



במעדבא אמרי

B' MAARAVA

AMREI

*Torah ideas from  
Bais Torah U'Tefilla,  
West Hempstead*



**CHANUKA 5781**

Volume 1





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**CHANUKA 5781**

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**B'Maarava Amrei**

Bais Torah U'Tefilla

Volume 1, Chanukah 5781

**Bais Torah U'Tefilla**

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In Memory Of

דב בן דוד  
חיה ליבה בת זאב וואלף  
שרגא פייוול בן דוד בנימין  
ריבה בת משה צבי  
אליהו בן יעקב הלוי  
שרה בת אברהם משה  
זאב דוד בן דב

Dedicated by  
David and Ariella Kesselman

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# Editors' Preface

The Rambam writes<sup>1</sup>:

חבר, קורין לכל תלמיד חכמים...וקראום בשם זה מפני  
שחברותם זה לזה היא החברות האמתית מפני שהיא לשם שמים  
*The title "friend" is assigned to students of the wise  
men....They are assigned this title as their  
friendship with each other is the truest friendship  
because it is for the sake of heaven.*

The Rambam's teaching reveals, friendship predicated on a sense of higher purpose and Torah values - the sake of heaven - is the truest friendship. At Bais Torah U Tefillah, under the leadership of Rabbi Lesser, we gather as a community of friends, unified by our commitment to Talmud Torah and Avodas Hashem. The goal of this journal, במערבא אמרי, is similar: to create a printed space for friends to share Torah ideas to enhance the experience of the upcoming ימים טובים. It is our sincere hope that במערבא אמרי will live up to its mission and promote אהדות, spirited Torah discussions, and enhance your Chanukah experience.

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<sup>1</sup> פירוש המשנה מסכת דמאי פרק ב

But why במערבא אמרי?

The title translates to *In the West They Say*. In the Talmud Bavli, the term Marava, the west, refers to Eretz Yisroel which is due west from Bavel. As residents of West Hempstead, we do not yet live in Eretz Yisroel ourselves, but spending time as a community with the portable Eretz Yisroel, our Torah, is a core value at BTU. Additionally, we live in *West* Hempstead, so in some sense we can consider our divrei Torah as emerging from the Marava.

Hashem should give the BTU chevra the opportunity to gather together in happiness, health, and friendship for many years to come.

Warmest Wishes,

**The במערבא אמרי Team**

## דברי פתיחה

Rabbi Uri Lesser

It is with great הלל and הודאה that במערבא אמרי is published for the many wonderful members and friends of our kehillah, Bais Torah U'Tefilla. A tremendous ישר כח must be given to Rabbi Elie Bashevkin, who took upon himself the אחריות to see this idea come to fruition. Special thanks must be imparted to Rabbis Tzachi Diamond, Yaacov Levy, and Josh Rohr who initiated this project, worked on layout, and made sure it would be produced professionally. Additionally, we thank the Kesselman family for their generous sponsorship. Their desire to elevate the דברי תורה into a beautiful journal shows the חשיבות התורה that their family has. May הקב"ה give the Kesselman family much שמחה and נחת for many years to come.

Chanukah represents our inner desire to stay faithful to the Torah. In the battle for our רוחניות, not only was our fulfilment of מצות on trial, but even the actual לימוד התורה itself. In victory, we expressed our strong desire to live with the Torah and ensure that it would not be put aside or categorized together with the חכמות העולם.

Chanukah is all about our desire, רצון, which is the strongest force we have.

This idea of רצון can give us another answer to one of the most famous questions in all of Yiddishkeit: the question of the בית יוסף. The בית יוסף asked, the חשמונאים lit the מנורה with enough oil for 1 day and it burned continuously for 8 days. Why then is Chanukah 8 days long if the oil burned miraculously for only 7 days?

There are many answers already suggested to the question of the בית יוסף. (Parenthetically, this notable phenomenon can be explained by the entire nature of Chanukah which represents תורה שבעל פה. What better way to express the essence of Chanukah than a question with infinite answers from every generation since the בית יוסף!) However, we can suggest that the נס was even from the first day itself. The חשמונאים knew that they would have to wait 8 days until the new pure oil was secured and finding only 1 days' worth of oil pained them tremendously. After all the חשמונאים had been through to secure the קדושה of the המקדש, בית המקדש, so they would have to suffer another lapse in the עבודה?! There was only one thing on their mind. The חשמונאים didn't know how long the oil would last or what they could do to make it last longer, but they

just wanted the lights of the Menorah to last ever so badly. And רצון הקב"ה responded to this. As we know, הבא לטהר מסייען אותו, - One who comes and wants to do good, Hashem helps them. This is not just a nice idea. It is an actual promise from Hashem. He promises to help those want to do the right thing and get closer to Him.

This could be why Chanukah is 8 days. It is true that the השמונאים had enough oil for one day, and that lighting may not have been a miracle. However, the רצון and desire that the oil should last, and that there should be continuous service of Hashem was present from the outset. That רצון lasted for all 8 days.

The essence of Chanukah is our רצון to serve Hashem continuously in every situation and at all costs. This is what we must remind ourselves daily especially during our long גלות. Nothing stands in the way of Hashem except our own lack of desire. When we want salvation for Hashem then Hashem provides.

This journal, במערבא אמרי, represents our true רצון as well: to get close to Hashem through the תורה and to create אהדות in כלל ישראל.

יהי רצון, may it be the will of Hashem, that our דברי תורה be the truest testament to all of our inner desires and yearnings to stay close to Hashem in גלות. May we be זוכה to see the building of the המקדש בית with the true הדלקת נרות and חנוכת הבית of the במהרה בנין השלישי.

החותם בשביל כבוד התורה,

רב זורי אסר

Rabbi Uri Lesser

# Awaiting Moshiach

Elie Bashevkin

## כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום

The Talmud (שבת לא.) quotes Rava:

אמר רבא: בשעה שמכניסין אדם לדין אומרים לו: נשאת ונתת באמונה, קבעת עתים לתורה, עסקת בפריה ורביה, צפית לישועה, פלפלת בחכמה, הבנת דבר מתוך דבר  
*Rava said, when a person is brought to [the future] judgement they ask him, "Did you conduct business faithfully? Did you set time for Torah? Were you involved in having children? Did you eagerly await salvation? Did you explore wisdom? Did you comprehend one thing from another?"*

Rava's teaching reveals six questions a person is asked during the final judgement before Hashem.

