

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
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Torah WELLSPRINGS

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Hashem's Compassion

The parashah begins with the words (41:1) *ויהי מקץ שנתיים ימים ופרעה חלם*, "And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh was dreaming..." The Or HaChaim writes, *ויהי* is an expression that denotes distress. The distress was because Pharaoh saw in his dreams that hunger years were approaching, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu is distressed when the world is in distress."

The hunger years had not yet begun. They wouldn't start until after the seven plentiful years had passed. Nevertheless, since it was revealed and decreed that the seven hunger years were approaching, Hakadosh Baruch Hu already had tzaar. And it seems that Hashem's tzaar wasn't only for Bnei Yisrael, who would suffer from hunger. Hashem felt bad for all mankind who would endure hunger. From here, we can try to understand and take heed of Hashem's endless compassion, and how He has pain together with His creations when they suffer any distress, pain, and discomfort. Certainly, when a Yid has a problem, he can be sure that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is with him during his hardships.

In Al HaNisim, we say *עמדת להם בעת צרתם*, "You stood up for them at a time of their distress." This means Hashem is with us when we go through hard times. Hashem cares, feels our tzaar, and *עמדת להם*, Hashem stands with us.

The Gemara (Succah 56:) tells the story of Miryam bas Bilgah, who left Judaism and married a Greek officer. When the Yevanim entered the Beis HaMikdash, she banged her sandal on the Mizbeiach and said, "For how long will You devour the money of the Jewish nation? And You don't stand up for them when they are going through hard times."

Therefore, we say the opposite, *עמדת להם*, Hashem stands with us when we are going through hard times.

How You Act Towards Others is How Hashem will Act Toward You

Yaakov Avinu said to his children (43:14) *וַאֲלֵל שְׂדֵי יִתְּנוּ לָכֶם רַחֲמִים לְפָנַי הָאֵישׁ*, "May Hashem give you rachmanus before the man." As we know, *הָאֵישׁ* "the man" is Yosef, the ruler of Mitzrayim (but at the time, Yaakov and his children didn't know that). This "man" had arrested Shimon and refused to see the other brothers again before they brought their younger brother Binyamin to Mitzrayim. When they ran out of food and had to return to Mitzrayim with Binyamin, Yaakov davened for them *וַיִּתְּנוּ לָכֶם רַחֲמִים לְפָנַי הָאֵישׁ*, that Hashem give them rachamim before the man.

There seems to be a problem in the grammar of the words *לָכֶם רַחֲמִים*. A more accurate expression, it seems, would be *עליכם רחמים*, that the leader of Mitzrayim should have rachmanus *on you*. As it is written, Yaakov said that Hashem should place into *your hearts* the attribute of compassion, that they should have mercy on others.

Reb Shlomo Kluger (Imrei Shefer, Mikeitz) answers that Yaakov was davening that his sons should comport themselves with the attribute of rachmanus, that they should have rachmanus on others. This is because when you have rachmanus on others, Hashem has rachmanus on you. As the Gemara (Shabbos 151:) states, *כל המרחם על הבריות, מרחמים עליו מן השמים*, "Whoever has rachmanus on others, he receives rachmanus from heaven." Yaakov saw that the leader of Mitzrayim took Shimon, and now was asking for Binyamin, and he was giving his family a tough time. He davened that Hashem should give his children opportunities to have rachmanus on others so Heaven will have rachmanus on them.

Yaakov requested that they should have rachmanus on others לפני האיש before they go to this man. Because then Hashem will have rachmanus on them and save them.

This is an excellent counsel to attain Hashem's compassion. Have rachmanus on others, care for others, see how you can help others, and *midah kneged midah*, this arouses above that Hashem will have rachmanus on you.

The Arvei Nachal (Mikeitz, דרוש א' ד"ה ואמנם) writes this counsel, quoting the Alshich HaKadosh. "When two people befriend one another with love and with a complete heart, doing favors for one another, there is so much love between them that they are only interested in helping their fellow man, and they aren't thinking about their own needs, this draws down this attitude from Hashem yisbarach. Keviyachol, Hashem turns away from His occupations and solely thinks about how He can help these two people. For it is known from Chazal ה' צלך, 'Hashem is your shadow' (Tehillim 121:5). A shadow imitates a person's action, and as they are focusing on helping their fellow man, Hashem will do the same and act compassionately with them.

"However, when there is no love between people - albeit there is no hatred, either - since each person is only thinking about himself and doesn't think about the good of his fellow man, Hashem yisbarach also doesn't think about how to help them, *chas veshalom*.

Therefore, whenever a person is in a *tzarah, chalilah*, it will be good for him to have a friend he loves with all his heart, or

more than one friend... Hashem will act in the same way. He will turn away from all that He does, and solely think about how he can give kindness to him, and he will be saved from all troubles."¹

The Gemara (Shabbos 33:) tells us that when Reb Shimon bar Yochai left his cave, he said, "Since a miracle happened to me, I will fix something." He asked his fellow men what needed to be rectified, and they told him about a struggle that the *kohanim* in Teveria were dealing with. The marketplace was situated on an essential road in Teveria, but *kohanim* couldn't pass through because there were graves on this road, and the people didn't know exactly where they were. Since *Kohanim* may not become *tamei*, they had to make significant detours, which was inconvenient. With his wisdom, Reb Shimon identified all the graves in the marketplace of Teveria, and from then on, the *kohanim* were able to live in Teveria without dealing with this issue.

Ben Yehoyada on this Gemara teaches: "Chazal tell us that when a miracle happens to a person, he loses some of his mitzvos. It is like he pays for the miracle with the mitzvos he performed. But there is a way a tzaddik can avoid this payment. The Ben Yehoyada writes, "It depends on one matter: If this tzaddik does charity and lovingkindness to others without gaining anything in return, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will repay him, measure for measure. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will perform miracles for him as a charity, without asking for anything in return."

1. I know of two *chashuve yungerleit* from Elad who are chavrusos for learning chassidishe sefarim. One of them was childless, eight years after his wedding. The other had daughters, baruch Hashem, but was praying for a son, as well. Some years ago, on parashas Mikeitz, they were learning together and came across this piece in the Arvei Nachal, which teaches that when one has rachmanus on others, this arouses Hashem's rachmanus. They both made a kabbalah to put this counsel into practice. Wondrously, on tzom Gedalyah, the following year, both made a bris for the sons that were born to them. The *brissim* were on the same day, and they attribute this miracle to their following and practicing the lesson of the Arvei Nachal.

When Reb Shimon was saved and was able to leave his cave, he feared that this miracle would be deducted from his good deeds. So he did a good deed without asking for anything in return, which made him eligible for kindness from Above, without needing to give up any of his mitzvos. He purified Teveria. Reb Shimon wasn't a *kohen*, so he gained nothing from this. He didn't even live in Teveria. He did a good deed for others without personal gain, and Heaven treated him in the same manner.

Once, a woman came to Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt'l, complaining bitterly that she didn't have children. Reb Shlomo Zalman replied, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu owes you anything? Be grateful that you are alive and healthy. Why do you carry complaints against Hashem?"

Deflated, she turned to leave the room.

Reb Shlomo Zalman immediately said, "Listen carefully to what I tell you. Hashem doesn't owe you anything, but if you do favors for others, Hashem will do favors for you. If you do chesed, something you aren't obligated to do, Hashem will act with you *midah kneged midah*, and He will do kindness with you, even if He isn't obligated to do so, and you can merit children."

The woman began volunteering at the Shaarei Tzedek Hospital in Yerushalayim to help the ill. A year later, she had a daughter.

(We heard this story from Reb A.Y. Leizeron z'l, a close relative of Reb Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.)

Many people who heard this story did the same. When they needed salvation, they sought to perform kindness, something that they weren't obligated to do. One example of this is a kidney donation – and Hashem performed kindness with them, *midah kneged*

midah, a kindness that keviyachol Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't owe and wasn't obligated to do.

We have learned in this section that Hashem is our shadow; he acts with us according to how we act:

(1) If we have mercy and compassion on others, Hashem will have compassion on us.

(2) If we do kindness to others without gain, Hashem will do kindness with us without deducting from our merits.

(3) If we do kindness to others, Hashem will do kindness with us, giving us what He isn't obligated to provide.

Focus on the Positive

The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 52:) states that the Yevanim desecrated the mizbeiach and made thirteen breaches in the walls of the Beis HaMikdash. In this devastating setting, the miracle with the Menorah occurred. Considering these circumstances, why do we celebrate the miracle that happened with the Menorah? At a time when the Beis HaMikdash appeared to be in the state of a churban, why was this situation worth celebrating?

There is a wonderful lesson here for us to take. There were problems in the Beis HaMikdash at this time. However, the Yidden were able to focus on the positive events that were transpiring simultaneously. In every situation, we must focus on the good, even if there is negativity as well. A person must also focus on his good traits, even if he has many faults. When a Yid accomplishes something good, he must celebrate those deeds.²

2. The *mechanech* Reb Moshe Blau Shlita tells a story that happened to his chavrusah back in the year ה'שמ"ה. His chavrusah once went to a dentist in Tel Aviv and was faced with difficult tests in shemiras einayim. His chavrusah was extremely upset and broken because he didn't pass every test. Reb Moshe Blau wanted to give him chizuk. He said, "It is 11:30 p.m., and the Steipler's door is still open. Let's go to him now, and you can tell him about your worries." (This happened a half-year before the Steipler was niftar.)

The Chasam Sofer zt'l says that when a person begins doing teshuvah, it is a grave aveirah to be sad over the past aveiros. Now, it is time to celebrate the good that he is doing. The Trisker Magid zt'l (Magan Avraham Chanukah ד"ה איתא בגמרא) says that הנוכה comes from the word הינוך. This means that on Chanukah, we seek to be *mechanech* ourselves, to improve our ways. Since it is a time for teshuvah, we must be cautious to focus on and celebrate the good and to avoid being sad over our faults.

Chazal (Shabbos 21:) say, "דלא למספד בהון", we mustn't give eulogies during Chanukah." The Trisker Magid explains that this means one shouldn't be sad on Chanukah. He shouldn't mourn aveiros of the past. He should learn from the *Chashmonaim*, who focused on the good and removed focus from all the negative.³

When one loses hope, he becomes inactive. He thinks, "What is the purpose? I am anyway a failure." But when one knows the value of his good deeds, he remains active and seeks to do whatever he can to continue improving.

The Gemara says that when the Chashmonaim won the war, בדקו ולא מצאו אלא, "They searched and they found solely one jug of oil." The Beis Yisrael said that if it weren't for the בדקו, that they checked and searched for the oil, they wouldn't even have had one jug of oil. There wouldn't have been oil for the first day. This reminds us that we can't lose hope even in the worst situations.

It states (41:53-54) ותכלינה שבע שני השבע אשר היה בארץ מצרים, ותחלינה שבע שני הרעב של שבע שנים, "The seven years of plenty that were in the land of Egypt were finished, and the seven years of famine began."

In his old age, the Steipler didn't hear, and all requests had to be written. The bachur wrote on a paper what happened, how he failed to guard his eyes. The Steipler asked, "Were there times during your trip to Tel Aviv that you did guard your eyes?"

The bachur was so broken it was hard for him to focus on the successes, but when the Steipler repeated his question, the bachur acknowledged that there were many instances in which he had guarded his eyes.

The Steipler replied with powerful words of chizuk. We have his exact words because Reb Moshe Blau wrote them down immediately after this meeting. The Steipler said, "I am not exaggerating, and I am not lying. I am not exaggerating, and I am not lying. If I had strength, I would stand up for you. It is about a thirty-five-minute drive from Bnei Brak to Tel Aviv. Each time that you guarded your eyes, you performed the mitzvos of ויראת מאלקיך... ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל... ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך, fearing Hashem, sanctifying Hashem's name, and loving Hashem with all your heart and soul. You will be punished for the times that you failed, but each time you were strong against the yetzer hara, you rectified the past. Therefore, why should you cry? Each time you were cautious with kedushah, you were on the level of Yosef HaTzaddik, *mamash, mamash, mamash* (literally, literally, literally)! The main thing is to fight, to battle, and to keep waging the war!"

In a letter (Kreina d'Igrasa vol.1, 106), the Steipler writes to a bachur who failed a test: "Although you fail sometimes, r'l, nevertheless, there were many times that you conquered your yetzer hara and you overcame your temptations. When you overcome temptations that burn so strongly in you, you draw a light of kedushah on yourself and onto all worlds... We cannot measure or comprehend the great kedushah that comes onto a person who overcomes a temptation when the yetzer hara is burning in him. At these moments, he is like Yosef HaTzaddik. The rule is that when a person fights the yetzer hara, he sometimes wins and sometimes loses. Just as the sin is very great, so too, every success is a great merit. He will rectify in his lifetime all his sins."

3. Reb Zundel Salant zt'l once spoke to people during Chanukah, and the conversation turned to something sad and disturbing. Reb Zundel told them to change the conversation because Chazal forbid hespeidim on Chanukah.

