**S.A.L.T. – PARASHAT MIKETZ**

**By Rav David Silverberg**

Motzaei Shabbat

Parashat Miketz begins with the story of Pharaoh’s peculiar dreams of seven lean cows devouring seven large cows, and of seven lean sheaves devouring seven large sheaves. These dreams were interpreted by Yosef as the prophetic foreshadowing of seven years of agricultural surplus that will be followed – and “devoured” – by seven years of devastating drought.

One of the subtle elements of Pharaoh’s dream, which often goes unnoticed, is that the cows seen by Pharaoh all rose from the river (“*min ha-ye’or olot sheva parot…sheva parot acheirot olot…min ha-ye’or*” – 41:2-3). Pharaoh did not only see the strange phenomenon of cows devouring one another, but also the strange phenomenon of cows rising from the water.

A seemingly esoteric insight into this aspect of Pharaoh’s dream is offered by the *Yismach Moshe* (Rav Moshe Teitelbaum of Ihel). He references the Gemara’s comment in Masekhet Avoda Zara (39a) that the status of a sea creature vis-à-vis human consumption is the opposite of the status of its corresponding land animal. For example, the Gemara states, sea creatures resembling donkeys are permissible for consumption, whereas actual donkeys, of course, are forbidden. Conversely, sea creatures resembling oxen are forbidden, whereas the meat of oxen themselves is permissible. The *Yismach Moshe* thus explains that Pharaoh, a wicked king who ruled over a wicked kingdom, was not worthy of seeing a vision of permissible animals, and so he was shown cows from the sea – creatures which are forbidden.

This concept is also presented by Rav Yehonatan Eibshitz, in his *Tiferet Yehonatan*, where he adds that this explains why Pharaoh saw cows preying on other cows. One of the characteristics of kosher animals – such as cows – is that they are herbivorous, and do not prey on other animals. The cows in Pharaoh’s dream, however, were actually creatures resembling cows that emerged from the river, and they were thus not kosher, and were creatures that preyed on one another.

What might be the significance of this aspect of Pharaoh’s dream – that the cows were “non-kosher” creatures rising from the river?

The notion being expressed, perhaps, is that Egypt represented the very opposite of the values and beliefs of Yosef and his family. That which our tradition considers “kosher” was loathed in ancient Egypt, and, conversely, that which our tradition abhors was cherished. We believe in the values of humility, subservience to God, self-restraint, kindness and generosity, whereas Pharaoh’s culture was characterized by lust for wealth, promiscuity, cruelty, and the belief in the right of the powerful to oppress the weak. The *Yismach Moshe*’s insight into the cows rising from the river perhaps points to the fact that Pharaoh’s sense of “kosher” and “non-kosher” was the diametric opposite of Yosef’s sense of right and wrong. And so immediately at the outset of the story of Pharaoh’s encounter with Yosef – which, in essence, begins the story of *Benei Yisrael*’s sojourn in Egypt – we are told that Pharaoh’s “cows” come from the “river,” that his kingdom’s value system was the exact opposite of our tradition’s value system.

If so, then this aspect of Pharaoh’s dream underscores the great challenge faced by *Benei Yisrael* during their period of exile in Egypt, beyond the pain and degradation of bondage. They needed to struggle to maintain not only their ethnic identity, but also their values, beliefs and traditions, while being ruled and enslaved by a society which championed the precise opposite values. In the future, too, *Am Yisrael* was destined to have to continually struggle to exist as a minority counterculture, swimming against the tide and maintaining beliefs and ideals that were rejected and scorned by the general society. Our ancestors’ success in preserving their identity and values in exile has served as a source of inspiration and encouragement for generations of Jews throughout the ages, who stubbornly adhered to Torah values even while living among people who championed diametrically opposite values.

Sunday

Parashat Miketz tells of Yosef’s brothers journeying to Egypt to purchase grain, whereupon they found themselves standing before Yosef, the brother whom they had sold as a slave, and who was now the Egyptian vizier. The brothers did not recognize Yosef, and he falsely accused them of coming to Egypt as spies, with the intent of seeing “*ervat ha-aretz*” (42:9). The word “*erva*” normally refers to parts of the body which are covered, and is used here, according to Ibn Ezra, in reference to state secrets and the like, which are meant to remain concealed. According to Rashi and the Rashbam, the word “*erva*” in this context actually means “openings,” or “revealed spaces,” referring to the breaches in the walls or other vulnerabilities which Yosef accused his brothers of having come to find.

