

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Zos Chanukah



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Torah Wellsprings - Mikeitz - Zos Chanukah

Take Advantage

The Sfas Emes says we read Parshas Mikeitz on Chanukah because it discusses how Egypt prepared in years of plenty for the subsequent hunger years. We should take this as a lesson and fill ourselves with spirituality and blessings on Chanukah so that the inspiration and brachos remain with us throughout the winter months after Chanukah passes.

Consider the following story:

A man was hiking through a forest and chanced upon a great treasure of gold, diamonds, and precious gems. The hiker emptied his backpack from his personal items and began filling his bag with precious gems.

Just then, his phone rings. It is his rebbe. "Rebbe, thank you for returning my call. Please give me chizuk. I feel so broken."

"What are you doing now, asked his rebbe."

"I am filling my bag with precious gems I found in the forest."

"You are gathering gems, and you need chizuk?"

During Chanukah, people come over to me and ask me for chizuk. I wonder, "How can it be that you need chizuk now? Every moment of Chanukah, you pick up treasures, b'gashmiyos and b'ruchniyos. No one should be happier than you, and you need chizuk?!" With Hallel, the neros Chanukah, Al HaNissim, Tehillim, Torah study, Chanukah seudah, and even simply by being happy on Chanukah, we pick up priceless treasures. So, should we feel we need chizuk at this time?"

Some days of Chanukah have passed, but great days are before us. Shabbos Chanukah is approaching, with two days of Rosh Chodesh, and Zos Chanukah. Tzaddikim said that Zos Chanukah is the peak of Chanukah.

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

On Zos Chanukah, you can score tremendous yeshuos, but we can also translate Zos Chanukah to say, "This is the final day. Take advantage of it, or it will be too late." Both aspects are correct. It is a day of salvation and spiritual growth, but soon the day will pass. Zos Chanukah tells us both messages – to take advantage of this special time and not let it go without taking advantage of this special day.

Someone did a favor for the king, and the king rewarded him by allowing him entry into the treasury room for one hour. He could bring two bags. Whatever he takes during this hour will be his.

After the king granted him this special offer, he worried he might give away too much of his wealth. So, the king inquired about which music this person enjoys and what type of food he likes.

When he came to the treasury, his favorite singer was singing outside the treasury, and there was a food stand featuring an elaborate spread of his favorite foods. He stopped for a "moment" to eat a bit and listen to the music.

The few minutes lasted longer than expected. When he realized what had

happened, he shouted, "There are only fifteen minutes left to gather the treasures."

He quickly ran inside with his bags and began filling them with as many treasures as the limited available time allowed.

The same occurs on Zos Chanukah. Perhaps we became sidetracked by the matters of this world. But now is our last chance. Zos Chanukah, this is Chanukah, but it is only today, and tomorrow it won't be with us.

The Kedushas Levi says, "Woe to the person who sleeps all day long when the treasury is open."

Shabbos Chanukah

The Meor Einayim (Mikeitz) writes, "Hashem gave Shabbos to the Jewish nation so that we can be close to the Creator. When one keeps Shabbos, all his sins are forgiven. However, it is hard to tap into the holiness of Shabbos because the holiness of Shabbos is extremely exalted. שבת is Hashem's name. How can a person ascend to this high, exalted place? On Chanukah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, *keviyachol*, goes down lower than ten *tefachim* [to the people at very low levels] and draws them up so that they too can experience Shabbos. This is the explanation of פתילות שאין מדליקין בשבת מדליקין בהן בחנוכה, 'Wicks that one can't use on Shabbos, one may light with them on Chanukah.' The wicks represent people, שאין מדליקין בשבת, who don't become illuminated on Shabbos, מדליקין בהן בחנוכה, can become illuminated on Chanukah. Hashem, Himself, *keviyachol*, lowers Himself down to the person and kindles his Neshamah."

This is a wonderful opportunity. Hashem enables all Yidden to appreciate and experience the holy Shabbos on Chanukah. It is important to prepare ourselves for this special Shabbos.

Hopefully, the experience will continue all Shabbosim that follow.

Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin zy'a would repeat in the name of his father, Rebbe

Shalom Shachnah of Pravitch zy'a, that the Shabbosim until Chanukah are alluded to in the words, "The earth was תהו ובהו, empty and void." Even the Shabbosim lack their shine and brilliance. But when Chanukah comes, it states, ויאמר אלקים יהי אור, "Hashem said, there should be light," as from then on, one can more easily attach himself to the holiness of Shabbos.

Zos Chanukah - Gmar Chasimah Tovah

Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin zt'l taught, "What tzaddikim accomplish on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, simple Yidden can accomplish on Zos Chanukah." So, if a person needs a salvation (and who doesn't?), you can get it on Zos Chanukah.

