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Part I. The Impressive Culture

The Greek Villains

When we speak about the story of Chanukah, we are under the impression that the Yevanim, the Syrian-Greeks, are the villains of the Chanukah story. That's what we've been saying every day in our *tefilllos*, that **עֲמֻדָּה מְלֻכּוֹת יוֹן הָרִשָּׁעָה** על עֲמֻד יִשְׂרָאֵל.

And to a great degree it's true. The Yevanim slaughtered many Jews. A mother who was caught with a son that had a *bris*, so the baby was tied around her neck, and she was led through the streets of the city in a humiliating show. And then she was taken up to a high building and thrown from the roof. When Jews concealed themselves because they wanted to observe Shabbos, it was a capital offense to keep Shabbos, so they went into hiding outside the city for the day, and when they caught these *shomrei Shabbos*, they burned them alive

in fire. They smoked Jewish families out of the caves where they were hiding and killed the men, women and children. Sometimes they burned them alive. And so, absolutely, the Syrian-Greeks were wicked.

But actually, it's not so simple because we know that in general, the Yevanim did not seek to impose their ideology on the provinces that they conquered. They weren't particularly interested in interfering in the internal affairs of those nations. What they wanted was money, and as long as the conquered territories paid their taxes and tributes loyally, they were permitted to do as they wished.

And so, before the Chanukah story, Antiochus, the king of Syria, was quite satisfied with the situation in Eretz Yisroel. He had plenty of his own business to worry about, and the land of Judea was already one of his provinces; it was already conquered, and they gave him tribute.

The Jewish Villains

So what went wrong? It was the Jews who went wrong. In those days, a group arose within our people who began to follow in the ways of the Greeks. It began with a small group of tax collectors, the *muchsims*, who came into contact with the Greeks for whom they were collecting the taxes. It was a few families and their friends and associates who began to see 'beauty' and 'progress' in Greek culture, and they began to follow in their ways. They wanted to 'modernize' the Jewish people, to make them adjust to the advancements that were taking place in the world around them.

And therefore, this small group of Jewish quislings, of fifth columnists and reformers, they came up with a plan. They contacted the wicked Antiochus and they proposed to him that there's a lot of wealth to be had from the sanctuary in Yerushalayim. And it was true. There was a lot of money put away there because people died and left over money, and it was deposited with the *beis din* there. In those days there were no banks, and so legacies were deposited in the Beis Hamikdash coffers as trusts. Besides, there was a lot of money from the *machatzis hashekel* donations for the Beis Hamikdash.

And so these bootlickers of the Greeks, the Misyavnim, they told Antiochus that it could all be his if he would step in and take over. But in order to do that, he would have to get the permission of the Jews, and he'd never get it unless he would first take over and transform the Jewish people into loyal adherents of Hellenistic attitudes.

Convincing an Antisemite

Now, the Greeks of course didn't need too much convincing. After all, they considered themselves part of a great, universal, superior culture. And here was a provincial country, an oriental country—they considered them barbarians—and they were being urged by some of the more progressive elements of that

people to come and take over and civilize them; they should come in and force them to give up their barbaric customs. And in the process, Antiochus would gain what he really wanted—a great wealth from the sanctuary.

And that's the story. I'm telescoping it, but that's basically it. It was a tempting proposition for Antiochus, and he accepted it. And now, at the urging of these reformer Jews—they brought him huge bribes, gifts—he began a campaign to force the people in Eretz Yisroel to forsake the Torah; to use force on the Jewish people to stamp out all practices of Torah and to make them one nation with the Greeks.

And therefore, when you read in the *siddur* that “the kingdom of the Greeks” arose against the Jewish people, it's only because the Chachomim wanted to be solicitous with our *kavod*, so they let it seem as if it was the fault of the *goyim* only. But who *really* were the *zeidim* who fell into the hands of *oskei sorasecha*? Jews! Who *really* were the *reshaim* who fell into the hands of the *tzaddikim*? Jews! Our enemies were Jews! Jews who had lost sight of the truth that they are the choicest of mankind, the exalted people, and instead began to cringe before the outside world.

The Perpetual Test

You have to know that this problem—when Jews are inferiority complexed; when they are lacking in self-confidence and are persuaded to get with the times, to flatter the gentiles and imitate them—has been one of the great tests in our history.

