

# Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts  
from  
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*Miketz- Chanuka*





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## Torah Wellsprings - Mikeitz

**Y**osef deciphered Pharaoh's dreams: there will be seven prosperous years followed by seven years of famine.

Then Yosef added, "Pharaoh should appoint an understanding and intelligent man over Mitzrayim," (אִישׁ נְבוֹן וְחָכָם) to be in charge of gathering the produce of the seven prosperous years for the subsequent seven years of famine...<sup>1</sup>

Reb Elyah Lopian *zt'l* asks, why was it necessary to appoint an אִישׁ נְבוֹן וְחָכָם, "an understanding and intelligent man"? It seems that any good manager could do the job. One doesn't need to be a genius to store grains.

He answers that in order to do the job correctly one has to be very wise to perceive the devastation of the upcoming hunger.

To explain this, we'll draw an example from those who suffered hunger in their youth (such as Holocaust survivors, or those who lived during the famine in Eretz Yisrael, etc.). They remember those days when there wasn't enough food to eat, when every

morsel was precious. Until today, it is hard for them to throw away food or to watch others discarding food. As far as they are concerned, every drop of food is worth saving.

Yosef advised Pharaoh to find someone, an אִישׁ נְבוֹן וְחָכָם, an understanding and intelligent person to manage the preservation of the crops, because only such a person will value the importance of each grain. Others won't understand the importance of saving every drop of food, but the wise and the understanding person will be cautious.

Reb Eliyahu Lopian concludes: Almost every year, we read *parashas Mikeitz* on Chanukah. We study how Mitzrayim carefully stored the produce from the prosperous years for the upcoming famine, saving every drop they could. This is to remind us that on Chanukah, when there is an abundance of spirituality, we should pack our bags with holiness, so the spiritual influence of Chanukah will remain with us for the rest of the year. Every morsel of spirituality that's available now is precious.

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1. The Meshech Chachmah asks, why did Yosef offer counsel (that Pharaoh should appoint someone to gather and store the crops)? Pharaoh asked Yosef to decipher his dreams; he didn't ask him for advice. It is disrespectful to offer unsolicited advice to a king.

The Meshech Chachmah answers that his advice was part of the dream's interpretation. It is written, וְהָנָה שִׁבְעַת אַחֲרוֹת עֹלוֹת מִן הַיָּאֵר רַעוֹת מְרֹאָה וְדַקּוֹת בָּשָׂר וְהַתְּעַמְדָּנָה אֵצֶל הַפְּרוֹת עַל שַׁפְתֵּי הַיָּאֵר, "Seven other cows were coming out of the Nile; bad in appearance and thin, and they stood next to [the robust] cows on the river bank" (41:3). Each part of Pharaoh's dream meant something. What is the significance of the thin cows standing next to the robust ones? Yosef understood that the thin cows standing next to the robust ones hints that the seven plentiful years should support the seven years of hunger. Yosef told this counsel to Pharaoh, because it was part of the deciphering of Pharaoh's dream.

This lesson is also written in *Sfas Emes*<sup>2</sup> (*Mikeitz*, 5631). He writes, "This *parashah* teaches us that on the good days, the days when holiness is revealed, we should acquire the inspiration and preserve it for the bad days, when the holiness is concealed... Because before every test there is a moment of light that teaches you how to act afterwards."

The Gemara says, "On Chanukah...one mustn't give *hespedim* (eulogies) and one mustn't fast..." (*Shabbos* 21).

it for Torah, *tefillah*, and so on, so that after Chanukah passes, one shouldn't have to give a *hesped*, eulogy, over a lost

opportunity. We shouldn't have to look back, mourn and bemoan a great opportunity that passed us by.

We say (this is hinted at in *Moaz Tzur*, in the words, *בני בינה ימי שמונה קבעו*, "the wise men established the eight days..." The wise men take advantage of these special days, and they are *קבעו*, establish and acquire them, so it will remain with them, throughout the year.<sup>3</sup>

### Taking Advantage of the Opportunity

When one makes a *siyum* he says, *הדרן עלך*, *מסכת... והדרך עלן*, "we will return to you

2. Once, Reb Eliyahu Lopian *zt'l* gave the *Sfas Emes zt'l* a *kvittel*. The *Sfas Emes* read the *kvittel* and asked, "A *yungerman* who saw Eliyahu HaNavi, should come to me with a *kvittel*?"

Reb Eliyahu Lopian responded, "If there is a Rebbe who knows who saw Eliyahu HaNavi, it is definitely proper to go to him..."

It is told that Reb Eliyahu Lopian's wife was ill and the doctors gave up on her life. The family stood around her, crying. A stranger knocked at their door and asked, "Why is there so much crying here?"

They told him about the ill woman, and the doctors' prognosis.

"Don't worry," the man told them. "She will be well." He told them where to go, and which herb to pick. "Cook it, and let her drink the water. It will heal her."

They followed the stranger's counsel, and she was cured. This is at least one of the times Reb Elyah Lopian met with Eliyahu HaNavi.

3. The final day of Chanukah is called Zos Chanukah, "This is Chanukah." The Vayaged Yaakov of Pupa *zy'a* explains that when the final day of Chanukah comes around, people often feel disappointed, because they wish they would have taken better advantage of the days of Chanukah. The final day is called Zos Chanukah ("This is Chanukah!") to tell people, "Don't be upset. Even on the final day, you can accomplish much. This is Chanukah; Chanukah is still here."

Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin *zy'a* taught: The *tefillos* of a simple person on Zos Chanukah, is comparable to the *tefillah* of a *tzaddik hador* (the greatest *tzaddik* of the generation) when he prays on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The Machzor Vitri says that Chanukah is from the word *chaninah*. *Chaninah* is when Hashem grants us good even when we don't deserve it. The holy *sefarim* list the many *yeshuous* one can attain on Chanukah, such as wealth, *refuah*, children, etc. These blessings are available for us throughout Chanukah, and especially on Zos Chanukah.

*masechta*...and you shall return to us..." We express our desire to review this *masechta*, and we request that the *masechta* should return to us, and remain with us.

One year, on Zos Chanukah, Rebbe Asher of Stolin *zt'l* suggested that we should say *הדרן עלך מסכת חנוכה*, the lights of Chanukah should remain with us throughout the entire year.

Reb Shmuel Minkes *zt'l* felt he needed *chizuk* in *avodas Hashem*, so he decided to travel to his Rebbe, the Baal HaTanya *zt'l*. He couldn't afford to hire a wagon and driver, so he went to the marketplace and sought a businessman who was anyway traveling to Liadi, where the Baal HaTanya lived. He found someone who would be traveling to deliver barrels of alcoholic drinks. He said that he doesn't have room in the passenger section of the wagon, but if Reb Shmuel wanted, he could sit among the barrels.

Reb Shmuel was happy to have found a solution, and rode with him.

That part of the wagon didn't have walls and ceiling, and it was cold. Reb Shmuel asked the businessman if he could open one of the barrels and drink a little vodka to warm up. The businessman agreed.

When Reb Shmuel got to the Baal HaTanya, he said *shalom aleichem*, and said that he was now returning home.

"Why did you come here, if you're planning to leave so soon?"

"I wanted *chizuk* in *avodas Hashem*, and I received my *chizuk* on the way here. I want to return home, and concentrate on the ideas

I acquired. When I need more inspiration, I'll return to the Rebbe to listen to his *divrei Torah*."

