

ISSUE

330



פרשת ויצא
כסלו תשפ"ד

YUD DALED KISLEV

Join Rabbi Johnson this week for Monday Night Chassidus for a special shiur in honour of Yud Daled Kislev, the wedding anniversary of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin.

We will be studying a letter sent by the Rebbe's father to the Rebbe in advance of the wedding, in which he explains the Kabbalistic significance of the wedding date - Tuesday the 14th of the month of Kislev.

The Shiur will take place on Monday night 8:30pm on Zoom.
www.Kollelmenachem.com.au/live

CHASSIDUS LEARNING EVENING

In preparation for Yud Tes Kislev, all Anash are invited to join us for a Chassidus learning evening this Thursday evening. 7:30pm in the Goldhirsch Hall (Mincha 7:15pm). Hot refreshments will be served.

SHABBOS SHIUR

The Shabbos Shiur this week will be given by visiting scholar Rabbi Dr Mendey Loewenthal on the topic of

Medical Ethics on End-of-life Matters

Shabbos afternoon between Mincha and Maariv in the Yeshivah Shule. Men and women are invited to join.

NEW KOLLEL MEMBERS

We would like to welcome Rabbi Zalman Szmerring who joined the Kollel this week and wish him much Hatzlacha in his learning. We look forward to welcoming more Kollel members over the next few months.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא **חידוש** Chiddush



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How to Respond to the Lavan of Today

Yaakov is described as the Ish Tam Yoshev Ohalim. In contrast to his brother Esav, the man of the field, Yaakov is the simple, sincere Jew who sat in the tents of Torah study, separated from the outside world.

Yet, in Parshas Vayeitzei, Yaakov is called upon to "go out", to leave his familiar environment and the protective walls of the Yeshivah and the holy land, to travel to enter the material world - the home-turf of Lavan.

How would Yaakov be able to survive, let alone thrive, when faced with the likes of Lavan the skillful deceiver who would certainly seek to exploit him?

The word Tam can be interpreted as naïve. From the moment that he arrived, Lavan saw Yaakov as someone that he could exploit for his own interests. His outward displays of welcoming affection and warmth were just a show to disguise his machinations. His hugs and kisses were just an attempt to rob Yaakov of his riches.

Throughout the Parsha we read how Lavan tried to exploit and deceive Yaakov. After Yaakov worked for seven years to be able to marry Rachel, Lavan switched Leah in place of Rachel, forcing Yaakov to agree to work an additional seven years with no compensation. When Lavan agreed to compensate Yaakov for his work in the final six years, he constantly tried to switch the terms of the agreement to swindle Yaakov and benefit himself.

And even when Yaakov left, Lavan pursued him and tried to claim that all of his assets, his flocks and even his wives and children, belonged to him and that Yaakov had stolen them from him.

Despite Lavan's attempts, Yaakov prevailed. He won the hearts of Lavan's daughters, raised a family of Tzaddikim and acquired all of Lavan's wealth for himself. How was Yaakov the 'unworldly' Torah scholar able to achieve this?

When Yaakov first arrived in Charan and met Rachel at the well, he told her "that he is the brother of her father and that he is the son of Rivka". Rashi quotes the Midrash that Yaakov was saying that if Lavan will come against him with deceit and trickery, he will be his 'brother' in trickery. If Lavan will be decent and upright towards him, he too will be "the son of Rivka", the righteous sister of Lavan.

Yaakov stood by these words. If Lavan would be good to him, he would be upright and kind in return. But if

Lavan would try to harm him and come to him with tricks, he would not naively take it, but would proverbially "fight fire with fire". When Lavan tried to trick Yaakov with his wages, Yaakov used his own 'tricks' to acquire the flocks of Lavan for himself. This is not what Lavan had had in mind from the naïve Yeshivah Bochur.

At the end of the Parsha, Lavan played the innocent victim, accusing Yaakov of being the villain who had swindled him. But Yaakov stood firm, pointing out the lies is Lavan's claims. Yaakov was the one who had tried to be peaceful and civil. Only when he was met with Lavan's attacks, was he forced to take action to protect himself, his family and their own interests.

There is an important lesson in all of this that is so relevant to what is happening in the world today as the nation of Israel faces the Lavan's of the world.

