

# Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts  
from  
Rabbi Elimelech  
Biderman  
Shlita*

*Mikeitz*

*Zos Chanukah*



# Torah WELLSPRINGS

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# Torah Wellsprings - Mikeitz - Zos Chanukah

## Emunah

In this week's parashah Yosef was summoned to Pharaoh to interpret his mysterious dreams. During their conversation, it became apparent to Pharaoh that Yosef was a man who possessed an unshakeable belief and trust in Hashem. Reb Moshe Midner of Slonim *zt'l* tells us that Pharaoh was overwhelmed by Yosef's conviction since he had never before met someone who so firmly believed in Hashem.

Pharaoh told Yosef (41:15), שמעתי עליך לאמר, "I heard that you know how to decipher dreams."

Yosef replied (41:16, see *Rashi*), בלעדי, "It isn't my wisdom. אלקים יענה את שלום פרעה, Hashem puts in my mouth what I should say."

Pharaoh was astonished. Yosef had deflected the honor from himself by admitting that his unique ability was granted to him from Hashem.

Additionally, when Yosef correctly deciphered Pharaoh's dreams, he had the perfect opportunity to plead and beg Pharaoh to free him from jail, but he didn't do so. He didn't say, "I was imprisoned for no reason; please save me." Instead, he trusted in Hashem to save him. As the *Zohar* (vol.1 194:) states, "No one imprisons a man, and no one

frees a man other than Hakadosh Baruch Hu." Pharaoh acknowledged that Yosef refrained from requesting his freedom and was stunned again. How can a person reach such a level of *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem?

After Yosef was told the details of the dream, Yosef told Pharaoh (41:25), את אשר האלקים עושה הגיד לפרעה, "Hashem relayed to Pharaoh what He is going to do."

Yosef revealed to Pharaoh that the dream was a prophecy, revealing the future to Pharaoh. Again, Pharaoh was astounded. He was unaware of the concept that Hashem addresses human beings.

Pharaoh said (41:39), אחרי הודיע אלקים אותך את, כל זאת אין נבון וחכם כמוך, "If Hashem told you all this, there is no one as wise as you."

Reb Moshe Midner *zt'l* (*Toras Avos*) explains that Pharaoh was saying, "If you recognize that every occurrence is from Hashem, no one is wiser than you." Because that is the greatest wisdom; to recognize Hashem Who conceals Himself in this world.

Amazed, Pharaoh exclaimed (41:38), הנמצא בו, כזה איש אשר רוח אלקים בו, "Could we find anyone like him - a person who has the spirit of Hashem in him?" and therefore, he appointed Yosef as viceroy of Mitzrayim.<sup>1</sup>

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1. There are more indications to Yosef's amazingly high level in *emunah* as he interacted with Pharaoh.

It states (41:14) וישלח פרעה ויקרא אל יוסף ויריצהו מן הבור, "Pharaoh summoned for Yosef, and Yosef was rushed out of the dungeon." Notice that *others* rushed Yosef out of the dungeon. He wasn't rushing on his own.

The *Ostroftza zt'l* (*Toldos Adam*, seventh night of Chanukah) expresses it this way:

Think of a person who is in jail for twelve years, he never sees the shine of the sun, and then, finally, there's hope. He can leave the dungeon and speak with the king! No one would need to rush him out of jail. He would run with all his might to plead before the king... But the Torah tells us ויריצהו, other people rushed Yosef out of prison. Yosef wasn't rushing on his own. And this is because Yosef believed that only Hashem could save him, and not Pharaoh. Rushing won't free him any sooner. He will be freed the minute and second destined by Hashem.

### Devoted to Fulfill Hashem's *Shlichus*

Pharaoh told Yosef (41:40-41), אתה תהיה על ביתי... רק הכסא אגדל ממך of my house... Only by my throne shall I outrank you." This is an enormous honor, so great it is hard to imagine. Yosef was appointed second in command of the largest and most powerful country in the world! Just moments before, Yosef was a prisoner, living in a dark pit. He had lived there for twelve years. And now, he was a free man and a powerful government leader. Anyone in Yosef's position would be ecstatic.

But surprisingly, Yosef was nonchalant, and he didn't show any signs of jubilation, as is evident from the following *pasuk* (41:41): ויאמר פרעה אל יוסף ראה נתתי אתך על כל מצרים, "Pharaoh said to Yosef: 'See, I have appointed you over the entire land of Mitzrayim.'"

Why did Pharaoh repeat it?

The answer is that Pharaoh couldn't understand how Yosef wasn't excited over the unbelievable turn of events. How could Yosef remain nonchalant, as if nothing spectacular just happened? Pharaoh figured that perhaps Yosef didn't hear him, or he didn't understand what he told him. So, Pharaoh repeated, ראה, "See and understand what I'm telling you because apparently, you didn't understand the first time. נתתי אותך על כל מצרים I appointed you over all Mitzrayim!"

But Yosef remained indifferent. Why? Why wasn't Yosef ecstatic with Pharaoh's offer?

Some commentaries (see *Kuntres Pri Oz*) explain that Yosef always believed that Hashem could do anything and everything.

Therefore, Yosef wasn't surprised when Pharaoh freed him from jail and appointed him to this high position because he always knew that something like this could happen at any time.<sup>2</sup>

Another reason Yosef was not euphoric over this good tiding is that Yosef's goal was to do Hashem's will. He didn't pursue his own success. Therefore, prisoner or ruler was the same to him, as he was prepared to do Hashem's will, in whichever situation Hashem placed him.

To explain, we repeat a *mashal* of a loyal servant who came before his king and said, "I want to serve you, to show my devotion to you. Any mission you give me, I will be happy to do."

The king replied, "I want you to be a guard, to protect the palace."

That wasn't really what the servant had in mind. There was no honor attached to this position. And when he discovered that the king wanted him to stand knee-deep in a sewer pit as he guards the palace, he informed the king that he didn't want the position.