We've been a small group that has wandered among great nations and the test is always: Will you have enough pride? Will you understand your true greatness enough that you'll disdain the ways of the nations around you? It doesn't mean you despise anybody; you should never show contempt to anybody. But there is no question in your heart you should feel that all of the greatness, all of the excellence, all of the best ways of living are by us and not anywhere else.

You're being tested always: Will you fall prey to the feeling of inferiority and look up to the nations instead of looking down on them? And that's the *nisayon* that the villains of the Chanukah story, the *Misyavnim*, failed.

Now, before we proceed, we have to remind ourselves of a certain incident that happened way back in our history. And because **כָּל מָה שֶׁאַירַע לְיוֹסֵף אֵירַע לְצִיּוֹן** – whatever happened to Yosef will happen to us, it will help bring into focus our subject.

Yosef's Test

Everybody knows that Yosef Hatzaddik was tested. What were the great tests in his life? Well, immediately it occurs to us the test of the wife of Potiphar. He was sold as a slave to Potiphar and Yosef was a beautiful boy. He was only

seventeen years old, and the wife of Potiphar put her eyes on him and she began to tempt him. In various ways, every day, she tried and tried.

But Yosef remembered where he came from. **נְרָאִית לּוֹ דְּמוֹת דְּיוֹקָנוֹ שֶׁל אָבִיו** – “I’m a son of Yaakov, a Yisroel,” he was thinking. It means “I’m an aristocrat and I can’t demean myself with such foolishness, such empty temptations. I won’t forget my father’s house.” And so he remained loyal to Hashem.

The Bigger Test

So this we understand is certainly a very important episode and Yosef deserves a great recognition for his virtue. But I’m going to tell you what I think is even a greater test that Yosef passed, a much more difficult test. It was in the palace, when he was standing in front of Pharaoh who took off his ring, his royal ring that gave him authority, and he put it on Yosef’s finger. Pharaoh took a golden chain off of his neck and hung it on Yosef’s neck. And he took a royal coat, a royal garment and put it on Yosef’s shoulders. As he rode through the streets in his chariot, runners ran ahead on foot and said, **אַבְרָהָם** – bend your knee! The ruler is coming!”

Now he’s a real Mitzri. He’ll speak the language. At that moment what could happen to Yosef? He could have forgotten all about his father’s house where his brothers had mistreated him so much and sold him into slavery and he could have said, “This place is a good place. I’ve been vindicated.” I am now an Egyptian.

The truth is that if prison wasn’t the end of Yosef, this surely should have knocked him out of our history. He should have been lost forever. Because it should have gone to his head and he should have fallen in love with Mitzrayim.

I don’t know if any one of us would have been *omeid b’nisayon*. We would love Mitzrayim! We would become so involved in it that we’d forget all about our past. Who cares about Eretz Canaan, about his brothers and even his father. They were just a nomadic tribe, simple shepherds, and now he was occupied with an advanced society. He should have forgotten all about them and become a patriotic Egyptian.

You know what a test that is?! If the king of England—today he’s a nobody, but even the king of England today, if he would call you in and take the ring off his finger and put it on your finger, I’m very much afraid what would happen to you. The tzitzis you’ll hide inside of your pants from now on, that’s for sure.

The Name Reminder

But no. Yosef kept his head and he realized that it’s all nothing. He’s a son of his father. “I’m a different person than they are.”

He realized that it was all a setup, a test. That's why he called one of his sons Menashe. כִּי נִשְׁכַּחְתִּי אֶת כָּל עֲמָלִי – *Hashem made me forget all of my troubles*, וְאֵת כָּל בֵּית אָבִי – *and my father's family* (Bereishis 41:51). Now we think it's merely a *hodaya*, a name of thanks. No. The plain *pshat* is maybe that he'd forget all the trouble he had from his family. But there's something else. Yosef said, "Hashem is making me forget. But it's a *nisayon*. All this—a modern civilized nation, and power and wealth—is all a test that I should forget that I'm a son of Yaakov Avinu! I might think this is my place from now on.

"Oh, no. I won't do that. I won't forget anything." Every time he called his son's name, "Menashe, could you bring me my shoes? Menashe, thank you," so Yosef was reminding himself. That's how Yosef passed the test. Because he should have fallen in love with Egypt. He should have kissed the earth of Egypt. But he remembered always who he was, even in the moment of the greatest pressure of temptation to look up at the Egyptians.

