

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Vayeishev

Chanuka



Torah WELLSPRINGS

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Torah Wellsprings - Vayeishev - Chanuka

Emunah and Bitachon

Yaakov Avinu sent Yosef to check up on his brothers in Shechem, but he didn't find them there. It states (37:15) וַיִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ וְהֵנָּה תַּעֲדָה "a man found [Yosef]... straying in the field," and he directed him to his brothers. Chazal (Bereishis Rabba 84:14) tell us that a malach found him and showed him to his brothers. Actually, three malachim. The Midrash states שְׁלֹשָׁה מַלְאָכִים נִדְּוּ לוֹ, וַיִּמְצְאוּ אִישׁ, וַיִּשְׁאַלְהוּ "three angels came to him, and they found him, and they asked him." It states אִישׁ three times, to tell us that three malachim came to help Yosef find his brothers.

The Ramban writes, "This teaches us... that Hashem's decree is truth, and hishtadlus is false." This means that when something is bashert, it will occur, and there isn't any hishtadlus to do to prevent it from happening. It was bashert that Yosef be sold to Mitzrayim, and Hashem made sure that His plan would occur. If it weren't for these malachim, guiding him, Yosef would have returned to his father, saying that he couldn't find his brothers. But Hashem's plan will always occur. When necessary, He sends a malach, or three malachim, to direct the person to where Hashem wants him to be.

The Ramban writes, "HaKadosh Baruch Hu arranged someone to direct him... so he would fall into their hands. This is Chazal's intention when they say that the אִישׁ in these pasukim refers to malachim. [It is to tell us that Hashem's plan will transpire.] The Torah wouldn't tell us this story for no reason. Rather, it is to tell us עֲצַת ה' הִיא תִּקּוּם, Hashem's plan will transpire."

Rabbeinu Avraham ben HaRambam (on the Torah, 37:13) writes that Yaakov Avinu was always cautious to protect his son Yosef, so that he wouldn't be with his brothers alone. He knew what his other sons thought about him, and he suspected that they might harm Yosef, chalilah, when they are alone with him, and no one would know... However, it

states in Mishlei (21:30) אֵין חִכְמָה וְאֵין תְּבוּנָה וְאֵין עֵצָה "There is neither wisdom or understanding nor counsel against Hashem." When Hashem wanted to have Yosef sold to Mitzrayim, Yaakov forgot to be cautious and sent Yosef to his brothers.

The Torah tells us that the brothers showed their father Yaakov the blood-stained clothing of Yosef, and he understood that wild animals killed Yosef (see 38:31-34). The Rebbe of Radzimin zt'l (Bikurei Aviv) asks, "Why did the brothers need to show Yaakov the blood-stained coat? Wouldn't Yaakov understand on his own that if Yosef wasn't coming home, it means he was killed?"

He answers: The brothers were afraid that without seeing the blood-stained coat, Yaakov's bitachon that Yosef would eventually return home would draw Hashem's aid, and somehow Yosef would come back. "The Mitzrim would surely send Yosef home. And then, Yosef would reveal to their father that his brothers sold him, and Yaakov would be angry with them. Therefore, they slaughtered a goat, dipped Yosef's coat in its blood, and sent it to their father."

From this *vort* we learn the tremendous power of bitachon!

The Chashmonaim won the war against the Yevanim because they trusted in Hashem. The Chashmonaim were kohanim, and כְּהֵן *gematria* במחון.

This can explain the custom of saying יוֹשֵׁב בְּסֵתֶר עֲלִיּוֹן (Tehillim 91) after lighting Chanukah *lecht*. This chapter discusses bitachon. כִּי אַתָּה ה' לֹא תִירָא "You Hashem are my shield, מפחד לילה, therefore I am not afraid." It was with bitachon that they won the war against the mighty Greek army.

Avudraham writes that we don't find the letter ו in this chapter because when one trusts in Hashem, he doesn't need כְּלֵי יָמִין, weapons.