I would like to focus on one aspect of the six questions. The very fact the questions are being asked of a person presumes that a person was obligated to fulfill them during their lifetime. Most of these questions can certainly be traced to many mitzvahs. But where do we find in the

Torah that a person must eagerly await salvation?

The Rambam<sup>2</sup> describes the days of Moshiach and he adds:

המלך המשיח עתיד לעמוד ולהחזיר מלכות דוד ליושנה... וכל מי בשאר 'שאינו מאמין בו, או מי שאינו מחכה לביאתו, לא נביאים בלבד הוא כופר, אלא בתורה ובמשה רבינו, שהרי התורה העידה עליו וכו

*Moshiach will return the Davidic dynasty to its former glory... And anyone who does not believe this, or anyone who does not await<sup>3</sup> his arrival, not only does he deny the words of the other prophets, but [he even denies] the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu because the Torah testifies to [the coming of Moshiach] etc.*

According the Rambam, not only must a Jewish person believe Moshiach is coming, but he must additionally await Moshiach.<sup>4</sup> Anything less

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<sup>2</sup> יד החזקה פרק יא מהלכות מלכים הלכה א

<sup>3</sup> במצודות ציון חבוקק ב:ג ד"ה חכה כתב וז"ל ענין תקוה כמו וחכיתי לה' (ישעיה ח) עכ"ל

<sup>4</sup> בליקוטי הגר"ז (חלק ב דף פא) מביאים מעשה על אחד שהיה משמע מדבריו כאילו רחוקה ביאת המשיח וז"ל שם הרי שחיוב האמונה בביאת המשיח היא לא רק שיבוא אי פעם, אלא החיוב הוא גם לחכות לביאתו להיינו להאמין שהנה ממש היום הזה הוא בא, אבל אם מאמין בביאתו אינו יודע מתי, חסר לו באמונה והוא כופר עכ"ל שם. ולכאורא הלשון "אני מאמין באמונה שלמה בביאת המשיח ואע"פ שיתמהמה עם כל זה אחכה לו בכל יום

would be heretical. My understanding of the Rambam is just as if a poor man was promised a winning lottery ticket by his closest and most trusted friend, he would wait with anticipation every day for his friend to deliver the ticket, so too the Jewish people were promised by Hashem through Moshe and the prophets that Moshiach will come, so we must await Moshiach with anticipation and hope that today is the day Moshiach comes. How could a believing person live life without waiting?<sup>5</sup> There is no clearer source than this!<sup>6</sup>

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שיבוא" הנדפס בסידורים משמע כדברי הגרי"ז. אבל נוסח זה אינו לשון הרמב"ם.

<sup>5</sup> עיין במאמר מהרב אהרן לופיאנסקי שמסביר ביתר

ביאור <https://mishpacha.com/sometimes-mashiach-is-not-the-solution>

<sup>6</sup> ומצאתי עוד ב' מקורות לחיוב לצפות לישועה:

הא' היא מדברי הרמב"ם בפירושו המשנה (הקדמה לפרק חלק ד"ה היסוד השנים עשר). וז"ל שם היסוד השנים עשר ימות המשיח, והוא להאמין ולאמת שיבא ואין לומר שנתאחר אם יתמהמה חכה לו, ואין לקבוע לו זמן, ולא לפרש את המקראות כדי להוציא מהן זמן בואו, אמרו חכמים תפוח דעתן של מחשבי קצין וכו' עכ"ל. ושמעתי הסבר בשם הגאון הרב יעקב קמנצקי זצ"ל שכוננת הרמב"ם"ם כאן באומרו "חכה לו" היא שאסור לחשוב את הקץ, פירוש שיבוא המשיח רק ביום פלוני בעתיד - ולא יום אחר. אלא חייב כל אדם להאמין שאין יום שא"א שהמשיח יבוא. ולפ"ז חיוב לצפות לישועה כרוך באיסור של מחשבי קצין.

אבל לכאורה דברי הרמב"ם בפירושו המשנה ק"ק מדבריו ביד החזקה. דבריש פרק יא מהלכות מלכים משמע שאפי' החיוב לחכות למשיח מקורו בחיוב להאמין בכל דברי הנביאים ממש רבינו עד מלאכי, ורק אח"כ כתב שם בפרק יב בהלכה ב' שיש איסור של מחשבי קצין. ומזה שהרמב"ם כתב

## כי אורך לנו הישועה

The Talmud (סנהדרין צח:) quotes Rabi Alecsandri who quotes two teachings of Rabi Yehoshua Ben Levi:

אמר רבי אלכסנדר, רבי יהושע בן לוי רמי: כתיב בעתה וכתוב אחישנה. זכו אחישנה - לא זכו בעתה

*Rabi Alecsandri said, Rabi Yehoshua Ben Levi asked a question: the verse states,<sup>7</sup> "[Moshiach will come] at its time", but the verse also states, "I will hasten [the coming of Moshiach]." [The answer is,] if they merit [the coming of Moshiach] I will hasten it. If they do not merit [the coming of Moshiach,] it will come in its time.*

Rabi Yehoshua Ben Levi's interpretation identifies two models for the coming of Moshiach. In the first model Moshiach comes

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שני העניינים האלו בב' מקומות בהלכות מלכים ולא צירף לשניהם הענין שהם נוגעים בעיקרי הדת משמע שהם ב' הלכות נפרדות לשיטתו. הב' היא מדברי הסמ"ק (מצוה א'). כתב שם וז"ל לידע שאותו שברא שמים וארץ הוא לבדו מושל מעלה ומטה ובד' רוחות... ובזה תלוי מה שאמרו חכמים (שבת דף לא) ששואלין לאדם לאחר מיתה בשעת דינו צפית לישועה. והיכן כתיב מצוה זו. אלא ש"מ בזה תלוי, שכשם שיש לנו להאמין שהוציאנו ממצרים דכתיב אנכי ה' אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך וגומר. ועל כרחין מאחר שהוא דיבור, הכי קאמר, כשם שאני רוצה שתאמינו בי שאני הוצאתי אתכם כך אני רוצה שתאמינו בי שאני ה' אלהיכם ואני עתיד לקבץ אתכם ולהושיעכם. וכן יושיענו ברחמינו שנית, כדכתיב (דברים ל') ושב וקבצך מכל העמים וגומר עכ"ל.

<sup>7</sup> ישעיה ס:כב

quickly because the Jewish people earn salvation on their own merits. In this case, Moshiach comes immediately once the Jewish people deserve his arrival. In the second model, Moshiach comes slowly and only because the time for Moshiach has arrived. In this case, the Jewish people do not really deserve Moshiach, but Moshiach comes anyways, albeit slowly, because his time has come.