Loving Germany

You know, the Jews in Germany, they kissed the earth. In Germany there was education. There were rights, they were law-abiding! You couldn't do anything against the law in Germany—no violence in Germany. It was a wonderful country, scientific, every kind of progress. And clean! The streets were perfectly clean—you couldn't throw a piece of paper. In America, you throw paper in the streets. You couldn't do that in Germany.

Germany was a model country and the Jews in Germany fell in love. They gave their hearts to Germany. Their *neshamas*, their souls were in Germany. I remember a story; it was in a little town in Lithuania, near the German border. It was on December 25th, and a German couple had run away to save their lives, and now these refugees were sitting in this house where I was, and they were listening to the German radio, to the song 'Silent Night'. That's one of the famous *Kratzmach* songs – Silent Night. And this German couple, they were shedding tears. I was there. Water was coming out of their eyes. They were so homesick – ah, the good old days in Germany. Ah, the beautiful Christmas carols. Ay, they were so sorry they had to leave their beloved fatherland. They kissed the earth of Germany so much that they were crying over its Christmas carols.

No, Yosef didn't kiss any earth. He didn't think Mitzrayim was his fatherland. You know why? Because he remembered who his father was and who he was. "I'm a son of Yisroel and therefore there's nothing outside that I'll be attracted to." His tremendous store of pride, pride in being a *ben Yisroel* was enough to strengthen him in this test.

Part II. Impressed By The Culture

Where's Yosseleh?

Now, Yosef, you have to know, didn't pass this test only for his own sake; because that's how he led the Bnei Yisroel. Remember, in Mitzrayim Yosef was a king! Pharaoh said that *בְּלִעְיֵדָה לֹא יָרִים אִישׁ אֶת יָדוֹ וְאֶת רַגְלוֹ בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם* – *nobody could lift up a hand or a foot in this country without his permission (ibid. 41:44)*. It means that when the family came down to Mitzrayim they didn't find Yosseleh, a little brother. No; they found a Yosef *hamelech*, someone who had to be listened to.

As was mentioned here recently, Yosef had more power even than Moshe Rabbeinu. You remember how people spoke against Moshe Rabbeinu; there were those who complained against him and argued with him. But not against Yosef. No, nobody opened their mouths against Yosef.

And Moshe Rabbeinu was only the leader of the Am Yisrael for forty years; Yosef, he was in charge for eighty years. And what was the purpose? It was so that there should be an iron fisted ruler over the Bnei Yisroel to prevent them from falling in love with their environment. Egypt after all was then a very civilized land. And the *bnei* Yaakov were shepherds; a small family coming from the pastoral society into an advanced civilization. Now, a little handful of Jewish shepherds coming into a wealthy, affluent civilization like Egypt, as needy visitors, and to remain loyal to their ideals, that's not an easy task. All around you is a big empire with huge cities, luxurious culture; it's impossible. The truth is it should have been impossible. We know the end of the story already so we're not surprised but it shouldn't have happened. They should be swallowed up by the ways of Mitzrayim.

The Goldeneh Medinah

What happened when the Jews came to America from the small towns in Poland and Lithuania, the *shtetlach*? They looked up to America. Big cities! Lights! A better way of living! And they right away began to imitate their hosts.

Once when I was in Slabodka a Jew came back from a visit to America, and he told me *b'hispaylos* how he was in America in the subway. He got lost in the subway. He didn't know where to go. A policeman came over and said, "What's the matter?" He couldn't talk to the policeman; he didn't know English. So the policeman went away and brought a Jewish policeman. And the Jewish policeman took him and helped him out.

So this old Jew was telling me this story, and he said, "America – ooh! What a wonderful country it is! What a great thing!" There was a sparkle in his eyes. In Europe, they used to spit on the Jews, once upon a time. They came

to America, nobody spat on you – not much anyhow. And so they were swept off their feet.

Surviving Mitzrayim

So how did they not weaken in Mitzrayim? How does a small family like that survive? There's only one way. You have to know what it means self pride. You have to have a strong leader of the family who puts his foot down and says "We're too good for that! We're not here to change! We're not going to forget where we come from, who we are."

That's why even after Yosef passed away, that lesson was not forgotten. Yes, there were cases of weakening but his lesson was not lost; eighty years of training was not lost. They were two hundred and ten years in Egypt! Two hundred and ten years! Imagine a Jewish family came to America two hundred and ten years ago. What is that? 1762. Before even the Declaration of Independence. Suppose in 1762 a family came here and to this day they were *frum* loyal Jews. That would be an achievement! The truth is of the families who came here in 1762, nothing remains of them at all. The only *frum* Spanish and Portuguese Jews you have today are those who came much later. They came from other places, the West Indies, South America. The old-time Spanish and Portuguese Jews are no longer Jews.

