G-d of my forefathers, may save me, today and every day, from brazen men and brazenness, evil men, the evil inclination, an evil friend, an evil neighbor, an evil mishap, the evil eye, evil speech, a harsh decree, a harsh opponent, whether he is Jewish or not Jewish).

This recitation is an individual's prayer. The request is for Hashem to protect each of us from a personal danger that we may encounter. Therefore we beseech Hashem's mercy by specifying that He is the G-d of "my" forefathers and that in this merit the possible threat that "I" "may encounter be thwarted. When each of us states this prayer we mean it for always and in this regard we do not just ask for this today but we include all other days. The brazen men that we may encounter are those that have no respect for human beings and as such have no mercy in their dealings with others. So in order to protect ourselves from those types of people we may also have to act brazen and we ask Hashem to both protect us from the brazen people and from the bad character trait of being brazen. The request then goes on to include other types of evil whether it may be a man, our own evil inclination, friend or neighbor. We then ask Hashem to protect us from an unforeseen mishap that may occur in our lives as such events may be a punishment for our misdeeds. We continue in our prayer for protection from the evil eye which is brought on from our own haughty behavior, evil speech and which we in our conduct may be instigating. We ask to be protected from a harsh decree for a wrongful act that we may have committed, or a harsh opponent which has a legitimate claim against us but pursues us with an unyielding stubbornness. We ask for protection from all of these claims whether

they come from those who are Jewish or not.

- Baruch Atah Hashem Eilokeinu Melech haolam asher kidishanu bimitzvotav vitzivanu al Divrei Torah - (Blessed are You Hashem our G-d King of the universe Who has sanctified us with His mitzvot and has commanded us with the words of Torah).— When we make a beracha of sanctification on some particular mitzvah it is specific to an action which is associated with our bodies and not with our minds. For example if we can consider the mitzvah of reciting Shema we do not have a particular blessing preceding it stating "al kriat Shema" since the essence of the mitzvah is the concentration of the mind in accepting the sovereignty of Hashem. So the question is, when it comes to our learning of Torah which is focused on the mind why is it that we have to recite a blessing? The answer is that the learning of Torah requires the bodily power of speech and hearing which allows one to retain and teach over to others. The understanding is Torah needs to be alive and brought out into the world and that only occurs with the usage of our human endowed functions.

-Vihaarev na Hashem Elokeinu eit Divrei Torah biphinu, ubiphiphyot amicha beit yisrael, vinihiye anachnu vitzetzaeinu, vitzetzaei tzeitzaeinu, kulanu yodiei shimcha vilomdei toratcha lishma: Baruch Atah Hashem Eilokeinu Melech haolam asher bachar banu micol haamim vinatan lanu et Torato: Baruch Atah Hashem Noten HaTorah – (Please, Hashem, our G-d sweeten the words of Torah in our mouth and in the mouth of your people, the house of Israel. All of us know Your name and study Your Torah. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who teaches Torah to his nation Israel. Blessed are You Hashem our G-d, King of the universe Who selected us from all of the nations and gave us His Torah). -We are now at the point that we have committed ourselves to the effort to learn Torah, we now pray that the words will be sweet to us. This is like someone who at first would never conceive of Shabbat as being enjoyable, rather viewing it as restrictive and confining. Yet many who experience Shabbat properly ultimately gain an awareness of its special quality, a day filled with family and a complete separation from the ongoing world, could not imagine how they could have a week without it! The same applies here as well whereby at first the learning may appear as difficult but afterward you look forward to it, craving and enjoying

each and every word. It is at the point that we feel a responsibility to support Torah for ourselves and future generations. It is within the words of Torah that we find Hashem, both in the written Torah and the Oral Torah. So it is in this regard that we pray that we should be taught the Torah in its entirety and that we are appreciative of the fact that we have been chosen with the loftiness of its fulfillment.

-Vayidaber Hashem el Moshe laimor: daber el Aharon viel banav laimor ko tivarchu et bnei Yisrael amor lahem: yevarechecha Hashem viyishmirecha, yaer Hashem panav eilecha vichunecha, yisa Hashem panav eilecha viyasem licha shalom: visamu et Shimi al benei Yisrael vaani avarichem - (Hashem spoke to Moshe saying : speak to Aharon and his sons saying to bless the children of Israel saying to them: May Hashem bless you and safeguard you: May Hashem cause his face to shine toward you and give you grace, May Hashem turn his countenance to you and establish peace for you: and place My name on the children of Israel and I will bless them). – In order to satisfy the requirement of learning Torah after we make the blessing on the Torah we read the Bircat Kohanim. Besides for being within itself a beautiful benediction of prayer, it holds within it an interesting correlation to Torah. We call up to the Torah three people on a regular day, five people on a Yom Tov, and seven on Shabbat. The construction of the Bircat Kohanim is exactly in that way. The first line is three words for the three people called during the week, the second line is five words for the five people called up to the Torah during Yom Tov, and the last line is seven words correlating to the seven people that are called up to the Torah on Shabbat.

Shul News

December 11 is the First Night of Chanukah
There will be an Oneg Shabbos by David & Gail Weiss
242 Coleridge at 8:00 pm

There will be a Major Chanukah Party
Tuesday December 15th at 6:00 pm
(The fifth night of Chanukah)
Celebrating the 1st Anniversary
Chanukas Habayis of the New Beis Medrash

**Sponsorships Are Available
Please Call R' Akiva Eisenstadt 917-312-0951
or Email mbkollel@aol.com**