The difference between ותכלינה (finished) and ותחלינה (began) is a כ' or a ה'. The ה' stands on its two feet, and the letter כ' is lying on its side. The כ' is idle, representing those who lost hope. They are inactive. They don't think their mitzvos have purpose or value. This is ותכלינה, finished, destruction. The ה' stands on its two feet. It represents those who continue serving Hashem. They may have faults, but they know that everything good they do is worth millions. This is ותחלינה, the beginning, and growing.

The Gemara (Brachos 53.) tells us that the nature of fire is that it is always new. The fire that burns at this moment isn't the same flame that burned a moment before. The Shem MiShmuel says that the miracle of Chanukah occurred with fire to hint that we should always become new and serve Hashem with a new spirit all the time.

Don't allow your past (and future) faults to cause you to lose hope. The good you do is substantial, so you can always begin your avodas Hashem again.

Trusting in the Hishtadlus Pushes Away the Salvation

It states at the end of last week's parashah (40:23) ולא זכר שר המשקים את יוסף וישכחו "The sar

hamashkim did not remember Yosef, and he forgot him." The miforshim ask why the pasuk expresses the same concept twice: that the sar hamashkim didn't remember Yosef and that he forgot Yosef?

The Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe, end of וישב) says וישכחו means that Yosef forgot the sar hamashkim. The pasuk is saying two things: The sar hamashkim didn't remember Yosef, and also Yosef forgot the sar hamashkim.

Certainly, we are unable to understand fully and correctly the holy ways of the great tzaddikim, the שבטי י"ה, such as Yosef HaTzaddik. But the Torah tells us about their lives so we can learn the lessons that apply to us. According to the Chasam Sofer's commentary, we understand that, initially, Yosef was waiting and hoping that the sar hamashkim would remember him and help him get out of prison. But after two years passed, and the sar hamashkim didn't do anything to help Yosef, Yosef lost hope of attaining salvation through him. He forgot about him, and it was then that his salvation began.⁴

This is because there is a great rule: When one relies on his abilities and hishtadlus, it doesn't help; it actually makes matters

4. It states (Tehillim 112:8) נכון לבו בטוח בה' סמוך "His heart is confident with bitachon, relying on Hashem." The Chidushei HaRim zt'l notes that the final letters of this pasuk spell הנוכה.

The Or HaChaim at the beginning of the parashah says that Pharaoh had his dream for two years. Every night, he dreamt the same dream but awoke in the morning and forgot the dream. At the end of two years, Pharaoh had the dream again, but he didn't forget it this time.

Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz (Mikeitz 71) asks, "Why was it necessary that he have this dream for two years?"

He answers with a story:

The Baal Shem Tov traveled through a forest with his student, Rebbe Mendel, the Magid of Bar zt'l. On the third day of their journey, Rebbe Mendel became extremely thirsty. The Baal Shem Tov told him to have bitachon in Hashem.

They came across a goy who asked them, "Did you see my horses? I am looking for them for three days." They replied that they hadn't. Reb Mendel asked for water, and the goy gave him.

Reb Mendel said to the Baal Shem Tov, "I am certain Hashem sent this man to bring me water. But why did he need to look for his horses for three days?"

The Baal Shem Tov answered, "Hashem sent him out three days ago so he would be there to bring you

worse. When one relies solely on Hashem, that's when the salvations occur.

The Chovos HaLevavos (Introduction, Shaar HaBitachon) writes, "If he relies on his wisdom, plots, physical strength, or hishtadlus, he will work for nothing, he will become weak, and his attempts will fall short of bringing him what he desired to attain... When he relies on his wealth, it will be taken away from him and given to someone else."¹⁵

The Kedushas Levi (Chidushei Agados) writes, "When one relies on some matter from this world, it demonstrates that he thinks that matter chalilah has the power to help without the Creator. This causes the matter to be detached from Hashem. I heard this from my teacher, the renowned holy tzaddik, Rebbe Ber, the Magid of Mezritch zt'l. He explained the pesukim (Bereishis 36:32-32) ... וימלוך

וימות, 'He died... He became king...' When a person trusts in something, he has made that matter his king and detached himself from trusting in Hashem. This will cause that he will receive less parnassah. Therefore, it states וימת [which means that he loses out]. But when one trusts in Hashem alone and places his trust in Him, and he understands that nothing has strength without the Creator, yisbarach Shemo, he attaches everything he does to the Creator. And then there will be blessings in all of his deeds because he attaches everything to Hashem."

The Gemara (Gittin 7:) says, "If a person sees that his parnassah is limited, he should give tzedakah." It is known that tzedakah is mesugal for parnassah. The Kedushas Levi explains that when he gives tzedakah generously, "he is showing with his actions that he doesn't trust in his money. On the

water the moment you acquired full *bitachon*."

Similarly, Pharaoh had this dream for two years so that the moment Yosef perfected his *bitachon*, he would immediately be released from prison.

The Imrei Pinchas writes, "This teaches us the greatness of bitachon. Hashem prepares a person's needs before he has bitachon, so that the moment he acquires bitachon, salvation will be available for him. This is what happened to Yosef. Initially, Yosef trusted in the *sar hamashkim* and was punished. He remained in jail until he had bitachon. Hashem sent this dream to Pharaoh every night for two years, so Yosef's redemption would be ready the moment he trusted in Hashem."

5. A grandson of the Tolna Rebbe zt'l told his grandfather about a person who had lost his parnassah and asked him to daven for him. The Tolna Rebbe replied, "Every Yid must believe that his parnassah is earned in accordance with Hashem's plan. When a person forgets this, Hashem causes this person's source of parnassah to dwindle and become less reliable. If he wakes up and realizes he must trust Hashem, his parnassah will become stable again. But if he still doesn't get the message and still thinks that his parnassah is due to the work of his hands, Hashem takes his parnassah away from him. Now, he knows that only Hashem can help him. He turns to Hashem for help, and Hashem arranges another parnassah for him. But the best path is that even when one has stable parnassah, he remembers that the parnassah isn't a result of his work, and it isn't from my boss but from Hashem alone. There are wealthy people who say פרשת המן every day, so they should remember that their parnassah comes from Hashem and not from the work of their hands. They daven daily for parnassah because they know parnassah is from Hashem, and Hashem gives them wealth and abundance. Tell this to your friend, and tell him that even after he has parnassah, he should continue to remember that parnassah comes from Hashem alone."

The man found a new source of parnassah and, indeed, didn't forget the Rebbe's counsel to continually daven for parnassah. (תנחומך ישעשעו נפשי) p.749)

The Noda b'Yehuda (in his sefer Ahavas Zion, Drush 5) teaches, "All coins, old and new, are round. Perhaps the reason it was established thousands of years ago to make coins round, and no other form, is to hint that money keeps rolling and doesn't stay in one place. This reminds a person to trust in Hashem regarding his wealth...."

contrary, he trusts in Hashem. This will cause that there will be a brachah in his money. Wherever he turns, he will succeed and have an enormous amount of property." This is the meaning of the pasuk (Mishlei 11:24) "יש מפזר ונוסף עוד", "There is one who scatters [his money] and he is given more."

Yosef's Bitachon, and His Asking the Sar Hamashkim for Help

It states (Tehillim 40:5) "אשרי הגבר אשר שם ה' מבטחו" "Praiseworthy is the man who makes Hashem his trust and he did not turn to the haughty..."

The Midrash (beginning of Mikeitz) explains: "אשרי הגבר אשר שם ה' מבטחו", "Praiseworthy is the man who makes Hashem his trust." This refers to Yosef because Yosef trusted in Hashem. "ולא פנה אל רהבים ושטי כוב", "and he did not turn to the haughty..." This refers to when Yosef went to the sar hamashkim and asked him to help him.

It seems from this Midrash that Yosef was wrong for making hishtadlus.

(Once again, we repeat the obvious: we aren't judging Yosef HaTzaddik, whose levels of bitachon are far above our comprehension. We are merely learning lessons in bitachon from the parashah that relate to us.)

Rabbeinu b'Chayei writes that Yosef was correct for making hishtadlus and for asking the sar hamashkim to help him, but the problem was that he said twice זכרתני, הזכרתני, requesting that the sar hamashkim remember him. He repeated this request twice, which was too much hishtadlus, and showed that he trusted in the sar hamashkim.⁶

Reb Shlomo Kluger (Imrei Shefer, Chanukah) also discusses this Midrash. He writes, "The Yefeh Toar asks correctly, is it forbidden for a person to make hishtadlus? ... Must he rely on a miracle? Why is Yosef taken to task

for doing hishtadlus? On the contrary, Chazal say, 'Perhaps a person can be idle and do nothing, but behold it states וברכתך בכל אשר תעשה, that Hashem blesses us when we do!'"

Reb Shlomo Kluger answers, "I think that a person should certainly make hishtadlus according to the rules of nature, and he shouldn't rely on miracles. He should do hishtadlus according to the path of nature. But when a person doesn't need the salvation right away, only later on, he shouldn't make hishtadlus now. If he has strong bitachon in Hakadosh Baruch Hu and he believes that Hashem has the ability to turn nature around and to create something from nothingness, he shouldn't engage in natural means of hishtadlus for something that he needs in the future, and it isn't so pressing at the moment. When the time arrives that he needs the salvation, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't yet bring the miracle, that is when he can make hishtadlus according to the rules of nature. We find in Chazal (Sotah 48:), 'If a person has parnassah for today and he wants to make parnassah for tomorrow, he is מוקטני אמונה, from the people who have a low level of emunah.' Why should he worry about tomorrow? Until tomorrow, Hashem can help. Also, it states (Beitzah 16.) "Hillel had a different approach: He would say ברוך ה' יום ויום. This means he had a high level of bitachon in Hakadosh Baruch Hu and didn't do hishtadlus from one day to the next. Someone who doesn't have such a high level of bitachon makes hishtadlus... to earn a lot of money, so he will have money in advance for his family that will last for a long time. He is afraid to wait until later because, maybe later, he won't find a way to earn parnassah according to the rules of nature, and he doesn't have bitachon in Hashem.

"This was Yosef's error: When he explained the dream to the sar hamashkim,

6. Rabbeinu b'Chayei writes, "One shouldn't trust in hishtadlus, only in Hakadosh Baruch Hu. This is what Dovid HaMelech said (Tehillim 62:6) "אך לאלקים דומי נפשי כי ממנו תקותי", "Only to Hashem should you hope, my soul, for my hope is from Him." Man's hope is Hashem, not his hishtadlus."

it was three days before the sar hamashkim was taken out of prison. If Yosef had fully trusted in Hashem, he wouldn't have made hishtadlus the moment after he explained the dream to the sar hamashkim. He would have waited until the third day when the sar hamashkim would leave jail, and on that day, he could make hishtadlus and ask the sar hamashkim to speak on his behalf to Pharaoh. Although, at that time, perhaps his words wouldn't have had such an effect and impact on the sar hamashkim as now when he interpreted the dream, nevertheless, Hakadosh Baruch Hu has other ways to save him. Why should he ask two days early? Therefore, since Yosef asked two days early, he was punished with two years in jail. A year for each day, as the *miraglim* were punished for forty years because of the forty days they spied Eretz Yisrael - a year for a day."

There is a third way to understand this Midrash, and we begin with a story with Reb Aharon of Titayov zt'l, a grandson of the Baal Shem Tov zt'l. (His father was Reb Hersh, a son of the Baal Shem Tov). At one point in his life, he was a concealed tzaddik. People didn't pay attention to him or to his needs because they didn't realize his great levels. His family suffered from poverty. Once, Reb Aharon couldn't take the distress of his family anymore, and after maariv, he announced in the beis medresh that he is a grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, and why isn't anyone helping him?

His announcement inspired them, and they immediately began planning to help him.

After everyone went home, Reb Aharon thought about what he had done and regretted that he trusted in human beings and left his usual way of trusting solely in Hashem. He davened all night long amidst bitter tears that Hashem should cause everyone to forget everything that occurred that night.

This story was repeated by Reb Dovid Moshe of Tchorokov zt'l and he added that

with this story, we can understand the pasuk (Bereishis 40:23) ולא זכר שר המשקים את יוסף וישכחהו "The sar hamashkim did not remember Yosef, and he forgot him." He explains that the pasuk is saying ולא זכר the sar hamashkim didn't remember Yosef, and that is because Yosef davened וישכחהו, that he should forget him. After Yosef made hishtadlus and asked the sar hamashkim to help him, he immediately regretted what he did and davened that the sar hamashkim should forget his request. Reb Dovid Moshe added, "This is the highest form of bitachon!"

He said that this is also the intention of the Midrash on the pasuk (Tehillim 40:5) אשרי הגבר אשר שם ה' מבטחו ולא פנה אל רהבים "Praiseworthy is the man who made Hashem his trust," and did not turn to the haughty..." The beginning of the pasuk praises someone who has bitachon, and the end of the pasuk expresses the negative side of someone who trusts in people. But the midrash says that both parts of the pasuk refer to Yosef! The Midrash is difficult to understand because it first praises Yosef for trusting in Hashem, then states that Yosef erred because he shouldn't have trusted in the sar hamashkim.