It's All in the Name

But under Yosef they remained Jews. Not only did they remain Jews but they remained proud. If you take a look at the lists of names; and we have big lists of names of people who came out of Egypt, you see they're all pure Hebrew names.

Do you remember how it was in America? No, you don't remember. When they came to America at first, everybody hurried to name their children good English names. He called himself Morris. M-O-R-R-I-S. A big *kovod*; Morris. Moshe? Who called themselves Moshe? It was a shame. I'm Morris! And then came the next generation of Maurice – M-A-U-R-I-C-E. Then the next generation – Murray. The next generation got lost entirely! Scott. Lost among the *goyim*! Scott!

But in Mitzrayim only Jewish names. And not just stereotype names after an old *bubbah* or great aunt. They're original names; heroic, proud names! Shelumiel ben Tzurishadai. Ah! That's a name! It's a prayer and it's a song: 'My peace is the Almighty' the son of 'My rock is the Almighty'. Amram, Moshe's father. Amram means 'the nation of the exalted One'. And Yocheved, his mother's name, 'the Almighty is my glory'. They invented the names from their own heads as an expression of nobility, of patriotism, of pride. It was a declaration of confidence in the greatness of their nation.

And it means that *lashon kodesh* was the language they spoke. That's what our Sages teach us, **שְׁלֹא שִׁינּוּ אֶת שְׁמָם** – *they didn't change their names*, **שְׁלֹא שִׁינּוּ אֶת לְשׁוֹנָם** – *and they didn't change their language*. There's a tradition too that they wore the same Jewish garments. I cannot prove it from the verses themselves but there's a tradition that **לֹא שִׁינּוּ אֶת בְּגָדֵיהֶם**. But this we know for certain that their language and their names were the same. And so you want to know who our forefathers were? Consider the idealism of that family! In those days of Yosef and afterwards they weren't interested in the least bit of being like the Egyptians.

The Misyavnim Take Over

But **בְּיָמֵי מַתְתִּיָּהוּ** we didn't have a Yosef. We had *tzaddikim* and *chachomim*, yes, but the wicked Jews had taken the reigns of power. There developed now a class of Jews who looked down at themselves and looked up at the gentiles they came in contact with. They were only a small minority, but still it was a strong and powerful minority and because of their connections to the Greeks, they were the ones that had the say over the government. They became whom we now call the Misyavnim, Hellenizers—it means people who have Greek ideas.

What does it mean 'Greek ideas'? Many things. They made public gymnasiums where people used to wrestle and do other exercises, sports. Now, the Jewish people have nothing against exercise. If it's done for exercise, then you don't need me to tell you that—if it's not too strenuous, exercise is very good. I recommend, the best thing would be if you went outside for forty-five minutes, take a brisk walk. Not in the nighttime and not on lonely streets, but a brisk walk in the fresh air, that's the best sport and the best exercise. And while you're doing that, you can be thinking all the good thoughts of how happy you are in this world, how fortunate you are to be a Yisroel. Whereas if you're playing sports, running, banging around a ball or doing some other things, that keeps your mind busy on small things. The time is entirely wasted.

And so exercise is good for your body but for the Greeks it was something else. They built gymnasiums in Yerushalayim. Now a gymnasium in Jerusalem sounds like something that's harmless but you have to know what the word gym means. *Gymnos* in Ancient Greek means naked and 'gymnasium' means 'a place of nakedness.' They used to exercise naked in order to display their bodies.

Now, to the Jewish people this is a *to'eivah*. Among us it's an abomination, but among the Greeks it was considered a beautiful thing to expose the body, to glorify the physicality of the human body. Of course, it was more than that. Don't think these things were innocent. All kinds of wickedness were associated with exposing the body.

Proud of Perversion

Now, of course to an authentic Jew, a proud Jew, such a thing is *meshukatz*; he looks down on such things. But once you waver in that foundation, in the truth of who you are, so anything is possible. Into the vacuum of the empty mind, whatever society tells you is good, and new and right, that's what you'll do.

How is it that a girl, a Jewish girl, is walking down the street well-undressed, she's so proud. It's a fact. She's so proud, so conceited; she thinks that she is dressed in the most noble raiment. What is there in that? The answer is she's imitating someone she's impressed with and she thinks that this is the way, this is the right way; not the old archaic Jewish ways.