This is because this servant had his own interests in mind and not the king's. But someone who truly desires to honor the king, any position is good for him because he is happy to do the king's will.

Yosef HaTzaddik had מדת השתוות, happy to serve Hashem in any position or situation Hashem chose for him. His goal was to bring honor to Hashem; therefore, prisoner and viceroy were both the same.

2. People say, "Money doesn't fall from heaven." Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa *zt'l* disagreed. Because it states in this week's *parashah* (43:23), אלקים ואלקי אביכם נתן לכם מטמון במאמתחתים, "Your G-d... placed the treasure into your bags." So, apparently, sometimes, Hashem can send money down from heaven directly into your bag (or directly into your bank account), because Hashem can do anything.

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk *zy'a* taught: A Yid can sell slivers of wood and earn his *parnassah* that way. Hashem can provide *parnassah* in any way. The only condition is that he mustn't be disgusted and complain about his work.

The location didn't make a difference. Whether Hashem wanted him to serve Him from jail or a prestigious office, it was the same to him. He was happy to perform the mission Hashem prepared for him.<sup>3</sup>

The Ramchal writes that every day we should think about the early tzaddikim and should ask ourselves, "Why did Hashem love them so much, and what am I doing that resembles their ways?" Above, we discussed Yosef's clear *emunah* in Hashem, and in this section, we discussed his devotion to Hashem's service, no matter what it was. We should seek to emulate these ways. As the Sfas Emes *zt'l* writes, "So must every Yid believe that everything happens according to Hashem's plan; nothing happens by chance. And when Hashem sends a person somewhere, he must do his *shlichus*, to fulfill the King's will."

### **Hishtadlus**

Chazal (*Shabbos* 21:) say, נר חנוכה מצוותה, "The mitzvah of Chanukah *lecht* is from *shkiyah* (sunset) until people stop walking in the market." *Shkiyah* is a popular *zman*, associated with many halachos. But עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק, "until people stop walking the market" is an

unusual expression, only used by Chanukah *lecht*. According to many *miforshim*, עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק is a half-hour after *shkiyah*. So, we wonder why the Gemara doesn't simply say that we light the menorah for half an hour.<sup>4</sup>

Rebbe Moshe Leib Sassover *zt'l* answers that עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק hints to us that when one internalizes the message of Chanukah, he will spend less time in the marketplace and more time in *beis medresh*, studying Torah. Because the miracles tell us that a little can accomplish a lot. The small jug of oil lasted eight days, and a few people won the war against the mighty Greek empire. These miracles teach us that Hashem can give His blessings to a little and a few, and it will be sufficient. When one internalizes this message, he will know that he can do less *hishtadlus* for *parnassah*, which will also be sufficient. This is Chazal's intention, one should light the Chanukah *lecht* עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק, until he spends less time in the marketplace. He will work less and still have *parnassah* in abundance.<sup>5</sup>

In this week's *parashah*, Yaakov Avinu sent gifts to appease the ruler of Mitzrayim, (43:11), "מעט צרי ומעט דבש נכאת ולוט במנים ושקדים, "A bit of balsam, a bit of honey, wax, lotus, pistachios, and almonds." Why just מעט צרי

3. Rashi (*Bereishis* 47:31) writes, וישתחוו ישראל, that Yaakov Avinu bowed down to Hashem in gratitude, שהרי יוסף, "because Yosef was a king, he was captured among goyim, and he remained righteous."

How did Yosef pass these difficult tests?

It is because he knew that every situation was pre-arranged by Hashem, and he was always prepared to do Hashem's will.

4. Chazal (*Shabbos* 23:) say, הרגיל בנר הויין לו בנים תלמידי חכמים, "Those who are cautious to light Chanukah *lecht* will merit children *talmidei chachamim*."

The Meor Einayim writes, "Certainly, *talmidei chachamim* don't go to the market. They are studying Torah. Therefore, it states עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק, that we should light the Chanukah *lecht* until the feet aren't going to the market." The phrase implies that you will merit children who will sit and learn Torah in the *beis medresh*.

5. Notice that it says רגל (*singular tense*), one foot. This hints that while one foot goes to work, the other foot stays home. It is referring to someone who understands that he doesn't have to spend all his time in the workplace. He can be חצוי לה וחצוי לכם, partially at work, and at other times in the *beis medresh* studying Torah, and that will be sufficient for him to earn his *parnassah*.

ומעט דבש, a bit of balsam and a bit of honey? Yaakov wanted to appease the ruler of Mitzrayim, so why didn't he send more?

The answer is that the gift was nothing more than *hishtadlus*; the salvation will come from Hashem. Therefore, Yaakov understood that a little was also sufficient.

It states in this week's *parashah* (42:34), ואת הארץ תסחרו. Yosef told his brothers (before he revealed his identity to them) that if they return to Mitzrayim with Binyamin, that will prove to him that they aren't spies and then, ואת הארץ תסחרו, they will be permitted to go freely about the land. Rashi explains that תסחרו means תסובבו, to go about the land.

The root of תסחרו is often used to describe סוחרים or סחורה, merchants or merchandise. Rashi explains that the root is the same because סחור means to circle, and merchants circle around, seeking merchandise to buy.

We wonder why merchants are named after their going after merchandise. That seems like a side point and not the main action that they do for *parnassah*. They should be named for *selling* merchandise, which is the primary aspect of their work.

However, selling merchandise isn't the root of their *parnassah* either because *parnassah* comes from Hashem. When we understand that, we understand that going around and about to buy merchandise isn't less *hishtadlus* than selling. They are both *hishtadlus*, and both are trivial in comparison to their true source of *parnassah*.