The Midrash (*Bereishit Rabba* 91:6), however, offers a different interpretation, based on the sexual connotation of the word “*erva*.” According to the Midrash, the brothers came to Egypt not only to purchase grain, but also to look for Yosef. Knowing the promiscuous nature of Egyptian society, and aware of Yosef’s good looks, the brothers considered the possibility that Yosef spent his days in the Egyptian brothels. And so upon arriving in Egypt, the brothers visited the “*shuk shel zonot*” (“prostitutes’ market”) in search of Yosef, where they figured he might be. When they eventually came before Yosef, the Midrash relates, Yosef pointed to the fact that they were seen in the “*shuk shel zonot*” as evidence of the fact that they had not come to Egypt to buy food.

It is hard to overlook the irony in the brothers’ supposition that Yosef had become entrenched in the promiscuous culture of ancient Egypt and spent his time with prostitutes. Of course, as we know, the precise opposite was true. As a slave in Potifar’s home, Yosef was tempted repeatedly by Potifar’s wife, and he resisted. Not only did Yosef never consider visiting Egyptian brothels, but he even refused to commit an illicit sexual act when given the opportunity and when he was lured by a temptress. The brothers’ image of Yosef’s character in Egypt was the precise opposite of his true character.

As such, this Midrashic passage perhaps expresses the cause of the conflict between Yosef and his brothers, which led to the great tragedy of their selling him as a slave. Namely, the brothers misunderstood Yosef. They saw Yosef tattling on him to Yaakov, they saw the preferential treatment Yosef received from Yaakov, they heard about Yosef’s dreams of leadership, and they reached the conclusion that Yosef posed a grave threat to the family. Just as they mistakenly assumed that he visited brothels in Egypt, when in truth he heroically resisted sexual temptation, likewise, they mistakenly assumed that he intended to destroy the family, when in truth all he wanted was to help and care for the family.

This aspect of the story of Yosef and his brothers is likely indicated by the Torah’s account of the brothers’ plans to kill him when he approached them in Dotan: “**They saw him from afar, and before he came near them**, they plotted against him, to kill him” (37:18). The tragedy of *mekhirat Yosef* occurred because the brothers saw Yosef only from a distance. The brothers’ hatred was fueled by their suspicions, which were themselves fueled by the distance between them and Yosef, by their inability “to speak with him in peace” (37:4). It was because they assumed to know who he was and what he was thinking, when in fact they did not, that they decided upon the drastic measure of driving him from the family. (We might also add that this may have been Yosef’s intent in falsely accusing his brothers of spying – to show them that their hostility towards him was the product of their incorrect assumptions about his character and his motives.)

Very often, the tension and friction that exists between individuals and between groups is the product of incorrect assumptions about one another, which result from a lack of knowledge about one another. Sometimes, we, like Yosef’s brothers, misinterpret other people’s character and motives, and paint in our minds a falsely threatening picture of who they are and what they want. This painful story teaches us to avoid reaching conclusions about other people, that we should pause before casting accusations, and realize that there is so much about other people that we do not know, and that we should therefore reserve judgment and avoid definitive assessments about our fellow Jews.

Monday

Rav Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, in his *Me’or Einayim*, asserted that the celebration of Chanukah was prophetically foreseen by two righteous figures in Sefer Bereishit – Avraham, and Yosef. As Avraham made his way with Yitzchak to Mount Moriah to fulfill God’s command to sacrifice his son, he told his attendants to wait for him and Yitzchak while he and Yitzchak proceed further – “*neilkha ad ko*” (Bereishit 22:5). The word “*ko*,” the *Me’or Einayim* notes, is spelled with the two letters “*kof*” and “*hei*,” which numerically equal 25, and this word thus alludes to the victory of the *Chashmonaim* on the 25th of Kislev. And Yosef, as we read in Parashat Miketz, gave a special wish to Binyamin when he was brought to Egypt, “*Elokim yochnekha beni*” – “God shall grant you favor, my son” (43:29). The final three letters of the word “*yochnekha*” are *ch.n.kh* – the root of the word “Chanukah.”

What connection might there be between Chanukah and these two contexts – the story of *akeidat Yitzchak*, and the story of Yosef and Binyamin’s reunion in Egypt – that may have prompted the *Me’or Einyaim* to find an allusion to Chanukah in these Biblical narratives?