The Or HaChaim HaKadosh (במדבר כד:יז) tethers the first model of Moshiach to the merits of the vast majority of ordinary people (בינונים) who improve their ways and deserve Moshiach. The second model of Moshiach is tethered to the merits of a small group of completely righteous people (צדיקים) in whose merit Moshiach comes, albeit slowly.<sup>8</sup>

The comment of the Or HaChaim HaKadosh is fascinating. We wait for Moshiach and we hope he will come quickly. However, the Or HaChaim HaKadosh teaches that Moshiach's rapid arrival can only be predicated on the

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<sup>8</sup> מקורו ע"פ נבואת בלעם בענין ביאת המשיח, "דרך כוכב מיעקב וקם שבט מישאל" (במדבר כד:יז). ועיין שם באור החיים הקדוש שכתב, דרך כוכב = משיח באופן אחישנה; מיעקב = בזכות בינונים; וקם שבט = משיח באופן בעתה; מישאל = בזכות הצדיקים

belief in the goodness of the large crowds of ordinary people and their ability to improve their ways and deserve Moshiach. We must believe in the goodness of ordinary people and we must try to help one another draw out our unique goodness. It is only in our merit Moshiach will come במהרה בימינו.

## What's in a Name?

Noam Ben Ari

While generally enticing to search for concepts that “wow!”, it is often the simple understanding of an idea that creates the most profound and long-lasting lesson on a given topic. In his sefer “Festivals of Life”, Rabbi Zev Leff Shlit”a goes through the Jewish year doing just that - discussing the inner meanings and often overlooked backgrounds and reasons of the Jewish holidays.

In his section on Chanukah, Rabbi Leff begins with the Maharal m’Prague’s idea that the three sons of Noach, from whom we all originate, represent the inner spiritual makeup of man. Shem (שם), with the same letters contained in the word neshama (נשמה), reflect a person’s essence. Cham, defined as “heat”, represents the heat, desire, and passion of man. Yefes, defined as beauty, represents the body and outward manifestation of the human being.

Yavan, descending from Yefes, is spelled with straight lines of varying sizes (יין), but no unity or connecting force between them. Spelled backwards from the Hebrew word for beauty,

“Noi” (נוי), the Yivanim completely distorted the concept of beauty by making it null and void of any connection to spirituality, the essence of man.

When studying the words and focal points of על הנסים, one realizes the greatness of the terms chosen and topics covered based on this connection to the three sons of Noach. A prime example is the words להשכיחם תורתך (Your Torah). The Greeks did not mind if we learned the Written Torah if we reveled in their lifestyle. But YOUR Torah, the Torah She’ba’al Peh, was abolished. However, Mishna (משנה), with the same letters as neshama (נשמה) and stemming from Shem, prevent the Written Torah from being distorted or misrepresented. The Greeks’ main aim was to be מטמא and מחלל, defile and desecrate, and to hollow out any inner meaning or purpose and leave only an outer shell.

In another instance, we say that the Greeks attempted “להעבירם מחקי רצונך”, targeting Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, Bris Milah, and Taharas Hamishpacha. The very group of Jewish fighters who fought back against the Greeks comprise the acronym for what they were fighting for. Of course referring to the

Chashmonaim, the “Ches” represents Chodesh, the “Shin” Shabbos, “Mem” Milah, “Nun” Niddah, and “Alef” referring to Eishes Ish/Adultery, all fighting for the honor of Hashem, represented by the final letter “Yud”.

As children of Hashem and descendants of Shem, our purpose is laid out before us. In על תשועה גדולה ופורקן כיום הזה” הנסים, we say “תשועה גדולה ופורקן כיום הזה” connoting a connection to every generation. What is our personal connection so many years after the initial fight? Every Chanukah contains at least one Shabbos, one Rosh Chodesh, lasts for eight days referencing Milah, and women refrain from work while the candles burn. We are given a yearly reminder of the flames of spirituality, which ultimately reign supreme long after the body, and everything it represents. decomposes. May Hashem give us the strength to ward off the ideals of the Troys, Spartas, and....Pompeiis, and harness the eternal inner flames in ourselves and our מקדשי until מוטט

# Avraham Avinu Reveals the Light of Chanukah

Rabbi Tzachi Diamond

We are all familiar with the idea that there is no direct reference to Chanukah in the Torah. However, there is no shortage of remazim to it. I would like to suggest the following chiddush which will hopefully help us appreciate the awesomeness of these holy days.

The miracles of Chanukah were apparent to all. When we experience open miracles, it is only due to the tremendous amount of love and kindness that Hashem has for us. It's an overabundance of חסד from Hashem. When dealing with the midah of חסד we are automatically drawn to Avraham Avinu. It would only seem appropriate to look to a time when Hashem shows an outpouring of חסד to Avraham Avinu. If we look to the beginning of וירא, we see exactly that occurring. Immediately following the bris milah of Avraham, Hashem comes to Avraham:

וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו ה' בְּאֵלֶיךָ מִמְּרָא וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל כְּזֶה הַיּוֹם:  
וַיֵּשֶׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְבִים עָלָיו וַיֵּרָא וַיִּרְץ  
לְקִרְאתָם מִפֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֲרָצָה:

*And Hashem appeared to him in the Plains of Mamrei and he was sitting at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day. And he lifted his eyes, and behold! three men were standing before him.*

*And he saw and he ran toward them from the entrance of the tent and bowed on the ground.*

Rashi there describes that Hashem came to inquire as to Avraham's wellbeing. This seems to be a much more intimate interaction with Avraham than just their usual conversing. Perhaps we can understand this based on a halacha. In תרעא:ו, the Shulchan Aruch writes that one must keep their menorah under ten tefachim. This is understood by many that on Chanukah, Hashem comes within ten tefachim of the Earth, closer than any other time during the year. This can explain the intimate nature of Hashem's visit to Avraham. We can support this idea that Avraham was celebrating the yuntif of Chanukah based off of the halacha preceding this one. The most ideal location for the menorah is in the doorway of one's house. The pasuk states clearly that Avraham was

sitting in the opening of the doorway, the exact location of the menorah.

We can understand Avraham's actions that occur next based on this interpretation too. When he looks up and sees the three malachim approaching his immediate reaction was to run to them, וירץ לקראתם. Perhaps we can understand that besides for Avraham's excitement to have guests, there was another motivation for this zrizus. Avraham was eager to share and engage his guests in the mitzvah of Chanukah.