Reb Dovid Moshe of Tchorokov zt'l explains that the entire pasuk praises Yosef. Yosef only trusted in the sar hamashkim for a moment. Immediately after Yosef requested the sar hamashkim to help him, he regretted what he did, and he prayed to Hashem that the sar hamashkim should forget that he promised to speak to Pharaoh on his behalf.

Therefore, the pasuk is praising Yosef and saying אשרי הגבר אשר שם ה' מבטחו "Praiseworthy is the man who made Hashem his trust," and did not turn to the haughty..." The second half of the pasuk also refers to Yosef because, in the end, Yosef didn't place his trust in the haughty sar hamashkim. In fact, he prayed that the sar hamashkim should forget his promise. Yosef placed his trust solely in Hashem.

This level of bitachon is beyond most of our levels, but each person, according to his level, can strengthen himself with bitachon.

Undeserved Kindness

Machzor Vitri writes that חנוכה comes from the word חנינה (or חנם), to give gifts, even to those who don't deserve them. The Ruzhiner *zt'l* explains, "On חנוכה, Hashem gives us bounty, similar to the blessings that descend on Rosh Hashanah. The difference is that on Rosh Hashanah, we receive the bounty solely if we are worthy, and on Chanukah, we receive the bounty even if we don't deserve it."

Rashi (*Bereishis* 8:11) says that the dove that Noach sent from the *teivah* said, "Ribono Shel Olam! May my *parnassah* be bitter like an olive, but given from Your hands, and not sweet like honey, given by a human being." Rebbe Moshe of Razvadov *zt'l* says that these words hint at Chanukah. The dove represents the Jewish nation (see *Brachos* 53:). They say to Hashem, "יהיו מזונותי מרורין בזית", let my *parnassah* come from Chanukah when we use זית שמן, olive oil, because then the *parnassah* comes from Hakadosh Baruch Hu's compassionate hand. We prefer that over the *parnassah* that comes from Rosh Hashanah, מתוקין כדבש, the time of year when we eat an apple with honey because then it is בידי בשר ודם, dependent on man's deeds. If one deserves, he receives; if he doesn't deserve, he doesn't."

Parnassah and all the brachos come when we light Chanukah *lecht*, but that shouldn't be our focus. We light the *lecht* because it is a mitzvah and because we want to publicize the *nisim*. The *parnassah* and bounty will certainly come in this merit, but we shouldn't think about that when we perform the mitzvah. This is hinted in Chazal (*Shabbos* 22.),

אסור להרצות מעות כנגד נר חנוכה. We can translate it to mean, "It is forbidden to *want* money when lighting the Chanukah candles." However, when we perform the mitzvah properly, we will receive many brachos and yeshuos, b'ruchniyos and b'gashmiyos.⁷

You Are the Kohen Gadol, and Your Home is the Beis HaMikdash

The Midrash (*Tanchuma*, *Behaloscha*) says that Hakadosh Baruch Hu told Moshe to tell Aharon that he has the best portion. "When the Beis HaMikdash is destroyed, the korbanos will end, but your portion is to light the menorah, and that will remain forever."

The Ramban asks that lighting the menorah also ended when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed! In what way was Aharon's portion more significant?

The Ramban answers, "The Midrash must be referring to the mitzvah of Chanukah *lecht*. This continues after the Churban..."

The Yismach Yisrael (*Behaloscha* 4) says that we understand from this Ramban that when one lights Chanukah *lecht*, it is a continuation of the Beis HaMikdash, and the person who lights the candles is like the kohen gadol lighting the menorah in the Beis HaMikdash. The simplest Yid becomes like a kohen gadol, and his home becomes a Beis HaMikdash when he lights the Chanukah *lecht*.

We say in Al HaNissim הדליקו נרות בחצרות קדש, that the kohanim lit the menorah in the courtyards. The *miforshim* ask that the menorah was lit in the *Heichal* and not in the courtyard/חצר of the Beis HaMikdash.

The Sar Shalom of Belz *zt'l* answers that we are referring to the courtyards of every Jewish home. On Chanukah, one's courtyard

7. In parashas Toldos, the Torah tells how Yaakov Avinu received the brachos from Yitzchak Avinu. The word לו is repeated several times in the pasukim. (27:25-27) ויגש לו ויאכל ויבא לו יין וישת... וישק לו. The Tzvi l'Tzaddik (*Bluzhev*) *zt'l* explains that ל"ו hints at the thirty-six Chanukah *lecht*. This means we receive Yitzchak's brachos yearly when we light the Chanukah *lecht*.

(where he lights Chanukah lecht) becomes חצרות קדשׁיך, holy like the Beis HaMikdash.

The *Rishonim* teach that Chanukah lecht resemble the Menorah in the Beis HaMikdash. For example, the Ran (Shabbos 21.) explains why we may not derive pleasure from the Chanukah lecht. He writes, "The mitzvah was established because of the miracle that occurred with the Menorah. Therefore, they made its laws similar to the Menorah. This is why it is forbidden to derive any pleasure from it."

Also, the Kol Bo (siman 44) discusses the minhag that some people have to change the wicks of the Chanukah menorah every day. He says it is in memory of the wicks of the Menorah, which were changed each night.

In הנרות הללו, we say ואין לנו רשות להשתמש בהם "We don't have permission to use the Chanukah lecht, only to see them." Isn't it obvious that we may see the Chanukah lecht? Why does this need to be mentioned? The answer is that there is a prohibition to gaze at and enjoy the beauty of the lights of the Menorah in the Beis HaMikdash (see Pesachim 26.). The Chanukah lecht are similar to the Menorah of the Beis HaMikdash, and this is the reason it had to be spelled out that we are permitted to look at the Chanukah lecht.

The Chiddushei HaRim zt'l said that lighting the Chanukah lecht is in some ways even greater than the Menorah in the Beis HaMikdash. If the lamps of the Menorah of the Beis HaMikdash were blown out, the kohen is obligated to light them again. But

when the Chanukah lecht become extinguished, they don't need to be relit. This is because the light of the Chanukah menorah shines in the neshamah of the Jewish nation, even after the light was extinguished.

Reb Chaim Palagi (Refuah v'Chaim 71) quotes the Zohar that when the kohen lit the Menorah in the Beis HaMikdash, there was *rachamim* in the world, similar to when we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. Reb Chaim Palagi says this also occurs when we light the Chanukah lecht. Immense *rachamim* flows, similar to what is achieved with the shofar, and midas hadin turns around and becomes *rachamim*.⁸

Segulos of Chanukah

It states (Tehillim 124:7) והפח נשבר ואנחנו נמלטנו, "The trap broke, and we escaped." Some say that this pasuk hints at the Chanukah *lecht* because הפ"ח נשבר means to break פ"ח (gematria 88) into half, and you will have 44, the amount of lecht that we light on Chanukah. (36 lamps, plus 8 שמשים). Some say that פ"ח alludes to Chanukah (without dividing it in half) because as we light 44 lamps below, Hashem in heaven does the same, and together there are 88, פ"ח, lamps.

The Kedushas Levi (Drushim l'Chanukah ד"ה להדליק נר) adds that the roshei teivos of הננוכה is gematria 88, פ"ח. So, the pasuk is referring to Chanukah, and it states, ואנחנו נמלטנו, that we escaped and were saved. This alludes to the salvations that occur on Chanukah.⁹

8. About the menorah of the Beis HaMikdash, the Baal HaTurim (Terumah) writes that when the Torah discusses the Menorah, the letter סמ"ך isn't mentioned. The letter סמ"ך represents Satan. There is no סמ"ך because when the Menorah was lit, there was no Satan and no dangers. We can add that the same occurs when we light the Chanukah lecht. There is no Satan, and there are no dangers.

In the home of Reb Shlomo Alter zt'l (a grandson of the Chidushei HaRim zt'l) they would light a candle whenever there was a need for a *yeshuah*. If someone was ill, or there was a ילידת, or even when the weather was harsh, they would light a candle. It seems that he received this custom from his holy ancestors. From the Baal HaTurim we mentioned, we understand the logic behind it. Lighting candles banishes the kelipos, the Satan, and it brings yeshuos.

9. A chasid came to the Lechovitzer zt'l and cried that he was going through financially difficult times. He

It states (Tehillim 115:17) לֹא הַמֵּתִים יִדְלָלוּ יי"ה, "Neither will the dead praise Hashem..." The Chidushei HaRim zt'l said that we can understand from this pasuk an opposite lesson: When people praise Hashem, they will live. Chanukah was established to praise Hashem, so this holiday is mesugal for a long life.

This is also alluded to in Mishlei (16:15) באור פני מלך חיים, "In the light of the King's countenance is life." With the light of Chanukah, we merit life.

Another hint is from Chazal (Shabbos 22): "The light of Chanukah should be on the left and the mezuzah on the right." The mezuzah represents long life as it states (Devarim 11:21) למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם, "So that your days may increase and the days of your children..." So, also Chanukah lecht is *mesugal* for long life.

Rebbe Moshe Kobriner zt'l said that Chanukah lecht brings *refuos* to the world.¹⁰

explained that in addition to his debts, he also has to marry off his children, and he doesn't have money for the dowry and expenses.

The rebbe asked him, "What do you do for parnassah?"

He answered that he sold honey but added that he earned just a paltry sum of money from each sale.

The rebbe said, "Listen carefully to what I tell you: When the next person comes to buy honey, tell him a price. When he agrees, tell him you will sell it to him for double that amount. When he agrees, double the price again. Keep going on this way... Keep doubling the price, endlessly."

When the chasid left the rebbe's home, he thought to himself, "How can I ask so much money for a jar of honey?" But the rebbe's words were holy to him; he believed in tzaddikim and decided to listen to the rebbe's instructions. He came home and someone knocked at the door. It was the priest of the city. The priest excused himself and said, "I don't generally buy from Jews, but the person I usually buy from ran out of honey, and I need honey, urgently. That's why I came to you."

The Yid said, "A jar of honey costs a thousand rubles." The priest agreed to this price. Money wasn't an issue for him. He had plenty of money... and he needed the honey. The chasid stuttered a drop, and then he told the priest that the actual price was two thousand rubles. He continued in this manner, raising the price until it was enough to cover all his debts and marry off all his children, and then, he finalized the sale.

When the chasid told the rebbe the great miracle that occurred, the Rebbe said, "Why did you stop? Why didn't you ask for more money? Whatever you would ask for, he would have given it to you. Even if you would have told him that you would sell him the honey only if he abandons his religion, he would have agreed to that, too. That would have brought a spirit of purity to the entire world, and then the geulah sheleimah would have come..."

The lesson is for Chanukah. There are so many miracles that occur every day. However, don't settle for small miracles. ערכתי נר למשיחי, ask for the coming of Moshiach. It can be attained.

The Gemara (Bava Kama 87.) says, חרש שוטה וקטן פגיעתן רעה. Literally, this means that when one meets up with a deaf person, an insane person, or a child, he ends up losing because if they cause him damage, they don't have to pay for it, but if he harms them, he must pay.

We will explain this phrase of Chazal b'derech remez. One translation of פגיעה is tefillah (see Brachos 26:). Thus, the phrase can be translated as "The deaf, the fool, and the children pray when it is רעה for them, when they have a problem." When something doesn't go their way, or they are struggling with some difficulty, they remember to pray, but when everything is good, they don't. This is the meaning of פגיעתן רעה, they pray when they have a problem. Whereas the wise, clever people also pray when everything is good. And when they experience a yeshua, they continue to pray because they know that things can become even better. There is no limit to Hashem's kindness and compassion, so why stop praying when matters start improving and things are more or less ok? They can ask for more, and they will receive it.

10. A father brought his infant son to the Ribnitzer Rebbe zt'l (when the rebbe was in Los Angeles for Chanukah.)

A hint is from the tefillah יקום פרקן (which we say on Shabbos). It states there בריות גופא ונהורא מעליא, "Health for the body and a divine light." We understand that when we have the "divine lights" of Chanukah, there will be health.

Furthermore, מלך להדליק נר חנוכה is gematria רופא נאמן.¹¹

Chanukah is also mesugal for abundant parnassah. The Chiddushei HaRim zy'a (quoted in Sifsei Tzaddik, Chanukah, 3) explains the pasuk (Mishlei 3:16) ארך ימים בימינה בשמאולה עשר וכבוד, "Length of days is in its right hand; in its left hand are riches and honor." The left hints at the Chanukah lecht which are lit on the left side of the entrance. From this mitzvah comes riches and honor.¹²

The father told the rebbe that his son was born prematurely and was placed in an incubator with a bandage over his eyes to protect him from the strong light. However, the bandage fell off, and the child became blind in both eyes, r'l.