The Maharal says that Chanukah lasts eight days, one more than the days of the week, to indicate that Chanukah is above nature. Zos Chanukah is even higher because it is doubly eight (the eighth day of the eight days of Chanukah, שמיני שבשמיני). So, Zos Chanukah is even more above nature. It is a miraculous day; therefore, even simple Yidden can draw yeshuos from this day, as tzaddikim do on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The Sfas Emes calls Zos Chanukah "A Moshiach day." We read on Zos Chanukah (Bamidbar 7:84) ואת חנוכת המזבח ביום המושח אותו, "This is the dedication of the mizbeiach on the day it was anointed..." המושח indicates that it "a Moshiach day," as the Sfas Emes calls it. It is a day above nature, and many miracles will b'ezeras Hashem come from this day.

Reb Itzekel of Pshevarsk zt'l lived in Aix-les-Bains, France. The rosh yeshiva there was Reb Chaim Yitzchak Chaykin zt'l, a student of the Chofetz Chaim zt'l. A bachur in the yeshiva had a cancerous growth in his throat r"l. The doctors agreed that surgery was the only chance this bachur could survive. The problem was that the required surgery was very risky; a tiny error could be fatal.

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

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

To perform such miracles, one must be a tzaddik of the caliber of Reb Itzikel. But on Chanukah, and certainly Zos Chanukah, every Yid can bring salvations.

A hundred years ago, in 5683, someone came to Rebbe Itzikel of Antwerp zt'l and told the rebbe that he must travel immediately, but he didn't have a passport. To order one would take too long.

Rebbe Itzikel told him, "If you need a passport, take this," and he handed him a bencher.

The man showed the border police his "passport," and the policeman accepted it, and stamped one of the pages. Do you know on which page he stamped the "passport"? Next to the words על הניסים. (We have a picture of this bencher, and it is amazing.)

This miracle didn't happen on Chanukah, but the origin of the miracle came from Chanukah.

The entire year, we have to construct miracles in heaven and then draw them down; we need tzaddikim to do that. But on Zos, Chanukah is a time beyond nature, during which miracles are already prepared in heaven. So, even simple Yidden can draw down salvations on this day.¹

The Beis Aharon writes, "I think the eighth candle of Chanukah is the same concept as שמיני עצרת. And therefore, tzaddikim say Zos Chanukah is the גמר חתימה when we are inscribed for a good year [just as שמיני עצרת is a גמר חתימה, a day when we are inscribed for a good year]."

Parashas Emor (Vayikra 23) lists the *yomim tovim*, but obviously, Chanukah isn't mentioned. Nevertheless, there is a hint to Chanukah. The Torah mentions the *yomim tovim*, concluding with Succos and Shmini Atzeres. Then the Torah discusses the menorah (see *Vayikra 24:2*). The Rokeiach points out that the menorah hints to Chanukah. He adds that Chanukah is for eight days because it is written next to Succos and Shmini Atzeres, which are eight days.

It is reasonable to assume that the eighth day of Chanukah represents Shemini Atzeres.

1. The Beis Yisrael zt'l said that חג-כ"ה indicates that Chanukah is for everyone, as they are. כה means "like this" - "As you are." Even if you are lower than ten tefachim, outside, at nighttime, on the left side, all of these concepts represent Yidden who are at low levels, Chanukah is for you.

The Sfas Emes zt'l said that Chanukah is primarily for the chalashim and beinonim (the low Jews and the Yidden who are at low levels). Chanukah is specifically for them.

The Chidushei HaRim said that not everyone can go to the king, certainly not prisoners. But when the king travels, it is his way to visit the prisons, and then the prisoners can shout out to the king and beg his mercy. Chanukah is like Hashem is visiting those in jail to draw them out.

Therefore, the Ruzhiner zt'l said that on Zos Chanukah, a simple Yid can accomplish what great tzaddikim do on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

If you need a salvation, you can get it on Chanukah, particularly on Zos Chanukah.

The dreidel turns on a tiny point. This hints that with a small kabbalah, everything can turn around.

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

Similarly, after seven days of Chanukah, Hashem says to the Jewish nation, "I enjoyed your mitzvos so much. Your Chanukah *lecht*, your Hallel, your Al HaNisim, etc. Stay with me one more day. It's hard for me when you leave."²

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

The Yismach Yisrael (*Chanukah* 53) says that when the Torah says זאת, it refers to something one can see with his eyes. ⁴ זאת means the *kedushah* is so great on this day that tzaddikim are able to see it. "But this revelation is only for the perfect tzaddikim. It states (*Tehillim* 118:23), מאת ה' היתה זאת, we believe that Hashem gives this revelation on זאת חנוכה; however, היא נפלאה, בעינינו, we can't see it... Although we don't

see or feel this special revelation, we are happy for the tzaddikim, for we believe that they see it. We rejoice in their joy."