On Chanukah, we play with a dreidel; it is spun from its top. Purim people make noise with a *grager* turned from below. *Kadmonim* (early scholars) explain that the Purim miracle began with people below because they davened and did teshuvah, which brought about Hashem's salvation.

And since the miracle began from people below, therefore, we turn the *grager* from below. The Chanukah miracle happened entirely from Above. So we spin the dreidel from above to commemorate the nature of the miracle.

But was the Chanukah miracle solely from Above? Didn't the Chashmonaim go out to battle against the Yevanim? Isn't fighting a war an act from below?

Clearly, it isn't. Because fighting a war is also from Hashem. As it states (*Avodah Zarah* 2:) מלחמות אני עשיתי "I make the wars." The Chashmonaim's war was *hishtadlus*, but it isn't considered the beginning of the salvation. Because *hishtadlus* is an obligation, but it isn't considered part of the results. Therefore, the Chanukah miracle was entirely from Above.<sup>6</sup>

The Yevanim decreed, "Write on oxen horns that you don't have a portion in the G-d of Yisrael."

Why specifically on oxen horns?

In that era, the ox was a primary source for *parnassah*. Oxen were used to plow, plant, and for other agricultural work in the field. Klal Yisrael believes that the oxen's work is just *hishtadlus*, but *parnassah* comes from Hashem. The Yevanim tried to destroy this belief. They wanted people to believe in the strength of man. They decreed that the oxen's horns should proclaim that work doesn't have anything to do with אלקי ישראל, the G-d of the Jewish nation.

But we know that Hashem gives *parnassah*. It is all from Hashem, alone.

## Chinuch

The root of the word Chanukah is חנינוך, therefore, let's take a few moments to discuss some ideas and *chinuch* tips.

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6. If a person spins a dreidel with all his strength, that won't help him win the game. It will just turn around longer, until it falls on the letter. Similarly, when people put more effort in earning their *parnassah*, it won't grant them more *parnassah*. They will spin around more, but the result will be the same.

The Yevanim decreed that everyone must write on the oxen's horn, שאין להם חלק באלקי ישראל, that they don't have a portion in the G-d of Yisrael. The Sfas Emes asks that if they don't have a portion in אלקי ישראל, why is Hashem called אלקי ישראל, "the G-d of Yisrael"? The words אלקי ישראל suggest the opposite of what the Greek's wanted to accomplish!

The Sfas Emes answers that the Yevanim didn't mind if Yidden believe that Hashem is the G-d of tzaddikim. There are very righteous individuals, and the Yevanim could accept that Hashem calls Himself their G-d. But it bothered them that every simple Yid also says that he is part of Hashem's nation, and that Hashem places His name on him, too.

*Chas v'shalom*, if the Yevanim would success in influencing the Yidden to think that way, it would detach them from Hashem and *avodas Hashem*. Chanukah, we regain awareness of the importance and holiness of every Yid. No one is superfluous; no one is unimportant. Hashem is אלקי ישראל, the loving G-d of each one of them, and each one is special and unique in his own, individual way.

Someone came to a *rosh yeshiva* and said, "I want the best *bachur* in your yeshiva for my daughter. Who is the best *bachur*?"

There were seventy *bachurim* in the yeshiva. "I have seventy best *bachurim*," the *rosh yeshiva* said because each *bachur* is best in his own way.

Each person serves Hashem in their own, individual way. As it states (*Koheles* 11:9), והלך בדרכך לבך, "Follow the path of your heart." The Netziv (*Ha'amek Davar*, end of *parashas Shelach*) explains, "People serve Hashem in different ways: Some toil in Torah all day long, others are occupied in *tefillah*, and others are busy doing *gemilus chasadim*, and all of these paths are good ones, leading to *avodas Hashem*. Even in the realm of Torah study, not all people should study the same way. [There are various parts and depths in Torah, and

each person should excel in the path that is best for him.] Also, regarding mitzvos, people vary [on which mitzvah they will place their emphasis]. As the Gemara (*Shabbos* 118) teaches that the *amoraim* would ask their friends, 'Which mitzvah was your father most careful with?' One said his father was most cautious with *tzitzis*, and another said that his father was most cautious with *Shabbos*. [Although we must keep all the mitzvos, a person can excel in a particular mitzvah.] Also, in *gemilus chasadim* people aren't the same. If one will ask: Since there are many ways to serve Hashem, which is the correct path? What is the correct way to study Torah, to keep the mitzvos, to do *chesed*? *Koheles* answers: והלך בדרכך לבך, see where your heart pulls you. Your heart will show you where your strengths are," and the path you should follow.

### Train them when they are Young

The Yevanim decreed that the Yidden must write on oxen horns that they don't have a portion in אלקי ישראל, the G-d of the Jewish nation. Why specifically on the oxen horns?

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 35:) says that a horn was used in their time as a bottle to feed children. The Yevanim wanted to impact young children's education *r'l*. They wanted them to feel detached from Hashem, *r'l*. We must do the opposite. We should begin *chinuch* when they are still young. Speak to your children; teach them the foundations of Yiddishkeit. You will be surprised how much they can understand. And these lessons will help them throughout their lives.

It states (*Bamidbar* 15:20), ראשית עריסתכם חלה, תרימו תרומה, "Before you eat from your dough, raise *challah* as *trumah*." Literally, this *pasuk* is referring to the mitzvah of *challah*, but the Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (*Toras Moshe, Shlach*, ד"ה בבואכם) writes that the *pasuk* hints that we should be *mechanech* children to go in Hashem's ways from when they are still very young. An עריסה is a crib. So ראשית

כריסתם means from when your children are still in the crib, תרימו תרומה לה, educate them to serve Hashem.

The Chanukah menorah cannot be placed higher than twenty *amos*. This hints at the idea of the importance of educating children when they are still young. Don't wait until your children are twenty years old to educate them because then it will be so much harder.