The rebbe stared forcefully at the Chanukah lecht, and then looked at the child. Then he looked again at the Chanukah lecht, and once again, at the child. After repeating this several times, the rebbe announced, "Baruch Hashem, the child sees with his right eye." The rebbe continued looking at the lecht and then at the child, and then he said, "The child still doesn't see with his left eye, but eventually he will."

Twenty years later, the rebbe received an invitation to the chasunah of this child, who now saw well with both eyes.

11. Chanukah are days להודות ולהלל, to praise Hashem, and the Arizal teaches that they are days of הוד. The attribute of הוד is associated with healing (as is taught in the holy sefarim). This is another source the Chanukah is mesugal for healing (Shaar Yissaschar, Yemei Orah 14).

The Gemara (Bava Kama 85a) says, מכאן שנתנה רשות לרופא לרפאות, "From this pasuk... the doctors were given permission to heal." Some say that רשות hints at Chanukah, the holiday whose meals are a רשות, not obligatory. מכאן, from these meals, נתנה רשות לרופא לרפאות, comes healing to the Jewish nation.

A Yid from Komemius, Eretz Yisrael, tells that one day, he awoke and couldn't see clearly. Everything he saw appeared fuzzy and double. Frightened by this sudden change in his vision, he immediately went to doctors, but after several examinations, they determined there was no cure for his condition.

This occurred during Chanukah. He cried and poured out his heart as he sat and stared continuously at the Chanukah lecht. His tefillos were answered, and his eyesight was healed, much to the amazement of the doctors. This isn't surprising because these are days of miracles and refuos, beyond and above the constraints of nature.

Reb Itzekel of Pshevorsk zt'l lived in Aix-les-Bains, France. The Rosh Yeshiva there was Reb Chaim Yitzchak Chaykin zt'l, a student of the Chofetz Chaim zt'l. A bachur in the yeshiva had a cancerous growth in his throat r"l. The doctors determined that surgery was the only chance for this bachur to survive. The problem was that the required surgery was very risky because it was in the neck, and a tiny error could be fatal.

Reb Chaykin went to Reb Itzekel for advice. Reb Itzekel replied, "I still have wicks from Chanukah. [Chanukah was three weeks earlier]. Place the wicks on the bachur's neck. He should stay home for three days, and b'ezras Hashem, he will have a *refuah sheleimah*."

The bachur did as instructed. After three weeks, he returned to the doctor for a checkup. The doctor was shocked at the results. He was totally healed!

12. Sifsei Tzaddik adds that this is the reason behind the custom of Chanukah gelt. It represents the wealth that Hashem bestows upon us these days.

The Gemara (Shabbos 151b) writes, "We have a tradition that a young Torah scholar does not become poor." The Gemara asks that we see that they do become poor sometimes. The Gemara answers, "If it happens that they become poor, הדווי אפתחה לא מיהדר, they don't go around begging at doors." This means that they

Chazal (Beitzah 32b) say, "Whoever has to come on to the table of others, the world is dark for him." On Chanukah, there has to be light. And therefore we understand that on Chanukah, Hashem will bestow wealth and honor.

Serve Hashem with Warmth

One of the primary segulos of Chanukah lecht is that with it, we merit children talmidei chachamim.

Someone once became a Rav, a leader of a community, and he asked the Rayatz of Lubavitz zt'l for counsel. How should he give mussar and direct his kehillah in the path of the Torah?

The Rayatz replied with a mashal:

A wealthy person went to a hot bath resort. As he bathed in the hot springs, someone gave him a massage. The rich man enjoyed the massage immensely. Every time the massager beat the wealthy person and forcibly bent his muscles, the wealthy man emitted sounds of "Ahhh!" showing that he enjoyed it. After the massage, he paid the person who hit him.

There was a poor person there. He thought that the wealthy person enjoyed being hit. So he followed the wealthy man home, and when they were outside the rich man's home, the poor man hit him several times. "Isn't this great?" the poor man said with a smile. "You probably enjoy it immensely!"

The wealthy man shouted at him angrily. The poor man didn't catch on yet and asked the rich man to pay him for his exemplary service.

The wealthy man called the police and had him removed from his grounds.

The poor man didn't understand what he did wrong and why he wasn't paid like the person at the hot bath resort. One day, he gathered courage and returned to the wealthy person with humility and tears and asked for an explanation. The rich man understood that he sincerely wanted to understand, so he explained it to him. "When I am in a sauna, each hit that I receive goes deeply into my flesh, and it is good for me emotionally and physically. I am willing to pay a lot of money for a massage. But you

don't become so poor until they need to collect tzedakah.

The Ahavas Yisrael of Vizhnitz zt'l explained the words of the Gemara אהדורי אפתחה לא מיהדר, that he doesn't go around the doors, according to *drush*, as follows: "He wasn't careful to light the Chanukah lecht in the doorway with a hidur mitzvah." The Gemara is saying that a Torah scholar doesn't become poor. If he does, it is a sign that he wasn't cautious about lighting Chanukah lecht with the proper hidur mitzvah.

A grandson of the Divrei Chaim zt'l was poor and was forced to collect money to support his family. At one home, the homeowner said, "I will ask you a question, and if you give a satisfactory answer, I will give you a nice sum of money."

He quoted the Gemara (Shabbos 151:), which says, "We have a kabbalah that a talmid chacham doesn't become poor...and if they become poor, they don't go around, door to door, collecting money."

The wealthy person asked the grandson of the Divrei Chaim, "But here you are, a talmid chacham and a grandson of the Divrei Chaim, collecting money door-to-door!"

The grandson of the Divrei Chaim replied, "You didn't read the Gemara correctly. It means, "If you see a talmid chacham who is poor, it is because he doesn't go door-to-door to collect money."

The Beis Yisrael zt'l repeated this story and added, "Going door-to-door doesn't refer exclusively to worldly doors. The Gemara is saying that if he is poor, it is because he isn't knocking on the doors of heaven. If he would daven, especially at times of *eis ratzon*, he would receive everything he needs.

hit me without any heat... and therefore, you deserved to be punished."

The Rayatz explained to the new Rav that if he wanted to give mussar to people, there had to be a lot of love and warmth, and then they would accept his teachings. But if he told them how to act without giving them any kind words, warmth, and love, they wouldn't want to listen to what he tells them.

We can say that this is hinted in the Chazal, הרגיל בנר הויין לו בנים תלמידי חכמים, "When one is accustomed to lighting Chanukah lecht, he will merit children talmidei chachamim. Fire is hot. This hints that with warmth and love, you can merit raising your children to Torah and to yiras Shamayim.

The Gemara also says there, הזהיר בציצית, הזהיר בקידוש היום זוכה וממלא גרבי יין, "When one is cautious with the mitzvah of tzitzis, he merits beautiful clothing. When one is cautious with kiddush on Shabbos, he merits having barrels of wine." These times the word הזהיר "When one is cautious" is used. Whereas, when it discusses lighting Chanukah lecht, the Gemara says הרגיל בנר, when he is accustomed to lighting Chanukah lecht. Shem Mishmuel (5680) explains that the Gemara is hinting to us הרגיל בנר, one should become accustomed to serving Hashem with "a fire," with *hislahavus*.¹³

This can be hinted in the words (Tehillim 132:17) עָרַבְתִּי נֵר לְמִשְׁיַחִי, "I have set up a lamp for My anointed/Moshiach." When mitzvos are performed with warmth, it brings Moshiach.

It states (Malachim 1, 1:1) והמלך דוד זקן בא בימים, "And the king Dovid was old, he came into his old age, and they covered him with clothes, but he was not warmed." Rebbe Hirsh Riminover zt'l (Be'eros Hamayim, Toldos, Haftarah) explained that Dovid represents Moshiach. בא בימים, it was time for Moshiach to come, but the people were performing mitzvos without warmth, and therefore he didn't come yet.

Shabbos Chanukah

Reb Henoch of Alexander zt'l (Chashava l'Tovah) taught, "The good Yidden (tzaddikim) say that this Shabbos is a great Shabbos, and on this Shabbos, one can attain clarity in emunah in Hashem." He explains that every Shabbos teaches us emunah, as it states (Shemos 31:13) אַךְ אֵת שַׁבְּתוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ... לְדַעַת כִּי אֲנִי ה', "Only keep My Sabbaths! ... to know that I am Hashem..." Chanukah is also a time to teach us emunah and to believe in His miracles. When both come together on Shabbos Chanukah, it is a very special time to acquire emunah in Hashem.¹⁴

The Meor Einayim (Mikeitz) writes, "Hashem gave Shabbos to the Jewish nation so we can

13. Chazal say עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק, "We light Chanukah lecht until the רגל, feet, leave the market (Shabbos 21:). We can explain that רגל hints at רגילות, being accustomed to doing things. A person can do good all day but grows accustomed to it and gets bored. We must get rid of this attitude of רגילות and always serve Hashem with a new spirit as if it were the beginning and he never did this mitzvah before. This can be hinted in the words עד שתכלה רגל, "We light Chanukah lecht until the רגל, feelings of familiarity, cease and every time we serve Hashem it is fresh and new.

14. In Lecha Dodi we say התעוררי התעוררי כי בא אורך קומי אורי. The Beis Avraham zt'l teaches that אורך and אורי allude to the light of Chanukah. This is because אורך can be read as אורך, the light of Chanukah, which is placed lower than twenty amos (ר is twenty). And אורי stands for אור י, that the Chanukah lecht must be higher than ten tefachim (י is gematria ten). It hints at the great light of Chanukah, and therefore, it states התעוררי התעוררי, awaken! There are great holy lights that illuminate the world. Let's awaken and utilize this unique opportunity!

A chasid came to Rebbe Asher of Stolin zt'l for Shabbos Chanukah. It was also rosh chodesh. In the afternoon, this chasid slept on a bench in the beis medresh. Every few moments he woke up and said with love, "Ah, Shabbos! Shabbos!" A few moments afterwards, he said, "Ah, Shabbos Chanukah." Some minutes

be close to Him. When one keeps Shabbos, all his sins are forgiven. However, it is hard to tap into the holiness of Shabbos because the holiness of Shabbos is so extremely exalted. שבת is Hashem's name, how can a person ascend to this high, exalted place? On Chanukah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, *keviyachol*, comes down lower than ten *tefachim* to the people at very low levels and draws them up so they too can experience Shabbos. This is the explanation of פתילות שאין מדליקין בהן בהנוכה, 'Wicks that one can't use on Shabbos, one may light with them on Chanukah.' The wicks represent people, שאין מדליקין בהן, who don't become illuminated on Shabbos, מדליקין בהן בהנוכה, they can become illuminated on Chanukah. Hashem, Himself, *keviyachol*, lowers Himself down to the person and kindles his neshamah."

Reb Yisrael of Ruzhin *zy'a* would repeat in the name of his father, Reb Shalom Shachna of Prohovitch *zy'a*, that the Shabbosim until Chanukah are alluded to in the words (Bereishis 1:2) וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֵהוֹ וּבִרְוֹ, "The earth was astonishingly empty..." Even the Shabbosim at the beginning of the year lack an element of shine and brilliance. But when Chanukah comes, it states, וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים יְהִי אוֹר, "Hashem said, there should be light," as from then on, one can more easily attach himself to the holiness of Shabbos.

Chanukah is for the People at Low Levels

The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* said that חנוכה"ה indicates that Chanukah is for everyone, as they are. כה means- "As you are."

The Chidushei HaRim notes that not everyone can approach the king, certainly not prisoners. But when the king travels, it is his custom to visit the prisons, and then the prisoners can shout out to the king and beg for his mercy. Chanukah is that time when Hashem visits the "jails" and brings the prisoners out. The Sfas Emes says that Chanukah is for the people at lower levels or *beinanim* (mediocre levels). Hashem brings a great holy light down below, to their levels, so they can climb up from there and attach themselves to kedushah.

Reb Asher of Stoln *zt'l* (Beis Aharon Chanukah 47.) said that this is hinted in the brachah that we say before *Shemonah Esrei* at Shacharis, מוּשְׁפִיל גַּאִים עַדִי אֶרֶץ וּמוֹגֵבִיָּה שְׁפִלִים עַדִי מְרוֹם, "He humbles the haughty to the ground and lifts the low on high." This alludes to what occurs during the days of Chanukah. Hakadosh Baruch Hu lowers divine bounty, the divine light of Chanukah, and He brings it down to the earth. The purpose is to raise שְׁפִלִים עַדִי מְרוֹם, to elevate those who are low to very high levels.

The Chiddushei HaRim (Likutei HaRim Chanukah) teaches, "(Chazal say Shabbos 21:), 'The mitzvah is to place the Chanukah lecht by the doorway of the house, on the outside.'¹⁵

later he awoke and said, "Ah, Shabbos rosh chodesh!" The son of Rebbe Asher (the Beis Aharon *zt'l*) saw this, and he quickly called his father to the beis medresh to see how this chasid slept. The rebbe came and watched this chasid for a while and said, אַיִן שְׁלֹאֲפֵט עַרְוִי אֵי אֵיד, "He definitely sleeps like a Yid!"