But we can take this a step further. Chazal tell us that when Hashem created the world, the light He created was far too powerful for this world. Realizing this, He hid that light after 36 hours. This light is now accessible to all of us to some degree on Chanukah via the 36 candles we light over the course of Chanukah. There is another place that we can attain this awesome light, through the Torah. We know from the Gemara in Megillah that אורה זו תורה, light is Torah. But on Chanukah we can be even more specific and say that the light is Gemara. As we know, there are 36 mesechtas in Shas. With this in mind we can understand that Avraham wasn't simply running from the mitzvah of Chanuka but rather he was running to enhance

it in a deeper level. This is alluded to by the roshei teivos of וירץ לקראתם as it equals 36, hinting to the lights that was held within them.

Let us add one more idea here. What was so urgent that Avraham could not simply wait for the malachim to come to him and then he would be able to benefit from this great light? We know that these guests were special, they were none other than מיכאל, גבריאל, רפאל. When אברהם runs to greet them, he is actually joining them to fully benefit from the light they had as a unit. This is alluded to by the roshei teivos of all four their names together, גמרא, hinting to the light that is hidden in the 36 mesechtas for us all to benefit from.

# Chanukah: A Spiritual War

Shua Drang

It is well known that Chanukah was a time in our history when our רוחניות was at stake. In contrast, Purim was a point in time when our physical existence was on the line. This idea is recorded in the שלחן ערוך (תרמ:ב) which states that having a festive meal on Chanukah is only a רשות because Chanukah was not established as days of משתה ושמחה. The משנה ברורה explains that since on Purim our bodies were threatened we celebrate physically with משתה ושמחה. However, on Chanukah where our רוחניות was under attack we celebrate spiritually with הלל והודאה.

Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel זצ"ל asks that in light of this it is strange to see how כלל ישראל responded to these two events. On Chanukah when our spirituality was at risk, we responded by going to war. However, on Purim when it was our actual physical beings that were at risk we responded with davening. Why was it flipped?

Rav Nosson Tzvi answers that when our spiritual existence was at stake we were truly in the most dangerous possible situation. Therefore, we needed to do our utmost to fight

against the danger, even if that meant going into a perilous physical battle. However, with “only” our lives at stake, the same level of מסירות נפש was not demanded of us and davening sufficed. This transformational idea requires a total shift in perspective of the hierarchy of the truly most important element of our lives.

We find this idea echoed in Parshas Mikeitz. The brothers tried to convince Yaakov to send Binyamin down to Mitzrayim. Reuven said, “I promise to bring back Yosef, and if I don’t my two children should die.” This would seem to be a very strong collateral, but Yaakov didn’t accept Reuven’s proposal. What changed Yaakov’s mind? Yehuda said, “If I don’t bring back Binyamin I will have sinned against you all my days,” (בראשית מג:ט). Rashi explains **all** my days includes even the world to come. Yaakov was willing to accept Yehuda’s share in the world to come as a collateral and allowed Binyamin to be sent down to Mitzrayim. Although, we would have thought nothing could be worse than losing a child, Yaakov was still unwilling to accept Reuven’s precious physical collateral. It was only when Yehuda offered to give up his share in the world to come that Yaakov accepted. May the light of Chanukah נרות illuminate this truth in our lives.

## Do You Believe in Miracles?

Hersch Goldberger

When we light the menorah on Chanukah, we make a special bracha of “she’asa nissim” as a way of publicizing the amazing miracle that happened in the Beis Hamikdash. Doing this mitzvah of pirsumei nisa by lighting the menorah is so important in halacha that if someone does not have enough money to buy oil to light his menorah, he must collect tzedaka or even sell his clothing to purchase the oil. Why is pirsumei nisa (publicizing the miracle) so important that we make a special bracha for it and go to such extremes to perform the mitzvah?

When the Gemara in Shabbos 21b discusses Chanukah it tells us about the miracle of the oil, yet when we recite Al Hanisim we barely reference the miracle of the oil and focus almost exclusively on the military victory over the Yivanim. Why is there such an incongruence over what the most important aspect of Chanukah is?

The Beis Yosef asks a very famous question about the miracle of Chanukah. Since there *was* enough oil to light the menorah for one day, the miracle was really only for seven days. So, why do we light the menorah for eight days?

Another question we can ask is why do we thank Hashem for all the miracles that He does every day - “v'al nisecha she'be'chol yom imanu” if we don't see these miracles?

The Ramban tells us at the end of parshas Bo that in reality everything that happens in the world is a miracle. A person has an obligation to know this and it is a fundamental precept in Judaism. Some miracles are revealed and some are hidden. Hashem occasionally performs a revealed miracle to allow us a window into this reality and gives us a chance to internalize this message. Revealed miracles afford us the opportunity to see the hidden miracles in everyday life.

This is why it is so important for us to publicize the miracle of Chanukah. We focus on the miracle of the burning of the oil for eight nights to help us realize that Hashem exists and to understand how He runs the world, and to

know that in reality there is no such thing as “nature”. Everything happens because Hashem is willing it so, not because of the laws of the universe.

When the Gemara tells us about the miracle of Chanukah, it is telling us about the revealed miracle. The miracle of the oil is the reminder for the crucial lesson that not only was it a miracle that the oil lasted longer than it should have - but that it lit at all! This is one answer to the Beis Yosef’s famous question. We light the first night as well to recognize that even the “natural” first night is an equal miracle to the rest of the nights.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein takes this concept to an extreme. In Darash Moshe in Parshas Vayishlach he asks, why did Yaakov send real angels to his brother Eisav? Even if he had the ability to send angels, why not send regular messengers? When a miracle happens on one’s behalf, merits are used up. Why did Yaakov sacrifice these merits? Rav Moshe answers that Yaakov Avinu was on such a high level that there was no difference to him between “natural” and miraculous, so for him it was all the same. This reminds us of the story where the

daughter of Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa lit her Shabbos candles with vinegar, and they stayed lit all of Shabbos. If someone truly recognizes the reality of the world - that even nature is in essence a miracle - then miracles become as plausible as nature and it is not a big deal for a "miracle" to happen for him. The fact that we are "wowed" by the concept of a miracle shows that we are somewhat lacking in our emunah, because we don't truly believe that Hashem can do whatever He wants and that He controls the universe and nature itself.