It states (*Tehillim* 127:4), כחיצים ביד גבור כן בני הנעורים, "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior so are children..." After an arrow is shot, the warrior can't draw the arrow back. Only as long as the arrow is still in his hands does he have control over it.

The same is with children. When they are young, they are with you, and you can mold them. But when they become older, when they go their own way, it is much harder. So, begin the education when they are young.

### Education with Love

The *pasuk* כחיצים ביד גבור כן בני הנעורים, teaches us another essential lesson in *chinuch*. It teaches us to love our children.

A prerequisite to educating children is to love them. Children who feel loved and valued are prepared to accept and abide by the guidelines and restrictions given to them. It isn't so when they don't feel love.

This is hinted at in the *pasuk*, כחיצים ביד גבור, כן בני הנעורים, "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are children..." A warrior aims his arrow on a target. There is a higher success rate when the target is nearby. The further the target, the harder it is to aim accurately.

כן בני הנעורים, the same is with children. Parents want to direct their children on the right path. Their chances for success are far greater when they are closer to their children. When they are distant from their children, they likely won't succeed.

In next week's *parashah*, it states (*Bereishis* 44:30), ונפשו קשורה בנפשו, "his soul is bound to his soul." The Baal HaTurim writes that the word קשורה is stated another time in Tanach in the *pasuk* (*Mishlei* 22:15) נער קשורה בלב נער, "Foolishness is bound in the child's heart."

The Baal HaTurim explains the message of these two *pesukim*: מפני שאולתו קשורה בו צריך, "Since he is bound with foolishness, he needs to be bound [in love] with the soul of his father so that his father can educate him."

Because, as we wrote, love is a critical component of education.

In (*Malachim* 2, 4:29-34) we learn that the child of אשה שונמית was *niftar*, and Elisha sent Gechazi with his staff to revive the child. Gechazi put the staff on the child, but it didn't help. Elisha came, וישם פיו על פיו ועיניו על, "he put his mouth on [the child's] mouth, his eyes on his eyes, his hands on his hands, and he lay on the child, and the child's flesh became warm." A staff didn't revive the child, but warmth did. The same is with the spirituality of the child. A staff won't help, but love will.

Another hint is from thunder and lightning. Chazal (*Brachos* 59:) say, "Thunder was created to straighten out the crookedness of people's hearts." Thunder frightens people and rouses them to *teshuvah*. However, before the thunder comes the lightning because you first need הארת פנים, a shining face, expressions of love, only then you can educate with warnings and fear. But without the light, without unconditional love, you can't educate at all.

### Light from Darkness

Once, Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zt'l* was returning from the *kosel* through an Arab neighborhood and an Arab hit him. Rebbe Shlomke's *gabbai* commented, "We should have taken a safer route."

Rebbe Shlomke replied, "We have a kabbalah that if one davens and then gets hit by a gentile, that's a sign his tefillos were answered.<sup>7</sup> As it states (*Shemos* 27:20) שמן זית זך, if one prays a pure prayer, כתיב, and he is then beaten by a gentile, למאור, that's a sign that his tefillos were answered."

On another occasion, Rebbe Shlomke taught, שמן זית זך, if one prays with *kavanah* a pure tefillah, like pure olive oil, כתיב, and afterwards the situation (that he was davening for) deteriorates and matters become worse than before, למאור, that's a sign that his tefillos were answered and that very soon things will improve.

Just as the bright sun rays of the morning follow the dark night, and just like the light of a candle shines brightest in the dark, similarly, when one goes through hard times, that is a sign that something positive will follow.

In this week's *parashah*, Yaakov Avinu complained to his children (43:6), למה הרעותם לי, להגיד לאיש העוד לכם אח, "Why did you wrong me, to tell the man that you have another brother?"

The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba* 91:10) states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, 'I am working to make your son king of Mitzrayim, and you complain, למה הרעותם לי?'"

The Ramchal (*Daas Tevunos* ch.5 ד"ה ואמנם) writes, "We learn from this that whenever Hashem desires to give a person, or the world, goodness, it will come through concealed ways. Good things are therefore preceded by something that causes distress. As Chazal (*Brachos* 5.) say, 'Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave three gifts to Bnei Yisrael, yet they are all acquired through *yesurim* (affliction).'"

And therefore, when going through hard times, strengthen yourself and be joyous with the knowledge that the hardships are a prelude to the kindness that Hashem will give you.

The Steipler Gaon *zt'l* once told a person who was going through hard times, "Don't focus on your *tzaros*. If I focused on all the *tzaros* I had in my lifetime, I would be an *am ha'aratz* today. Do you have an idea what I went through in life?"

"There were years when I was extremely poor. Shabbos, we ate black bread. Don't even ask what our clothing looked like. I also had many hardships raising my children. You think you have troubles? Believe me, the *tzaros* I had with my children could be divided into a hundred pieces... Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave me a son-in-law, and he was *niftar*, leaving me with eight orphans to raise. There were also health problems and more... If I had focused on my plight, I wouldn't be able to study a *daf* Gemara. But Hashem helped me - perhaps because I learned *mussar* or perhaps because I learned some Torah in my youth - and I ignored my troubles. With every problem I had, I remembered the Seforno's explanation to the words (*Tehillim* 23:4), שבטך ומשענתך המה ינחמוני, 'Your rod and Your staff console me.' שבטך, 'Your rod' alludes to the hardships. They were always followed with משענתך, 'Your staff,' Your support. המה ינחמוני, that comforted me, because when new troubles arose, I knew that Hashem would help me again, as He helped me in the past. There's no other *eitzah*, other than to turn your thoughts away from the troubles of Olam Hazei."

Eventually, the troubles will go away, and you will *be'ezras Hashem* experience more goodness than ever before.<sup>8</sup>

7. Rebbe Shlomke added, "Better that the body is hit, and not the soul" because the other route had harder tests with *shemiras einayim*.