בואת ידעתי כי חפצת בי (*Tehillim* 41:12). The Yismach Yisrael explains בואת, since you gave us זאת חנוכה, I know that You desire me and that You want to grant me good.⁵

Salvations on Zos Chanukah

It states (*Tehillim* 92:7) איש בער לא ידע וכסיל לא יבין את זאת, "A boorish man does not know; neither does a fool understand זאת." We can explain that he doesn't understand the significance of זאת חנוכה. לו חכמה ישכילו זאת, if you were wise, you would understand the importance of זאת חנוכה, and בואת אני בוטח, in the merit of Zos Chanukah, I trust and will experience Hashem's salvation.

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

The Bnei Yissaschar (*Kislev Teives* 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 Ahron of Belz zt'l and other tzaddikim would repeat this idea from the Bnei Yissaschar yearly at their Zos Chanukah *tisch*.)

2. This can be another answer to the Beis Yosef's renowned question. Chanukah should really be for seven days because the miracle was for seven days (there was enough oil for one day). But Hashem requests that they have one more day of Chanukah, the eighth day because it is hard for Hashem when we leave.

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

4. For example, it states (*Shemos* 12:2), החדש הזה לכם, and Chazal explain that ה' indicates that Hashem showed Moshe the new moon. Because when it says זה, it's something that can be visibly seen.

5. The Divrei Chaim zt'l explains that there was a time when the yomim tovim from the Torah were sufficient, but the Chachamim understood that in the later generations, Yidden need more holidays so they could survive in galus. This is the reason they added Chanukah and Purim.

These additions aren't solely for ruchniyos. They are also for gashmiyos. We won't survive the galus, not even in gashmiyos, without the holidays of Chanukah and Purim; therefore, the Chachamim established them.

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

The Chazon Ish corrected him and said that this phrase should be read as follows, לאו, it isn't so! בכל יומא מרתחיש ניסא, miracles do occur every day!" And this is undoubtedly true on Zos Chanukah, a day of miracles, a day beyond the laws of nature.

Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz zt'l said that Zos Chanukah is *mesugal* for *parnassah*. He learned this from the eight praises we say in לך ה' הגדולה (1). (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.⁶

The other days of Chanukah are also *mesugal* for *parnassah*, as the Arugas HaBosem zt'l (Vayigash) teaches on the *pasuk*, כי למחיה, שלחני אלקים לפניכם, "for the sake of *parnassah*, Hashem sent me before you..." (Bereishis 45:5). The word שלחני is *roshei teivos* להדליק נר חנוכה שמונת ימים, "To light the candles of Chanukah eight days."⁷

6. It is good to get an aliyah for shlishi on this day because over there we read about the immense wealth that was donated to the beis hamikdash for chanukas habayis. The accumulation of all the donations given to the chanukas hamizbeiach is listed there. We say there (Bamidbar 7:84) קערת כסף שתים עשרה מזרקי כסף שנים עשר, "There were twelve silver bowls, twelve silver basins and twelve gold spoons..." and so on. (However, it isn't worth fighting over getting an aliyah. Many brachos come from being mevatar, as well.)

7. Chazal say that a kameiah for a man won't work for an animal. The Meiri explains this because the kameia doesn't function if one doesn't believe in it.

We have to believe in these days and in the miracles and salvations we can attain from them.

8. Reb Shmuel Minkus zt'l (renowned chassid of the Baal HaTanya zt'l) felt that he needed *chizuk* in *avodas Hashem*, so he went to the marketplace and sought someone who could take him to Liadi, where the Baal HaTanya lived. A spirit's merchant told him that he was traveling in that direction, but he only had room for him to sit in the uncovered wagon next to the barrels of spirits.

Reb Shmuel went with him. It was freezing in the uncovered wagon, and Reb Shmuel asked the spirit merchant for permission to drink some vodka from the barrels so that he could warm up. Permission was granted.

When Reb Shmuel came to the Baal HaTanya, he said *shalom aleichem* and *tzeshem l'shalom* at the same time. He explained that he was ready to return home.

Chanukah All Year Round

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 to you, *misechta Chanukah*, and return to us, *misechta Chanukah*.'" The Beis Aharon adds, "Who am I to explain my father's words?"

Indeed, it was unusual. Chanukah isn't a *misechta*. Furthermore, these words are said at a Gemara siyum, not at the siyum of a holiday.