(The way of the chassidim was that they could hear just a small *vort* or idea from their Rebbe, and that would be sufficient for months. They worked on that concept until they acquired it, and then they would return to their Rebbe to learn another concept. Reb Shmuel said that he had already received his missive in *avodas Hashem*; he didn't need more inspiration for now.)

The Baal HaTanya asked him, "Which inspiration did you acquire?"

Reb Shmuel said, "I was sitting among barrels of alcohol, but they weren't giving me any warmth. When I took some of that alcohol within me, I warmed up. I learned from this that it isn't sufficient to be around chassidic ideas, and to hear chassidic thoughts. To become warm, these concepts have to become part of you. I must allow these ideas to penetrate me, and then it will change me."

In reference to Chanukah, the holiday is saturated with an extremely great light, but the light won't affect us if it remains outside of us. We must bring this great light within us, and only then will the warmth and the enthusiasm last throughout the year.

### Shabbos Chanukah

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 21:) teaches that the Shabbos candles must be lit with good wicks, because the flame that comes out of poor wicks may not burn well, and one might come to fix the flame on Shabbos. Chanukah

is different, since we may use poor quality wicks for the Chanukah lamps. The words of the Gemara are, פתילות ושמנים שאין מדליקין בהן בחנוכה, "Wicks and oils that one may not use on Shabbos, one may use them for lighting on Chanukah."

The Meor Einayim explains that this Gemara is hinting to the specialness of Shabbos Chanukah. There are people who don't experience the holiness of Shabbos throughout the year because the light of Shabbos is so great, and they are so low. But on Chanukah, Hashem goes down to the level of the yid and fills him with holiness, so he can experience the light of Shabbos.

The Meor Einayim writes, "Hashem gave Shabbos, the good present that was in Hashem's treasury, to the Jewish nation, to draw the person close to his Creator. When one keeps Shabbos all his sins are forgiven... But it is hard for a person to tap in to the holiness of Shabbos, because the holiness of Shabbos is extremely exalted — it's Hashem's name. How can a person ascend to this high, exalted place? On Chanukah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, *keviyachol*, goes down lower than ten *tefachim* [to the person's level] to draw him up. This is the explanation of, פתילות ... שאין מדליקין בשבת מדליקין בהן בחנוכה, 'wicks that don't light on Shabbos, one may light them on Chanukah.' For a lamp, one puts in the wick, fills it with oil, and then lights it. So it is with a person.

He is the wick, the oil is the wisdom that Hashem puts in him, and Hashem lights him, so his deeds and service shine.

The Gemara says, פתילות, the wicks, which are people, שאין מדליקין בשבת, who don't become illuminated on Shabbos, מדליקין בהן בחנוכה, can become illuminated on Chanukah. Hashem, Himself, *keviyachol*, lowers Himself down to the person and has the light catch onto him, so he can return to Hashem and serve Him with great perception. This happens each year when the time comes to light the Chanukah menorah..."

We should therefore invest in making Shabbos Chanukah special — both in the foods and zemiros of Shabbos, and in one's service of Torah and *tefillah*. It is a special opportunity, and if one merits it, he can continue to experience the light of Shabbos after Shabbos Chanukah too.

Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin *zy'a* would say in the name of his father, Rebbe Shalom Shachnah of Pravitch *zy'a* that the Shabbosim until Chanukah are alluded to in the words, "The earth was תהו ובהו, empty and void." Even the Shabbosim lack their brilliance. But when Chanukah comes, it states, ויאמר אלקים יהי אור, "Hashem said, there should be light," as from Chanukah on the light of Shabbos becomes revealed, and it is easier for people to tap into the holy light of Shabbos.<sup>4</sup>

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4. Rebbe Shalom Shachna of Pravitch would say: if someone desires a *lechtiger* Shabbos (bright, joyous Shabbos) he should speak about him (about Reb Shalom Shachna of Pravitch) on Thursday night. Speaking about him is a *segulah* for a happy Shabbos. (He added, "If one doesn't have a

Indeed, אור is the twenty-fifth word of the Torah, as it hints to the light of Chanukah and the light of Shabbos that begins to shine, from Chanukah onwards.

There was a Stoliner chassid who came to be with Rebbe Asher of Stolin *zt'l* for Shabbos Chanukah. Rebbe Asher's son, the Beis Aharon of Stolin *zt'l*, was a child at the time, and he watched this chassid sleeping on a bench in the beis medresh, Shabbos afternoon. Every few minutes, this chassid woke up, and called out, "Ah! Shabbos! Shabbos!" or "Ah! Shabbos Chanukah!" or "Ah! Shabbos Rosh Chodesh!" The Beis Aharon was inspired by that, and he called his father to come look. When Rebbe Asher saw, he said, "He sleeps like a yid!"

To describe the light of Chanukah, the Sukelener Rebbe *zt'l* would compare it to someone who built a beautiful edifice, but he didn't yet connect the electricity. Everyone understands that without electricity, the edifice isn't finished. Similarly, at the beginning of the year (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Succos) we build a spiritual edifice, but the light is first put in on Chanukah. The light and joy of being a yid, the light of Shabbos, and the recognition that we are fortunate to keep the mitzvos, they all come into place on Chanukah.

Rebbe Hanoch of Alexander *zy'a* taught that Shabbos Chanukah is a time that is *mesugal* for increasing one's belief in Hashem. Every Shabbos is *mesugal* for belief in Hashem, as it is states, in reference to Shabbos, לדעת בי אני ה' מקדישכם, "to know that I am Hashem..." (*Shemos* 31:13). Also Chanukah is a time to recognize Hashem, because we are celebrating the miracles that Hashem performed. When both holidays come together on Shabbos Chanukah, it is a very good time for recognizing Hashem, and for increasing one's *emunah*.

### Chanukah: A Time for *Teshuvah*

In the *Al HaNissim* we discuss the miracles of the war, how a few Chashmona'im won the war against the mighty Greek army. We say, מסרת גבורים ביד חלשים רבים ביד מעטים, "You gave the mighty into the hands of the weak; the many into the hands of the few..." These words are understood. It was certainly a great miracle when the few Chashmona'im won the war against the great Greek army. However *Al HaNissim* continues to discuss more factors of the miracle. It states, במאים ביד טהורים רשעים ביד צדיקים וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך, "the impure fell into the hands of the pure, the *resha'im* fell into the hands of the tzaddikim, and sinners fell into the hands of those who study Torah."

The Berditchover Rav *zy'a* said that these phrases need explanation, for why is it

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*dvar Torah* or a story to tell about me, he should speak about our טיש און בענק, table and chairs." Because mentioning him, and even just how his furniture appeared, brings the *segulah* to have a happy and *leichtiger* Shabbos. Chasidim explained that when he said טיש און בענק, table and chairs, he was hinting that people should speak about his *tish*, his Shabbos meal, and how he would בענק, yearn for Hashem (because בענק means yearn in Yiddish).

considered miraculous that the impure (טמאים) fell into the hands of the pure (טהורים), or that the sinful fell into the hands of those who study Torah? Is it unnatural and miraculous when the righteous, the pure, or those who study Torah, win a war?

The Berditchover Rav answers that due to this war, a great wave of teshuvah began. Everyone saw how a handful of tzaddikim miraculously won a war against the mighty Greek army, and many non-religious yidden began to do *teshuvah*. They perceived that the Torah is true, and that Hashem helps those who are loyal to Him. *Al HaNissim* is discussing that wave of *teshuvah*: טמאים ביד טהורים means that the impure people did *teshuvah* and they became pure. רשעים ביד צדיקים, means that the *resha'im* became righteous. And זרים ביד עוסקי תורתך implies that the sinners began studying Torah.