Even if someone feels that this level is distant from him, the story is a reminder of how the early chasidim would invest in the special days of the year. Even in their sleep, they remembered and felt the kedushah of the day.

15. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 65:22) writes that when the Romans were about to enter the Beis HaMikdash, they wanted a Jewish person to go in first. They chose Yosef MiShisa, a great rasha. They offered to let him keep whatever he took out. He went in and came out with the menorah. The goyim told him that the menorah was too precious to keep for himself. "It is fit for a king, not a regular person. Go in again, and this time, whatever you take, you can keep." Yosef MiShisa refused to go in another time. They tortured terribly, but Yosef MiShisa remained firm. He said, "It is bad enough that I angered my G-d once. Should I do so again?" The resha'im took him, placed him into an oil press, and killed him there with terrible

This mitzvah also shines for the people who fell for the street and all the foolishness out there. For those who are literally "outside" spiritually, the mitzvah shines for them, and they can become a new creation.¹⁶

The Sfas Emes (5632, נר א) writes, "This has remained for all generations. There is help during these days to do Hashem's will more than the standard order and hashgachah of the rest of the year. It is a path of miracles and wonders."¹⁷

yesurim. The entire time, Yosef MiShisa shouted, "Woe to me that I angered my Creator."

We wonder, how did Yosef MiShisa do teshuvah so quickly. He was a great rasha, agreeing to enter the Beis HaMikdash and remove the menorah, but then was moser nefesh not to go in another time. How did this occur?

One answer is that it was due to the immense kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash and the Menorah. A person, so far away from kedushah, entered the Beis HaMikdash and grabbed onto the menorah. This turned him around, and he became a brand-new, holy person. Even when they gave him terrible, unimaginable yesurim, he didn't break. His only distress at that time was that he had angered Hashem.

The Chanukah lecht have the kedushah of the Beis HaMikdash. So, with this mitzvah, one can turn around entirely and rise to the highest levels.

16. There are three levels of how one can perform the mitzvah of Chanukah lecht. (1) נר איש וביתו, which means one candle per home. This is the simplest level. (2) מוהדרין, those who seek to beautify the mitzvah, light one candle for each member of the household. (3) מוהדרין מן המהדרין, those who perform mitzvos in the best manner light lamps in accordance with the day of Chanukah.

The Sfas Emes (5646) explains, "This demonstrates that the days of Chanukah shine on all types of people of Bnei Yisrael." Some people are on low levels, and they keep the mitzvah in its simplest manner, and there are others who perform the mitzvah in more beautiful ways. The laws of Chanukah discuss the laws for all types and levels of Yidden because Chanukah is for everyone, to elevate them to higher levels.

The Magan Avraham (670) teaches "Impoverished youths (נערים) are accustomed to go door to door on Chanukah." The Sifsei Tzaddik zy'a explains that נערים, youths, hint to the people who are מנוער וריקם מן המצות, empty from mitzvos, chas v'shalom. They are poor in wisdom (עני בדעה). They are מבחוץ, outside of the kedushah. But on Chanukah, they can come close to kedushah. At this time, נפתח פתח, a door opens in heaven to accept them. This is why there is a custom of יסובבו על הפתחים, that they go around the doorways." They go around the doorways of heaven, which are opened to accept their teshuvah.

When one can't light Chanukah lecht, but he sees someone else's lecht, there is a brachah that he must say (see Shulchan Aruch 676:3). This hints at people who are distant from the kedushah – because one sees from afar – he also has a way to connect to the mitzvah of Chanukah lecht and to grow from that level.

People call Chanukah יום טוב אין די ויאכין, yom tov on a weekday because it is like a weekday, but it is a holiday. Work is permitted on Chanukah, and we wear regular clothes.

The expression also hints at the potential of Chanukah. The holiday is for people who are weekday-like people, people who aren't perfect in their actions. Chanukah is for them, to raise them.

The Gemara (Shabbos 22.) says that if one lights the Chanukah lecht above twenty amos, it is pasul because people don't see it. Nachal Yitzchak of Zutchke zt'l explains that the Gemara is hinting that if a person feels that Chanukah is too high and exalted for him and says that he doesn't see it and it doesn't relate to him, that is a problem. A person should know that Chanukah lecht is for him. It elevates him from the level he is on to higher levels.

17. The Gemara (Shabbos 22.) states that one should place the *ner* Chanukah in the doorway, on the left side, "So the *ner* Chanukah will be on the left, the mezuzah on the right, and the baal habayis, dressed in tzitzis, in between them." The roshei teivos of מוה"ט is מזוזה, הנוכה, טלית, needle. The Gemara says, "Open up for me

Also, the Sfas Emes (Chanukah 5635) writes, "These days, there is help from above to acquire in large measurements yiras Shamayim and to overcome and conquer the yetzer hara." The Sfas Emes explains that this is hinted in the Chazal that says (Shabbos 21:), "The mitzvah of Ner Chanukah, is to place it by the doorway, on the outside," and the outside represents yiras Shamayim. This is because the Gemara (Shabbos 31:) says, "Any person who has Torah without yiras Shamayim is like a caretaker who was given the keys to the inner door but didn't receive the keys to the outer door. How will he go inside?" This Gemara refers to yiras Shamayim as "the outer door". We light

Chanukah lecht outdoors, which tells us that with Chanukah lecht, we can attain yiras Shamayim.¹⁸

It states (Mishlei 20:27) גַּרְה' נְשָׁמַת אָדָם הַקֶּשֶׁת כָּל חֲדָרָי בְּטֶן, "Man's soul is Hashem's *ner*/lamp, which searches all the innermost parts." The Beis Avraham zt'l says (Chanukah) that חופש can be translated as freedom (see Shemos 21:26 לחפש ישלחו, "he shall set him free"). The Chanukah lecht frees the neshamah of a Yid from all *tumos* that are hidden within him.¹⁹

Therefore, let every person strengthen himself and invest in reviving and renewing his avodas Hashem.²⁰ When one tries, Hashem will help him.²¹

an opening the size of a needle, and I will open up for you an opening the size of the Ulam (of the Beis HaMikdash)." On these days, we open an opening of a בִּזְרוֹת, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu opens up for him so much more.

18. Someone came to the Magid of Mezritz zt'l seeking advice. He said that he couldn't overcome and push away the many thoughts that came to his mind while he was davening and learning. The Magid advised him to go to his student, the Or HaMeir, for counsel in this matter.

This man immediately went to the Or HaMeir's house. He arrived at nighttime and knocked on the door, but no one answered. It was a very cold night. He knocked again and again, but the door remained shut. Sometime later, he met the Or HaMeir and he asked him why he didn't answer the door. "The Magid sent me to speak to you!" The Or HaMeir replied, "I am the baal habayis of my house. I decide who comes in and who doesn't. You too must know that you are a baal habayis. You are the baal habayis over your mind. You can accept into your mind the thoughts that you want to think and block out whatever you don't want to think about."

With this story, we can explain the Chazal, which says, "So the *ner* Chanukah will be on the left, the mezuzah on the right, and the baal habayis, dressed in tzitzis, between them." He is called specifically baal habayis to indicate that with this mitzvah, it is mesugal that he will become a baal habayis, a person in control of his thoughts.

We can also explain that Chazal are hinting that if he is a baal habayis, that he controls his thoughts, his performance of the mitzvah of Chanukah is on a much higher and perfect level.

19. The Bnei Yissaschar (Hallel 1) teaches that Chanukah lecht saves from Gehinom. Kabbalah sefarim say that Gehinom is in the north, and north is to the left. (When facing mizrach, north is to the left.) In the zechus of the Chanukah lecht which are placed on the left side of the doorway, we are spared from the fire of Gehinom.

20. If Chanukah lecht are within the first three tefachim of the ground, it is *pasul* (see Shulchan Aruch 671:6). Tzaddikim taught that this hints that although Chanukah is about Hashem's light going down to people who are below ten tefachim, a person must do at least something to elevate himself. He can't be all the way down on the ground. He must take the first step towards improvement, and then Hashem will elevate him.

The dreidel has the four letters נגה"ש - the roshei teivos of נס גדול היה שם, "A great miracle occurred there." In this way, the dreidel publicizes the miracle. But the dreidel is small. Wouldn't it be better to hang up large posters with the words נס גדול היה שם on them? Wouldn't that be a greater *pirsumei nisa*, publicization of the

Everything is from Hashem

Pharaoh said (41:41) ראה נתתי אתך על כל ארץ מצרים, "See that I have appointed you over the entire land of Mitzrayim." Pharaoh wanted Yosef to think he had appointed and raised him to this high rank.

Yosef, on the other hand, told his brothers (45:8) וישמיני לאב לפרעה ולאדון לכל ביתו ומשל בכל ארץ מצרים, "Hashem made me a father to Pharaoh, a lord over his household, and a ruler over the entire land of Mitzrayim."

Yosef recognized that his honor and power came from Hashem, not Pharaoh.

miracle? The answer is that a poster stands in one place, whereas a dreidel moves around. Man's obligation is to be active, move, perform, and not remain stuck at one level.

This is hinted in the Gemara (Shabbos 22:) היה תופש נר חנוכה ועומד לא עשה ולא כלום, "He was holding a Chanukah menorah *and standing*, he didn't do anything at all." Rebbe Yisrael of Tchartkov zt'l said that the problem is that he is standing in one spot. A Yid should be growing and rising from level to level.

Beis Shamai hold פוחת והולך, that the first night of Chanukah, eight lights are lit, and each night, we light one less. Beis Hillel say מוסיף והולך, that the first night we light one, and each day, we add another lamp (see Shabbos 21:). The Chidushei HaRim zt'l points out that they both agree that one shouldn't be stagnant. One must constantly change. You cannot light the same number of lecht each night. This teaches us that a person must always grow and elevate himself, especially on Chanukah.

The Sifsei Tzaddik (Chanukah 3) quotes his grandfather, the Chidushei HaRim zt'l who told the following story:

Once, during Chanukah, chasidim came to the Chozeh of Lublin to ask for help with a certain *moser* (informer) who lived in their city and caused them a lot of tzaros. They wrote the moser's name on a kvittel and gave it to the Chozeh. When the Chozeh saw the kvittel he said, "But this person shines in all worlds!" The chasidim were shocked. How could that be? But they didn't dare to ask for an explanation. A bit later, they mentioned his name again to the Chozeh, and this time the Chozeh gave them a brachah that they should be saved from the moser's evil deeds.

When the opportunity arose, they asked the Chozeh for an explanation. Why did he first say that the man's neshamah shined in all worlds, and afterward, he saw that he was indeed a great rasha? The Chozeh explained that the first time they gave him the kvittel, this man was lighting Chanukah lecht. This brought a great light to his neshamah.

Generally, people learn from this story the power and potential of Chanukah lecht, that it can bring light and kedushah even to the neshamos of resha'im. But there is another lesson here: Shortly after the moser lit the Chanukah lecht, the Chozeh was able to see that he was a rasha. This is because it is true that Chanukah lecht have the potential to sanctify us, but it is up to the person to continue on that path. He must desire to grow and improve his ways. If he doesn't, after lighting the Chanukah lecht, it will not be long before he returns to where he was before, chalilah.

21. כשור לעול "like an ox that carries a yoke" is an expression used to mean that one should accept the yoke of Torah and mitzvos כשור לעול, like an ox that carries its yoke. Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa zt'l (Sfas Emes Avos, p.23) explains that when an ox plows a field, it never looks back at the freshly plowed field to see what it accomplished. Its focus is always to plow forward. This is how a person should serve Hashem. He shouldn't look back on his accomplishments. His focus should be always on the future, not on the past. When one follows this counsel, he will never come to *yeush*. He will never lose hope and despair. But when one looks back, he may be disappointed, due to his lack of accomplishment.

The Yevanim decreed that every Yid must write on their oxen's horns that they don't have a portion with the G-d of Yisrael. We can explain the significance of ox's horns in that they didn't want the Yidden to serve Hashem with the kind of service that oxen do. The Yevanim wanted them to look back, to delve into their failures and shortcomings because that would bring them to *yeush*.

Similarly, when Yosef left jail, Yosef knew that Hashem had freed him from prison, and Pharaoh had no say in the matter. We will prove this from two sources:

1) It states (41:14), ויריצהו מן הבור, "They rushed [Yosef] from the dungeon." The Rebbe of Ostrova zt'l (*Toldos Adam, Chanukah, 7th night*) writes:

"Let's think about this. Yosef was in prison for so long, unable to see the sun's light for years. There were no breaks or off days. After twelve years, there finally seemed to be hope. He could speak to Pharaoh and plead for his case! Why did they need to rush Yosef out of the dungeon? We would assume that Yosef would run with all his might to speak to Pharaoh and plead for his life. But it states, ויריצהו מן הבור, Pharaoh's messengers rushed Yosef out of prison. This is because Yosef HaTzaddik believed and understood that everything is from Hashem. His freedom from prison was from Hashem. It wouldn't happen a moment earlier or later than was planned Above. So, why rush for no reason?"