What are we actually celebrating on Chanukah? We are not only celebrating the miracle which sounds more impressive - the revealed miracle of the oil. We are celebrating the miracle that we focus on in Al Hanisim - that we won the war with the Yivanim; that the few beat the many. This miracle, which could be mistaken for "kochi v'otzem yadi," is the true miracle of Chanukah, but we need to internalize the miracle of the *first* night of Chanukah in order to truly appreciate the miracle of winning the war.

Finally, why do we thank Hashem three times a day for the "nisecha she'be'chol yom imanu" -

the miracles that occur every day? What miracles does a person experience on a daily basis? We see from these answers that everything we experience on a daily basis is, in essence, a miracle. Everything that Hashem does, every day, is a miracle whether we recognize it or not.

May we all recognize Hashem in our daily lives and grow in our understanding of His love for us and in our love for Him.

## ברכה מעין שלש in the על הניסים

Baruch Jerome

The Gemara in Shabbos says that the days of Chanukah are days of הלל והודאה. Rashi explains "הודאה" to be referring to the recitation of על הניסים. As we know, על הניסים is inserted into עשרה in the bracha of מודים and into ברכת המזון in the bracha of הודאה. However, interestingly, we do not insert על הניסים, or anything additional, into the ברכה מעין שלש. However, we do insert a line into the ברכה מעין שלש to commemorate Shabbos, Yom Tov, and Rosh Chodesh. Why should we not commemorate Chanukah when making the ברכה מעין שלש?

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik (quoted in הגדה של פסח (מבית בריסק) suggested the following explanation.

The ברכה מעין שלש contains a shortened version of each of the brachos of ברכת המזון. Therefore, on a weekday, the ברכה מעין שלש touches on each of the four brachos of ברכת המזון. On a day when there would be additional brachos in ברכת המזון, the ברכה מעין שלש adds a line to represent the additional brachos.

The Gemara in Brachos (מט) discusses a situation where a person forgets יעלה ויבוא or רצה. The Gemara concludes that as long as the person did not yet begin the bracha of הטוב והמיטיב (the final bracha of ברכת המזון) he can insert a compensatory bracha at that point and then continue on with הטוב והמיטיב. However, no such compensatory bracha exists for one who forgets על הניסים on Chanukah. Rav Chaim maintains, since Shabbos, Yom Tov, and Rosh Chodesh have an extra compensatory bracha in ברכת המזון, an extra line is added to the ברכה מעין שלש on these days corresponding to this additional bracha in ברכת המזון. However, since there is no compensatory bracha on Chanukah, there is no additional line added to the ברכה מעין שלש on Chanukah.

Rav Chaim's answer also explains why the insertions for Shabbos, Yom Tov, and Rosh Chodesh in the ברכה מעין שלש appears between יעלה ויבוא and הטוב והמיטיב while רצה and יעלה appear before ירושלים. The insertions in the ברכה מעין שלש does not correspond to the paragraph of יעלה ויבוא or רצה that is said in ברכת המזון before ירושלים. The insertion into ברכה מעין שלש corresponds to the compensatory bracha said upon forgetting רצה

or *ובנה* *after* which is said *ברכת המזון* *יעלה* *ויבוא* in *ירושלים*.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (quoted in *הררי קדם*) proposes a different reason why we don't have a line in the *ברכה מעין שלש* to commemorate Chanukah. He explains the functions of *רצה* and *יעלה* *ויבוא* are very different from the function of *על הניסים* on Chanukah. We insert *רצה* and *יעלה* *ויבוא* into *ברכת המזון* to mention the day of Shabbos or Rosh Chodesh. These paragraphs are external additions into the *ברכת המזון*. But the *על הניסים* on Chanukah is an extension built onto the bracha of *הודאה*. We are elaborating on the special miracles that Hashem did for us on Chanukah. It is not an additional insertion into *ברכת המזון* like *רצה* and *יעלה* *ויבוא*. It is simply an expansion upon the themes of the existing bracha. Therefore, since *ברכה מעין שלש* briefly touches upon the various parts of *ברכת המזון*, it makes sense to mention the days of Shabbos, Yom Tov, and Rosh Chodesh which would otherwise go unrecognized. However, there is no need to mention Chanukah because, in essence, *על הניסים* is merely an elaboration of one of the existing brachos, and *ברכה מעין שלש* is written without long elaborations upon its themes.

Perhaps we can suggest another answer על פי דרוש. The whole idea of the ברכה מעין שלש is that it is an abridged form of המזון ברכה. It briefly summarizes the various themes of ברכה המזון. When it comes to giving הודאה to Hashem, we cannot be brief. We must express our appreciation and praises to Hashem in full form - without shortcuts. The tefillos of הודאה are meant to open up our hearts and minds to the endless הסדים that Hashem does for us 24/7 and that can only be accomplished when we elaborate upon them. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to simply throw in a line representing על הניסים in the ברכה מעין שלש as that would negate the whole concept of הודאה.

May Hashem help us open our hearts and minds to enable us to contemplate his endless ניסים, both from the times of the Maccabees and today. In that זכות may we all merit to see the ultimate ניסים with the coming of the גאולה שלימה בקרוב.

# Leftover Chanukah Oil and

## אין מבטלין איסור לכתחילה

Michael Lavner

### Part I

On יום טוב the גמרא analyzes a case of branches that broke off a tree and fell into an oven on יום טוב. The גמרא seeks to address whether the branches (which are otherwise מוקצה since they broke off a tree on יום טוב), may be rectified in a manner that would permit moving the branches on יום טוב. In ruling on the matter, the גמרא concludes that one may add regular “permissible” branches (that were set aside prior to יום טוב) to the mixture, nullifying the fallen ones in the larger resulting mixture (מרבה (עליהם עצים מוכנים ומסיקן)). The גמרא explains that even though there is a general principle of אין מבטלין איסור לכתחילה, which prevents one from increasing the quantity to attain the required amount for nullification, this does not apply by an איסור דרבנן.

The גמרא further seeks to resolve how this can be permissible, given the general restriction against utilizing the method of ביטול with respect to a דבר שיש לו מתירין, something which is

prohibited now but will become permitted in the future, even in the case of an איסור דרבנן. (In this instance the wood would become permitted immediately after יום טוב, rendering it within the category of a דשל"מ.) The גמרא ultimately concludes that this case is an exception to the general restriction of דשל"מ, as at the time one actually moves the branches (potentially violating מוקצה), they are already consumed by fire. Apparently, the restriction against nullifying a דשל"מ only applies where the item will remain in existence.