With regard to *akeidat Yitzchak*, the answer likely lies in the notion of sacrifice. Just as Avraham was prepared to sacrifice his beloved son in fulfillment of God’s command, so did the *Chashmonaim* display unbridled loyalty and obedience to Torah in the face of fierce and relentless oppression. They courageously set out to risk their lives to defend their faith and tradition which came under brutal assault, perhaps drawing inspiration from Avraham’s boundless devotion to God displayed at *akeidat Yitzchak*.

How might we explain the *Me’or Einayim*’s second allusion – Yosef’s blessing to Binyamin upon the latter’s arrival in Egypt?

Yosef’s special affection for Binyamin stemmed not only from his being Yosef’s only full brother, with the same father and mother, but also from Binyamin’s being the only brother who, as tradition teaches, did not participate in *mekhirat Yosef*, the sale of Yosef as a slave. Binyamin, therefore, perhaps represents the dissenting minority, the individual or group of individuals who refuses to be led astray by the majority. He serves as the symbol for those heroic figures who have the courage to swim against their tide, who listen to their conscience instead of their peers, and who stay to the side when the others act wrongly. And thus the *Me’or Einayim* pointed to Binyamin as an early symbol of the struggle waged by the *Chashmonaim*, who resisted the wave of Hellenism that swept the Jewish Nation at the time, and heroically upheld Jewish belief and practice. Like Binyamin, they were the small “jug” that remained “pure” when the rest was “defiled.” The teach us that we can and must remain true to our principles even when they are unpopular, and muster the strength, courage and confidence to do the right thing even when the majority of the people around us aren’t.

Tuesday

The Midrash, in a famous passage (*Bereishit Rabba* 2:4), relates that one of the oppressive measures imposed by the Greeks upon the Jews was requiring them to engrave upon the horns of their oxen the pronouncement that “you have no share in the God of Israel” (“*ein lakhem cheilek b-Eilokei Yisrael*”). Many different explanations have been offered to explain the meaning of this decree, and the deeper insight expressed here by the Midrash into the nature of the Jews’ struggle against Greek persecution.

Rav Avraham of Slonim, in *Beit Avraham*, suggests focusing on the word “*lakhem*” (“you”) in this pronouncement. In his view, the Greeks’ message to the Jews was that they were not worthy of a relationship with the Creator they sought to serve. They wanted the Jews to see themselves as too lowly, too ordinary, to aspire to the lofty, sublime goals which Torah tradition sets for us. We might add that this is why the Midrash speaks of this decree as focused on the ox – the symbol of agriculture. The Greeks’ campaign, as understood by the *Beit Avraham*, was aimed at making the Jews feel too “human” to build any kind of connection with a Supreme Being. Living ordinary, human lives, tending to their bodily and material needs, they were to find it impossible to live lives of spirituality and sanctity. The Greeks insisted that “*ein lakhem cheilek b-Elokei Yisrael*’ – the Jews were simply too “normal” to connect to God.

Many writers raised the question of why the *Chashmonaim* felt it so important to kindle the *menorah* with pure olive oil after their triumph over the Greeks. Halakhic measures such as “*tum’a hutra be-tzibur*” were likely applicable under the circumstances, and could have allowed the *Chashmonaim* to use oil that had been contaminated. One possibility is that the *Chashmonaim* specifically wanted to show what can be accomplished even in a state of widespread “impurity.” The lone jug of pure of oil which they discovered perhaps symbolized, in their minds, the potential for sanctity under any circumstances. Even when we might feel inadequate, when we feel “impure” and “unholy” as a result of our failings, our faults, or the various forms of “oxen” – mundane activities – to which we devote so much of our time, we can and must work to find the small “jug” of purity, the spark of holiness, within ourselves. And, like the small jug of oil in the *Beit Ha-mikdash*, that small spark is capable of illuminating far more than we would have expected.

In describing the Greeks’ decree to pronounce, “you have no share in the God of Israel,” the Midrash comments that through this decree, the Greeks “darkened the eyes of Israel.” They sought to make the Jews see their world as “dark,” bereft of spiritual meaning and value, to feel incapable of infusing their lives with spiritual significance. Appropriately, Chanukah is celebrated during the darkest time of the year – near the time of the winter solstice, and at the very end of the month of Kisleiv, when the moon is at its smallest point – and its celebration includes the kindling of lights. The candles express our belief that life is never completely “dark,” that under all circumstances, we are capable of kindling the light of spirituality. No matter how many hours a day we find ourselves with the “ox” – struggling to meet our physical and material needs, and no matter how much “darkness” we might have brought upon ourselves through our misdeeds, we are nevertheless capable and worthy of spiritual “illumination.” Our world is never too “dark” for a connection with God, and no matter how “defiled” we might feel we’ve become, we will always find a “jug” of purity with which we can overcome the darkness and fill our lives with spiritual meaning and sanctity.

