

# Mikeitz (Chanukah)

A grandmother is giving directions to her grandson, who was coming over for a Chanukah party with his newlywed.

“You come to the front door of the apartment complex. I am in apartment 8L.” She continued, “There is a big panel at the door. With your elbow push button 8L, I will buzz you in.

Come inside, the elevator is on the right. Get in, and with your elbow hit 8. When you get out, I am on the left.

With your elbow, hit my doorbell.”

“Grandma, that sounds easy,” replied the grandson, “but why am I hitting all these buttons with my elbow?”

She answered, “you mean, you’re coming without Chanukah presents?”

*The Parsha of Mikeitz contains 146 (קמ"ו) pesukim.*

*The mnemonics are Yechizkiyahu and Amatzya.*

י ה ז ק י ה ו

$$146 = 6 + 5 + 10 + 100 + 7 + 8 + 10$$

א מ צ י ה

$$146 = 5 + 10 + 90 + 40 + 1$$

The Shaloh states that the name *Chanukah* means “fixing” the Holy Temple, and by extension, “fixing” the world. The world was created for the purpose of Torah study and performance of *mitzvos*; the Greeks however wanted to stamp out this way of life. The similarity between the holiday and the creation of the world is underscored in its dates as well. The first day of creation was the 25th of Elul and the first day of

Chanukah is the 25th of Kislev. Furthermore, the first thing G-d created on day one was light, so too the holiday of Chanukah is celebrated with candles of light.”<sup>1</sup>

This explains the mnemonics of the *Yechizkiyahu* and *Imatzya* who both became king at the age of 25 years.

## OIL OF TORAH

As already stated, the Greeks wanted to put out the lamp of Torah. The antithesis was Yechizkiyahu, who was called by this name because he “strengthened” the devotion of the Jewish people to their Father in Heaven.

The Talmud states, “The yoke of Sennacherib was destroyed due to the oil of Yechizkiyahu, which would burn all night in the synagogues and study halls when the Jewish People were engaged in Torah study.” As a result, they searched from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, and did not find an ignoramus. They searched from Gevat to Antipatris and did not find a male child, or a female child, or a man, or a woman who was not expert even in the complex *halachot* of ritual purity and impurity.<sup>2</sup>

## EIGHT DAYS

During Chanukah we celebrate the miracle of finding one cruse of oil that had enough oil to last for one night, yet it burned for eight. The number eight is also connected to Yechizkiyahu, who possessed eight names.<sup>3</sup>

## YECHIZKIYAHU PRECEDES AMATZYA

These two mnemonics are the same as the mnemonics Parsha Bereishis, however, there *Amatzya* precedes *Yechizkiyahu*, while in this Parsha, *Yechizkiyahu* is mentioned first.

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1. See *Shaloh*, Parshas Vayeshev, “Drush: Tzon Yoseph” in the Hagaha, and *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 10, p. 282.

2. Sanhedrin 94b.

3. *Ibid.*, 94a.

One approach to understanding the interconnections of the above is as follows:

Two major miracles took place on Chanukah: 1) the victory of a small army over a much larger and stronger army, and 2) the miracle of finding a cruse of pure oil which burned for eight days.

Which miracle is greater? According to the Talmud, the miracle of oil outshines that of the war.<sup>4</sup> Therefore *Yechizkiyahu* is mentioned first, since he donated oil for Torah study it reminds us of the miracle of oil, in contrast to *Amatzya*, who is famous for merely winning a war against Edom.<sup>5</sup>

Another approach is the following. *Chanukah* means “education.”<sup>6</sup> It is a time to encourage Jewish education, pride and the strengthening of one’s commitment to the study of Torah and *mitzvos*. The Talmud suggests that among those who need encouragement are those who routinely study Torah and perform *mitzvos*,<sup>7</sup> thus the letters of *Yechizkiyahu* and *Amatzya* etymologically spell the phrase *Chazak ve-ematz*, “Be strong and courageous!”