One item that the גמרא fails to fully and comprehensively address is the scope of the limitation placed on the general principle of אין דיני איסור לכתחילה מבטלין איסור דרבנן or is it only applicable in a limited number of cases?

The הלכות מאכלות אסורות פרק טו הלכה כה-כז in רמב"ם seems to take the most lenient view, ruling that one can be מבטל any איסור דרבנן. For example, in the event milk falls into a pot of chicken (operating with the assumption that בשר עוף בהלב is an איסור דרבנן) and there is less than a sixty-to-one ratio, one may add additional chicken to the mixture, to successfully nullify the taste of the milk.

A more limited approach is adopted by תוספות. They explain that the exception to אין מוטלין applies by certain דרבנן דיני but not all דיני דרבנן. Specifically, the exception applies where the nature of the דרבנן is such that it is בדבר שעיקרו מדרבנן, where the essence of the prohibition is purely Rabbinic. This applies in the case of the גמרא, as it is dealing with a prohibition of מוקצה. However, with respect to an איסור דרבנן that is linked to a דאורייתא (e.g. תרומה by foods other than דגן תירוש ויצהר), then the general rule of אין מוטלין איסור לכתחילה will still apply. The כסף משנה is quick to note that the example provided by the רמב"ם of בשר עוף בחלב is clearly in conflict with the ruling of תוספות, as this is no doubt an example of an איסור דרבנן that has a התורה.

A third approach is offered by the רא"ש. He takes the most stringent and narrow view, ruling that there are no איסורי דרבנן that can be nullified לכתחילה. While it did appear that the גמרא was allowing for this possibility, the closing analysis of the גמרא, which noted that the דבר שיש לו מתירין principle didn't apply since the wood was being consumed, also served a critical limitation on the first half of the גמרא which addressed אין מוטלין איסור לכתחילה. As a result, only in cases where the item will be consumed

by fire (e.g. this specific case), can we allow for one to be *מבטלו עליו ומבטלו*. However, in all other cases of prohibited Rabbinic mixtures, regardless of the whether the prohibition has *אין מבטלין איסור* or not, the rule of *לכתחילה* remains in full effect.

The *יורה דעה* הלכות תערובות סימן צט סעיף ו' *in שלחן ערוך* rules in accordance with the lenient opinion of the *רמב"ם*. In contrast, the *רמ"א* adopts the stringent ruling of the *רא"ש*.

## Part II

While not cited by the *בבלי*, there is an established tradition from the *מדרש תנחומא פרשת* *רא"ש שבת* (see *שאלות*) and cited by the *רא"ש שבת* (see *פרק ב' סימן ט*) that leftover oil from the *מנורה* may not be used for personal benefit. The *ראשונים* struggle to explain why the leftover oil would be prohibited when generally *מצוה* objects (*תשמישי מצוה*) are not subject to any such restrictions after the *מצוה* is completed (e.g. a *לולב* or leftover oil from *שבת* candles). They offer varying explanations as to what makes the oil unique by *חנוכה* (see, e.g., *תוספות מסכת שבת דף מד*, *הר"ן על הרי"ף מסכת שבת דף ט עמוד א* and *עמוד א ספר אבודרהם הלכות חנוכה*, and further analyzed by *י*.) In the final analysis, all opinions are in agreement that this prohibition

against benefitting from the leftover oil is a halachic concern that one must take in consideration. The שלחן ערוך establishes this position as normative in אורח חיים סימן תרע"ז.

What would be the case in the event that מנורה oil became mixed in with non-מנורה oil and the ratio was insufficient (less than sixty-to-one) to nullify the oil? Based on the יורה דעה analysis outlined in Part I above, given that this is a דרבנן prohibition, one would readily expect the שלחן ערוך to rule leniently, allowing one to add additional non-מנורה oil, so that the mixture attains the required sixty-to-one ratio. As such, it is very difficult to understand the ruling of the מחבר, wherein he writes that אם נתערב בשמן אחר ואין ששים לבטלו יש מי שאומר שאין להוסיף עליו כדי לבטל מרבה עליו ומבטלו in such case. The obvious question emerges: how is one to reconcile the ruling of the מחבר in אורח חיים with his ruling in יורה דעה?

The ש"ך initially suggests the possibility that a הוקצה למצוה דרבנן prohibition that is rooted in מצוה (which includes the case of oil from the מנורה) is more severe and therefore does not allow for the אין מבטלין איסור exception to apply. He ultimately rejects this proposal, noting the origin of the ruling of the מחבר stems from the מהר"ם, wherein

it is clear that הוקצה למצוה is not a factor which is guiding the ruling.

The ט"ז raises this question in both יורה דעה and אורח חיים. He does not appear to attempt to resolve the contradiction, simply noting that the correct ruling appears in יורה דעה. The משנה ברורה appears to take a similar approach, by focusing on the wording of the מחבר in אורח חיים wherein he characterizes the stringency as a שאומר. (It is of note that the יורה דעה in יש מי שאומר fails to cite this שאומר from מחבר.)

The מגן אברהם offers a possible solution, highlighting that the oil from the מנורה may be considered a דבר שיש לו מתירין since it will be permitted to be used the following year. As such, it would be a more severe case of ביטול, not allowing for the exception to אין מבטלין איסור to apply.

The לבושי שרד challenges this observation, noting that in the event it were truly a דבר שיש לו מתירין, then it would not even be nullified in a sixty-to-one ratio (and it is clear from the מחבר that the only issue is a lack of ששים). He further notes that it's not really a דבר שיש לו מתירין; after all it will forever (even the following חנוכה) be prohibited for non-מנורה uses. A similar version

of this latter challenge is also raised by ר' עקיבא מחצית השקל and discussed at length by the מגן אברהם (see also שו"ת בית אפרים אורח חיים סימן יח). A further difficulty with the suggestion of the מגן אברהם stems from the ruling of the טור, which restricts one from holding onto the oil until the following year. The ערוך השלחן works to resolve this latter issue. The שער הציון acknowledges that he intentionally is not citing the opinion of the מגן אברהם because of difficulties that have been raised with his positions.

In attempting to justify the מגן אברהם, the לבושי שרד offers the possibility of this oil being a quasi-דבר שיש לו מתירין where ששים would be sufficient but מרבה עליו ומבטלו כיון "דדמי" (קצת" לדבר שיש לו מתירין). The approach of the מגן אברהם, as explained by the לבושי שרד may also be the view of the ערוך השלחן, as he refers to this as כדבר שיש לו מתירין in explaining the מגן אברהם, justifying the conflicting rulings of the מחבר.