Fifty years ago, a yid from Eretz Yisrael went to Australia. He didn't know anyone, and he didn't know where he could go for Shabbos. He decided to go to a fish store Friday morning, and if he sees someone buying a large fish, he would assume that he is probably a yid, and he would ask him if he could go to his home for Shabbos.

The planned worked. He approached a customer who was buying a large fish, and discovered that he was indeed a yid. He asked whether he can stay with him for Shabbos. "Definitely," the man replied, and joyously brought him to his home.

The yid from Eretz Yisrael never saw a house like that one before. It was enormous and beautifully designed. It was obvious

that his host was very wealthy. They spent a very pleasant Shabbos together, singing *zemiros* and speaking *divrei Torah*.

Shabbos afternoon, the guest spent some time looking at the china closet. Seeming totally out of place, he saw a broken oil bottle displayed on a silver tray.

On Motzei Shabbos, he thanked his host, and then he asked, "I noticed that you have a broken oil bottle in your china showcase.

I was wondering why it's there?"

The man replied, "Oh, that oil bottle is very precious to me. Because of that bottle I am where I am today. I'll tell you my story:

"I was orphaned as a child, and it became my responsibility to support my widowed mother. I tried my hand in business and *baruch Hashem*, succeeded. Together with my financial growth came my spiritual decline. The first thing that went was my yarmulke. Gradually I dropped all the mitzvos.

"One day, I saw a young child crying on the curb. Since I was an orphan, I have a soft spot for children who cry, and I asked the child what was bothering him. He said, 'My father gave me money to buy olive oil for Chanukah and he warned me to be careful not to break the bottle since he doesn't have money to buy another one. I was walking home with the bottle when a cat ran right in front of me. Startled, I began to run and I fell, and the bottle broke. How can I face my father without the bottle of olive oil'?"

"I immediately realized that I should be asking myself the very same question: After

my demise, I will go to heaven and meet with my father. How can I meet up with my father without olive oil, without the mitzvah of Chanukah *licht*? I saw my father light Chanukah *licht* each year. How could I stop?"

"I gave the child some money and said, 'Buy two bottles; one for your father and one for me,' and I took the broken bottle. That year, I lit Chanukah *licht*. After Chanukah, I began keeping Shabbos. Then I started wearing tefillin. And now I have a beautiful family, all of us following in the ways of my father."

This is an example of the power of *teshuvah* which is available for us on Chanukah.

### *Simchah*

The Yevanim enacted several laws against the Jewish nation. The Gemara (*Taanis* 28) states, "The Yevanim forbade donating wood for the *mizbeiach* and they prohibited bringing *bikurim* to Yerushalayim" (*Taanis* 28).

The Maharsha writes, "Why did the Yevanim forbid particularly these two mitzvos? It is because these mitzvos were performed with immense joy. Those who donated wood for the *mizbeiach* would make a celebration, and *bikurim* was also brought with great joy. As the Mishnah states, 'The

flute played before them...' The Yevanim didn't want the Jewish people to be happy..."<sup>5</sup>

They didn't mind if Yidden kept Torah and mitzvos without inspiration and without joy. But it bothered them to see Yidden rejoicing with the mitzvos.

The Yevanim were somewhat successful in their attempts to relinquish our joy. The Ba"ch (670) teaches that the Jewish people were lax with the *korbanos*, and therefore, the Yevanim were able to conquer the Beis HaMikdash. The Sheim MiShmuel (680) explains that it wasn't that the Yidden didn't bring the *korbanos* – they brought every one. The problem was that they offered the *korbanos* without joy. Therefore, the *korbanos* were taken away from them.

Yavan loved culture, and they wouldn't mind if Yidden go about keeping Torah and mitzvos as if it were nothing more than a culture. But the Jewish people know that Torah and mitzvos are Hashem's command, and when we keep them, we unite with Him. This truth infuses our performance of the mitzvos with joy, and that was something the Greeks didn't tolerate. They therefore strived to take away our joy in the mitzvos. When we rejoice with the mitzvos, we are overcoming Yavan's influence.<sup>6</sup>

5. David HaMelech said, ויעלני... מטיט היין, "Hashem saves me from the mud of Yavan..." (*Tehillim* 40:3). The Sfas Emes explains that there are four elements: fire, water, wind and earth. The *galus* of Yavan is called *tit hayavan* (the mud from Yavan) because mud is made from earth and water, but there's no fire here. This exemplifies the approach of Yavan, who desired to extinguish the inner flame and fire of the Jew.

6. The parents of Rebbe Meir Yechiel from Ostroftza *zy'a* were simple people. Once, the Ostroftza Rebbe was at a gathering together with several other rabbanim, and each one was saying something they learned from their father. Most of their fathers were great rabbanim, and they all had something

## Do the Best You Can

After the Yesod HaAvodah of Slonim *zy'a* was *niftar*, the chassidim were debating who should take over the leadership. In the end, the Yesod HaAvodah's grandson, Reb

Shmuel (the Divrei Shmuel *zy'a*) was chosen, because of the following incident:

The Divrei Shmuel was extremely dedicated to the mitzvah of Chanukah *lecht*. He was an expert in the halachos of Chanukah, and

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inspiring to say, some special lesson that they learned from their fathers. When it was Rebbe Meir Yechiel Ostroftza's turn to speak, he said, "My father was a baker. I learned from my father that fresh bread is better than old bread."

He meant to say that more important than who one's parents were, is who you are. People pride themselves for having this great-grandfather, and for being a descendent from this tzaddik. He told them that even more important is the individual himself.

Then, the Ostroftza Rebbe said, "My father also taught me that when one wants to bake bread, he should fill the oven with wood, and seal it hermetically, as even the slightest draft can affect the temperature of the oven. When it is very hot, one can put bread inside."

We understand from this, that if one desires to have good children, he must first be very warm himself. One first needs to heat up his own spiritual oven with joy and eagerness for the mitzvos, and then he can influence his children and others as well.

Someone once invited the Chernobler Magid *zy'a* to be the *sandak* at a bris.

"Are you making a *seudah* too?" the Chernobler Magid asked.

"No, just the bris *milah*. I can't afford a meal."

"I'll only come if there's a *seudah*."

"But what can I do? I can't afford it?"

"Tell your boss, whom you work by, to lend you the money. For the next few months, he'll pay you less until the debt is paid up."

The Chernobler Magid explained that it is very important to make a *seudah* for a *bris milah*, and the *yetzer hara* tries very hard to prevent it. He said, "It is known that the *yetzer hara's* name is ל"סמא, which is *roshei teivos* for לעשות אין מסכת אין , 'Don't make a meal for a *siyum*,' סעודת לעשות מצוה אין לעשות, 'don't make a meal for a mitzvah,' and סעודת מילה אין לעשות, 'don't make a *seudah* for a *milah*. The *yetzer hara* has already succeeded to get rid of the *seudah* for a *siyum*, but I won't let the *yetzer hara* succeed to annul the *seudah* for a *milah*..."

When the Bas Ayin repeated this discussion, he explained: Why it was so important for the Chernobler Magid that there be a meal at a bris?