That's what it was in the time of Chanukah. And so for the first time men appeared naked in public among Jews. Among Greeks it wasn't such a novelty, but the Misyavnim, they urged the Jewish youth to come out into the gymnasiums in public and perform. And there were some Jews among the Hellenizers who were ashamed to appear in public—because you could see they were Jews—so they had operations performed upon themselves that they shouldn't look like Jews anymore, that they shouldn't look like *nimalim*.

Yerushalayim New and Old

Not only exercise—they admired all of the Greek ways; Greek education, Greek art, and entertainment. They liked the Greek theaters. Jews never had theaters before and now the Misyavnim got busy introducing empty ideals into the bloodstream of our nation. They made theaters and they wanted to make hippodromes and introduce gentile amusements. The Misyavnim were profaning Yerushalayim with everything the Am Yisroel had always kept far away from.

The New York Times would have been proud! You know, when Teddy Kollek was defeated as mayor of Jerusalem, so the ones who sat *shivah* for him most were the New York Times. A long editorial, "Ay, ay, ay. What a tragedy!" They were so sad. They were praising Teddy Kollek, all the 'good' things he did for Yerushalayim. "When he was in power, it started becoming a modern city and today there's even a little bit of nightlife already in Yerushalayim," they said. You hear that praise on him? A little bit of nightlife also was beginning to develop in Yerushalayim!

And now, *nebach, nebach*, he was defeated. It was such a sad day for the New York Times. Nightlife! That's what they want! Nightlife in the holy city of Yerushalayim.

That's what the Misyavnim wanted for Yerushalayim too! The Greeks were all over the world now and they had all the modern advances, the sciences. They also had beautiful architecture. They made buildings that were a beauty

to behold. Wherever you went, you could see the results of the great progress and therefore many fell victim to Greek culture. That's what happened at the time. The Misyavnim looked up to the advancing Greeks and they started bringing foreign ideas into Eretz Yisroel.

Part III. Fighting the Culture

How'd it Happen?

And that's one of the great lessons of Chanukah—it's a hidden lesson—that the people who caused us the greatest trouble were not the Greeks but the Misyavnim; it was the Jews, Greek wannabes. It was the Jews who came into contact with the outside world and lost their heads.

And so the question we want to answer is *why* did they lose their heads? What made them so weak-minded?

So you'll say it was the desire for money, maybe. I'm sure that it's true. Or maybe power; the desire for power and *kavod* absolutely can make a person lose their head. But there's something that comes before all of that. There's something weak in the foundation and that's the lack of pride in being a Yisroel. All this is the result of inferiority because they never learned to appreciate who they were, and if you don't know who you are, you'll be a milquetoast—you'll look up to and imitate the ways of the outside world.

The superior one never imitates an inferior one, you know. It's only when you look up to someone, that you imitate him. If you look down on him, so what's there to imitate? And that's been one of our great problems in history. And now more than ever, even the *bnei Torah*, the really good Jews, have to know that we are the victims of this attitude also. It has permeated into us, it has seeped into our bones. We don't have that pride anywhere near what is expected of a Jew, of the most simple and plain Jew.

Hiding the Crown

Here's a man, one of the top men in the Syrian community and he had to visit me in my home for a certain reason. This was some time ago. He wanted to invite me to speak at his synagogue. So I knew he was coming and I looked through the window. He was there. He got out of his car and he put a *yarmulke* on his head and walked up to my door. Why? Why just when he walked into my house? Because he was trained to be ashamed of a *yarmulke*. He wouldn't walk with a *yarmulke* in the street. Because then he won't look like his fellow Irishman.

Now to be so ingrained in self shame is a tragedy of tragedies! Because a *yarmulke* is just the opposite! It's a crown of glory! You know we make a *bracha*

every morning on a *yarmulke* and on a hat. The *bracha* is בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' – we thank You, עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתַפְאָרָה – You crown Your people Yisroel with glory. It's not on tefillin; it's your hat. A hat or a beanie, whatever it is you wear on your head, a stovepipe, anything you put on your head, a tarbush, anything you wear on your head, if you do it because you're a Jew, then it's a crown of glory! That's the *bracha* we make on it every morning.

To be ashamed of a crown?! Suppose a king gives you a badge. You're ashamed of the badge; instead of pinning it on your coat where everyone can see, you'll pin it on your underwear?