We can't say we know why Rebbe Asher of Stolin asked that the chasidim sing this song. Nevertheless, we will explain it as best as we can, according to our limited capabilities:

At the end of Zos Chanukah, we have completed all the mitzvos of the holiday. We pray, הדרן עלן, that the light of Chanukah should return to us. The spiritual impressions we gained on Chanukah and the miracles we attained should return and remain with us all year long.⁸

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

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

Another hint to משיח is from מדליקין שמונת ימי חנוכה. The first letters spell משיח. The gematriya of the letters נגה"ש on the dreidel is משיח.

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

master (Moshiach) whom you await' (*Malachi* 3:1). May it be speedily in our days.

Hashem Does

Yosef told Pharaoh (41:25) את אשר האלקים עושה הגיד לפרעה, "What Hashem is doing, He has told Pharaoh." Reb Moshe Minder zt'l (Toras Avos) explains that Yosef told Pharaoh that everything that occurs in the world, האלקים עושה, Hashem does it.

Pharaoh replied (41:39) אין נבון וחכם כמוך, "There is no one as understanding and wise as you." Pharaoh admitted that no one is as wise as Yosef because Yosef understands that everything is from Hashem.

Even Pharaoh's thoughts are in Hashem's hands. We will prove it:

The Torah tells us that Pharaoh changed Yosef's name to Tzafnas Paneiach, as it states (41:45) ויקרא פרעה שם יוסף צפנת פענח. The Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe) zt'l asks, why is it important to know the name that Pharaoh called Yosef, and why is it written in the Torah?

The Chasam Sofer explains that if Pharaoh hadn't changed Yosef's name, everyone in Mitzrayim would call him Yosef, and the brothers would be afraid to come before him.

The Chofetz Chaim zt'l also teaches this lesson and explains that if the brothers didn't come to Yosef, Hashem's plan (by the בריית בין הבררים) that Bnei Yisrael would go down to

"You just came!" the Baal HaTanya said with a smile, well accustomed to Reb Shmuel's humor. "Why do you want to leave so quickly?"

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

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

Reb Shmuel said, "I sat among barrels of alcohol as I traveled here, but the barrels didn't warm me up. I became warm when I drank the alcohol. I learned from this that it isn't sufficient to learn chassidic ideas. To become warm, I must allow these ideas to become a part of me."

In reference to Chanukah, now is the time to think about what we acquired over Chanukah and to consider how we can take those lessons, attitudes, and inspiration with us for the entire year.

Mitzrayim wouldn't have occurred. So, Hakadosh Baruch Hu put in Pharaoh's mind to change Yosef's name so that the Yidden would come to Mitzrayim.

So, we see that even the thoughts in Pharaoh's mind are from Hashem.

A poritz once told his Jewish employee, "You are fortunate that I support you because what would you do without me? Your entire parnassah comes from me."

The Yid replied, "You don't support me; Hashem does."

This response enraged the poritz. Angrily, he said, "You're fired. You no longer work for me. Now let's see if Hashem supports you."

Sometime later, the poritz sat in his room, counting gold coins. He bit each coin to make sure it was real. His pet monkey, who was always with him, watched the poritz do this, and the monkey copied what the poritz. Only the monkey didn't realize that the poritz was just biting the coins. He thought he was eating them, so the monkey did the same. He swallowed many coins and died.

The poritz, who didn't know why it died, told his servant, "Throw the corpse into the house of the Yid who doesn't believe that I support him."

He did this to humiliate the Yid. The monkey fell with a crash, its stomach opened, and the many coins rolled out.

On the night of the seder, the poritz came to the Yid's home, assuming it would be dark and cold, without any food. To his surprise, he encountered a well-lit home with plenty of food. He was forced to admit that Hashem provides parnassah and nobody else.

This story is customarily repeated before Pesach on Shabbos Mevorchim Nisan. We tell it now because it portrays people's desire that others should think they help and support them, not realizing that everything is from Hashem.

This is found in this week's parashah when Pharaoh appointed Yosef king over Mitzrayim. He told Yosef (41:41) ראה נתתי אתך "See that I have appointed you over the entire land of Mitzrayim."

He wanted Yosef to think that he appointed him to this high rank and that all of Yosef's honors came from Pharaoh. But Yosef told his brothers (45:8) ועתה לא אתם שלחתם ושימיני לאב לפרעה ולאדון לכל ביתו אתי הנה כי האלקים ומושל בכל ארץ מצרים, "And now, you did not send me here, but Hashem and He made me a father to Pharaoh, a lord over his household, and a ruler over the entire land of Mitzrayim." Yosef recognized that his honor came from Hashem and not from Pharaoh.

Yosef, the ruler of Mitzrayim, told his brothers that if they bring Binyamin (42:34) ואת הארץ תסחרו, "You may travel around the land," they may roam the land of Mitzrayim as free people.