Avoid Machlokes and Increase Peace

When discussing the story of *mechiras Yosef*, we must first realize that we don't understand anything of the ways of the שבטי יה, the holy shevatim, the twelve children of Yaakov Avinu. They were all holy and beloved, and their greatness is immeasurable. The only reason we discuss their machlokes with Yosef [which the sefarim say was essentially a machlokes in differing paths of avodas Hashem] is that it is written in the Torah, so we can learn the severity of machlokes, and the importance of increasing peace.

It states (37:18) וַיֵּרְאוּ אוֹתוֹ מֵרֶחֶק וּבְטָרֶם יִקְרַב אֵלֵיהֶם וַיִּתְּנֵקְלוּ אוֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ, "They saw him from afar; and when he had not yet approached them, they conspired against him to kill him." The Toras Chaim of Kosov (ד"ה ויראו) says that this pasuk is hinting to us the way hatred develops. It begins וַיֵּרְאוּ אוֹתוֹ מֵרֶחֶק, a slight feeling of hatred, a slight feeling of distance.

But in the end וַיִּתְּנֵקְלוּ אוֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ, they consider killing him, r'l. Therefore, we must be cautious to stay away from machlokes, even from its tiny beginnings.¹

We quote the Toras Chaim: "The Torah is hinting that a person must distance himself, as far as possible, from *sinas chinam*. Because at first, it seems that he doesn't love him so much, as hinted in the words וַיֵּרְאוּ אוֹתוֹ מֵרֶחֶק, they saw him from afar... This small hatred will lead, chas v'shalom, to וַיִּתְּנֵקְלוּ אוֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ, "they conspired against him to kill him." For this is the way of the yetzer hara. Today he tells you to do this..." On the contrary, a person should seek to increase peace, as the Tiferes Shlomo (ד"ה לך נא) explains the pasuk (37:14) לֵךְ נָא רְאֵה אֶת שְׁלוֹמֵם אֶחָיֶךָ, "Go now and see the peace of your brothers..."

A person should always focus on the good qualities of his fellow man and their

1. It states (Bereishis 4:8) וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל הֶבֶל אָחָיו, "And Kayin said to his brother Hevel..." but the Torah doesn't say what Kayin said and what the conversation was about. This is because the topic of the conversation isn't important. As Chazal tell us, the reason Kayin started the conversation was to find a way to get into a dispute and create an excuse to kill Hevel.

The lesson is that it doesn't take much for a minor dispute to snowball into a large machlokes, and therefore, we must be careful to avoid even the smallest disputes.

It states (37:16) אֵת אֶחָי מִבְּקֵשׁ, "My brothers, do I seek." This can be translated as follows: אֵת אֶחָי, if I want to love my fellow man like my brother, מִבְּקֵשׁ, "I check myself". Search your deeds, find your faults, realize that you aren't perfect, and then you will understand that those who oppose you aren't entirely wrong. With this awareness, you can judge your fellow man favorably, including those who oppose you, and you can act friendly towards them.

In this week's parashah, pasukim (38:16-18) the Torah relates a discussion between Yehudah and Tamar. In these pasukim, it states three times וַיֹּאמֶר... ותאמר. ויֹּאמֶר means Yehudah spoke, and ותאמר means Tamar spoke. Reb Yitzchok Elchanan Spector zt'l points out that the *trop* on the words ויֹּאמֶר and ותאמר are the same in each exchange. Pasuk (16) states, ... וַיֹּאמֶר מִה-תִּתֶּן-לִי. In this example וַיֹּאמֶר "He said" and ותאמר "She said" are both with the *trop* פשטא.

The following pasuk (17) states וַיֹּאמֶר אֶנְכִי אֶשְׁלַח גְּדִי-עֲגִים מִן-הַצֹּאן וַתֹּאמֶר אִם-תִּתֶּן עֲרֵבוֹן עַד שְׁלֹחַ, Here again, וַיֹּאמֶר, "He said," and ותאמר, "She said" both have the same *trop*. They are both זקף גדול.

The next pasuk (18) states, וַיֹּאמֶר מִה הָעֲרֵבוֹן אֲשֶׁר-לָךְ וַתֹּאמֶר חֲתָמְךָ וּפְתִילְךָ וּמִטָּה אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדְךָ, Once again, the *trop* on וַיֹּאמֶר and ותאמר are the same. They are both רביעי.