8. Rebbe Shaul Yedidiah of Modzitz *zt'l* always had a joyous smile on his face, even in Poland during the Holocaust. People asked him how he managed to be so happy, and why he isn't worried like everyone else. He replied, "I'm also worried, only I keep my worries tied up and stored away. Once a day I take

It states (*Tehillim* 19:9), פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב. One of the translations of פקודי is lacking (as in *Bamidbar* 31:49). פקודי ה', when one knows that whatever he lacks is by Hashem's plan, משמחי לב, he will be happy because he knows that it is for his good.

Chazal (*Avos* 4:1) say, איזהו עשיר השמח בחלקו, 'Who is wealthy? He who is satisfied with his lot.'

Rashi writes, "He is happy with the portion Hakadosh Baruch Hu prepared for him, regardless of whether it is good or bad, little or a lot. He accepts everything with a good eye."

Early *sefarim* write that חלקו is *roshei teivos* for חם לח קר ויבש, "hot, wet, cold, and dry." This hints that in all situations, and under all circumstances, be שמח בחלקו, happy with your lot.

It states (*Devarim* 23:25), והסירתי מחלה מקרבך, "I will remove the illness that's in you." The Ksav Sofer *zt'l* says the illness in man is that he isn't satisfied with his portion.

Reb Yaakov Galinsky *zt'l* was a short man. He once commented that this is for his benefit because he can only see the lower half of the cup, which is full. The empty half of the cup is above his head.

The elders of Yerushalayim (and some say the origin is from the Skulener Rebbe *zt'l*) would say that a person shouldn't be upset that his cup is only half full because his cup is actually full, only his cup isn't as tall as he thought it was.

The Imrei Emes (*Korach* 5676) writes that in his youth, he heard in the name of Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* that if everyone would place their *peckel* (package of hardships) on a table and would be given the opportunity to switch with someone else's, they wouldn't want to. They would take back their own *peckel* because Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives

each person the exact situation and struggle that is best for him, *beruchniyus* and *begashmiyus*. Somebody else's problems would overwhelm him.

A hint to this concept is the *pasuk* (*Bamidbar* 17:24), ויראו ויקחו איש מטהו. Targum Yonoson translates it, ואשתמודעו ונסיבו גבר חוטריה, "They understood, and each person took his staff." They understood that their portion was best for them.

It states (*Tehillim* 148), רוח סערה עושה דברו, "The stormy winds do His will." The Nesivos Shalom *zt'l* explained, even matters that seem bad, such as storms, are Hashem's word and decree and are certainly for the good.

A king had a wise advisor. The king enjoyed listening to his advice, but there was one point they disagreed on. The advisor was a strong advocate that everything that happens in the world is for the good. The king disagreed. He believed that there is good in the world, and there is bad. And therefore, when something bad happens, there is no reason to be happy about it.

Once, the king was hunting in the forest together with his close associates. One of the king's servants saw movement in the brush. Excited to catch game, he quickly shot his arrow. Unfortunately, he didn't know that it was the king, and the arrow wounded the king's thigh. The king's doctor, who was part of the hunting party, heard the king's shouts and immediately rushed forward and treated the king's leg. All the king's officials lined up to apologize to the king. The king's advisor was last in line. When it was his turn to speak with the king, he had a giant smile on his face, and to the astonishment of all the officers, he said, "Don't feel bad about what happened. Something very good will come from it. You will see. This is for the king's benefit..."

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out my worries to look at them, and then I immediately tuck them away until the next day. That's how I am able to maintain a happy disposition..." (*Imrei Shaul*).

The king glared at his advisor and said, "I see you are happy I was shot. Unlike all the others who express their sorrow, you express glee. Guards! Throw him into a pit, and then we will see whether he can say that 'everything is good.'"

Two strong officers grabbed the advisor and brutally pulled him towards a large pit in the forest, from which one couldn't get out without outside help.

As the advisor was being placed into the pit, he said to the king, "Yes! I say that even this situation is for my good. I am happy that this is happening to me! Only good will come from it."

The king and his men laughed heartily.

A tribe of cannibals lived in that forest; they were hiding up in the trees. When the king passed, riding on his horse, they dropped a net and captured the king. They tied their captive to a tree and began preparing their feast. Then they noticed that the king's wounded leg. Fearing the wound was infected, they set him free.

The king returned to the pit and said to his advisor, "I admit. You are right. Everything is for the good. When I was shot in the leg, I thought it was bad, but that wound saved my life."

The advisor said, "I was also correct when I said that it was good that I was thrown in the pit because that saved my life. Otherwise, I would have been captured by the cannibals, too."

From then on, the king would always say, "Even when things seem bad, they are for the good."

### Take it with You

Chanukah is for eight days, but the holiness should remain with us for the rest of the year.

The Kozhiglover Gaon *zy'a* (*Eretz Zvi, Moadim*, p.270) proves this from the name of the holiday: חנוכה, which is similar to חנוכה

חנוכה or חנוכה הבית. When one buys or builds a new house, he makes a חנוכה. People come to celebrate, *divrei Torah* is spoken, and the house is inaugurated on the foundation of gratitude to Hashem. But the purpose isn't the two-hour חנוכה celebration. The goal is that afterwards the family should raise children, study Torah, keep Shabbos, and live as Yidden in that home.

Similarly, when a *mizbeiach* is dedicated, *korbanos* are brought להנחת המזבח, to sanctify the *mizbeiach*. But the purpose is all the *korbanos* that will be sacrificed after the dedication.

So too, חנוכה isn't solely for eight days. It is a dedication of holiness that should remain with us long afterwards.

Chazal (*Shiltus, Vayishlach* 26) say we should light the Chanukah *lecht* on the left side of the doorway. The mezuzah is on the right side, and the *baal habayis* stands in between them wearing *tzitzis*. In this way, he is surrounded by *mitzvos*.