The nations of the world expect that the Jewish people will naively follow their dictates and allow them to 'fool' us into compromising and sacrificing our security, territory and assets to our own detriment, to serve their purposes. There is an expectation that the Jewish people should be weak and non-confrontational and that our arms can be twisted until we buckle under the pressure, that we will not stand firmly to defend our interests and protect ourselves.

This has played out in all of the wars and rounds of conflict with the Arab nations and terrorist groups who seek our destruction, where Israel was pressured into ceasefires. It played out in the disastrous 'peace accords' where Israeli governments were pressured into making compromises to our own detriment, with little or no demands on the other side. And when we were forced to fight back to protect ourselves in response to our enemies' attacks, they turn around and play the victim, accusing Israel of being the aggressors.

We are the biggest lovers of peace. If our enemies would lay down their weapons and come to us seeking genuine peace, we would gladly be their brothers in peace. But until such time, we need to declare to our enemies and to the nations who try to pressure us, that we will be their 'brothers' in how we respond. We will fight to protect our people, our land and our interests, we will continue to call out the real evil and we will not allow ourselves to be swindled or pressured to compromise on our security.

The Weekly Halacha Analysis

Respecting the Sanctity of a Shule

On his journey to Charan, Yaakov spends the night on Har Habayis. He dreams of a ladder ascending to the Heavens, with angels going up and down. The Gemara (Chullin 91a) explains that the angels went up and gazed on the “Image of Man” above and then went down to gaze at Yaakov, the image of man below. According to the Gemara, the angels wanted to harm Yaakov and so Hashem stood above him to protect him.

Iyun Yosef on Ein Yaakov explains that the angels wanted to harm Yaakov because he had slept on Har Habayis. The halacha is that one may not sleep in a place that is designated for prayer such as a Beis Hakeneses. Certainly it was forbidden to sleep on the site of the Beis Hamikdash, the gateway to Heaven.

This is why the Torah tells us that Yaakov awoke from his sleep and said ‘surely Hashem is in this and I did not know!’. He understood that this is why the angels in his dream sought to harm him. Had he known that “Hashem is in this place”, he would not have slept there.

Iyun Yosef references Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 151, the Halachos of Kedushas Beis Hakeneses. Below we will present a selection of Halachos recorded in that Siman.

Respecting the Kedusha of a Shule

A Beis Kneses is referred to as a Mikdash Me’at, a miniature Sanctuary¹. Just as there is a Mitzvah to have reverence for the Beis Hamikdash on account of the One Who dwells there, so too one must treat a Beis Hakeneses or Beis Medrash with reverence².

According to some authorities³, having awe for the Beis Hakeneses is a Mitzvah Deoraisa. Most authorities maintain that the sanctity of a Beis Kneses is Derabbanan⁴.

One may not act in a Shule in a manner of *Kalus Rosh* – light headedness and frivolity⁵. The Sefer Mitzvos Katan⁶ writes that because people act with *Kalus Rosh* in a Shule, these Shules are transformed into houses of Avodah Zarah.

Proper Speech

The Shulchan Aruch⁷ rules that one may not speak idle conversation or jest in a Shule. This refers even when the Tzibbur is not davening. The Zohar⁸ speaks very harshly about one who speaks mundane chatter in a Shule; that they are shaming the Shechina and prolonging the Golus⁹. Magen Avraham records that the Arizal¹⁰ was careful to not say anything other than

Tefillah in a Shule. He would not even say words of Mussar lest it lead to speaking mundane matters.

Mishna Berura¹¹ writes that even speaking about matters of Parnasa is forbidden in a Beis Kneses. The Mishna Berura continues that certainly one must take care not to speak Lashon Hara, Rechilus or word of Machlokes in Shule. Such speech is forbidden always. When it is done in a Holy place, one is also insulting the presence of the Shechina; just like one cannot compare one who sins in private to doing so in the palace of the king¹².

Aruch Hashulchan¹³ notes that nowadays people are seemingly lax in these Halachos, sitting after davening to Shmooze in Shule. He seeks to justify this practise based on the view of the Ramban¹⁴ that if the Shule is built with express condition¹⁵ to allow so, one may do certain necessary mundane activities in the Shule which could include certain conversations such as business and the like¹⁶.