This teaches us that a person will always answer you in the tone you spoke to him. If you speak with פשטא, your fellow man will answer that way. But if you speak with זקף גדול, your fellow man will answer in that manner.

perfections rather than their faults, and thereby, there will be peace in Klal Yisrael.²

Once, the Chofetz Chaim zt'l was in the home of Reb Nachumke Kaplan zt'l on Chanukah. It was time to light Chanukah *lecht*, but Reb Nachumke waited to light until his Rebbetzin got home. The Chofetz Chaim asked his Rebbe why he waited, since halachah clearly states one should light at the proper time, even if some people aren't home.

Reb Nachumke replied, "My wife will be upset if I light the Chanukah *lecht* without her, so it is a matter of *shalom bayis*. Chazal say שלום בית עדיף, *shalom bayis* is more important than Chanukah *lecht*. So, according to halachah, I should wait until my wife comes home."³

It states in this week's parashah (38:7) ויהי ער בכור יהודה רע בעיני ה' וימיתוהו ה' "Er, Yehudah's firstborn, was evil in the eyes of Hashem, and Hashem caused him to die." However, the Torah doesn't tell us in which way Er was evil. However, in the following pasukim, we discover Er's aveirah. When discussing his brother Onan's aveirah, it states וימת גם אותו, Hashem caused him *also* to die. The Gemara understands from the words גם אותו that both brothers died for the same aveirah. The Torah tells us the aveiros of אונן, and we understand that Er had the same aveirah.

But why does the Torah only tell us the aveirah when discussing אונן, and not when discussing ער? The Chida (Midbar Kedamos מערכת ח')

writes in the name of Reb N. Shapiro, author of Matzas Shimurim, that ער's aveirah was only to heaven, but אונן's aveirah was worse, because it was also to people. As the Torah says, וידע אונן כי לא לו יהיה הזרע... לבלתי נתן זרע, "Onan knew that the child would not be his..." so he didn't perform yibum, "as not to provide offspring for his brother." His aveirah was worse because it was also *ben adam l'chaveiroh*. He wasn't interested in helping his deceased brother. Therefore, when discussing the aveirah *ben adam l'makom*, which was the same for both of them, the Torah only mentions it by Onan. The Torah chooses to write the aveiros when discussing Onan because he transgressed the severe aveirah of *ben adam l'chaveiroh*.

At the end of the parashah, it states (40:5-6) וַיַּחְלְמוּ חֲלוֹם שְׁנֵיהֶם אִישׁ חֲלֹמוֹ בְּלֵילָה אֶחָד אִישׁ בְּפִתְרוֹן חֲלֹמוֹ, "The two of them dreamt a dream on the same night; each one according to the interpretation of his dream..." Chazal explain that in addition to their dreams, each one dreamt the explanation of their fellow man's dream. The Sar HaMashkim saw in his dream that the Sar Ha'Ofim would be killed in three days, and the Sar Ha'Ofim saw that the Sar HaMashkim would be reinstated. וַיָּבֹא יוֹסֵף אֲלֵיהֶם יוֹסֵף בְּבֹקֶר וַיֵּרָא אֲתָם וְהֵם זֹעֲפִים, "Yosef came to them in the morning and he saw that they were aggrieved." The Pnei Menachem asks why the Sar Ha'Ofim was sad? He saw the meaning of the Sar HaMashkim's dream, that he would live and work again for Pharaoh. Perhaps this was a sign that his dream was also positive. Why was he

2. Parnassah comes through shalom, peace. The Divrei Yisrael learned this from the pasuk (37:14) לֵךְ נָא רֵאֵה אֶת שְׁלוֹם אֶחָיִךְ וְאֶת שְׁלוֹם הַצֹּאן, Yaakov told Yosef, "Go now, look into the shalom of your brothers and the shalom of the flock." The flock represents parnassah, and parnassah comes from שלום.

In contrast, the Shlah tells us, one machlokes banishes one thousand parnassos.