When the Satan tells over the sins of the Jewish people, the good *malachim* tell the heavenly court that the Jewish people aren't guilty for their sins, since they don't want to sin. The proof that they don't want to sin is that they never make a *seudah* to celebrate an *aveirah*, but they do have festive meals when they perform mitzvos. (Even Chanukah, when there isn't an obligation to make *seudos*, Klal Yisrael find ways to celebrate and to make *seudos*, as discussed in *Shulchan Aruch* 670). The heavenly court accepts this claim, and the Jewish nation is saved. If Klal Yisrael will stop making a *seudah* for a *bris milah*, and for other mitzvos, the good *malachim* will lose their proof that the Jewish nation don't want to sin, and they won't have an answer for the Satan. That's why it was so important for the Chernobler Magid that the Jewish people should have *seudos* for a *bris milah*.

he kept this mitzvah with all his heart and soul.

Once, on Friday, Erev Shabbos Chanukah, the Divrei Shmuel prepared his menorah, and before lighting it, he went to his grandfather's home (the Yesod HaAvodah) to watch him light Chanukah *licht*. When the Divrei Shmuel returned to his apartment, he saw that someone had already lit the menorah that he prepared. The Divrei Shmuel calmly sought another menorah and some more olive oil, but all that he could find was one single candle made from animal fat (*cheilev*). Shabbos was fast approaching, so the Divrei Shmuel lit that one candle with joy.

He wanted to do the mitzvah in the best way, but this time instead of lighting with olive oil, he used a candle, and instead of lighting the candles according to the day of Chanukah, he only lit one candle. He was happy with what he could do.

After the Yesod HaAvodah was *niftar*, the elderly chassidim remembered this story and said, "For that alone, that he was happy with a mitzvah, although it wasn't performed in the most ideal manner, he deserves to be Rebbe."

An amazing story took place with the Divrei Shmuel's son, the Beis Avraham of Slonim *zy'a*. One year, on Friday afternoon, the Beis Avraham was ready to light the Chanukah menorah, when his son ran by and accidentally knocked over the menorah and the oil spilled. There wasn't enough time before Shabbos to prepare the menorah again. The Beis Avraham didn't become

angry. He stayed calm, and said with a smile, "The same Creator who commanded us to light, commanded us not to become angry."

Every year, the Tolner Rebbe *zy'a* (of Yerushalayim) would rejoice immensely in front of his Chanukah *licht*. One year, as he was dancing and rejoicing in front of his candles, his grandson ran by and knocked over his menorah. The Rebbe said, "My dear child, how grateful I am to you. Now I can keep the words of Chazal, *בביתא דאין זקוק לה*, that if the candles blow out before the half-hour passes, one isn't obligated to light them again.' How often do I have the opportunity to keep this Chazal?" Instead of being angry at his grandson for spilling the menorah, he rejoiced that he could carry out a statement from Chazal. (Afterwards, the Rebbe lit the candles again, as the Mishnah Berurah recommends.) At a time when others may become frustrated, the Rebbe found the good in the situation, and rejoiced with the mitzvah that he performed.

### Shema Yisrael

One of the translations of *חנוכה* is *חנו ב"ה*, the Yidden rested from the war on *ב"ה בסלו*. No other holiday is named for the date it occurred. Purim isn't called fourteenth because it happened on the 14th of Adar, and Pesach isn't named for the fifteenth of Nissan. Rather, the names of the *yamim tovim* express the miracle that occurred. (Purim from the *pur* [Haman's lot] that turned for our favor, and Pesach means jumping over, because Hashem skipped over every yiddishe home when He smote the

Egyptian first-born-sons.) So why is Chanukah different? Why is it named for the date it occurred?

The *Tzror HaMor* tells us that Chanukah is actually named for the miracle that happened. כ"ה, twenty-five, he teaches, are the number of letters that are in the first *passuk* of *kriyas Shema*, שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו, ה' אחד. Chanukah means, חנו, the Yidden rested, and were victorious, in the war, in the merit of כ"ה, their *emunah* in Hashem.

The *Sfas Emes* explains that Yavan thought everything is nature. As is alluded to in the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 69:3) טבעתי בין, that ין taught טבע, nature. They didn't believe in Hashem.

Yavan is therefore called חשך, darkness (see *Bereishis Rabba* 2:4) because when one believes in Hashem, and he knows that everything is *bashert*, and for the good, life is bright and good for him. But Yavan's

heretic philosophy of nature turns all difficult life situations dark and sour, without any means to be happy. We light the Chanukah *licht* which banishes the darkness and opens up our eyes to see how everything is run with Hashem's *hashgachah*.

A *mashal* is when people are watching a video, and someone isn't seeing well, so he turns on the light. People shout at him, "What did you do? Now we can't see the show."

He responds, "Yes, but now we can see everything else." The point is that before we light the Chanukah candles, we have a false impression of the world, we think the pictures shown are real, thinking that it is all nature. When the light of Chanukah shines, we don't see nature anymore, we see the truth that nature is only a picture and in reality the world is led by Hashem with *hashgachah pratis*.<sup>7</sup>

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7. Someone asked the Chazon Ish, "How does one know when *hishtadlus* is good and when it isn't?"

The Chazon Ish replied, "It is like a nail that you want to knock into the wall. You keep hammering the nail again and again, but when the nail becomes crooked, you throw it away. The same is with *hishtadlus*: when things become crooked, you know it's time to stop."

For example, if *hishtadlus* will cause him to miss davening with a minyan, or to answer cell phones in the middle of the *tefillah*, or to miss Torah *shiurim*, it means that *hishtadlus* has become crooked, and it isn't considered *hishtadlus* anymore. Likewise, if *hishtadlus* will lead him to shady attempts to earn *parnassah*, this means it is time to stop. That isn't called *hishtadlus*.

On Chanukah it is customary to play with a dreidel. There are several things that we can learn from a dreidel:

When one spins the dreidel, he cannot plan for the dreidel to fall on the winning letter. Even if he is the best spinner in the world, he still cannot plan or predict the outcome of his spin. Similarly, regarding *parnassah*, one must be aware that *hishtadlus* is in our hands, but the outcome is entirely in Hashem's hands. On our own, we cannot guarantee success.

With one twist of the fingers, the dreidel spins round and round. This is to remind us that we don't need to overdo our *hishtadlus*, in our quest for *parnassah*. We set matters into motion, and

### Lights Shining in the Darkness

Yaakov Avinu complained to his children for causing him trouble, by telling the ruler of Mitzrayim that they have another brother. Yaakov said, (43:6) למה הרעות לי להגיד לאיש, "Why did you do bad to me, to tell the man that you have another brother?" The Midrash (91:10) teaches, "Hashem said, 'I am working to make Yosef the king of Mitzrayim, and you are complaining, למה הרעות לי, 'Why did you do bad to me...' Hashem's rebuke was that Yaakov should have believed that everything that's happening is for the good.

The Midrash adds that Yaakov was saying, נסתרה דרכי מה, "Hashem concealed His eyes [and He doesn't see me]" (*Yeshaya* 40:27). But Hashem replied that it wasn't so. Hashem was doing kindness for him, for Yosef, and for Klal Yisrael, although it was in concealed ways.

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Hashem does the rest.

Reb Chaim Volozhiner *zt'l* compared the person who has *bitachon* to someone who has to move a barrel from point A to point B. Since it is round, he can give it one good push, and it will roll to its destination. Someone who doesn't have *bitachon* is compared to someone moving a square barrel. He must lift the heavy barrel and carry it himself.

It states (*Tehillim* 37:5) גול על ה' דרכך ובטח עליו והוא יעשה, "Roll your needs to Hashem, trust in Him, and Hashem will do" (*Tehillim* 37:5). All one needs to do is to start things rolling, and Hashem will do the rest.