The Sfas Emes (תרל"ד ליל א') asks that many people light Chanukah *lecht* at night, and there are opinions that at nighttime we don't have the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*. So how do we understand this Chazal? How is he surrounded by *mitzvos*? There's a mezuzah on his right, Chanukah *lecht* to his left side, but we don't have the person performing the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis* in between.

The Sfas Emes replies that the holiness of the Chanukah *lecht* doesn't disappear when the *lecht* go out. As he writes, "The *mitzvah* of Chanukah leaves a light of holiness by the doorway throughout the year." So, tomorrow morning, when he walks past the doorway, he will be surrounded with the mezuzah to his right side, the light of Chanukah *lecht* on his left side, and he, in between, wearing *tzitzis*. The Chanukah *lecht* aren't there right now, but the light of the *mitzvah* remains throughout the year, bringing holiness into your home.

We are permitted to work on Chanukah. The Shem MiShmuel (תר"פ ליל ג' Chanukah)

explains that the Chachamim didn't want to institute that work is forbidden on Chanukah, because then, at the end of Chanukah, we would have to make havdalah. We don't want to say havdalah after Chanukah passes because we want its holiness to remain with us throughout the year.

On Chanukah we read parashas Mikeitz, and there are indeed connections between the parashah and Chanukah. Yosef advised Pharaoh to appoint (41:33) איש נבון וחכם a wise, clever person to store the grains during the seven years of plenty for the seven years of famine. But why does he need to be נבון וחכם, wise to do that? Storing wheat doesn't seem so hard to do?

The answer is that when there's an abundance, people tend to be lax, and don't save every kernel. Only the wise can understand that there will be a time when every seed will be precious and that they should save up for that time.

This is read on Chanukah because we must remember that although now it's Chanukah, soon Chanukah will pass, and we will be back to navigating plain winter weekdays. So remember this now, draw as much *kedushah* as you can, so Chanukah will shine for you the entire year.

The Beis Aharon (p.45:) said, "Once, on Zos Chanukah, my father [Rebbe Asher of Karlin *zt'l*] asked his chassidim to sing, הדרן "עלך מסכת חנוכה והדרן עלן מסכת חנוכה", words that are generally said at a *siyum*.

The Beis Aharon adds, "Who am I to explain my father's intentions?"

Indeed, we don't know why Rebbe Asher of Stolin asked his chassidim to sing these words at the end of Chanukah. But we can offer an explanation. One of the translations of הדרן is to return. At the end of Chanukah, we pray עלן הדרן, that the light of Chanukah should return to us. It shouldn't leave us. The impressions of the lights of Chanukah should remain with us all year long.

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

Zos Chanukah is an auspicious time to think about what we can take along with us for the rest of the year. Because "what a person gains on Zos Chanukah, he won't lose." It will remain with him the entire year.

## Shabbos

The Meor Einayim (*Mikeitz*) writes, "Hashem gave the Jewish nation a most precious gift from His treasure house – Shabbos kodesh, in order to draw us close to Him. When one keeps Shabbos, then all his sins are forgiven. But it is difficult for a person to tap into the holiness of Shabbos because the holiness of Shabbos is extremely holy – it's 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 person's level] to draw him up. This is the explanation of, פתילות ... שאין, מדליקין בשבת מדליקין בהן בחנוכה, 'wicks that don't light on Shabbos, one may light them on Chanukah.' ... The wicks, which are alluding to people, שאין מדליקין בשבת, who don't become illuminated on Shabbos, מדליקין בהן בחנוכה, can become ignited on Chanukah. Hashem, Himself, *keviyachol*, lowers Himself down to the person and has the light catch onto him..."

Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin *zy'a* would say in the name of his father, Rebbe Shalom Shachnah of Pravitch *zy'a* that the Shabbosim leading up to Chanukah are referred to as, "תהו ובהו, empty and void," even the Shabbosim lack their brilliance. But when Chanukah comes, it states, ויאמר אלקים יהי אור, "And Hashem said, there should be light," as from then on, one can attach himself to the holiness of Shabbos.

### Zos Chanukah - Gmar Chasimah Tovah

The Beis Aharon (p.42.) said, "The main miracle [of the menorah in the Beis HaMikdash] was on the eighth day. Miracle occurred during the first seven days too. Nevertheless, the primary miracle was on the eighth day [because seven represents nature and the eighth day is beyond nature]."

The Ostrovtza Rebbe *zt'l* said that Sarah Imeinu's Shabbos candles remained lit from Shabbos to Shabbos. There already existed a seven-day miracle in the world. When the menorah of the Beis HaMikdash remained lit even for the eighth night, that was a *nes* that never happened before., Therefore, the highlight of the miracle was on the eighth day.

On Zos Chanukah, we read in the Torah the beginning of *parashas* בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ, which discusses the menorah. This is another indication that the primary miracle of the menorah was on the eighth day.

The Sfas Emes (תר"מ ד"ה אא"י) writes that on each day of Chanukah we read the *korbanos* that the *nesi'im* brought, and on Zos Chanukah, we read the sum-total of all the *korbanos*. This indicates that Zos Chanukah contains the "light" of all the seven days that passed.

Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin *zt'l* taught, "What *tzaddikim* accomplish on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, simple *Yidden* can accomplish on Zos Chanukah."<sup>9</sup> It's a day that's *mesugal* for *yeshuos*.

The Beis Aharon writes, "I think that the eighth candle of Chanukah possesses the same concept as שְׁמִינֵי עֶצֶרֶת. Therefore, *tzaddikim* say Zos Chanukah is the גְּמֵר חֲתִימָה, the final judgment when we are inscribed and sealed for a good year [just as שְׁמִינֵי עֶצֶרֶת

is the גְּמֵר חֲתִימָה טוֹבָה, when we are inscribed and sealed for a good year]."