Wednesday

In the *Al Ha-nissim* section which we add to the text of *Shemona Esrei* and *birkat ha-mazon* during Chanukah, we thank and give praise to God for granting the *Chashmonaim* a miraculous victory over the Selucid Greeks, and we describe how He “delivered the mighty in the hands of the weak, the many in the hands of the few, the impure in the hands of the pure, the wicked in the hands of the righteous, and plotters of evil in the hands of those engrossed in Your Torah.”

Already the *Beit Yosef* (O.C. 682) noted that the final clause in this passage – “plotters of evil in the hands of those engrossed in Your Torah” – does not appear to fit the pattern that otherwise runs throughout this segment. Until this final clause, we list pairs of direct opposites: powerful/weak, many/few, impure/pure, and evil/righteous. In this final clause, however, we speak of “*zeidim*” – those who intentionally sow evil – being defeated by “*oskei Toratekha*” – those who engage in Torah study. How, the *Beit Yosef* asks, does the term “*zeidim*” represent the opposite of “*oskei Toratekha*,” just as, for example, the term “*temei’im*” (“the impure”) represents the diametric opposite of “*tehorim*” (“the pure”)?

The *Beit Yosef* offers a cryptic answer, suggesting that this final clause is based upon King David’s proclamation in Sefer Tehillim (119:51), “*Zeidim helitzuni ad meod, mi-Toratekha lo natiti*.” King David here professes that although the “*zeidim*” – evil people – mocked and ridiculed him for his devotion to God’s law, nevertheless, “I did not turn away from Your Torah” – he remained unwaveringly loyal. The phrase in *Al Ha-nissim*, “*zeidim be-yad oskei Toratekha*” is structured based on this verse, with the “*zeidim*” presented as the adversaries of those committed to Torah.

Still, however, we might wonder how these two groups – “*zeidim*” and “*oskei Toratekha*” – represent polar opposites, like the previously mentioned pairs in *Al Ha-nissim*.

The answer, perhaps, is that the term “*zeidim*,” as implied in this verse in Tehillim, refers specifically to cynics who ridicule the Torah. As opposed to the more generic term “*resha’im*,” which is used in reference to generally wicked people, the term “*zeidim*” appears to refer to those who engage in, as King David describes, “*helitzuni ad me’od*” – the relentlessly taunting of those who commit themselves to Torah study and observance. And thus, indeed, the term “*zeidim*” represents the opposite of “*oskei Toratekha*.” Rav Soloveitchik explained that when we recite the *berakha* each morning on the command “*la-asok be-divrei Torah*” (“to engage in words of Torah”), this refers to something far more than merely the intellectual exercise of Torah study. The term “*eisek*,” the Rav asserted, refers to emotional involvement and passion. He cited as a prooftext the term “*hit’asku*” used in reference to the fierce struggle between Yitzchak and the *Pelishtim* over a well of precious water which Yitzchak’s shepherds discovered during a period of drought (Bereishit 26:20). This verb denotes intensive engagement, a goal which a person pursues with fierce emotion, passion and fervor. If so, then indeed, the terms “*zeidim*” and “*oskei Toratekha*” are diametric opposites of one another. The first speaks of those who reject the value and significance of Torah, who find it worthless and consider it a waste of time, whereas the second speaks of those for whom Torah is their passion, their life’s mission, their highest priority. Passionate engagement is truly the diametric opposite of cynicism and scorn. And on Chanukah, we celebrate the miraculous triumph of the *Chashmonaim*’s passion over the cynicism of the Greeks and their Jewish supporters, and we commit ourselves to maintaining our own passionate commitment to Torah learning and observance even when this commitment is subject to the cynical derision of the “*zeidim*.”

Thursday

The *Beit Yosef* (O.C. 670) famously raises the question of why Chanukah was instituted as an eight-day celebration, given that the first night that the *menorah* burned in the *Beit Ha-mikdash* was not miraculous. After all, the Gemara (Shabbat 21b) relates that the pure oil discovered by the *Chashmonaim* sufficed to sustain the candles for one night, and thus the miracle occurred for only seven days, not eight.