In this week's *parashah*, when Yaakov sent his children down to Mitzrayim, he sent along a gift: קחו מזמרת הארץ בכליכם והורידו לאיש מנחה מעט צרי ומעט דבש ונכאת ... "Take in your baskets from the land's harvest and bring a present to the man. A drop of balsam, a bit of honey, wax, almonds, etc." (43:11).

Notice that Yaakov sent מעט צרי ומעט דבש, "a drop of balsam, a bit of honey." But since he was sending a gift to appease the ruler of Mitzrayim, shouldn't he have sent a larger, more impressive, gift?

The answer is that Yaakov Avinu knew that ultimately only Hashem can help. He needed to do *hishtadlus*, but he also knew that a minimum of *hishtadlus* is also sufficient.

The Ramchal quotes this Midrash and writes, "This is a *binyan av* (a source) that whenever Hashem wants to raise a person, or when Hashem desires to elevate the world, there is always a period of concealment first. There first must be hardships [before the good comes]."

Reb Mottel Pogramsky *zt'l* was once on a train together with a *mohel*. They were traveling to perform a *bris milah* in a small village near Kovno. They missed their stop, and had to take a train that goes back in the other direction. The *mohel* was extremely upset, because their error cost them a long detour. But Reb Mottel encouraged the *mohel* to have *emunah* that the detour was for the best. "Obviously there's a reason why this is happening. Nothing happens by chance..."

They got off at the next station, and waited for the next train to bring them back to their destination. While they were waiting,

someone approached them and said, "My son is eight days old today. I need a *mohel*. Do you know where I can find a *mohel*?"

The reason for their detour was understood.

Things may seem hard and difficult, but there is always a reason, and it is always for our benefit.<sup>8</sup>

The Gemara states that one lights the Chanukah lamps *משתשקע החמה*, from when the sun sets. This hints to those moments in life when everything seems dark and difficult. We light the Chanukah candles at sunset to remember that even during the hard times, miracles are happening to us.

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 21:) concludes that one lights the Chanukah candles *משתשקע עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק*, "From sunset until there aren't people walking in the market place."

The Kedushas Levi explains *עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק* can mean that we light the Chanukah lamps and ponder the wonders until *תכלה רגל*, people will stop thinking that everything that happens in the world is routine and natural. He will begin recognizing the miracles that happen to us at all times, and even when the sun sets, and things seem to be happening by chance.

Reb Binyamin Zev Deitsch *zt'l*, *mashgiach* of Yeshivas Ponovizh, said that when he

was a *bachur* living in Hungary, before War World Two, he and forty-nine other *bachurim* were drafted to the Hungarian army. The parents of the fifty children called an emergency meeting, to save their children. They decided to write a letter to a doctor, asking him to write up false medical reports for the fifty *bachurim*, claiming that they were ill and unfitting for army service.

The doctor agreed to write up these documents for a price. All the parents contributed whatever they could, and Reb Binyamin Zev's parents, and the parents of one other *bachur*, who were both wealthy, paid a higher sum than the others, to guarantee that their children would get their documents.

The letters finally arrived on the morning the *bachurim* were supposed to sign up for the army. They showed their reports to the army personnel, and they were freed from military service.

However, the doctor only wrote letters for forty-eight *bachurim*. Reb Binyamin Zev and the son of the other wealthy family didn't receive their letters. (Ironically, it was the children of the wealthy parents who paid the most money, who didn't get an exemption.)

Reb Binyamin Zev and the other *bachur* had to flee to Eretz Yisrael. They didn't

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8. Before Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk's *zy'a* demise, he said that he won't rest in heaven until he abolishes the decree (that was placed on the Jewish community, at that time). Time passed and the decree was still in effect. His student, Rebbe Mendel of Raminov *zy'a* saw Rebbe Elimelech in his dream, and he asked him why he wasn't abolishing the decree. Rebbe Elimelech explained to him that now that he is in heaven, he sees that the decree is for the benefit of Klal Yisrael, and therefore he isn't abolishing it.

even have time to say good-bye to their families properly, and they didn't have time to prepare for their long trip either. They had to escape as quickly as possible – because that was the day that they were supposed to be inducted into the army.

Reb Binyamin Zev recollects, "I remember how we felt that day, when we escaped without having time to say good-bye to all our family members, and without preparing for the trip. Compared to our 48 comrades, we considered ourselves the most unfortunate ones. We arrived in Eretz Yisrael, two young *bachurim* alone, having to fend for ourselves. But a few short years later, we realized that we were the fortunate ones. None of our friends survived, except for us, since we were in Eretz Yisrael..."

Reb Binyamin Zev learned from this episode that even when things seem bad, they are always for the good. Even when everything appears like sunset, the brilliant light of miracles is shining.

This week's *parashah* tells us, "[Yosef] commanded..., 'Fill these people's bags with food, as much as they can carry... ואת גביעי ואת הכסף תשים בפי אמתחת הקטן and place the silver goblet at the top of the younger one's bag.'" (44:2).

In the morning, as the brothers started traveling back to Eretz Yisrael, Yosef sent his aide to arrest them for stealing the goblet. ויחפש בגדול החל ובקטן כלה וימצא הגביע באמתחת בנימין, "[The aide] searched, starting with the oldest [Reuven], and concluded with the youngest, [Binyamin] and the גביע was found in Binyamin's bag" (44:13).

The Midrash (*Tanchumah, Mikeitz*, 10) states that Binyamin's brothers suspected that Binyamin had intentionally stolen the goblet. They beat him on his shoulders and said, "Thief, son of a thief, you embarrassed us. You are your mother's son. Your mother embarrassed our father [when Rachel stole Lavan's *avodah zarah*]..."

The Midrash concludes, "And because they hit him on his shoulders, Binyamin merited that the *Shechinah* would rest between his shoulders (on his property). As the Torah says, ובין כתיפיו שכן, '[Hashem] resides between [Binyamin's] shoulders' (*Devarim* 33:12).

Binyamin was beaten and humiliated; it seemed to Binyamin as though *משתשקע החמה*, the sun has set for him. But at the time of his humiliation, something wonderful was happening. As a consequence of his humiliation, the *Kodesh HaKedoshim* and the *mizbeich* were built on his property.

We can assume that Yehudah didn't hit Binyamin, since Yehudah promised Yaakov אנוכי אעריבנו מירי תבקשנו for Binyamin... (43:9). And since Yehudah didn't beat Binyamin, part of the *mizbeich* was built on Yehudah's property, as well. As Chazal (*Yoma* 12.) say רצועה היתה יוצאת מחלקו של יהודה ונכנסת לחלקו של בנימין ובו היה מזבח בני, "A strip of land extended from Yehudah's property into Binyamin's. That's where the *mizbeich* was built."

Chazal say, ובנימין הצדיק היה מצטער עליה, לבלעה בכל יום, "Binyamin HaTzaddik was distressed about [this portion of the *mizbeich* that wasn't on his property], and

every day, he wanted to swallow it [and get it back]..."

We can explain that in retrospect Binyamin was upset that Yehudah didn't hit him. Had Yehudah hit him, the entire *mizbeiach* would be on his property.<sup>9</sup>

For this is the nature of *yesurim*; at first, when you don't know the reason and the benefits of the *yesurim* you wish you wouldn't have them. But afterwards, when you discover how much good you received from the *yesurim*, you wish you would have had even more *yesurim*.