Rashi explains that the root of the word תסחרו is to "go around." Rashi explains that businesspeople are called סוחרים because שמוחרים וסובבים אחר פרקמטיא, "They go around looking for merchandise."

It is noteworthy that businesspeople are named for their looking for merchandise and not for their primary profession, which is to buy and sell.

The explanation is that parnassah comes from Hashem. Their hishtadlus is to go around, from here to there, and Hashem sends them their parnassah.

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

"Let's think about this: Yosef was in prison for so long. He didn't see sunshine for years. There were no breaks and off days. After twelve years, there's finally hope. He could speak to Pharaoh and plead for his case! Why would they need to rush Yosef out of the dungeon? We would assume that Yosef would run with all his strength to

speak to Pharaoh and plead for his life. But it states, ויריעהו מן הבור, Pharaoh's messengers rushed Yosef out of prison. This is because Yosef HaTzaddik believed and understood that everything is from Hashem, including his freedom. It won't happen a moment earlier or later than was planned Above. So, why rush for no reason?"

Yosef's high level of bitachon is evident in this story. For example, when Yosef deciphered Pharaoh's dream, he didn't mention his plight to Pharaoh at all! He didn't tell Pharaoh that he was enslaved for no reason, and so on. This is because he knew that it was Hashem that would save him, and not Pharaoh.

Bitachon

The parashah begins, ויהי מקץ שנתיים ימים, "It came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh was dreaming," The Or HaChaim says that Pharaoh had this dream every night for two years, only each morning, he forgot his dream. At the end of two years, Pharaoh dreamt, and he didn't forget it.

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

He explains with a story:

The Baal Shem Tov was traveling through a forest with his student, Rebbe Mendel, the Magid of Bar zt'l. On the third day of their travels, Rebbe Mendel was extremely thirsty. The Baal Shem Tov told him to trust in Hashem.

They came across a goy who asked, "Did you see my horses? I am looking for them for three days."

They replied that they didn't see the horses.

Reb Mendel asked the goy for some water, and he gave it to him.

Reb Mendel turned to the Baal Shem Tov and asked, "I am certain Hashem sent him

to bring me water. But why was he looking for his horses for three days?"

The Baal Shem Tov answered, "Hashem sent him out three days ago so he can bring you water the moment you acquire *bitachon*."

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

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

People say, "Money doesn't fall from heaven," but is that accurate? Can't it be that at times you suddenly find money in your wallet or the bank, and you don't know how it got there, that it came down from heaven?

In this week's parashah, the overseer of Yosef's house told the brothers (43:23) אלקיכם, "Your G-d and the G-d of your father gave you a treasure in your sacks." No one knew how the money came there, and the overseer suggested that Hashem put it there. The brothers apparently accepted that theory. Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa zt'l proves from this that the saying is wrong. Money can indeed fall from heaven.

Yaakov sent his children down to Mitzrayim with a gift for the ruler of Mitzrayim. (43:11) קחו מזמרת הארץ בכליכם והורידו לאיש מנחה מעט צרי ומעט דבש נכאת ולט במנים ושקדים "Take in your baskets from the land's harvest and bring a present to the man. A drop of balsam, a bit of honey, wax, almonds, etc."

Notice that Yaakov sent "a drop of balsam, a bit of honey." Shouldn't he have

sent a more significant gift to the mighty ruler of Egypt?

The answer is that Yaakov Avinu knew that, ultimately, only Hashem could help. He needed to do *hishtadlus* and knew that minimal *hishtadlus* was sufficient.⁹

The Benefit of Yesurim

The mizbeiach and the Kodesh Kadoshim were in Binyamin's portion, but the southeastern corner of the mizbeiach was in Yehudah's portion.

The Gemara (Yoma 12.) writes, ורצועה היתה יוצאה מחלקו של יהודה ונכנסת לחלקו של בנימין ובה היה מזבח בנוי ובנימין הצדיק היה מצטער עליה לבלעה בכל יום שנאמר חופף עליו כל היום, "A strip [of land] came out from Yehudah's portion and entered into Binyamin's portion, and the mizbeiach was built there. Binyamin the tzaddik was constantly bitterly yearning to get that part for himself, as it states (Devarim 33:12) חופף עליו כל היום. Rashi explains that חופף is like חפיתת הראש, scratching/scrubbing the head. Rashi writes, "Like a person who scratches himself when he doesn't get his desires." חופף עליו כל היום describes Binyamin's disappointment that he didn't get that portion of the mizbeiach. All day long, he scratched himself with agony that he didn't get that portion.

The Gemara says that in this merit that Binyamin so badly wanted to host the mizbeiach, he merited that the kodesh Kadoshim was in his portion. As stated at the end of the pasuk (Devarim 33:12) ובין כתפיו "Hashem dwells between his shoulders."