This question was already posed by the *Tosafot Ha-Rosh* (Masekhet Shabbat), who, interestingly enough, gave the same three famous answers proposed by the *Beit Yosef*. The first possibility suggested is that the *kohanim* in the *Beit Ha-mikdash* realized that it would take eight days before new oil could be produced and shipped to Jerusalem, and so from the outset they divided the small supply of pure oil into eight portions. They lit one portion each night, and thus even on the first night, a miracle occurred, as one-eighth of the amount of oil normally needed to kindle the *menorah* sufficed for the entire night.

Already the *Peri Chadash* (671) questioned this theory, noting the famous principle of “*ein somkhin al ha-neis*” – that we do not rely on miracles, neither in general, nor in our performance of *mitzvot*. Seemingly, the *Peri Chadash* asserts, it would have been improper for the *kohanim* to light the *menorah* with only one-eighth the amount of oil needed to fulfill the *mitzvah*, hoping that it would miraculously sustain the flames for the entire night. As we are expected to fulfill *mitzvot* within the constraints of the natural order, it would seem that the *Chashmonaim* should have used the available oil for the first night to at least satisfy that night’s requirement.

[Rav Asher Weiss](http://www.torahbase.org/%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%A9%D7%AA-%D7%95%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%91-%D7%91%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%91%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%95%D7%A1%D7%A3-%D7%A2%D7%9C-%D7%A9%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%9E/) explores several possible approaches to answer this question. One possibility, he writes, is that the *kohanim* initially supplied one-eighth the normal amount of oil hoping for a miracle, but stood nearby ready to add more oil to the oil lamps if they saw that the supply was dwindling. If so, then they hoped for – but did not rely upon – a miracle, devising a strategy which would enable them to fulfill the *mitzva* all eight nights if a miracle occurred, while at least fulfilling the *mitzva* the first night if no miracle occurred.

However, as Rav Weiss notes, this theory works off the assumption that kindling the *menorah* in the *Beit Ha-mikdash* in this fashion is valid – meaning, that the required amount of oil did not need to be supplied at the outset, when the candles were lit. When it comes to Chanukah candles, for example, *Halakha* demands that already at the time of lighting, the candles must be capable of burning for the minimum required duration. As such, when the candles are lit, there must be enough oil to sustain the candles for the required period of time (*Shulchan Arukh*, O.C. 675:2). The question thus becomes whether this requirement applied also to the kindling of the *menorah* in the *Beit Ha-mikdash*.

Rav Weiss writes that this question would appear to hinge on the different interpretations of the Gemara’s discussion in Masekhet Menachot (89a) concerning the method by which the *kohanim* initially determined how much oil to place in the *menorah*’s lamps. According to one view cited by the Gemara, when the *menorah* was first used for lighting, the *kohanim* placed in the lamps before lighting an amount a *revi’it* of oil, and if this did not suffice, they would add more oil. In order not to risk wasting precious olive oil, they began with this small amount, and then added more if they saw that a *revi’it* did not suffice. (According to the other view in the Gemara, the opposite was done – the *kohanim* began with a larger amount, and then reduced the amount if they saw that the initial amount was more than necessary.) Rashi explains this to mean that if they saw during the night that the oil supply was being depleted, the *kohanim* added more oil to ensure the candles would burn throughout the night. If so, then indeed, it would have been acceptable for the *Chashmonaim* to initially kindle the *menorah* on the first night with just one-eighth the regular amount of oil, as the Rosh and *Beit Yosef* explain, and then add more oil later if they saw this was necessary.

However, in a different version of Rashi’s commentary to Masekhet Menachot (called “*Rashi ketav yad*,” which appears on the page in the standard editions of Masekhet Menachot), this comment is explained to mean that more oil was placed in the lamps the next night, if necessary. In other words, the *kohanim* would not add oil during the first night if they saw that a *revi’it* did not suffice, but would rather learn from this failed “experiment” that a higher amount of oil was needed. This view, apparently, felt that it would not have helped to add oil during the night, since the *menorah* needed to be lit with the required amount of oil already in place.

It would thus seem that the theory proposed by the *Tosafot Ha-Rosh* and the *Beit Yosef* would hinge on these different opinions as to whether the full supply of oil needed to be in place at the time of lighting the *menorah*.