The Ramchal discusses how after every suffering comes good, and he quotes the Gemara (*Brachos* 5) "HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave three gifts to Bnei Yisrael [Torah, Eretz Yisrael, and Olam HaBa] and he only gave them to them with *yesurim*."

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Drashos* 4:185) teaches us a lesson we wouldn't be permitted to even think on our own, if he hadn't said it. The Chasam Sofer says that Yaakov Avinu suffered many hardships in his lifetime (Lavan, Eisav, Dinah, etc.) but he was able to bear them all with his *emunah* that everything is ultimately for the good.

But when he lost Yosef, he was totally devastated and wore sackcloth. Losing Yosef meant to him that he might go to Gehinom. As Rashi (*Bereishis* 37:35) writes, "[Yaakov said] 'I received this sign from Hashem: If none of my children die in my lifetime, I am guaranteed that I won't go to Gehinom.'" When he thought Yosef was killed and that he might go to Gehinom, he couldn't find respite. He wore sackcloth and mourned copiously.

The Midrash (84:20) states, "Since Yaakov took the sackcloth, the sackcloth doesn't leave him, his children, or his grandchildren, until the end of generations..." The Midrash enumerates that Dovid, Achav, Yoram, and Mordechai all wore sackcloth, and it was because Yaakov Avinu set the precedent of putting on sackcloth. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* explains that sackcloth is something negative; it means that they weren't accepting their hardships with joy, with belief that everything is for the good.

A better approach is to can accept that everything is for the good, because **סבלון אחד עולה על כמה תפילות**, "accepting Hashem's decree is more effective than many *tefillos*."<sup>10</sup>

9. The Gemara says **רצועה היתה יוצאת מחלקו של יהודה**, "a strip of land came out of Yehudah's portion..." The Gemara uses specifically the word **רצועה** because **רצועה** also means the whip *beis din* used for those who are **חייב מלקות** (see *Makos* 22). Binyamin was lacking just one lash, one **רצועה**, from Yehudah, and this caused him immense distress.

10. The Chasam Sofer explains that this is the reason Esther made several parties. She was attempting to abolish Haman's decree with her joy. Mordechai, on the other hand, took sackcloth and cried and prayed. The salvation came primary from Esther's approach, because being happy and accepting Hashem's decree with joy, and with *bitachon*, is the more effective approach towards abolishing it.

### Bitachon

It says, ויהי מקץ שנתיים ימים ופרעה חולם, "and it was at the end of two years, and Pharaoh dreamed..." The Or HaChaim states that Pharaoh dreamed of seven cows and seven ears of grain every day for two years, but each day when he woke up he forgot his dream. This is implied by the words, שנתיים ימים ופרעה חולם, "for two years Pharaoh was dreaming." At the end of two years, Pharaoh had the dream, and he didn't forget it.

Why did Pharaoh dream the same dream for two years if he would anyway forget it in the morning? Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz (*Miketz* 71) answered that the daily dream was to provide Yosef with the opportunity to be released each day. Should Yosef have sufficient trust in Hashem, Pharaoh would remember his dream in the morning and Yosef would be freed that same day.

To explain this better, Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer told a story that happened with the Baal Shem Tov *zt'l*. The Baal Shem Tov was traveling with his student, Rebbe Mendel, the Magid of Bar, through a forest. Rebbe Mendel was thirsty. The Baal Shem Tov told him, "Have *bitachon* that Hashem will give you water."

They came across a gentile who asked them, "Did you see my horses? I lost my horses three days ago, and I'm looking for them since."

Reb Mendel replied that he didn't see the horses, and asked the gentile whether he has water. He did, and he gave it to Reb Mendel.

Reb Mendel said to the Baal Shem Tov, "I am certain that the gentile traveled around, seeking his horses for my sake, so that I could have water. But why was he looking for his horses for three days?"

The Baal Shem Tov replied, "Hashem sent him out beforehand so he would be ready to give you water the moment you acquire the ideal level of *bitachon*."

Similarly, Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz explained, Pharaoh had this dream for two years, so the moment Yosef would perfect his *bitachon*, Pharaoh will remember the dream and Yosef released from prison.

Yosef is praised for his *bitachon*. The *passuk* אשרי הגבר אשר יבטח בה, "Fortunate is the person who trusts in Hashem..." is written about Yosef HaTzaddik (see *Rashi* 40:23).

The final *passuk* of last week's *parashah* states that after Yosef asked the *sar hamashkim* to mention him to Pharaoh, so he could be released from the dungeon, ולא זכר שר המשקים את יוסף וישכחהו, "the *sar hamashkim* didn't remember Yosef, and he forgot him." Why does the *passuk* say that the *sar hamashkim* didn't remember Yosef and he forgot Yosef? Why are there two expressions used for forgetting? *Rashi* answers, "He didn't remember on that day, and he forgot in the future..."

The Chidushei HaRim answers that the *passuk* is referring to the *sar hamashkim* and to Yosef. The *passuk* is read as follows: ולא זכר שר המשקים את יוסף וישכחהו, the *sar hamashkim* didn't remember Yosef, and also Yosef forgot the *sar hamashkim*. They forgot each other. This demonstrates

Yosef's amazing level of *bitachon*. Yosef was in prison for ten years; finally, there's hope. He interpreted the *sar hamashkim's* dream, and the *sar hamashkim* is now serving wine to Pharaoh. He asked the *sar hamashkim* to mention him to Pharaoh, and to tell Pharaoh how he was imprisoned unlawfully. Anybody else in Yosef's place would constantly be thinking about the *sar hamashkim*, wondering whether he did the *shelichus* and forwarded his plea to Pharaoh. But Yosef trusted solely in Hashem. He forgot about the *sar hamashkim*. After doing his *hishadlus*, he put his trust solely with Hashem.

Another indication of Yosef's firm *bitachon* is when the Torah says, וישלח פרעה ויקרא, אל יוסף ויריצוהו מן הבור, "Pharaoh summoned for Yosef and they rushed him out of the dungeon..." (41:14). The Rebbe of Ostroftza *zt'l* (*Toldos Adam*, seventh night of Chanukah) notes that the *passuk* states ויריצוהו, that *others* rushed Yosef out of jail, but Yosef wasn't rushing on his own. Why? Pharaoh summoned Yosef because he wanted Yosef to decode his dreams. This was Yosef's opportunity to be freed from prison. Nevertheless, Yosef didn't rush. ויריצוהו, others rushed him out. Because Yosef didn't trust in Pharaoh, and not in the *sar hamashkim*, and not in his talent of

deciphering dreams. He trusted solely in Hashem, and therefore there was no real reason to rush out of prison. His *hishadlus* didn't count now; everything was in Hashem's hands.<sup>11</sup>

Yosef's trust in Hashem is also seen when we study the words Yosef said to Pharaoh when he deciphered Pharaoh's dreams. Someone else in this circumstance would certainly hint to Pharaoh his innocence, and plead for freedom. But Yosef didn't once hint or plead to Pharaoh that he wants to be released from jail. He interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, and trusted in Hashem that this was sufficient *hishadlus* to be released from the dungeon.

The Yevanim didn't want the Jewish nation to believe that they have a connection with Hashem, and they can trust in Him. Therefore, they decreed, "Write on the horn of a bull that you don't have a portion with the G-d of Yisrael." And the Greeks proclaimed, "Whoever says Hashem's name will be pierced with a sword."