The Beis Yosef (670) writes, "Why did the *Chachamim* make Chanukah eight days? If the jar of oil contained enough to light for one night, isn't the miracle only seven nights?"

The Rokeiach answers as follows:

In *Parashas Emor* (*Vayikra* 23) the *yomim tovim* are listed. The last of the *yom tovim* mentioned are the eight days of Succos and Shemini Atzeres. Then the Torah discusses the laws of lighting the menorah (see *Vayikra* 24:2), which alludes to the holiday of Chanukah. And since Chanukah is written next to the eight-day holiday of Succos and Shemini Atzeres, it implies that Chanukah should also be for eight days.

This source brings the connection between Chanukah and Shemini Atzeres, and it is reasonable to assume that the eighth day of Chanukah represents Shemini Atzeres.

Rashi (*Vayikra* 23:36) tells us the reason Hashem gave us the *yom tov* of Shemini Atzeres. "A *mashal* to a king who invited his children for a meal [a celebration that lasted] for several days. When it was time for his children to return home, the king said, 'My children, please, remain with me one more day- קָשָׁה עָלַי פְּרִידַתְכֶם, it's hard for me when you leave.'"

Similarly, we can explain that after seven days of Chanukah, Hashem says to the Jewish nation, "I enjoyed your mitzvos so much- your Chanukah *lecht*, your *Hallel*, etc. Stay with me one more day. It's hard for me when you leave."

This can be another answer to the Beis Yosef's question. Chanukah should really be for seven days because the miracle was seven days. But Hashem requests that we

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9. Some explain that this is because on Zos Chanukah the miracles are all prepared and ready in heaven. We don't need to create the miracles; they are already there. All we need to do is to draw them down. Therefore, even simple *Yidden* can draw down salvations on this day.

have one more day of Chanukah, an eighth day, because He doesn't want us to leave.

About Shemini Atzeres, the *Zohar* (vol.3, 32.) states, ובהוא חדותא לא משתכחי במלכא אלא ישראל בלחודייהו, ומאן דיתיב עם מלכא ונטל ליה בלחודיה כל "At this joyous time [of Shemini Atzeres] the Jewish people are alone with the King. And when one sits with the king, all alone, whatever he asks for will be given to him." This also applies to Zos Chanukah. Whatever we request from Hashem on this day will be granted to us. Indeed, חנוכה has in it the word חנוך or חנם, free, underserving gifts. Whatever we ask for, Hashem grants it to us because of His love for us.

The Vilna Gaon teaches that the *Hallels* we say on the eight days of Chanukah are to complete the eight *Hallels* that we miss during the year- six days of Pesach we only say half-*Hallel*, and Rosh Hashanah (which is one day from the Torah) and on Yom Kippur, when we don't say *Hallel* at all. This amounts to a total of eight days.

The *yomim tovim* begin with the holiday of Pesach. Therefore, tzaddikim taught that it is logical to assume that the first six days of Chanukah complete the *Hallel* that we missed during Pesach. On the seventh day of Chanukah, we complete the *Hallel* of Rosh Hashanah. And on the eighth day, Zos Chanukah, we say the *Hallel* that should have been said on Yom Kippur.

According to this calculation, Zos Chanukah corresponds to Yom Kippur. And, just as Yom Kippur is the day when the Jewish people are sealed for a good year (גמר חתימה טובה), so too, on Chanukah, the Jewish people are sealed for a good year.<sup>10</sup>

The Yismach Yisrael (*Chanukah* 53) says that when the Torah says, זאת, it refers to something one can see with his eyes.<sup>11</sup> The Yismach Yisrael explains that on זאת חנוכה tzaddikim can see the holy light of Chanukah. The *kedushah* is very great, and tzaddikim can see it. Therefore, it is called זאת חנוכה. "But this revelation is only for the perfect tzaddikim. [For people like us], it states (*Tehillim* 118:23), מאת ה' היתה זאת, we believe that Hashem shares this revelation on זאת חנוכה, however, היא נפלאה בעינינו, we aren't able to see it. It is concealed from us... Although we don't see or feel this special revelation, we are still happy for the tzaddikim, for we believe they see it. We are happy with their joy."

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

### Salvations on Zos Chanukah

It states, איש בער לא ידע וכסיל לא יבין את זאת, "The fool doesn't know, and the unintelligent doesn't understand זאת." We can explain that he doesn't understand that זאת חנוכה is a special day. לוי חכמה ישכילו זאת, "if you are wise, you will understand זאת" the importance of זאת חנוכה. And בזאת אני בוטח, on Zos Chanukah, I trust in Hashem's salvation.

The Maharal teaches that the world was created with the number seven (seven days in the week, seven *chachmos*, etc.). Eight represents a world of beyond nature, a world where miracles occur.

Zos Chanukah is doubly eight (שמיני) as it is the eighth day of the eight days of Chanukah. Therefore, Zos Chanukah

10. The Beis Ahron *zt'l* teaches that we should say *Tehillim* on Chanukah. We add that surely one should say *Tehillim* on זאת חנוכה because Hashem bestows His kindness on us on this day.

11. It states (*Shemos* 12:2), החודש הזה לכם, and Chazal explain that הזה indicates that Hashem showed Moshe the new moon. Because when it states זה it's something that can be seen. There are several examples of this principle.

is certainly a day beyond nature, a day for miracles.

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

Rebbe Shlomo of Bobov *zt'l* said that the miracles of זאת חנוכה are alluded to in the *pasuk*, מפאת ה' היתה זאת היא נפלאות בעינינו, wonders will happen because of זאת, because of זאת חנוכה.