Friday

Yesterday, we noted the theory advanced by the *Tosafot Ha-Rosh* (Shabbat 21b) and, far more famously, by the *Beit Yosef* (O.C. 670), that after the *Chashmonaim* discovered the small jug of pure oil, they divided it into eight equal portions. Realizing it would take eight days for new pure oil would arrive, they decided to fill the lamps of the *menorah* with one-eighth the normal amount, rather than using the entire jug to kindle the *menorah* for one night, and then be left without any oil for the next seven nights. As we discussed, later writers raised the question of why, according to this theory, the *Chashmonaim* added less oil than was required hoping that it would miraculously sustain the candles throughout the night, seemingly in violation of the famous rule of “*ein somekhin al ha-neis*” – that we are to conduct ourselves within the constraints of the natural order, and not anticipate God’s miraculous intervention.

One answer is given by Rav Yosef Zecharya Stern of Shavel, in his *Zeikher Yehosef* (vol. 1, O.C. 120), where he explains this theory on the basis of the famous halakhic principle of *chatzi shiur*. This principle is discussed by the Gemara in Masekhet Yoma (74a), which states that although one is liable to punishment for eating forbidden food only if he eats a certain quantity, it is nevertheless forbidden to eat any quantity. Most prohibitions involving eating are punishable only if one eats a *ke-zayit*, but the Gemara establishes that eating even smaller amounts is prohibited. According to the accepted position, that of Rabbi Yohanan, the prohibition of *chatzi shiur* applies on the level of Torah law, and not merely by force of Rabbinic enactment. Meaning, the Torah itself forbids transgressing its prohibitions in any quantity, even in smaller quantities than those which are needed for the court to punish the violator.

Several *Acharonim* addressed the question of whether the concept of *chatzi shiur* applies even in regard to the performance of *mitzvot*. Many *mitzvot* require a certain quantity or duration, just as many prohibitions involve certain amounts. If a person is able to perform only “half a *mitzva*,” does he receive credit for a partial *mitzva*, or is there no value at all to such an act? The classic example given is the case of a person who has access to only a small amount of *matza* on the night of Pesach, smaller than the minimum amount one is required to eat to fulfill the *mitzva* of eating *matza* on this night. Is it worthwhile for the individual to eat the small amount, in order to fulfill the “*chatzi shiur*” of the *mitzva*, or is such an act halakhically meaningless, given that the person does not eat the minimum required quantity?

Rav Stern infers from the *Beit Yosef*’s theory concerning the *Chashmonaim*’s kindling of the *menorah* that indeed, the concept of *chatzi shiur* is relevant even in regard to the performance of *mitzvot*. According to the *Beit Yosef*, he explains, the *Chashmonaim* did not anticipate the oil’s miraculously sustaining the candles throughout the night, but rather chose to achieve “*chatzi shiur*” – a partial fulfillment of the *mitzva* – rather than perform the *mitzva* fully one night, and then not at all for the next seven nights. This was a calculated halakhic decision, Rav Stern suggests, and not the expectation of a miracle.

Rav Asher Weiss, in his [discussion of this subject](http://www.torahbase.org/%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%A9%D7%AA-%D7%95%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%91-%D7%91%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%91%D7%99%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%95%D7%A1%D7%A3-%D7%A2%D7%9C-%D7%A9%D7%9E%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%9E/), questions Rav Stern’s line of reasoning. Even assuming that the notion of *chatzi shiur* applies to *mitzva* performance, Rav Weiss writes, it is questionable whether one should compromise a complete fulfilment of a *mitzva* for the sake of multiple opportunities for partial fulfillment. Rav Weiss contends that even if there was value in kindling the *menorah* for one-eighth the required duration, it would have been preferable to kindle the *menorah* normally the first night and fulfill the *mitzva* in its entirety, and then not light at all the next seven nights. The value of a “*chatzi shiur*” performance of a *mitzva* is, without question, far inferior to a complete performance, and thus a complete performance should not be sacrificed even for the sake of multiple opportunities for performing a “*chatzi shiur*.”

Regardless, Rav Weiss notes that in his view, the concept of *chatzi shiur* is limited to the specific context in which it is discussed – the violation of prohibitions. The Gemara infers the principle of *chatzi shiur* from a nuance in a verse in the Torah (“***kol*** *cheilev*” – Vayikra 7:23) referring to the consumption of prohibited foods. As such, this rule cannot be applied beyond this context, and deemed relevant even with regard to the performance of *mitzvot*. (However, the Gemara also explains the rule of *chatzi shiur* as based upon the rationale of “*chazi le-itzterufei*” – that since a partial quantity can potentially combine with another partial quantity to complete the required amount, even partial amounts are deemed significant. One could argue that if this is the basis of the principle of *chatzi shiur*, then it is relevant even to *mitzvot*, as for all purposes we regard partial amounts as halakhically significant.)

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