It's a good idea to practice that by the way. Don't put on your hat or your *yarmulke* in the morning like you're still in the drunken stupor of your sleep. Remind yourself! It's a crown of glory! And once in a while remind yourself during the day; it will be like vitamins. It will fortify you with pride.

Mitzvos Tzrichos Kavana

And every mitzvah is like that. Besides for the intention of that specific mitzvah, there's a general and more important *kavanah*—*Vitzivanu!* I'm so privileged to be commanded, to be chosen by the King of kings!

It's an opportunity to feel proud. You are privileged by the *mitzvos*. But not like the modern orthodox rabbi in the synagogue who speaks from the pulpit and says, "You're privileged to do *mitzvos*," but he doesn't even know what it means. A mitzvah is a sign of royalty! And not royalty in the sense of the king of this country, that country. It's the only true royalty there is.

And therefore, when a king goes out in the street wearing all of his badges, does it occur to him to be embarrassed, to imitate the ways of the lower element? Never. His confidence and superiority, his aristocracy, is so great it's as if suppose let's say a king is taking a walk from Windsor Palace. And as he is walking, a ragged urchin, a cockney kid came along and said, "Hey you bum, what are you doing on the street?" the king wouldn't even notice it. He's a king! And this is a nobody! And therefore, the Torah Jew who knows his worth is not influenced.

Cringing Before the Evolutionist

How is it that a Jewish boy or a Jewish girl is impressed with the theory of evolution? The truth is that judged on its own merits it's as childish a doctrine as anyone could ever imagine. But people are so deflated before the imaginary superiority of the academicians and by their own feeling of inferiority, that it seems to them sacrilegious to question the great body of academicians. Look, if so many educated people believe in evolution, so even if I won't but still I feel it's very difficult.

The truth is that an ancient Jew, let's say a Jew came from Meah Shearim who never went to college, never read the Sunday newspapers, never listened

to the radio, so his store of dignity, his Torah confidence, the knowledge of what a Jew is, his superiority, wouldn't make him yield to the fact that here is a well-dressed professor who is saying something. He's not impressed in the least bit because he knows that the truth is in the repository of the Torah where all the truths are. If this professor would meet him on the street and say, "You know, your ancestor was a protozoan, a tiny little insect wiggling its way through the mud," so he'd quickly run away from that man because he'd think he escaped from an asylum.

Now I'm not even talking about the arguments. The truth is, the arguments of the evolutionists in themselves are nothing and nothing and nothing. And I'll be glad to speak to you about this; not in one lecture—many lectures. But the fact that even one lecture is necessary is due only to the feeling of inferiority among us. All the wickedness of the gentiles has made inroads in the Jewish people solely due to the fact that the Jews have lost this pride.

Ashamed Rabbis

How is it that Jews look like gentiles? It's because they look up to them. They admire them. How is it that Jews, even rabbis, take gentile names? Rabbi Louis, Rabbi Charles, Rabbi Howard, Rabbi Albert, Rabbi Alfred. A rabbi should take pride in a gentile name?!

Now, the last name is not so easy to change, but the first name you can change; your first name is your choice. Who cares what your parents called you? So if you're a Norman, forget it. What's wrong with Nachman? With Nossan? Give yourself a new name and use that name with pride.

The answer is they have no pride as Jews. They think it's an honor to have the name of some Scotch drunkard, or of some Irish wife beater. To them, that enhances their personality. If he'll have the name of a goy and talk like a goy and dress like a goy and look like a goy, that's his achievement.

And so all the troubles come from this. The Jew who thinks that by having a haircut like a goy or wearing Reeboks like a goy or wearing pants like a goy, whatever it is, that he's doing something that makes us better. That's the beginning of the end because the Jew who never learned the greatness of who he is, a Yisroel, then it's easy to take him and to make him into an American street bum.

The Fragrance of the Theatre

And therefore, when I pass by a movie and I see a big line waiting to be admitted to the place of morass and they want to pay for it too, I see one or two *yarmulkes*. I say, "What's this? How could they stoop so low?"

So once I stopped a man with a black hat. I said, "Why are you standing in line? A Jew with a hat of glory should want to go into a place like that?!"

“First of all,” he said to me, “I’m not going in there. And anyways I’m not a Jew. I’m a Turk”

“Oh!” I said, “You’re a smart Turk.”

Now, why he wasn’t going in I don’t know. But a Jew who has an awareness of his aristocracy, it’s beneath his dignity to enter such a place. A place of *mishugoyim*! Sitting and watching somebody else’s imagination. And paying for it? Fools!