### Part III

This characterization of the oil from the מגורה as דבר שיש לו מתירין, wherein it is neither truly a דשל"מ nor outside the category either, is reminiscent of a comment in תוספות מסכת חולין דף שחיטה wherein he analyzes a case of a פגם and (2) (1) may or may not have a

the פגם may or may not have come into contact with the סימנים on the animal. He rules leniently, based on the scenario outlined qualifying as כספק ספיקא.

In his יורה דעה סימן קי ש"ך, כללי ספק ספיקא, the ש"ך attempts to explain why תוספות deemed it necessary to use the prefix 'כ'. He notes that the qualifier suggests that the case does not satisfy all the necessary elements to be a full-fledged ספק ספיקא. The ש"ך rules that there is a requirement for a bona-fide ספק ספיקא that it must be מתהפך (i.e. that it can be presented in both directions). For example, in this instance, in the event the knife did not have a פגם, then there can be no ספק as to whether a פגם came into contact with the סימנים. Since the two ספקות can only be presented in one direction, it fails the מתהפך test and cannot truly be categorized as a ספק ספיקא. Nonetheless, in this instance (but perhaps not all instances), תוספות is willing to leverage its status as a quasi-ספק ספיקא to rule leniently on the matter.

On the most basic level, הלכה seems to have certain binary categories that carry with them fixed implications - stringencies or leniencies. Generally speaking, cases fall into these categories or they do not. However, it

would appear that there may be certain (albeit limited) cases where a quasi-category exists, wherein the facts are very close to the requirements for a definition within the halachic category but still do not measure up in every detail. In these instances, it would appear that there may be some limited halachic implications of the designated category (given its close relationship to the halachic category), while other traditional implications may not apply (given that it does not satisfy all the necessary elements). One might consider what other halachic categories allow for such flexibility in definition and application.

# Fate vs. Destiny

Rabbi Michael Merrill

There are definitely people who look at the length of davening and wonder why we need to add in extra prayers. Generally, those same people rejoice when there's a chassan or mohel in Shul (only on Monday/Thursday of course). On Chanukah, they probably wonder why we add the extra perek of Tehillim (chapter 30) to the end of our davening.

The most obvious answer is found in the words of the first pasuk "chanukas habayis" - the dedication of the Mikdash. The Perisha shares that it's because the actual Mikdash was completed on Chanukah. The Ohr Zaruah says it's because the mizbeach was rededicated on Chanukah.

Rav Yehuda Shaviv offers another explanation. The festival of Chanukah is the celebration of our victory over the Greeks. We find ourselves focusing mainly on the two miracles - the miracle of the jug of oil and the military victory over the mighty Greek army. Yet, there's a much deeper philosophical victory over the Greeks.

The Greeks believed in the notion of fate. You were destined for things to happen and there was virtually no way of escaping your fate. Fate is cruel and there's little reprieve when one's fate is sealed. Judaism believes in destiny. Our destiny is based on our strong relationship with Hashem. Our people have had our ups and downs, but we know we need only to reach out to Him for help. Rav Shaviv explains that the second pasuk in the perek talks about our relationship with God and Jewish destiny. "I will exalt Hashem because He has drawn me up," wrote Dovid HaMelech. I was not a victim of fate. Hashem maintains a bond with me and raises me up above fate. This bond is eternal. It can never be severed. Hashem is here for us.

It is at precisely our greatest moments that we need to recognize how we got there. Chanukah is a time when we remember that eternal bond. We remember the depths of our despair and the joy of our victory. It's the light of the Chanukah candles that are so small yet can light up the absolute darkness of the winter nights. The final tefillah in our davening might lengthen our time in Shul by an extra minute. That minute is well worth spent reflecting on how lucky we are to have this eternal connection with Hashem.

# The Mystery of Chanukah

Aaron Parnes

While Chanukah is a widely known holiday even amongst those who don't necessarily celebrate it, there are many mysteries surrounding it which need to be explained. I don't claim to have all the answers, and neither is this short forum the right place to attempt it. However, I raise the issues with the hope that it stimulates some thoughtful discussion, and perhaps some possible resolution.

Let's start from the beginning. The רמב"ם starts off הלכות חנוכה by retelling the story of the miracle of Chanukah, which he notes as starting with the victory of the בית השמונאי over the Greek kings and culminating in the discovery of the שמן טהור which burned for 8 days.<sup>9</sup>

Any student of history will tell you that the 200-year reign of the השמונאים mentioned by the above quoted Rambam was not a golden period in our nation's history. There was intrigue, corruption, power struggles and more within the royal family, resulting in much distress and suffering for the Jewish people. The Greeks

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<sup>9</sup> רמב"ם הל' חנוכה פ"ג ה"א

even made a strong comeback relatively soon after the Chanukah story, and this time there was no decisive victory by the Jews.

Is the celebration of Chanukah really just about a one-time victory which in the course of history had relatively minor impact and did not last too long?

Furthermore, it is very strange that in the entire משנה, ששה סדרי משנה, Chanukah is mentioned only one time and in passing. Why wasn't this special festival given more air time, just like its sibling פורים which is also מדרבנן and was given an entire מסכת? (Much ink was spilled over this question, but after all is said the question remains strong.)

Let's continue with the miracle of the oil. Yes – the miracle was most definitely great, that a tiny bit of oil lasted for 8 days, which was the amount of time needed for them to obtain new olive oil. But really – is that something so astounding that merits a festival still celebrated over 2,000 years later, complete with candles, latkes, and custard donuts?

Even more troubling is why the need for such a miracle.<sup>10</sup> The מסכת שבת in גמרא talks about how degrading it is for one to survive through a

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<sup>10</sup> שבת נג: א"ל אביי אדרבה כמה גרוע אדם זה שנשתנו לו סדרי בראשית

miracle. The need for שמן טהור to kindle the lights of the מנורה is not that strong, since there is a question if the oil in the בית המקדש is even susceptible to טומאה,<sup>11</sup> and even if it is, it would be permitted to use it through the principle of בציבור טומאה הותרה.<sup>12</sup>

So why indeed are we celebrating Chanukah? It is truly a great mystery.

I don't intend to fully dispel the mystery surrounding the festival of Chanukah. Rather, let me just share a few thoughts that can perhaps shed some light on what the true essence of the celebration might be about.