Yehudah's portion of the mizbeiach is called in this Gemara רצועה, a strip of land. But רצועה has another translation. It also means a whip.

This brings us to an interesting explanation (taught by Reb Yiddel Rabinovitz):

The Midrash says that when Yosef's police found the goblet in Binyamin's bag, the brothers hit Binyamin with רצועות, whips, and they called him גנב בר גנבתו, "A thief the son of a thief" (because his mother, Rachel, stole her father's avodah zarah).

We can explain that for every whipping he received, he earned the merit to receive the portion of land where the Beis HaMikdash was built.

We can also assume that Yehudah didn't hit him since he was Binyamin's ערב, guarantor because he promised Yaakov to bring Binyamin home (see Bereishis 43:9).

We can now explain that when the Gemara says Binyamin was upset about the רצועה, it isn't only the strip of land that he was referring to. He was bemoaning that he didn't get hit רצועה אחת, the one whipping from Yehudah. He was missing that one whipping. If he had been beaten once more, he would get the corner of the mizbeiach, too.

Fight the War

In על הנסים, we thank Hashem for the המלחמות, wars. Shouldn't we thank Hashem for winning and not for the war itself?

The Ponovicher Rav zt'l answers that we never finished the war. Until Moshiach comes, we are in the midst of the battle. The war that the Chashmonaim raged wasn't only a physical war. It was based on ideologies, which continues until today, and the battlefield is in our heart and mind. Therefore, על המלחמות is praising Hashem that we are not giving up, and we are still battling

9. On Chanukah, the custom is to play with a dreidel. When one spins the dreidel, he can do nothing to make the dreidel fall on the winning letter. Even if he is the best spinner in the world and spins the dreidel with all his might, he still cannot predict or arrange the outcome. Similarly, one works for a living, one makes hishtadlus, but the results are in Hashem's hands. Hashem does, and not mankind.

the war, but we can't yet praise Hashem for being victorious in this war.

The holy Chashmonaim were a small group fighting a war against a mighty, large army. One wonders, "Is this a war? It looks more like suicide! Logically, it was impossible to win this war. The answer is that the Chashmonaim understood that they must wage this war to save Klal Yisrael, so they put aside logic and common sense and threw themselves into the battle.

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

We should do the same when it comes to our battle against the *yetzer hara*. We should be brazen, fearless, and determined to do what's right.

Shalom

Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa *zt'l* taught about a two-step plan that will eradicate all disputes:

(1) Focus on your fellow man's qualities, and (2) think about your own faults. The combination of these two focuses will end all disputes.

Yosef taught his brothers the process, so there should be peace among them. He told them (42:18), *זֹאת עֲשׂוּ וְחַיֵּי אֶת הָאֱלֹקִים אֲנִי יֵרָא*, "Do this and live, I fear Hashem." Yosef told them to focus on the fact that he has Yiras Shamayim (and on Yosef's other qualities). That will help them overcome their hatred toward

him. The brothers thought about their faults, as it states (42:21), *אֲבָל אֲשָׁמִים אֲנַחְנוּ עַל אֲחִינוּ*, "We are guilty of what we did to our brother..." So, they had two thoughts that lead to peace.

It states (42:20), *וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כֵן*, "They did so." Rebbe Bunim said that they attained this focus. They thought about Yosef's greatness and their own lowliness and, thereby were able to be at peace with him.

Humility

It states (Tehillim 84:12) *הָאֵל וְכָבוֹד יִתֵּן ה'*, "Hashem will give chen and kavod." This seems obvious because Hashem gives everything.

It is explained that there is no hishtadlus for attaining these matters. To achieve wealth, there is hishtadlus; to gain wisdom in Torah, there is hishtadlus, but to attain honor or chen, either Hashem gives it, or He doesn't, but there is no worldly hishtadlus possible to do to achieve it.

However, there is one thing to do to attain chen, and that is living with humility.

It states (Mishlei 3:34) *וְלִעֲנָוִים יִתֵּן חֵן*, "To the humble, Hashem gives chen."

There was a tailor who had an excellent reputation. The poritz bought clothes from him, and people said, "If he is good enough for the poritz, he must be a very good tailor."

Once, the poritz asked the tailor to make him a set of clothes and added, "Make sure that it comes out nice."

The tailor replied, "Can I make something that isn't nice?"

Not the humblest thing to say.

When the poritz took the clothing home, his wife made a foul face and said she couldn't stand looking at it. "It has no chen."

"I can't wear this," the poritz said to the tailor as he gave him back the clothing. "Make it again, and this time, make it good."