To combat them, Matisyahu Cohen Gadol and his children shouted, מי לה' אלונו, "Whoever is with Hashem, come with us." And they said מי כמוך באלים ה', "Who is like You, among the mighty, Hashem." Yehudah HaMakabi jumped into the enemy's

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11. The Mishnah (*Bava Metzia* 10.) teaches, "If someone sees a lost object, and falls on top of it [to acquire it] and then another person comes by and picks it up, that second person gets it." The Rebbe of Kotzk *zt'l* explains that the first person's problem was that he made *too much hishadlus*. When he saw the lost object, he fell on it, hoping to claim the lost object before anyone else did. But his rushing actually caused him to lose the item (because he didn't make a valid acquisition, since he never raised the object). If he would have calmly gone over to the lost object and picked it up, it would be his. But since he lost his *bitachon* in Hashem, he loses.

camp and killed twenty-five thousand soldiers (see *Yosifun* 21) in one attack. They won many other great battles in similar manners, because they believed in Hashem and put their trust in Him. <sup>12</sup>

### The Beloved Mitzvah

The Rambam (*Hilchos Chanukah* 4:12) writes, מצות נר חנוכה מצוה חביבה היא עד מאד, "The mitzvah of Chanukah *licht* is an

extremely beloved mitzvah..." The Rambam doesn't use expression for any other mitzvah. What is special about Chanukah *licht*?

We can explain with an analogy:

When a wealthy man marries a poor girl and brings her into his luxurious home it still doesn't show that he loves her. This is where he lives, so he brought her there. But if she would tell her husband that she

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12. The Alshich HaKadosh *zy'a* was once teaching his students about *bitachon*. He said, "When one has *bitachon*, his *parnassah* will descend from heaven, just like the *mon* in the desert." One simpleton, listening to this *shiur*, took the Alshich's words very literally. He sold his horse and buggy (which he used as a deliveryman) and spent his days in the *beis medresh*, studying Torah.

His wife tried to persuade him to continue working for *parnassah*. "How will we manage?" she asked. But he told her that Hashem will certainly support them.

At first, they lived off the money they earned from selling the horse and buggy. When this money ran out, his wife once again nudged him to do something for *parnassah*.

"Don't worry, Hashem will certainly help us."

The gentile who bought the horse and buggy was working at the foot of a mountain. He was hewing large stones for construction purposes. His newly purchased horse and buggy was standing nearby ready to carry the stones into the city. After removing one very large stone, the gentile saw a large, hidden treasure inside the mountain. He loaded the precious treasure onto the wagon. He went into the cave for one last look around, to make sure that he took everything, and just then the cave collapsed, the stones cascaded all over him, leaving him dead under the rubble.

The horse decided that it's time to eat. Since his new owner wasn't caring for him, it headed back on his own. Following the route it knew best, it soon came with the treasure to the home of his previous owner. The Yid received the large treasure. He and his children were wealthy.

When the Alshich's students saw what happened, they were amazed. They asked the Alshich, "We are striving to attain *bitachon* for a long time now, but never has a miracle happened to us as it happened to this simple person. What's the difference?"

The Alshich explained to them that this simple man believed without doubt that Hashem would support him. "He didn't have any doubts. He was certain that Hashem will help. But when I speak to you about *bitochon*, you have many questions. You wonder if your level of *bitochon* is sufficient and whether you are deserving of Hashem's kindness... and other doubts. You don't fully place your trust in Hashem. That's the difference."

People say, "Money doesn't fall from the sky." The Rebbe Reb Bunim of Pshischa said that this isn't true. If Hashem desires it, money can fall from heaven, directly into your pocket or into your bank account.

prefers to live in her old, small cottage, and he agrees to live there, that shows that he truly loves her. He is leaving a house of wealth for his wife's sake. This is the reason Chanukah is called מצוה חביבה עד מאוד, an extremely beloved mitzvah, because Chanukah *licht*, which are lit below ten *tefachim*, implies that Hashem comes down to our level. The Gemara (*Succah* 5.) states that the *Shechinah* doesn't go below ten *tefachim*. On Chanukah, however, Hashem goes to the people who are on very low levels, and He illuminates them with the light of holiness, because of His love to His nation. We now understand why Chanukah is a מצוה חביבה היא עד מאוד, an extremely beloved mitzvah.<sup>13</sup>

One night, before lighting the Chanukah *licht*, the Trisker Magid *zt'l* asked one of his chassidim who had a short wife, "When someone has a short wife, does she climb up on a chair to speak with her husband, or does he bend down to speak with her?" After asking this question, the Rebbe lit the Chanukah *licht*.

The Trisker Magid's nephew, Rebbe Mordechai Dov of Hornestieple *zt'l*, explained that with his question, the Trisker Magid was hinting at the essence of Chanukah. The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 59.) states, "If you have a short wife, bend over to seek her counsel..." This is how Hashem treats us on Chanukah; He lowers Himself, *keviyachol*, to whichever level we are on, to listen to us and to elevate us.

The Divrei Chaim of Tzanz *zt'l* said: On Shabbos, Hashem invites us into His holy abode, so we can enjoy the light of His presence. On *yom tov*, the Jewish nation invites Hashem to them. On Chanukah, Hashem visits his children in prison, so to speak.

The Divrei Chaim of Tzanz writes, "It can be compared to a king in his palace; the people of lowly status won't be able to visit the king. Surely, those who [have sinned and] are being punished by the king won't either be able to come to the king, to state their requests... However, when the king travels around his kingdom, it's his way to

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Proof, Rebbe Bunim said, is in this week's *parashah*. The brothers told Menasheh that they don't know how the money got inside their bags. Menasheh told them, ואלקיכם ואלקי אביכם נתן לכם, מטמון באמתחותיכם (43:23). The brothers didn't disagree. They accepted it, because it can be so. Hashem can place money into their packages because Hashem can do anything.

**13.** There is generally a mitzvah to eat on *yom tov*. Chanukah is an exception, as there is no obligation to celebrate with festive meals on Chanukah. *Shulchan Aruch* (670:2) states, "Some say that there is a little bit of a mitzvah to make meals..." but it certainly isn't an obligation. Why is Chanukah different than all the other holidays?

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* answers with a *mashal*: A simple farmer married the king's daughter. Does anyone need to tell him to make a *seudah*? He will do so on his own. On Chanukah the *Shechinah* comes down to us, lower than ten *tefachim*. We don't need to be told to make a *seudah*. We are so happy, we will do so on our own.

visit the prisoners in jail... The prisoners shout, "King! Please save us!" This is what happens on Chanukah, Hashem comes to us in our jail, to save us from our imprisonment."

Rebbe Asher of Stolin *zt'l* said that this is alluded to in the *brachah* we say in *Maariv*: משפיל גאים עדי ארץ ומגביה שפלים עדי מרום. This can be translated, משפיל גאים, Hashem lowers the exalted lights of Chanukah, עדי ארץ, down to the earth, to the lowest levels. And the reason is ומגביה שפלים, to raise up those who are on lowly places, עדי מרום, to bring them to the highest levels.<sup>14</sup>

### Zos Chanukah

The Rebbe of Ruzhin *zt'l* said, "What tzaddikim are able to accomplish on Rosh Hashanah and on Yom Kippur, a simple yid can accomplish on Zos Chanukah."