Early on in the Tannaic period, a sage by the name of חזקיה בן חנניה authored a book called מגלת תענית,<sup>13</sup> which contained a collection of Rabbinically mandated festivals in commemoration of the many miracles that occurred during the Second Temple period. These days were to be celebrated in various forms, primarily through eating and rejoicing. One of the festivals mentioned in מגלת תענית is indeed the very festival of Chanukah.

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<sup>11</sup> פסחים יז. תני לוי משקי בי מדבחיא דכן

<sup>12</sup> עיין פני יהושע שבת כא:

<sup>13</sup> שבת יג:

One may wonder, why was Chanukah singled out from all the festivals mentioned in מגלת תענית to have survived until this day? This question is actually asked by the Gemara<sup>14</sup> and the answer given is that Chanukah is different because the נס is widely known. Rashi<sup>15</sup> explains, since the miracle has become widely known through the מצות and they have “held onto the practice as a Torah-mandated law, it is not proper to abolish it.”

The true celebration of Chanukah is not what it appears to be – simply a commemoration of a long-ago miracle of minor consequence. Rather, it is a continuation of the practice that had become widespread amongst the people “who held onto it as being from the Torah itself”.

The גמרא says that the words of the Sages are more beloved than the words of the Torah.<sup>16</sup> And indeed – when it comes to the מצוה of Chanukah, the Rambam writes חביבה היא עד מאד.<sup>17</sup>

Torah itself, without any safeguards, could not possibly survive the travails of history. Only

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<sup>14</sup> ר"ה יח: ותבטל איהי ותבטל מצותה

<sup>15</sup> שם ד"ה דמפרסם ניסא

<sup>16</sup> ע"ז ל"ה. כי טובים דודיק מייין – חביבין דברי סופרים יותר מיינה של תורה

<sup>17</sup> הל' מגלה וחנוכה פ"ד הי"ב

with the power of Rabbinic sanctions – תקנות וסייגים דרבנן, could the Torah survive and flourish even through the most difficult periods of our people.

Our history is full of dozens, perhaps hundreds of sects who openly challenged the authority of חז"ל – some were even scornful of what they perceived to be leniencies – and they all disappeared without a trace. The wise and prophetic חז"ל are what has kept the Torah and its commandments alive and well even through all these many generations, exiles, and turbulent periods.

Perhaps the true essence of the celebration of Chanukah is not about the miracle itself – for the reasons given earlier. Rather, the celebration is about the Jewish nation's ability to look to חז"ל for guidance and reassurance, and hold on tight to their enactments as if it were the Torah itself.

We can even suggest that Chanukah is a self-declared festival, having survived only because we the Jewish people wanted it to survive. On its own right, it would have been abolished with the destruction of the Second Temple, but because we held onto it, it remains in our tradition.

Chanukah is not brought in the Mishna because it is not especially important on its own right. There is nothing more significant about it than the other festivals recorded in מגלת תענית. It doesn't belong in the Mishna because at the time the Mishna was codified there was no guarantee that it would last much longer. Perhaps Chanukah would have met the fate of every single other Second Temple-era festival which was relegated to the dustbin of the history books, and we would never have enjoyed those delicious donuts.

Yet, the Jewish people held on to Chanukah, not willing to let it go. As we went from exile to exile, from Eretz Yisroel to Bavel and then to Spain, Europe, Africa, Asia, and finally faraway North America, we took strength from the spiritual light represented by the Chanukah candles and their significance. The Torah stayed relevant and primary only because we appreciated the role our Sages had in maintaining that structure. Chanukah and its Rabbinic מצוה to light the candles represents our unwavering commitment to stay faithful to the Torah no matter what – ensuring the preservation of a Torah-true people through the generations.

# Chanukah Candles Revealed

Judah Plaut

Seemingly, the two mitzvos we have on Chanukah correlate perfectly with the two miracles that took place on Chanukah: We say הלל to commemorate winning the war against the much stronger Yivanim, and we light candles to commemorate the פך שמן lasting for eight days. However, a closer look at the Gemara seems to indicate that the miracles and mitzvos are more interrelated than that. After describing the miracle of the פך שמן, the Gemara in Shabbos says it is because of this miracle that we say Hallel on Chanukah. Shouldn't the Gemara have correlated פך שמן with lighting candles – why Hallel?

Rav Asher Weiss, as well as others, focuses on the Ramban at the end of Parshas Bo to address this question. In explaining the importance of יציאת מצרים and the miracles that took place in מצרים, the Ramban writes that when Hashem does an obvious miracle - when something happens that's seemingly unnatural, it is in order to make the world realize that everything that happens is, in reality, a miracle. There is, in fact, no such thing as “natural.” Based on this

Ramban it is suggested that the entire purpose of the נס of the פך שמן – a נס נגלה – was to make us aware that the war was also an incredible miracle. Without the subsequent נס of the פך שמן, it would have been possible to have dismissed Hashem's hand in winning the war. We could have thought of ourselves as smarter than the Yivanim, and that we were able to win with a superior strategy. In order to prevent that, Hashem provided the נס of the פך שמן to show that everything that happened there was a true נס.

My Rebbi, Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz, explained that this motif could help answer a couple of other questions around Hilchos Chanukah. The Rambam, after describing the miracles of Chanukah, writes that we light candles “להראות להנס ולגלות את הנס” – to show and to reveal the miracle. Why the double language? Aren't those the same thing? Perhaps the Rambam is alluding to this same idea. There's an extra element of לגלות, of revelation, that the Chanukah candles represent. They reveal that just like the פך שמן was a miracle, everything around us is also a miracle.

This may also explain an interesting difference in the פרסומי ניסא of the Chanukah lights as compared to the פרסומי ניסא of reading Megillas Esther on Purim. On Chanukah we can only be יוצא if others can see our candles. We must light עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק. But on Purim, even though reading Megillas Esther is also פרסומי ניסא, we don't absolutely require public performance of the mitzvah. One can be יוצא reading Megillas Esther by himself with no one else around. Why? Once again, this makes sense when we explain what the פך שמן represents. As an obvious נס וגילה, the purpose of the פך שמן was to reveal, so our lighting must be done in front of others in order that it should also reveal. Without anyone else seeing the Chanukah candles, there is no revelation. However, the Purim miracle was a נס נסתר, so reading Megillas Esther may be done privately.

It has been a tough year for so many. Perhaps we can take a moment when we light candles this year and reflect on the positive. Perhaps we can take a moment to recognize the amazing hashgacha and bracha that is around us every day, and the tremendous נסים Hashem constantly provides.





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