2) When Yosef stood before Pharaoh to decipher his dream, we would assume that Yosef would plead his case and say, "I was imprisoned for no reason... Please free me from jail..." But he didn't speak about his imprisonment because he knew that only Hashem, not Pharaoh, could save him from jail.

Yaakov sent his children down to Mitzrayim with a gift for the ruler of Mitzrayim. (43:11) קחו מזמרת הארץ בכליכם והורידו לאיש מנחה מעט צרי ומעט דבש נכאת ולט בטנים ושקדים "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.

Notice that Yaakov sent "a drop of balsam, a bit of honey." Shouldn't he have sent a more significant gift to the mighty ruler of Egypt?

The answer is that Yaakov Avinu knew that, ultimately, only Hashem could help. He needed to do *hishtadlus*, but he knew that minimal *hishtadlus* was sufficient.²²

Yosef told his brothers that if they bring their younger brother Binyamin (42:34) ואת הארץ תסחרו, "You may travel around the land." Rashi explains that תסחרו means to "go around." And Rashi explains that businesspeople are called סוחרים because "they go around looking for merchandise."

Why aren't businessmen named for their profession, which is to buy and sell? Why are they called for their journeys from one place to another?

This is because mainly what businessmen do is that they travel from here to there. The *parnassah* that they make comes from Hashem.

People say, "Money doesn't fall from heaven." Reb Bunim of Peshischa zt'l proved that this isn't true. Hashem can send money down from heaven.

Rebbe Bunim proved this from this week's parashah when the overseer of Yosef's house told the brothers (43:23) אלקיכם ואלקי אבותיכם נתן לכם מטמון באמתחתיכם, "Your G-d and the G-d of your fathers gave you a treasure in your sacks." The brothers were perplexed about how the money they thought they gave Yosef ended up in their bags. האיש אשר על בית יוסף, the overseer of Yosef's home, whom Chazal say was Menasheh, told them that

22. On Chanukah, the custom is to play with a dreidel. When one spins the dreidel, there is nothing that he can do to get the dreidel to fall on the winning letter. Even if he is the best spinner in the world and spins the dreidel with all his might, he still cannot predict or influence the outcome. Similarly, one works for a living and makes *hishtadlus*, but the outcome remains in Hashem's hands.

Another interesting observation is that a dreidel spins on a tiny point. This hints that even with a small *kabbalah*, everything can turn around.

they don't have to worry about that. Hashem put the money there.

So, we see that money can indeed fall from heaven.

Peace with Everyone

When one knows that everything is from Hashem, he will be at peace with everyone.

There is a mashal of someone who came home after a hard day's work. He comes to the sink to wash his hands for supper, but no water comes out. He turns the knobs in all directions, and he bangs on the faucet until it breaks. He then looks under the sink. He opens the pipes to find the problem. Why isn't water coming through?

His wife sees him doing this and says, "Why don't you call the water department? They are the ones who always bring us water, and they can bring you water now, too. You just need to pay the debt you owe them, and they will reconnect the water to our home." The husband thought that there was a problem with the knobs, the faucet, or pipes, but the problem came from the source of the water.

The nimshal is that there are people that are angry at this one and at that one because they think that their problems come from them. They forget that everything comes from Hashem, and there is no reason to be angry at anyone.

This can be the meaning of the pasuk (Mishlei 16:7) ברצות ה' דרכי איש גם אויביו ישרים אתו, "When Hashem favors a man's ways, even his enemies will make peace with him." When a person finds favor in Hashem's eyes because he attains the emunah that everything is from Hashem, he is at peace with everyone. He isn't angry at the person who spoke lashon hara about him or the person who took away his parnassah, and not at anyone else because he knows that everything comes from Hashem. And if this person didn't cause him harm, someone else would have done so.

There is another wonderful counsel from Reb Bunim of Pshischa *zt'l*, which can be used to resolve all disputes. The counsel is: (1) Focus on your fellow man's qualities. (2) Think about your own faults.

Your fellow man has many qualities. Train yourself to find the good in your fellow man. And think about your own faults. You will probably find that you lack many of the wonderful qualities that your fellow man has. Think about these matters, and you will be humble before your fellow man and at peace with him.

Yosef taught his brothers this process, so there would be peace among them. He told them (42:18), זאת עשו וחיו את האלקים אני ירא, "Do this and live, I fear Hashem." Yosef told them to focus on the fact that he has Yiras Shamayim. Yosef's brothers thought about their faults, as it states (42:21), אבל אשמים אנחנו על, אחינו, "We are guilty of what we did to our brother..." They had the two thoughts that led to peace. They thought about Yosef's qualities and their own faults, and this helped them respect and be *b'shalom* with their fellow man.

It states (42:20), ויעשו כן, "And they did so," but the pasuk doesn't tell us what they did. Reb Bunim explains that they followed Yosef's counsel to focus on his greatness and on their faults, and thereby, they were able to be at peace with him.

Reb Bunim of Peshischa said that it is a mitzvah to publicize this lesson, as it is a tried and proven approach for establishing peace among people and within family.

Humility

It states (Mishlei 3:34) ולענוים יתן חן, "To the humble, Hashem gives *chen*."

There was a tailor who had an excellent reputation. The poritz would buy clothes from him, and people would say, "If he is a good enough craftsman for the poritz, he must be an excellent tailor." They followed

the poritz's lead and bought their clothing from this tailor.

Once, the poritz asked the tailor to make him a suit and added, "Make sure that it comes out good."

The tailor replied, "Can I make something that isn't good?" Not the humblest thing to say.

The tailor sewed the suit, and the poritz brought it home to show it to his wife. His wife made a foul face and said, "I can't look at it. It has no *chen*."

The poritz returned the suit to the tailor and said, "I can't wear this. It has no *chen*... Sew it again and make it good this time."

The word went out. The poritz wasn't happy with the tailor's work. People stopped buying their clothes from him. He was more expensive than other tailors, and if the poritz wasn't satisfied with his work, his clothing obviously was not worth the price.

Brokenhearted, the tailor told Reb Bunim of Peshischa zt'l that his parnassah was at stake because people stopped coming to him.

Reb Bunim had an unusual solution. He said, "Undo the seams and sew it up again exactly as you made it the first time. This time, the poritz and his wife will be happy with the suit."

The tailor asked, "If they didn't like it the first time, why would they like it the second time if I made it exactly the same way?"

"Just do as I say," Reb Bunim told him.

The tailor had *emunas chachamim* and did as the rebbe recommended. When the poritz's wife saw the suit she said, "This is a beautiful suit. I'm so glad it turned out well this time." The poritz thanked the tailor for doing such a good job. Everyone heard that the poritz and his wife were happy with the tailor, and they began hiring him again.

But how did it happen? Wasn't it the same clothes as before?

Reb Bunim explained, "Whatever is made with humility, has *chen*, as it states ולענויים יתן ה'. The first time you made the clothing, you were proud, you thought you sewed the best clothes in the world, so your work didn't have *chen*. The second time, you made the clothes with a broken heart and with humility. And that's the reason it had *chen* in their eyes."

Yosef blessed Binyamin (43:29) אלקים יחנך בני, "May Hashem grant you *chen*, my son." The Yismach Yisrael says that Binyamin received *chen* because בני, which means child, alludes to young and humble. He felt humble, and humility is mesugal for *chen*. The Kli Yakar discusses Hashem's name הו"ה and shows that these letters have the smallest gematriya when spelled out in full. ה"א for example, is gematriya 6. ו"א is gematriya 13. י"ד is gematriya 20. All the other letters of the Aleph Beis have a much higher gematriya when spelled out in full. Hashem's name is comprised of the letters with the smallest gematriya to indicate that Hashem resides among the humble.²³

23. One aspect of humility is to be mevater.

Reb Moshe Goldish and his wife z'l were both niftar on the same day. As soon as Reb Moshe's levayah was over, his wife was niftarah.

This is their story:

Mrs. Goldish was orphaned at a young age, and her older brother, Avremel, moved from Romania to America so he could earn enough money to support his siblings and provide them with a dowry. Avremel himself got married only after setting up all his brothers and sisters.

One of his sisters married Moshe Goldish, and Avremel took care of all the wedding expenses. Additionally, he gave them a large sum of money as a dowry to help them begin their lives together.

The Chanukah lecht are lit lower than ten tefachim. One must bend down to light the lamps. The Bas Ayin says that this is because miracles result from the Chanukah lecht, and they begin when one bends over and is humble.

Reb Meir of Premishlan zt'l said that when a Yid bends to the will of others and is humble, he is "a Goldener Yid," a Yid made of gold. He said that it is alluded to in a pasuk that we read each day of Chanukah: (Bamidbar 7) כַּף אַחַת עֶשְׂרֵה זָהָב מְלֵאָה קְטָרֶת "One spoon [weighing] ten [shekels] of gold filled with incense." Reb Meir of Premishlan zt'l translated the pasuk like this:

כַּף אַחַת means אֵינְךָ בִּיג, once to bend, עֶשְׂרֵה, ten, which is יו"ד, which stands for "a Yid." זָהָב is gold.

The Kli Yakar (48:16) writes, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu chooses the humble more. Whoever has humility, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will elevate him very high..."

The Shach al HaTorah says that the כַּף jug of oil that was found by the Chanukah

miracle was the same פְּכִים קְטָנִים, small jugs, that Yaakov Avinu went back to retrieve (see Rashi Bereishis 32:25). The key word is קְטָנִים, small. Reb Moshe Leib Sassover zt'l says that the jug was small, and Hashem performs miracles for the small and humble.

Battling the Yetzer Hara

There is an unusual expression of praise stated in the על הניסים. We thank Hashem על המלחמות, for the wars. If we said, "We thank Hashem for giving us victory, we would understand, but why do we thank Hashem for the wars? The Ponovitzer Rav zt'l answers that we can't thank Hashem for victory because we never finished the battle. Until Moshiach comes, we are at battle. Therefore, על המלחמות is praising Hashem that we are not giving up and we are still battling the war. We aren't fighting the war in a literal sense, but spiritually, we are still battling against the influences and ideologies of the Yevanim, and we thank Hashem that we didn't give up and are still fighting.²⁴

Moshe rented a dilapidated house in Romania and renovated it with the money from his dowry. He didn't do this to live there. He planned to sublet it at a much higher rental rate. The problem was that when the owner saw the beautifully renovated home, he demanded a much higher rent from the Goldish's.

Reb Moshe could have fought in court. After all, he signed a contract with the owner for the lower rent. Furthermore, he could have demanded that the owner pay him for the house's increase in value due to his renovations. But Reb Moshe didn't want a fight and decided not to go to beis din. He preferred to be mevater, and he gave up the apartment.

But he needed money. He sent a letter to his brother-in-law Avremel asking for help. Avremel replied, "I see you don't know how to take care of your money. If you want more money, come to America, yourselves. I'll help you here." Not having much of a choice, they boarded a ship to America - the last boat to leave Romania before the Nazis invaded.

The war began. Many Yidden in Romania were murdered immediately after the invasion. Boyaner chasidim said, "Moshe Goldish was mevater, and the merit of the vatranus pushed off his death sixty years."

This story is a lesson in vatranus, in living with humility and being extremely careful not to raise machlokes. As in this story, this approach grants people life.

24. It states (Devarim 28:1) וְנָתַן ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ עֲלֶיךָ וְעַל כָּל גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ "Hashem, your G-d, will place you supreme above all the nations of the earth." The Sfas Emes (5661) quotes the pasuk and notes that על יון spells עליון, above Yavan. The time *mesugal* to be elevated above the *kelipah* of Yavan is Chanukah.

It also states (Tehillim 113:7) מִן־הַצִּיָּפוֹת יָרִים אֶבְרָהָם "from the dung heap He raises up the needy." We can explain that אֶבְרָהָם can be read as אֶב יון. Rashi (Bereishis 45:8) on the words וַיִּשְׁמְעֵנִי לְאֵב לְפָרְעָה explains that אֶב means להבר ולפטרון

The holy *Chashmonaim* were a small group fighting a war against a mighty, large army. One wonders, "Was this a war? It appeared to be a suicide mission. They would undoubtedly lose! The answer is that the *Chashmonaim* understood that they must wage this war to save Klal Yisrael, so they put aside logic and common sense and threw themselves into the battle.

It states in Daniel (7:6), *ווארו אחרי כנמר*, that Balshatzar, the king of Bavel, saw a leopard in his dreams. Rashi writes, "This represents the kingship of Antiochus." A leopard has the attribute of *עזות*, as it states in *Pirkei Avos* (5:2), *הוי עז כנמר*, "Be brazen like a leopard." The Shem MiShmuel (תרע"ט ליל ד) says that this tells us that the Yevanim had the attribute of *עזות*. The *Chashmonaim* adapted and acquired this attitude from the Yevanim. Only, the *Chashmonaim* used the trait of *עזות*, brazenness, to be firm in their resolve not to allow anything to get in the way. A large army didn't frighten them. They went out to war and won.