The Bnei Yissaschar (*Kislev Teivos* 2:10) writes, "The earlier rabbanim often said that Chanukah is *mesugal* for פקידת עקרות, for barren women to bear children... In my opinion, the *segulah* is primarily on Zos Chanukah..." (Rebbe Aharon of Belz *zt'l* and several other tzaddikim would repeat this idea from the Bnei Yissaschar each year at their Zos Chanukah *tisch*.)<sup>12</sup>

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

The Chazon Ish corrected him. He said the phrase should be read as follows, לאו, it isn't so! בכל יומא מתרחיש ניסא, miracles occur every day!"

And this is surely true on Zos Chanukah, a day for miracles.

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

ובארץ לך ה' הממלכה (6). והמתנשא לכל לראש (7). והעושר (8).

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

The other days of Chanukah are also *mesugal* for *parnassah*. It states (*Bereishis* 45:5), כי למחיה שלחני אלקים לפניכם, "for the sake of *parnassah*, Hashem sent me before you." The *Arugas HaBosem* says שלחני is *roshei teivos* for, להדליק נר חנוכה שמונת ימים, "To light the candles of Chanukah eight days." כי למחיה tells us that with this mitzvah, we receive *parnassah*.

The Imrei Noam (7th day of Chanukah) writes that זאת חנוכה בנים פרנסה is *gematriya*, hinting that on Zos Chanukah one can merit bearing children and earning *parnassah*.

On Chanukah, and especially Zos Chanukah, it is a time that's *mesugal* for *refuah*.

A story took place in Paris, in the yeshiva of Reb Chaim Yitzchak Chaykin *zt'l* (a student of the Chofetz Chaim *zt'l*). A *bachur* in the yeshiva became ill; a tumor was found in his neck. The doctors said he needed surgery immediately, however, they cautioned that the operation itself was dangerous. At the time, Reb Itzikel of Pshevorsk *zt'l* lived in Paris, and they asked him for advice. He replied, "It is only three weeks after Chanukah, and I still have my wicks from Chanukah. Place the wicks on the tumor, and the *bachur* should stay home for three days. They did so, and the tumor disappeared, to the astonishment of the doctors.

The following amazing story occurred in תרפ"ג. A person came to Rebbe Itzikel of Antwerp *zt'l* and told him that he needs to travel immediately (he provided the reason the trip was an emergency) but he expressed his

12. The Chakal Yitzchak of Spinka related that his father, the Imrei Yosef *zt'l*, didn't have children for many years. On Zos Chanukah, the couple received a *brachah* from the Divrei Chaim of Tzanz *zt'l*, and nine months later they had a child.

distress that he doesn't have a passport, and to order one would take too long.

With a smile on his face, and in a calm, happy demeanor, Rebbe Itzikel told him, "If you need a passport, take this," and handed him a bencher.

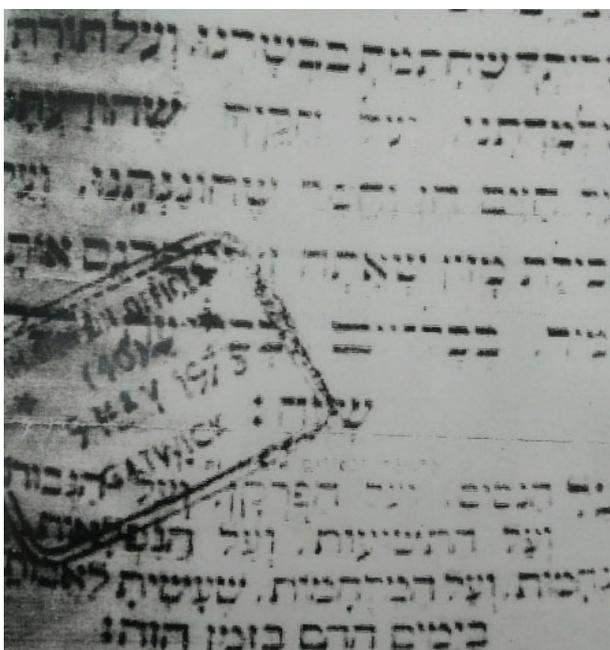
With emunas chachamim, the man handed the border police his "passport" which was a bencher, and the policeman accepted it.

We still have a picture of this "passport." The policeman stamped it on the page of על הניסים.

This miracle didn't happen on Chanukah, but the origin of the miracle came from Chanukah. Chanukah we draw miracles that will happen throughout the year.

We add that throughout the year, one needs a tzaddik like Reb Itzikel to perform a miracle like this one, but on Chanukah, a time of miracles, everyone can perform miracles.

As the Ruzhiner said, "What tzaddikim accomplish on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, simple people can accomplish on Zos Chanukah." We can daven for *yeshuos* and *refuos* and they will come, *be'ezras Hashem*. As the *Shaul u'Meishiv (Divrei Shaul)* *zt'l* teaches, although we generally don't daven for miracles, on Chanukah we may, because on Chanukah miracles are the norm and the standard way Hashem leads the world.



In *sefer Chesed L'Avraham* from Rebbe Avraham of Radomsk *zt'l* it states that Zos Chanukah is *mesugal* for hastening and bringing Moshiach, since on זאת חנוכה we read, וזאת חנוכת המזבח ביום המשח אותו (*Bamidbar* 7:84) and משיח is from the word משיח.

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

Hashem's salvation will come quickly. As it states in this week's *parashah* (41:14), וישלח, פרעה ויקרא את יוסף ויריצהו מן הבור, "Pharaoh summoned, Yosef was called, and he was rushed out of the dungeon."

The Seforno writes, "[Yosef was saved quickly] because all of Hashem's salvations 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 rushed out of Mitzrayim.' Chazal say that their dough didn't have time to rise, and the King of kings, Hakadosh Baruch, redeemed them. And this will also occur in the future. As it states (*Malachi* 3:1), ופתאום יבוא, 'Suddenly He will come to his *heichal*, the master (Moshiach) whom you are awaiting.'" May it be speedily in our days."