The Maharal writes, "The world of nature is subjected to the number seven, as the physical world was created in seven days. Therefore, whatever is beyond nature is in the realm of eight... ברית מילה is beyond nature, since according to nature, a person was born with an ערלה, foreskin... Therefore the *milah* is on the eight day... The Torah was also given after seven, as it states (*Devarim* 16:9) count seven weeks, and after

the seven weeks, on the fiftieth day, the Torah was given... We already explained that a small jug of oil remained with the *cohen gadol's* seal, and it's known that the *cohen gadol* served with eight clothes. All of this is because of his level, that he had the level of eight [beyond nature].... Therefore the miracle was eight days." Chanukah is eight days, as they are days beyond nature. This is more pronounced on Zos Chanukah, because then it is doubly eight, שמיני שבשמינית, and miracles beyond nature can occur.

Yet another explanation for the uniqueness of Zos Chanukah, and for the miracles that are bestowed on this day, is because Zos Chanukah corresponds to Shemini Atzeres, which is also a day for *tefillah* and salvations.

To explain this we will make some introductions:

The end of *parashas Emor* lists all the *yamim tovim*. Then the Torah writes, ויקחו אליך שמן זית זך למאור, "Take for yourself pure olive oil to light [the menorah]" (*Vayikra* 24:2). What is the connection between the *yamim tovim* and lighting the menorah? The *Rokeiach* teaches that it is hinting to the mitzvah of Chanukah *licht*. With this information, the *Rokeiach* answers

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14. The *Sefer HaMitzvos* of the Sma"g (*mitzvas asef* 3, *Avodas HaBorei*) writes, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires the tefillin of a *rasha* more than of a tzaddik." He explains that the purpose of *tefillin* is לזכרון, to help us remember Hashem and to help us remember our obligations to Him. Consequently, it's even more important for the *resha'im* to wear *tefillin* than tzaddikim, for they need to be reminded of their obligations more than tzaddikim do. Everyone is special to Hashem, and Hashem is waiting for everyone to return to Him. No one is superfluous. Chanukah is a time when Hashem seeks to raise those who have fallen to low places.

the renowned question of the Beis Yosef. Why is Chanukah eight days? They found enough oil for one day, so the miracle was really only for the subsequent seven days! The Rokeiach explains that since Chanukah is stated in the Torah after Succos and Shemini Atzeres, which are eight days long, the *chachamim* established Chanukah for eight days.

We can assume that the eighth day of Chanukah represents Shemini Atzeres.

About Shemini Atzeres, the *Zohar* states, "At this time of joy only the Jewish nation is with the King. And when one is alone with the King, he will receive whatever he requests..." Zos Chanukah, which corresponds to Shemini Atzeres is therefore also a special time for *tefillah*.

Rashi (*Vayikra* 23:36) explains the reason for Shemini Atzeres, "It can be compared to a king who invited his children for a meal for several days. When the time came for them to return home, he said, 'My children, please, remain with me one more day. קשה עלי פרידתכם, it's hard for me when you leave.'

This describes the essence of Shemini Atzeres and also of Zos Chanukah. Hashem says, "Remain with me, and celebrate one more day. It's hard for me when you leave."

Hashem asks us to celebrate Chanukah for just one more day, and on this day the Jewish nation can request for whatever they want, and Hashem will fulfill their requests.

The Vilna Gaon teaches that the *Hallels* we say on the eight days of Chanukah

complement the eight *Hallels* that we didn't complete during the year. These are the six days of Pesach (when we only say parts of *Hallel*) one day of Rosh Hashanah (from the Torah, Rosh Hashanah is only one day) and one day of Yom Kippur.

During the final days of Pesach we don't say the entire *Hallel*, as Chazal say, "My creations are drowning in the sea and you are saying *Hallel*?" And since we don't say *Hallel* on the seventh day (the day of *kriyas Yam Suf*), we don't say *Hallel* on Chol Hamoed Pesach, either. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we also don't say *Hallel*, because Chazal say, "How could it be that the King is sitting on the throne of judgment, the books of life and the books of death are opened before Him, and Yisrael are saying *shirah*.." This means that these days are technically days when we should say the entire *Hallel*, but there is something that prevents us. The Vilna Gaon taught that the complete *Hallel* that we say on the eight days of Chanukah corresponds to those eight days, and completes the *Hallel* that we missed.

The order of the holidays begins with Pesach. Therefore it is logical to assume that the first six days of Chanukah complement the *Hallel* of Pesach. On the seventh day of Chanukah, we complement the *Hallel* of Rosh Hashanah. And on the eighth day, Zos Chanukah, we say the *Hallel* that should have been said on Yom Kippur.

According to this calculation, Zos Chanukah corresponds to Yom Kippur. We can therefore add that just as Yom Kippur is the day when the Jewish people are sealed

for a good year, so too, on Chanukah, the Jewish people are sealed for good things and miracles.

The Beis Ahron *zt'l* encourages people to say *Tehillim* on Chanukah. He said, "a person must believe that by saying *Tehillim* one can leave his foolishness, his problems, and his difficulties. He can overcome thoughts of *yeush*, of despair, of losing hope, which the *yetzer hara* brings onto a person."

In particular, *Tehillim* should be recited on *זאת חנוכה*, and to request all your heart's desires, because on this day, Hashem is bestowing His kindness.

Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin *zt'l* came into the beis medresh on Zos Chanukah and saw the chassidim playing dreidel with money. The Rebbe said, "What a person earns during Chanukah, he still might lose it [because when he plays dreidel on the next day of Chanukah, he might lose what he earned on the first day]. But what one gains on Zos Chanukah, he won't lose." It will remain with him forever.

The *brachah* יוצר אור, (that we say each morning) list eight praises: פועל גבורות, עושה חדשות, בעל מלחמות, זורע צדקות, מצמיח ישועות, בורא רפואות, נורא תהילות, אדון הנפלאות. The kabbalists say that these eight praises correspond, respectively, to the eight days of Chanukah. The eighth praise is אדון הנפלאות, which means Hashem performs

miracles. It's appropriate that this praise corresponds to Zos Chanukah, a day of miracles.

Rebbe Shlomo (the first Rebbe) of Bobov *zt'l* said that the miracles of *זאת חנוכה* are alluded to in the *pasuk* זאת ה' היתה זאת מאת ה' היא נפלאות בעינינו. The נפלאות, wonders, happen because of *זאת*, which is Zos Chanukah.

It is written, בואת ידעתי כי הפצת בי (*Tehillim* 41:12). The Yismach Yisrael (*Chanukah* 53) explains בואת, since you gave us *זאת חנוכה*, I know that you desire me, and that you want to grant me good. <sup>15</sup>

### Segulos of Zos Chanukah

The Bnei Yissaschar (*Kislev Teives* 2:10) writes, "The earlier rabbanim often said that Chanukah is *mesugal* for פקידת עקרות, for the barren women to bear children... In my opinion, the *segulah* is primarily on Zos Chanukah..." (Rebbe Ahron of Belz *zt'l* and several other tzaddikim would repeat this idea from the Bnei Yissaschar each year at his *tisch* on Zos Chanukah.)

Someone came to the Chazon Ish *zt'l*, complaining about his poverty. The man said, "I need a miracle, and לא בכל יומא לאו בכול יומא, miracles don't happen every day."

The Chazon Ish corrected him, and said that this phrase should be read as follows,

15. One should be cautious that the *passuk*, איש בער לא ידע וכסיל לא יבין את זאת, "the fool doesn't know, and the imbecile doesn't understand זאת - that *זאת חנוכה* is a special day," should not be said on him. It should be said about him, לו חכמו ישכילו זאת, "if you are wise, you will understand זאת." And you will say בואת אני בוטה, that in the merit of Zos Chanukah, you trust in Hashem that you will have a salvation.