The word went out. The poritz wasn't happy with the tailor's work. People stopped buying their clothes from him.

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

Rebbe Bunim had an unusual suggestion: "Take the suit you made, undo the seams, and then sew it up again exactly as you made it the first time."

"But the poritz and his wife won't like it," the tailor explained. "If they didn't like it the first time, why would they like it the second time."

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

The tailor had emunas chachamim and did as told. Upon seeing the garment, the poritz's wife said, "Now that is a beautiful outfit. I'm so glad it turned out well this time."

The poritz thanked the tailor for doing such a good job this time.

Everyone heard that the poritz and his wife were happy with the tailor, and they began asking him again for his service.

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

Rebbe Bunim explained, "Whatever is made with humility has chen, as it states *ולעניים יתן חן*. The first time you made the clothing, you were proud; you thought you make the best clothes in the world, so your actions didn't have chen. But the second time you sewed up the clothing, you did so with a broken heart and humility. And that's the reason it had chen in their eyes."

Yosef blessed Binyamin (43:29) *אלקים יחן* בני, "May Hashem grant you chen, my son." The Yismach Yisrael says that Binyamin received chen because of בני, which means child, alluding to young and humble. He felt humble, and humility is mesugal for chen.

The Kli Yakar discusses Hashem's name *הוי"ה* that these letters have the smallest gematriya (when spelled out in full). *ה"א* for example, is gematriya 6. *ו"י*, is gematriya 13. *י"ד* is gematriya 20. All of the other letters have a much higher gematriya. Take *א"ל*, for example. The gematriya is 111. *ב"ת* is 412, *ג"ל* is 83, *ד"ת* is 434, and so on. Hashem's name is comprised of the letters that have the smallest gematriya to indicate that Hashem resides among the humble.

One aspect of humility is to be mevater.

Reb Moshe Goldish z'l and his wife were from Romania. They came to America on the last ship that left Romania before the Nazis invaded. They were both niftar in Williamsburg on the same day. As soon as Reb Moshe's levayah was over, his wife was niftarah.

This is their story:

As a child, before marriage, Mrs. Goldish's family name was Rosenberg. She was an orphan child, and her older brother, Avremel, left Romania and moved to America, so he could earn enough money to support his sisters and brothers and get them married with a dowry.

Avremel himself got married only after setting up all his brothers and sisters.

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

Moshe rented a run-down house in Romania, and he renovated the rented home with the money he received for the dowry.

He didn't do this to live there. He planned to rent it out to others for a higher price.

The problem was that the owner saw the beautifully renovated home and wanted the Goldish's to pay a higher rent.

Reb Moshe could have fought in court. After all, he had a contract with the owner,

and a price was agreed on. Furthermore, he could have asked the owner to pay for the house's increase in value because he had invested for him. But Reb Moshe didn't want to go to beis din, and he didn't want to make a fight. He preferred to be mevater and to suffer the loss.

But he needed money. He sent a letter to his brother-in-law Avremel that he needed financial help.

Avremel replied, "I see you don't know how to take care of your money. If you want more money, come to America, yourselves. I'll help you here."

They took a ship to America. This was the last ship to leave Romania.

The war began. Many Yidden in Romania were murdered immediately after the invasion.

Boyaner chasidim said, "Moshe Goldish was mevater, and the merit of the vatranus pushed off his death for sixty years."

This story is a lesson in being mevater, living with humility, and being extremely careful not to raise machlokes. In this situation, all this granted them life.

Chanukah lecht is lit lower than ten tefachim; one has to bend to light the lamps. The Bas Ayin says that this is because miracles come from the Chanukah lecht, and the miracles begin when one bends over and is humble.

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

כֹּף אֶחָת means כֹּף בִּיג, once to bend,

עֶשְׂרֵה, ten, which is י"ד, which stands for "a Yid."

זָהָב is gold.

So the pasuk is saying that for bending once, he is a Yid of gold.

The Kli Yakar (48:16) writes, כִּי הַקָּב"ה בּוֹחֵר בִּיּוֹתֵר בַּקְטָנִים, וְכָל אָדָם שִׁישׁ בּוֹ צָד קְטָנוֹת אֵין בִּיּוֹתֵר הַקָּב"ה מוֹגִיחַוָּה לְשִׁיתוֹ לְאַלְפֵי רַבְבָּה "Hakadosh Baruch Hu chooses the small (the humble) more. Anyone who has an aspect of humility, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will elevate him very high..."

The Shach al HaTorah says that the jug of oil that was found by the Chanukah miracle was the same פְּכִים קְטָנִים, small jugs, that Yaakov Avinu went back to retrieve (see Rashi Bereishis 32:25).

The key word is קְטָנִים, small. Reb Moshe Leib Sassover zt'l says that the jug was small, and Hashem performs miracles for the small and humble.