And so, when a man learns the attitude of aristocracy, he looks down on these things. It’s beneath him; it becomes *ma’us* to him to walk in the ways of the gentiles. He despises these things! A proud Jew passes by a movie theatre and he thinks it’s a latrine and it has a terrible odor coming out of it. Did you ever pass by an old time *beis hakisah*? Not in America; I’m talking about an old time European *beis hakisah*. The fragrance, you could feel a block away. A *ben Yisroel*, someone who constantly has before him the awareness of *diyukno shel aviv*, the knowledge that he has a glorious past and a glorious future, so that’s how he feels when he walks by these places. It’s *tzoah*; it’s ugly and nauseating, that’s what he thinks about these places.

The New Old Yetzer

Now, it’s a big job, a lifetime job. And it’s in every generation. Every generation says, “This is a new people. We know it’s a new kind of a nation. It’s all brand new – we never had this before. It’s a wonderful people now.” Every time the same old *yetzer hara* comes in a new form. The Greeks. The Spaniards. The French. The Germans. The Americans. We make the same error over and over again.

And therefore in order to combat the *yetzer hara* that caused the trouble of Chanukah and that still causes trouble today, we have to continually keep in mind this great principle that Hakadosh Baruch Hu expects that at all times, to remember that he chose us and forever and ever we have to walk with our heads high and the pride that Hakadosh Baruch Hu bestowed on us. A Jew has to have in mind a great deal of meditation, radial reflection. We must constantly be aware of the greatness of our history.

Misyavnim Go Lost, Chashmonaim Live Forever

Now that’s a very important lesson we have to learn because if we had learned that previously, a great many people would have survived. Otherwise, they got lost. They got lost. The Misyavnim became Tzedukim. They all became Tzedukim. And the Tzedukim all went lost. I read in a gentile book – a gentile said this. At the *churban Bayis Sheini*, he said, the Tzedukim all went lost. We never heard about them anymore. They got lost.

But **חַיִּים כּוֹלְכֵם הַיּוֹם, וְאַתֶּם הִרְבֵּקִים בְּה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם** – *you who are loyal to Hashem, you'll remain forever and ever*. If you’re proud, you’ll be loyal. And so that’s our

job. To regain the ancient pride of the Jewish people. Ahh! To know with a full conviction that we are on the right side of history, that the ways of living are found only in our *seforim*. To have good Jewish pride means a strong but quiet confidence, a firm inner certainty in what it means to be a *ben* or *bas* Yisroel.

And when a person gains that pride of knowing what it means to be a Yisroel, so such a Jew will never fall prey to the silly theories of the gentiles, to doctrines and to fads and styles. And that's why when we want to leave Chanukah with something tangible, something we can hold onto all year long, we should remember that one of the lessons of Chanukah is recognizing the genuine pride of our real worth. We should always see before our eyes what Yosef always kept before his eyes—the *diyukno shel aviv*, the image of Yisroel Saba. Because when you know who you come from and who you are, you're going to live successfully.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Wear the Crown

This week we learned that the downfall of the Misyavnim began with a lack of pride — they admired the nations around them and were ashamed of their own identity. Yosef HaTzaddik, on the other hand, stood proudly as a son of Yaakov even while wearing Egyptian royal garments. His secret was remembering who he was every moment of the day.

This week I will *bli neder* take ten seconds each morning, when putting on my yarmulka, hat, or tznus clothing, to remind myself that this is my crown of glory. Instead of dressing out of habit, I'll pause and think: "*I am a proud ben/bas Yisroel. I wear this because Hashem chose us.*" And once more during the day, I'll touch my yarmulka (or recall my tznus dress) and refresh that thought. These brief moments will help fortify my pride and keep the spirit of Chanukah alive all year long.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

12 – Perils of Humility | **605** – Pride of Israel

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Shabbos Inspired

לע"נ שרה נטשה בת דבורה שהין · דינה ברכה בת שרה נטשה · דבורה מזל בת שרה נטשה

Chanukah Candles

The uplifting feeling of Shabbos is wonderful. But it lasts only until *motza'ei Shabbos*. After we recite Havdalah, everything changes. It seems as if we leave behind life as a holy Jew and return to ordinary human existence.