Let's learn from our enemies and be brazen against the yetzer hara.²⁵

Rosh Chodesh

In the Musaf of rosh chodesh, we say, *ראשי חדשים לעמך נתת זמן כפרה לכל תולדותם*, "You gave Rosh chodesh to Your nation, a

forgiveness for all their תולדותם." The Beis Yosef (Tur 423) writes that תולדותם means deeds. Rosh Chodesh atones for all the bad deeds we might commit throughout the coming month. תשועת נפשם מיד שווא, "to save their souls from the enemy." The enemy is the yetzer hara. In the merit of Rosh Chodesh, Hashem saves us from our enemy, the yetzer hara.

Hashem promised Avraham that (Bereishis 15:15) *תקבר בשיבה טובה*, that he will be buried at an old age. Reb Shamshon Ostropoler zt'l (in his commentary on sefer Karnayim 6:1) says that the first letters of *תקבר בשיבה טובה* spell ת"ב. Hashem hinted to Avraham Avinu that he will be niftar on Rosh Chodesh Teves. There are three great merits and kedushos on this day. It is Chanukah, it is Rosh Chodesh, and it carries the merits of Avraham Avinu, too, because it is his yahrtzeit.

Avraham davened for Sedom, but the cities were overturned. Lot davened for Tzoar, and it was saved. We can explain, *b'derech tzachus*, that this is because Lot began his tefillos by praising Hashem. He said in his tefillah (Bereishis 19:19) *הנה נא מצא עבדך חן בעיניך ותגדל חסדך אשר עשית עמדי להחיות את נפשי*, "See now, Your servant has found favor in Your eyes, and Your kindness was great which You did with me to save my life..." After this praise, Lot prayed that Hashem save Tzoar, and Hashem accepted his tefillos.

a caring friend. Thus, we can explain the pasuk *מאשפת ירים אב-יון*, that even someone who is an אב, a close friend to Yavan, and is influenced by Yavan's philosophy and lifestyle, even he can be elevated on Chanukah. *מאשפת ירים אב-יון*, from the dung heaps of Yavan's ways, Hashem will elevate this person who is אב-יון, a friend to Yavan, and raise him above Yavan.

25. The main thing is to set boundaries and gates that distance us from aveiros.

In parashas Vayetztei, Yaakov told Lavan how he worked loyally for him. He said (31:40) *הייתי ביום אכלני חרב*, "This is how I was: By day scorching heat consumed me, and frost by night." Why didn't Yaakov come into Lavan's home to warm up or get some shade? Why did he remain outdoors?

Yaakov wanted to distance himself from Lavan, his avodah zarah, and evil ways. This was among the boundaries he set for himself in Lavan's home so that he would remain faithful to Hashem. As Rashi (Bereishis 32:5) writes, "I lived with Lavan the rasha and I kept the 613 mitzvos." He accomplished this because he set boundaries for himself. He wouldn't even enter his house to escape the harsh elements because he didn't want to be exposed to his influence. This is a lesson on how distant we must keep ourselves from tests!

This is because a tefillah said amidst praise is a very powerful tefillah.

Let's use this auspicious time of Chanukah when we praise Hashem also to ask Him for all our needs.

Tefilas HaDerech

The Imrei Emes zt'l would buy old *kisvei kodesh*, handwritten sefarim, and invest money to have them written legibly and then get them printed. (Portions of the Meiri were printed with the Imrei Emes's efforts in this manner.)

Once, he came across Reb Chaim Vital's commentary to *mechilta*. This was a sefer that no one had, so he brought it to a publisher to handset the letters and bring it to print. That year, 5696, was very difficult for the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael due to the Arab attacks, and the publisher didn't have time to work on it.

In the year 5699, the Imrei Emes lived in Poland, and the publisher returned the sefer to him. He wrote that he wasn't getting around to putting out the sefer, so the Rebbe should find someone else to do the job.

The messenger who brought it back to Poland was Reb Avraham Elimelech of Karlin zt'l hy'd. Almost immediately upon arriving in Europe, this great tzaddik was murdered, r'l, hy'd, and the manuscript has been lost ever since.

The Imrei Emes returned to Yerushalayim. The publisher said to him, "I'm so sorry. I tried..."

The Imrei Emes replied that it was *bashert* and it wasn't his fault. "But tell me, did you see anything in the sefer that you remember?"

He didn't.

The Imrei Emes said that he remembered one thing. It states (Bereishis 44:4) **הם יצאו את העיר** לא הרחיקו ויוסף אמר לאשר על ביתו קום רדף אחרי האנשים, "They had exited the city, but had not gone far when Yosef said to the overseer of his house, 'Get up, rush after the men.'"

Reb Chaim Vital writes in his introduction, "After I finished writing this sefer, it became revealed to me in a dream: Why does the pasuk emphasize, **לא הרחיקו**, "They had exited the city, but had not gone far?" And why did Yosef say, **קום רדף אחרי האנשים**, "Get up and rush after the men"?

Shulchan Aruch states that one should say Tefillas Haderech within the first *parsah* outside the city limits. Yosef wanted to catch them before that time because after they said Tefillas Haderech, there was no way he could cause them any discomfort and distress.

One Thursday night, a group of *yungerleit* traveled to Meron. They stopped the car on the side of the road to say Tefillas Haderech with *kavanah*.

They continued driving to Meron, and the police were behind them. They quickly put on their seatbelts.

Soon afterward, a truck drove toward them, and they had to swerve quickly. It was raining, the roads were slippery, and the car fell off the road into a ditch. The car turned over, but their lives were saved because they were all buckled in safely.

This story teaches us the power of tefillah, particularly the power of Tefillas Haderech.

Zos Chanukah

Reb Yisrael of Ruzhin zt'l taught, "What tzaddikim accomplish on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, simple Yidden can accomplish on Zos Chanukah."

The Vayaged Yaakov (of Pupa) zt'l said, "Don't feel bad if you didn't take advantage of Chanukah until now. Zos Chanukah means 'This is Chanukah.' The peak of Chanukah is before you, and you can benefit from it immensely."

The Maharal says that the number seven represents nature (as there are seven days in the week, seven notes for music, seven wisdoms, etc.) and the *yom tov* of Chanukah is for eight days because

Chanukah is beyond nature. Zos Chanukah is even higher because it is doubly eight (the eighth day of the eight days of Chanukah, שמיני שבמיניית, (שמניי שבמיניית). It is a day of miracles, and even simple Yidden can draw *yeshuos* from this day.

The explanation is that throughout the year, we must construct miracles in heaven and then draw them down. Not everyone can construct miracles; therefore, the average person cannot perform miracles throughout the year. But on Zos Chanukah, a time beyond nature, miracles are already prepared in heaven. All that is needed is to draw the miracles down, so even simple Yidden can do that on this day.²⁶

The Bnei Yissaschar (*Kislev Teives 2:10*) writes, "The earlier Rabbanim often said that Chanukah is *mesugal* for עקרות, for barren women to bear children. In my

opinion, the *segulah* is primarily on Zos Chanukah."²⁷

Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz *zt'l* said that Zos Chanukah is *mesugal* for *parnassah*. He learned this from the eight praises we say in לך ה' הגדולה (1). והגבורה (Divrei HaYamim I 29:11) ויברך דוד (2). והתפארת (3). והנצח (4). וההוד (5). כי כל בשמים ובארץ לך ה' הממלכה (6). והמתנשא לכל לראש (7). והעושר (8).

wealth, is the eighth praise, corresponding to the eighth day of Chanukah.

The other days of Chanukah are also *mesugal* for *parnassah*, as the Arugas HaBosem *zt'l* (*Vayigash*) teaches on the *pasuk* (*Bereishis 45:5*) כי למחיה שלחני אלקים לפניכם, "for the sake of *parnassah*, שלחני, Hashem sent me before you..." The word שלחני is *roshei teivos* להדליק, "To light the candles of Chanukah eight days."²⁸

26. It states (*Tehillim 92:7*) זאת היא נפלאה בעינינו. נפלאה זאת, "A boorish man does not know; neither does a fool understand זאת." It can be explained that he doesn't understand the significance of זאת חנוכה.

if you were wise, you would understand the importance of זאת חנוכה, and בזאת אני בוטח, in the merit of Zos Chanukah, I trust and will experience Hashem's salvation.

Rebbe Shlomo (the first Rebbe) of Bobov *zt'l* said that the miracles of זאת חנוכה are alluded to in the *pasuk* זאת חנוכה, wonders occur on זאת חנוכה.

27. Rebbe Aharon of Belz *zt'l* would repeat this idea from the Bnei Yissaschar every year at his Zos Chanukah *tisch*.

28. Chazal say that a kameia (amulet) that heals people doesn't accomplish anything for an animal. The Meiri explains this because the kameia doesn't is useless if one doesn't believe in it.

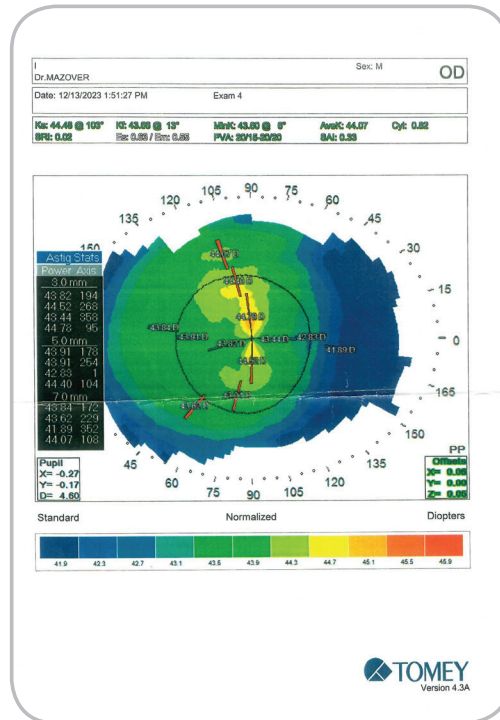
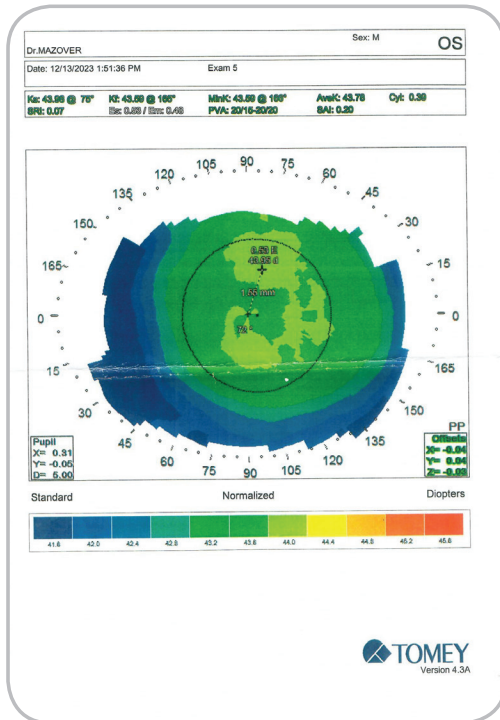
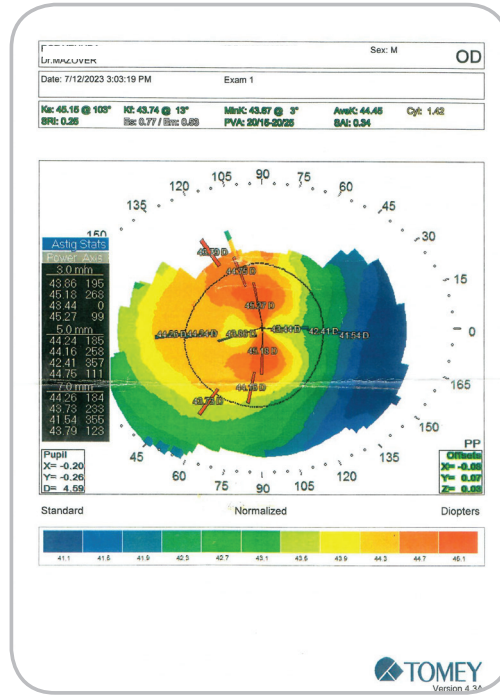
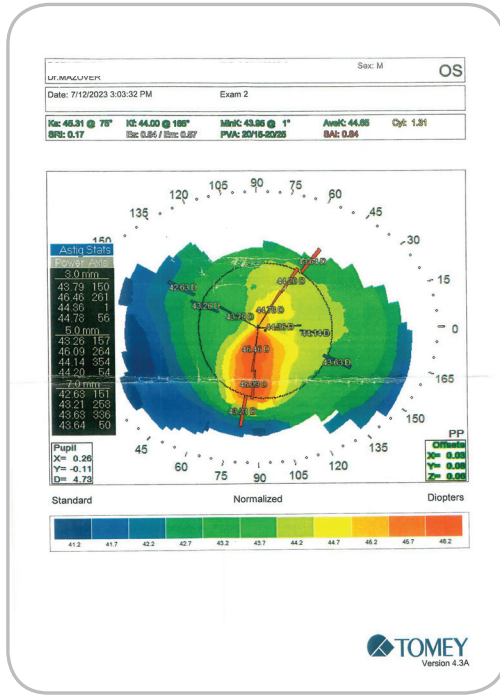
We have to believe in these days and in the miracles and salvations we can attain from them, and then they will have their intended effect.