Tefilas HaDerech

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

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

In the year 5699, the Imrei Emes was living in Poland, and the publisher sent the sefer back to him. He wrote him that he sees that he isn't getting around to putting out the sefer, so the Rebbe should find someone else to do the job.

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

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

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

He didn't.

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

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

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

We know of a story of yungerleit, who traveled to Meron one Thursday night. They stopped the car on the side of the road to say Tefillas Haderech with kavanah.

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

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

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

Tefillah and Praise

The following vort is said b'dereech tzachus, but the lesson that we bring out from it is very true:

Avraham davened for Sedom, but it was overturned. Lot davened for Tzoar, and it was saved. We can explain that this is because Lot began his tefilos by praising Hashem. He said in his tefillah (Bereishis 19:19) הנה נא מצא עבדך חן בעיניך ותגדל חסדך אשר עשית עמדי להחיות את נפשי, "Behold now, Your servant has found favor in Your eyes, and You have increased Your kindness, which You have done with me, to sustain my soul..."

A tefilah said amid praise is a very powerful tefillah.

In Hallel, we say (116:4) אנה ה' מלטה נפשי, "Please, Hashem, save my soul," and we say (116:16) אנה ה' כי אני עבדך, "Please, Hashem, for I am your servant," and we say (118:25) אנה ה' הושיעה נא, "Please, Hashem, save now." Tzaddikim say that one of these verses (it is debated which one) is mesugal for yeshuos.

We can explain that this is because it is a prayer during Hallel, and when we pray while praising Hashem, the tefillos are more powerful. (And therefore, all נאנס said in Hallel and all other requests are very powerful tefilos).

This can explain the special time for tefillah on Chanukah. Chanukah are days for praising Hashem, and when one requests amidst praises, the tefillos are more potent.

The Beis Aharon zt'l encourages saying Tehillim on Chanukah and all year round. He writes that one can leave his foolishness and problems with Tehillim.

The Beis Aharon also encourages us to daven with a tzibur, with a minyan. The Beis Aharon zy'a writes, "I am convinced that tefillah b'tzibur can help for all matters, just like the tzaddik hador."

The Beis Aharon also writes, "I have acquired the following rule: When one prays with a minyan, the Shechinah is there, and with Hashem's help, it accomplishes and

corrects all matters, just like the *tefillah* of a *tsaddik yesod olam*."

The Torah tells us (42:3) וִירְדּוּ אֶחָי יוֹסֵף עִשְׂרֵה לִשְׁבוֹר בָּרַ, "Yosef's ten brothers went down [to Mitzrayim] to get food..."

Rashi asks, מָה תִּלְמוּד לֵאמֹר, why does the Torah tell us that they were *ten* brothers? We can figure this out on our own.

The Divrei Yisrael of Modzitz *zy'a* answers that they were cautious to go down to Mitzrayim with ten people because the purpose of this trip was לִשְׁבוֹר בָּרַ, to earn *parnassah*, and they knew that the success of their mission was dependent on their *tefillos*.¹⁰

Chazal (Brachos 8) say, "When is an *eis ratzon* for *tefillah*? It is when the community davens together [with a minyan]."

The Beis Yosef (670) asks: They found enough oil in the Beis HaMikdash for one

day, so what was the miracle on the first night? The Beis Yosef offers three answers.

One answer is that they divided the oil they found into eight parts. They poured an eighth into the menorah every night, and that small amount of oil burned all night. So, a miracle happened on the first night, too."¹¹

Reb Shlomo Kluger *zt'l* asks, why did they divide the oil into eighths? They should have used the entire jug of oil for the first night! We have a rule: אֵין סוֹמְכִין עַל הַנֶּס; we don't rely on miracles. So, they should have used the entire oil for the first night.

Reb Shlomo Kluger answers that they put an eighth of the oil in the menorah, and they davened that it should burn all night long. After *tefillah*, one can rely on miracles. The Maharsha (Kidushin 29:) writes, וְאֵין זֶה מִיִּקְרִי, "and this is not a miracle," "[when a miracle happens because of *tefillah*], it isn't called a נֶס."

10. The first word of the *passuk* is וִירְדּוּ. The Divrei Yisrael teaches that this also alludes to *tefillah*, because the person who davens at the *amud* is called in Chazal, יוֹרֵד לְפָנֵי הַתִּיבָה.

11. The Beis Yosef adds, "Or we can answer that after they poured the oil into the menorah, the jug remained full, like before. Thus, the miracle was also seen on the first night. Or we can answer that on the first night, they filled the menorah with oil, the menorah burned all night long, and in the morning, they saw that the menorah was still full with oil. This happened every night."