## 2025 WORDS

The only single Parsha in the Torah that records the number of words (in addition to the pesukim) is our Parsha, Parshas Mikeitz. The *Torah Temima* notes that on Chanukah, we light candles for eight consecutive nights, beginning with the 25th of the month of Kislev. In Hebrew, (*candle*) is spelled כָּנֵל, which has a gematria of 250 (thus 250 x 8 days = 2000, plus 25 for the 25th of Kislev = 2025).

Similarly, the number of pesukim (146) could be expressed as: for “eight” days of Chanukah we play *dreidel*. The letters on the *dreidel* in Israel, where the miracle occurred are ד, ר, ג, ל. These letters total 138 (138 + 8 days = 146).

Furthermore, the name of our parsha, *Mikeitz* (מִיִּקֵּץ) has a

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4. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 25, Sicha on Chanukah.

5. Chronicles II, 25:11–13.

6. *Sefer Hasichos*, 5748, p. 161.

7. Tractate Brachos, 32b.

gematria of 230, the same as **הַנּוֹכַח כ"ה כסלו** or “Chanukah, the 25th of Kislev.”<sup>8</sup>

Also, if you deduct the amount of pesukim (146) from the name of the parsha (230), you have 84, which is the same as the letters of the phrase **(הַנּוֹכַח עִם הַכּוֹלֵל)** “*Chanukah* plus one.” The one unites the letters **הַנּוֹכַח** into a single word,<sup>9</sup> and it also implies a required action,<sup>10</sup> namely, the act of kindling the Chanukah menorah.

## MOSHIACH

The Midrash states that when Moshiach comes, all the holidays will be nullified besides Chanukah and Purim. Again we find a subtle reference to *Yechizkiyahu*. As stated in the Talmud, “G–d wanted to make *Yechizkiyahu* the Moshiach.”

## STORY

On the night of Shmini Atzeret, in 1977—the Rebbe suffered a major heart attack during the *hakafos* in his synagogue, 770 Eastern Parkway. Over the next few weeks, his office was turned into a hospital. The Rebbe finally went home five weeks later on Rosh Chodesh Kislev—which has become a day of great celebration ever since.

A month later, on the last day of Chanukah, the Rebbe called in my grandfather, Rabbi Jacob J. Hecht, and said that “I have searched for a person who is energetic and can keep a secret, and I have found him.” The Rebbe told my grandfather that he wanted to make a *farbrenge* later that day but did not want to disturb and disrupt people’s lives. He then asked my grandfather to buy challah so that people could wash and eat, and bottles of vodka that he would distribute at the end of the *farbrenge*.

Subsequently when my grandfather was asked by the Rebbe how much he owed for the challah, my grandfather gave him the amount.

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8. From my cousin, Reb Aaron Leib (ben Reb Y. Michel) Raskin.

9. See Tanya, part II, ch. 12.

10. See *Toras Menachem*, 5742, vol. 1, p. 2031, in the name of the “Shomer Emunim,” R’ Yosef Irgis.

“And what about the vodka?” continued the Rebbe. My grandfather replied, “I have a congregant who supplied me with the vodka. If I don’t pay, the Rebbe doesn’t have to pay.” “Who is this person?” asked the Rebbe. “I wrote to you about his wife, that she was sick from cancer. This man said to me that even though he loves his wife, she is “just” his personal partner. However, it’s more important to him that the Rebbe should be well for the whole world needs him. The Rebbe became serious and responded, “G–d has enough health for me and for his wife —and tell him that she will be well.”

The woman miraculously recovered.

—ACTION—

- Make a Chanukah party where you . . .**
- a) Recall the historical miracles of Chanukah and the miracles in our own lives;**
  - b) Sing a Chanukah or Chassidic song;**
  - c) Give daily Chanukah gelt to your family members,<sup>11</sup> and students, and . . .**
  - d) Give *tzedakah* daily.**

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11. Sefer Hasichos, 5748, p. 163.