There are several ways in which we can bring the *kedushah* of Shabbos into the weekdays. One way is, "Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it." During the week, we should remember the *kedushah* of Shabbos. Another way is by having the *Melaveh Malkah* meal on *motza'ei Shabbos*. This carries the material aspects of Shabbos into *motza'ei Shabbos* and thus into the weekdays. Yet another way is by reciting "*Vihi no'am*" on *motza'ei Shabbos*, which carries the spiritual aspects of Shabbos into the weekdays. In "*Vihi no'am*" we pray to be saved from the formidable spiritual dangers we face during the week.

All these practices are like sparks of the holiness of Shabbos within the weekdays. But in the end, Shabbos is light and the weekdays are dark. If so, it seems we hardly benefit from the *kedushah* of Shabbos. It's like someone who goes into a diamond mine, fills his pockets with glittering jewels, and then loses them all. All he has left is a little diamond dust in his pockets. When Shabbos is over, the person goes back to the way he was before.

That's why we have Chanukah. The Chanukah candles radiate the holy light of Shabbos in the weekdays as well. The following Gemara hints to this idea:

The *Shechinah* never descended below...for it is written (Tehillim 115:16), "*The heavens are heavens for Hashem, and He gave the earth to the sons of men*". But how could it be said that the *Shechinah* never descended below? It is written (Shemos 19:20), "*And Hashem descended on Mount Sinai*." When the *Shechinah* descended, it remained ten *tefachim* above the ground." (Sukkah 5a)

Ten *tefachim* create a separate domain. If the *Shechinah* hovered ten *tefachim* above the ground, it never really came down to earth, because it remained in a separate domain. This is reflected in the halachos of Shabbos as well. The *reshus ha-rabbim* (public domain) extends only ten *tefachim* high. But the *reshus ha-yachid* (private domain) extends upward without limit.

Shabbos Kodesh reveals to us the reality that the world is the *reshus ha-yachid* of Hashem. It is all His alone, because "*there is nothing besides Him*." Therefore, the Shabbos candles are placed higher than ten *tefachim*, beyond the *reshus ha-rabbim*, for this is the position from which they can shed light. Once a week, a Jew "visits" Hashem's *reshus ha-yachid*, so to speak. He sees the truth that Hashem is *yachid b'olamo*, alone in His world. But during the week, a Jew is in the *reshus ha-rabbim*. He's in the dark.

Then comes Chanukah and teaches us that with those same candles—with the same enlightened view of the world that we have on Shabbos—we can illuminate the darkness of the weekdays. We can bring the reality of *ein od milvado* into our daily lives. For in truth, the message of Shabbos is not limited to that day alone. It applies just as well during the week.

The preferred position of the Chanukah candles is below ten *tefachim*, because something below ten *tefachim* is in the domain of this world. It is "down-to-earth," so to speak. Thus, the Chanukah candles radiate the light of Shabbos from within the reality of this world, illuminating our lives in a way that even Shabbos cannot.

Let us do all we can to take the true reality that reveals itself on Shabbos and bring it into the weekdays—to live with the recognition that "there is nothing besides Him" –אין עוד מלבדו!

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יצחק בן אדל ע"ה

The Yedid Family

Adapted by R' Y. Levy from Nefesh Shimshon, Shabbos Kodesh, Rav Shimshon Pincus, Feldheim

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QUESTION

When irreligious Jews or gentiles hear about this Torah attitude of capital punishment so they think it's too extreme and that the Torah is wicked.

ANSWER

Of course they do! Because the outside world has all kinds of criminal attitudes.

I once spoke in one of these lectures. A man came over to me. He was a high school principal or something. And he said, "Rabbi Miller, you advocate capital punishment? How can you think of killing?"

So I said to him, "Suppose a man was about to murder your mother, would you kill him to save your mother?"

"Oh no!" he said.

So this ideal of being righteously 'just' to the criminal and being very stern on the decent people, that attitude, of course, looks down on the Torah that condemns a criminal to death. But we have to realize that the mercy and the compassion of today's liberal world is actually the worst kind of cruelty. It's a result of their compassion that murder today is on a bigger scale than ever before. That's the compassion.

Like the *rasha*, *yemach shemo*, Cuomo, said. Cuomo said "I'm going to veto the death penalty because it's barbaric. It's barbarism." But we have to know that Cuomo is a murderer who is constantly killing people, every day, as a result of his attitude.

If there was a death penalty there's no question that murderers wouldn't repeat their crimes. Once you kill a murderer, you're finished with him. It's the best rehabilitation. And so, as a result of the liberal compassion on criminals, crime today, murder today, is more than it was ever before.

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