Entering the Shule

A person should not enter a Shule for personal needs other than davening or other Mitzvah purpose. If one needs to enter the Shule to call a friend or other similar purpose, they should say/learn some Pesukim or teaching of Mishna or Halacha and only then call their friend¹⁷. Alternatively one may ask another person to share a teaching, or may even sit down for a few moments as just sitting in a Shule is a Mitzvah.

One may not enter a Shule or Beis Medrash to take shelter from the rain or sun.

If a Shule or Beis Medrash has multiple entrances, one may not use it as a short-cut¹⁸. Mishna Berura¹⁹ writes that the leniency of sitting or learning something in Shule also works in this case. Many Acharonim²⁰ argue, maintaining that this ‘heter’ is limited to the case of entering a Shule to call someone.

Eating in Shule

The Shulchan Aruch rules that one may not eat or drink in a Shule²¹, even for a snack²². Talmidei Chachamim and their students may eat even a meal in a Shule or Beis Medrash²³. Poskim write that anyone learning in Shule, even for a short amount of time, may have tea, coffee and a snack if required. The rationale is that if they were not able to eat or drink in the Beis Medrash, this would force them to pause their learning.

The Shulchan Aruch²⁴ rules that if it is for the needs of the Shule, one may eat or sleep there. This would include guards and the like. Similarly one may eat in Shule for other Mitzvah purposes. Ma-

gen Avraham²⁵ qualifies that this does not apply to meals, even a Seudas Mitzvah, where there is likely to be *Kalus Rosh* (and drunkenness²⁶).

The Mishna Berura writes that the custom is to be lenient to celebrate Siyumim in Shule with a meal. This is the basis for those who are lenient and allow Seudos Mitzvah to be held in a Shule or Beis Medrash²⁷, such as a Shalosh Seudos or Melave Malka or serving Lechaim and Mezonos on a Yartzeit. It is also the basis for holding a Seudah / farbrengen in a Shule or Beis Medrash in honour of a Tzaddik’s Yartzeit and the like where Yidden gather to hear words of Torah and Chassidus and sing songs in praise of Hashem.

If the Shule or Beis Midrash was built with a stipulation permitting eating drinking, there is more grounds for leniency to host other Seudos Mitzvah²⁸ such as a Bris, Pidyon Haben, Barmitzvah or Sheva Brachos or even a Shalom Zachar and Shabbos Kiddush in the Shule or Beis Medrash. In all cases, one should take care that the behaviour and conduct is befitting for a holy place.

1. Yechezkel 11:16

2. Mishna Berura 151:1

3. Yereim 324, Chayei Adam 17:6, Rav Pealim 2:20 and others.

4. See Sdeh Chemed Klalim Maareches Beis 43, Maharsham 1:10, Pri Megadim 151 M.Z. 1. Divrei Chaim 1:3 and others. Pri Megadim writes that the obligation to treat a Shule with awe could be Biblical if it is because of a Neder – communal vow.

5. Megillah 28b, Shulchan Aruch 151:1

6. Siman 11 quoted by Magen Avraham 151:1

7. ibid

8. Vayakhel 2:205b

9. Chid”a in Pesach Enayim writes that it would be better not to come to Shule at all then to come and speak mundane matters.

10. Shaar Hakavanos 5:1

11. 151:2 based on Pri Megadim 151 Eshel Avraham 1.

12. See there for a continuation of his words how such gatherings can create fires of Machlokes, leading to cursing, public embarrassment and physical blows, even in the presence of the Sefer Torah itself.

13. 151:5

14. Megillah 26b. This is a Machlokes Rishonim – see Beis Yosef 11 who follows the view of Tosfos and the Rosh that such a condition only helps to allow such activities in a Shule once it has been destroyed.

15. In Chitz Laaretz, the presumption in Halacha is that Shules were built with such a stipulation in mind.

16. See Shaar Hatziyun 20 that such a condition does not allow completely idle chatter

17. Shulchan Aruch 151:1

18. Shulchan Aruch 151:5

19. ד”ה לעשותו 28, Or

20. Shiurei Tahara 2:28, Or Sameach on Hilchos Tefillah 11:10

21. 151:1

22. Aruch Hashulchan 151:2. See however Biur Halacha ו”ה ואין אוכלין who writes that snacking may be permissible.

23. Shulchan Aruch and Ram”o ibid

24. 151:4

25. 151:5

26. Pri Megadim Eshel Avraham 5

27. Ketzos Hashulchan 29:12

28. See Igros Moshe OC 1:45