The following is a letter we received from someone who experienced his own Chanukah miracle:

"Before Chanukah, year תשפ"ד, I went to an eye doctor, and he saw that I have Keratoconus (an eye condition that changes the shape of the cornea and affects its ability to see correctly). The nature of this condition is that either it remains in the same state and then nothing is done to treat it, or it can worsen and then the patient requires surgery, and if it is not operated on, then the condition can worsen to the point of blindness, r'l.

"I heard as a child that looking at the Chanukah lecht is a wonderful *segulah* for the eyes. So, when it was Chanukah, I just stood and gazed at the holy Chanukah lecht. When I stood there, I didn't do anything; I didn't even think about the disease. I just stood there and looked at the lecht, knowing this was a *segulah* for the eyes.

On Zos Chanukah, I had an appointment with my doctor to check on my eyes once again. The doctor said, "Something wondrous happened here; I didn't see anything like it my entire life. The condition has disappeared!" As I wrote at the beginning of the letter, the nature of this disease either stays the same or becomes worse, but it was never heard that it should disappear entirely. We witnessed a Chanukah miracle.



The colors red and orange indicate the Keratoconus condition of the eye, and the other colors indicate the healthy part of the eye

The doctor showed us our recent test results compared to the ones from before Chanukah, and the difference was astonishing. (The doctor isn't a religious Yid, so he tried to downplay the significance of the improvement, but we knew this was a true miracle.) Below are copies of the tests so that you can see for yourself Hashem's miracles and wonders.

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

The Chazon Ish corrected him and said that this phrase should be read as follows: לאו, it isn't as people think! בכל יומא מתרחיש ניסא, Miracles do occur every day!" This is undoubtedly true on Zos Chanukah, a day of miracles, a day transcending the laws of nature.

On Zos Chanukah, Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin zt'l saw chassidim playing dreidel with money. The Rebbe said, "Play. What a person earns during Chanukah, he might lose. But what one gains on Zos Chanukah, he won't lose." It will remain with him forever.

The Beis Aharon (p.42) writes, "The primary miracle occurred on the eighth day. Although there was a miracle all seven days, the primary miracle was the eighth day, because it is above seven. As people say about miracles, 'Miracles are above this world.'"

The Ostrovtza zt'l said that the miracle that a lamp can remain lit for seven days had happened before. Sarah Imeinu's Shabbos lecht remained lit all week, from erev Shabbos to erev Shabbos. But a miracle for eight days happened only by the Chanukah miracle. The eighth day revealed to everyone that the miracle was above nature. It revealed that also the first seven days were a miracle beyond nature, but the primary miracle was revealed on the eighth day, on Zos Chanukah.

Every day of Chanukah, we read in the Sefer Torah the end of Parshas Naso which discusses the korbanos that the nesi'im brought when there was the *chanukas hamizbeach* in the desert. On the eighth day, we finish reading all the nesi'im, and we conclude with the pesukim that discuss the menorah (which is written at the beginning of parashas Behaloscha) בַּהֲעֵלְתָךְ אֶת הַנְּרוֹת, etc. On the final day of Chanukah, we read in the Torah what is directly related to the miracle of Chanukah. This is another indication that the primary day of the miracle was the final day.²⁹

The Beis Aharon writes, "I think the eight lamps of Chanukah are of the same concept as שְׁמֵינֵי עֶצְרָת. Tzaddikim say Zos Chanukah is the גִּמְרַת הַתִּימָה when we are inscribed for a good year."

Parashas Emor (Vayikra 23) lists the *yomim tovim*, concluding with Succos and Shemini Atzeres. Then, the Torah discusses the menorah (see Vayikra 24:2). The Rokeach says that the menorah, mentioned after the *yomim tovim*, hints at Chanukah. Chanukah is for eight days because it is alluded to next to Succos and Shemini Atzeres, which are for eight days.

Rashi (Vayikra 23:36) explains the essence of Shemini Atzeres: "It can be compared to a king who invited his children for a meal for several days. When it was time for his children to leave, the king said, 'My children, please, remain with me one more day. קֶשֶׁה עָלַי פְּרִידַתְכֶם, it's hard for me when you leave.'"

Similarly, after seven days of Chanukah, Hashem says to the Jewish nation, "I enjoyed your mitzvos so much. Your Chanukah *lecht*, your Hallel, your Al HaNisim... Stay with me one more day. It's hard for me when you leave."³⁰

About Shemini Atzeres, the *Zohar* (vol.3, 32.) states, "At this joyous time, the Jewish people are alone with the King. And when one is alone with the king, whatever he asks will be given to him." We can say that the same applies to Zos Chanukah. Whatever we ask Hashem for on this day will be granted.

²⁹ It is good to get the aliyah of shlishi on Zos Chanukah because we read there about the immense wealth donated to the Beis HaMikdash for chanukas habayis. We say there (Bamidbar 7:84) קָעֵרַת כֶּסֶף שֶׁתִּים עֶשְׂרֵה מְזֻרְקֵי כֶּסֶף, שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרֵה כַּפּוֹת זָהָב שֶׁתִּים עֶשְׂרֵה, "There were twelve silver bowls, twelve silver basins and twelve gold spoons..." and so on. However, remember that many brachos come from being mevater, too. So, it certainly isn't worthwhile to fight over this aliyah.

³⁰ This can be another answer to Beis Yosef's renowned question. True, Chanukah should be for seven days because there was enough oil for the first day, but Hashem requests that we keep an extra day, an eighth day because it is hard for Hashem when we leave.

The Beis Aharon *zt'l* teaches that we should say *Tehillim* on Chanukah. Certainly, one should say *Tehillim* on *זאת חנוכה*.

The Yismach Yisrael (*Chanukah* 53) says that when the Torah says *זאת*, it refers to something one can see with his eyes.³¹ *זאת חנוכה* means the *kedushah* is so great on this day that *tzaddikim* are literally able to see it. "But this revelation is only for the perfect *tzaddikim*. It states (*Tehillim* 118:23), *מאת ה' היתה זאת*, we believe that Hashem gives this revelation on *זאת חנוכה*; however, *היא נפלאה*, we can't see it... Although we don't see or feel this special revelation, we are happy for the *tzaddikim*, for we believe that they see it, and we rejoice in their joy."

בואת ידעתי כי הפצת בי (*Tehillim* 41:12). The Yismach Yisrael explains *בואת*, since you gave us *זאת חנוכה*, I know that You desire me and that You want to grant me goodness and *chasadim*.³²

31. It states (*Shemos* 12:2) *החודש הזה לכם*, and Chazal explain that *זה* indicates that Hashem showed Moshe the new moon. Because when it says *זה*, it refers to something visible.

32. The Divrei Chaim *zt'l* explains that there was a time when the *yomim tovim* from the Torah were sufficient, but the Chachamim understood that in the later generations, Yidden needed more holidays to help them survive in *galus*. This is why they added Chanukah and Purim.

These additions aren't solely for *ruchniyos*. They are for *gashmiyos* too. We wouldn't survive the *galus*, even with respect to *gashmiyos*, without Chanukah and Purim; therefore, the Chachamim established these holidays.

33. Once, Reb Shmuel Minkus *zt'l* felt that he needed *chizuk* in *avodas Hashem*, so he went to the marketplace and sought someone who could take him to Liadi, where his rebbe, the Baal HaTanya *zt'l*, lived. A merchant of hard drinks (*vodka*, etc.) told him he was traveling in that direction, but he only had space in the wagon's uncovered section next to the spirits' barrels.

Reb Shmuel agreed and got on. It was cold in the uncovered wagon, and Reb Shmuel asked for permission to drink some *vodka* from the barrels to warm up. Permission was granted.

When Reb Shmuel came to the Baal HaTanya, he said *shalom aleichem* and *tzeischem l'shalom* simultaneously.

"You just came!" the Baal HaTanya said. "Why are you leaving already?"

"I came because I needed *chizuk* in *avodas Hashem*. However, I got my inspiration on the way here. Therefore, I can go home now."

The Baal HaTanya asked, "What inspiration did you get?"

Reb Shmuel said, "I sat among barrels of alcohol, but the barrels didn't warm me up. I only warmed up when I drank the alcohol. I learned from this that it isn't sufficient to learn chassidic ideas. To warm up, one must allow these ideas to enter and to become part of his being."

Chanukah All Year Round

The Beis Aharon (p.45:) said, "Once, on Zos Chanukah, my father [Rebbe Asher of Stolin *zt'l*] asked his chassidim to sing, *הדרן עלך מסכת חנוכה*, 'We will return to you, masechta Chanukah, and return to us, masechta Chanukah.'" The Beis Aharon adds, "Who am I to explain my father's words?"

We certainly aren't on the level to grasp the depths of Rebbe Asher of Stolin's ideas and lessons, but one aspect of it could be to draw the impression of Chanukah for the rest of the year. At the end of Zos Chanukah, we have completed all the *mitzvos* of the holiday. We pray *הדרן עלך*, that the light of Chanukah should return to us. The spiritual impressions we gained on Chanukah and the miracles we attained should return and remain with us all year long.³³

The Sfas Emes (Chanukah 5637) teaches that the purpose of a miracle is so that we should never forget that Hashem loves us and leads us in a special, unique way beyond the rules of nature. Hashem could save us from all troubles without performing miracles, but Hashem prefers to perform miracles at times so we can remember our special connection with Him. When the impression and inspiration of a miracle weaken over time, Hashem brings on another problem and then another miracle and salvation, so we will never forget Hashem's love for us.

The *nes* Chanukah was the final miracle (see an indication of this from Yoma 29.). The Sfas Emes says that this means we don't need another miracle to receive inspiration. There is enough inspiration and awareness of Hashem's love for us from the Chanukah miracle to last us throughout the long galus.

We quote the Sfas Emes:

"Hashem doesn't necessarily need to perform miracles to save us because He can arrange for the enemies not to harm us... Rather, the purpose of the miracles is to show Bnei Yisrael that Hashem leads them above the rules of nature. The miracles are uniquely the portion of Bnei Yisrael. The four malchiyos (*galus*) are so that Bnei Yisrael will always need miracles. And when Hakadosh Baruch Hu performed a miracle for our forefathers, they received chiyus, inspiration, from it. They recognized that Hashem protects them and leads them with rules above nature. When the inspiration from one miracle wore off – the miracle became old to them due to the heavy galus – they needed another miracle to inspire them, and Hashem performed another miracle for them. This was the pattern that recurred repeatedly in galus. After the

Chanukah miracle, Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't perform another revealed *nes* for Bnei Yisrael. This proves that the inspiration from the Chanukah miracles continues to shine... it has new inspiration for us, until the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days, when Hakadosh Baruch Hu will perform new miracles for us. חנוכה, from the word חינוך, means newness because this miracle is always new to us until Moshiach will come, speedily in our days."

The *Chesed L'Avraham* (Rebbe Avraham of Radomsk *zt'l*) states that Zos Chanukah is *mesugal* for hastening the redemption because this day we read וזאת חנוכת המזבח ביום המושח אותו (*Bamidbar* 7:84) and המושח is similar to the word משיח.

Another hint to משיח is from מדליקין שמונת ימי חנוכה. The first letters spell משיח.

The gematriya of the letters נגה"ש on the dreidel is משיח.

It states in this week's *parashah* (41:14) וישלח פרעה ויקרא את יוסף ויריצוהו מן הבור, "Pharaoh summoned, and he called Yosef, and he was rushed out of the dungeon." The Siforno writes, "[Yosef was saved quickly, as it states ויריצוהו, they rushed him out], like all of Hashem's salvations that happen quickly and immediately. As it states (*Yeshayah* 56:1), כי קרובה ישועתי לבוא, 'My salvation is near.' This is what happened in Mitzrayim, as it states (*Shemos* 12:39) כי גרשו ממצרים, 'they were banished from Mitzrayim.' Chazal tell us that their dough didn't have time to rise before the King of kings, Hakadosh Baruch, redeemed them. This will also occur in the future, as it states (*Malachi* 3:1), ופתאום יבוא אל היכלו האדון אשר אתם, מבקשים, 'Suddenly, he will come to his *heichal*, the master (Moshiach) whom you await.' May it be speedily in our days.