When Yosef said to the person he met (37:16) אֶת אֶחָי אֲנִי מִבְּקֹשׁ הַגִּידָה נָא לִי אִיפֹה הֵם רֹעִים "My brothers do I seek; tell me, please, where they are pasturing." His primary question was where they have parnassah. The man replied, נִסְעוּ מִן־הָאָרֶץ, "They have journeyed on from here." This means that they left their brotherhood, and therefore, they are lacking parnassah.

3. The Gemara discusses a person who only has one candle for Friday night of Chanukah. The Gemara rules he should use it for the Shabbos candle and not for Chanukah (which is lit outside) because the Shabbos *lecht* increases shalom bayis, and shalom bayis is of paramount importance.

downcast? Why does it state, וְהָיָה זָעִפִּים, 'they were aggrieved'?

The Pnei Menachem answers that the Sar Ha'Ofim was sad to see that his partner in prison would go free and attain a high-ranking position. He was upset that good was coming upon another. Due to his *ayin ra*, his evil eye, he wasn't saved.

The Severity of Embarrassing Others

Most importantly, we have to be careful never to cause embarrassment to one's fellow man. Tamar said (38:35) לֹא־אֵשׁ אֶלֶּה לּוֹ אֲנֹכִי הָרָה, and Rashi (see also Sotah 10b) writes, "She didn't want to embarrass [Yehudah]... Rather, she said, 'If he admits it on his own, then so be it, and if he doesn't, I will be burned. But I won't embarrass him.' Chazal learn from this that "It is better for a person to be thrown into a fiery furnace and not to embarrass his fellow man in public."

Pnei Yehoshua proves from the Gemara (Bava Metzia 58b) that embarrassing one's fellow man is worse than murder. This is because the Gemara says, כל היורדין לגיהנם עולים, "Whoever goes to Gehinom will leave Gehinom." This applies to all aveiros, including murder, r'l. Gehinom isn't forever. Reshaim suffer in Gehinom for twelve months, but afterwards, their neshamos are brought to Gan Eden. So, even for murder, the baalei aveirah will eventually leave Gehinom. However, the Gemara says that there are three exceptions, those go to Gehinom and never leave. Among those who never leave Gehinom are those who embarrass their fellow man in public and those who call their fellow man by a degrading nickname. Embarrassing one's fellow man is worse than murder.

The Ostrovtza zt'l explains that Tamar was pregnant with twins. If she were burned, three souls would die. Nevertheless, Tamar understood that this was better than embarrassing one's fellow man in public.

In contrast, we understand the great reward for those who give chizuk to their fellow man. The Imrei Emes zt'l said that sometimes you can't offer advice, and you are unable to help someone in different ways. But you can listen to the person, as he pours out his heart before you and tells you of his *tzaros*. Sometimes it's sufficient, and he is relieved afterwards. This is hinted in the words (37:21) וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיַּעֲלֶהוּ, Reuven heard, he listened to someone pour out his bitter heart, and that brought salvation. The person feels understood, and he feels that others have compassion for him, and this can help him endure the difficult test he is going through.

The Maharil teaches that the *shamesh* should be placed above the other *chanukah lecht*. This hints that when one shines and gives light and hope to others, he is above all.⁴

The Candles' Message

The Kav HaYashar (96) writes, "We have several sources that Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves lamps of a mitzvah, for it states (Yeshayah 24:15), בָּאוּרִים כִּבְדוֹ אֵת ה', 'Honor Hashem with lamps.' Every candle lit for a mitzvah has immeasurable holiness. If we had *ruach hakodesh*, we would be able to see the future when lighting these *lecht* because the candles of a mitzvah tell prophecies, just like a *navi* giving over what he heard from Hashem's mouth."⁵

4. Salvations come from helping others. Yosef was released from jail because he said to the Sar HaMashkim and Sar HaOfim (40:7) מַדּוּעַ פָּנִיָּךְ רָעִים הַיּוֹם, "Why do you appear downcast today?" (Through this episode, the Sar HaMashkim discovered that Yosef knows how to decipher dreams, and he told Pharaoh about it when Pharaoh had his dreams.) So, we see that salvations come when one shows interest in and helps others.

5. Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz zt'l said: From the Shabbos candles, one can know what will happen during the following week, and from the Chanukah candles, one can know what will happen throughout the following year.

At this point, the Kav HaYashar tells a story: "The *gaon*, the Maharshal *z'l*, writes in the introduction to his *sefer Yam shel Shlomo*, 'Once, with a candle of a mitzvah, heaven encouraged me and opened the gates of light. Heaven told me, "Study Torah... Be like a lion in his den. Write *sefarim*... And after I received this message, I couldn't abstain from writing *sefarim*."

Hashem told the Maharshal, through holy candles, that Hashem loves his *sefarim*, and that encouraged him to continue doing so. What was the story? The Kav HaYashar heard it from his rebbe, the Yesod Yosef, who heard it from scholars:

"One night, Reb Shlomo Luria (the Maharshal) was studying and writing his *sefer Yam Shel Shlomo* with only a small candle before him, and it was about to go out. The candle remained lit for several hours – as if he had three or four complete candles... He understood from his candle that Hashem was with him." The miraculous candle told him that Hashem loves his Torah learning and *chiddushei Torah*, that Hashem wants him to continue learning and writing his *chiddushim*, and that encouraged him. The miracle that happened to the Maharshal is similar to the miracle of the menorah in the Beis HaMikdash on Chanukah" (*Kav HaYashar*).

One night, Rebbe Shmelke of Nikolsburg *zy'a* was learning Torah by candlelight, and a gust of wind blew out the candle. He didn't have a match or a stone to light his candle, so he went onto the porch to see if a passerby could light it. A man passed by, lit his candle, and Rebbe Shmelke returned to study Torah. Rebbe Shmelke later thought, "How did he light my candle? I was on the porch of the second floor, and the man was on the street!" He realized that Eliyahu HaNavi had come to light his candle so he could continue learning.

The Alter of Novardok *zt'l* would study Torah and *mussar* in a small hut in the forest. One night, his lamp blew out, and he needed more oil. The Alter of Novardok told himself, "Hashem can do everything; Hashem can send me oil."

He opened the door of his hut to do his *hishtadlus*.

Just then, a man came by. "Do you have oil?" the Alter asked. He did. The Alter was able to study Torah and *mussar* for the rest of the night. In the morning, the Alter took the remaining oil and stored it, so he would never forget the miracle that Hashem performed for him.

Once, there was a fire in his home, and the jar of oil was consumed in the fire. The Alter said he was happy this happened because "Why should I remember this episode more than all the other miracles Hashem performs for me? Every moment of life is filled with miracles."

As we wrote from the Kav HaYashar, the lamps tell prophecies, like a *Navi* relaying what he heard from Hashem. We don't have *ruach hakodesh* to understand the prophecies, but one message comes through clearly: The *lecht* tell us that Hashem loves us, and He wants our Torah and mitzvos. That is the message of the Chanukah *lecht*. Regardless of our spiritual level, Hashem loves us and wants our *avodah*.

Chanukah is for People at Low Levels

The Sfas Emes writes, "Chanukah is mostly for the *chalashim* and the *beinonim*." This means Chanukah is mainly for the Yidden who are at a low or mediocre level. Chanukah is their opportunity to come close to Hashem.⁶

6. Many have the custom of using cotton wicks on Chanukah, and in Yiddish, cotton is *vatte*. *Vatte* also means distant (פֿאַר). We use *vatte* wicks to hint that even those distant from Hashem can return to Him on Chanukah.

The Divrei Chaim of Sanz *zt'l* also teaches that Chanukah is for the people who are at very low levels. He expressed it this way: "When a king is on his throne, in his palace, the average person can't visit him. Surely, those punished by the king won't be able to visit the king. However, when the king travels around his kingdom, it's his custom to visit the prisoners in jail. When the king is there, the prisoners shout out to him, 'King! Save us!'" This is what happens on Chanukah.

The Divrei Chaim of Sanz *zt'l* explained, "On Shabbos, Hashem brings us up to Him. On *yom tov*, Hashem comes down to us. On Chanukah, Hashem visits His children in prison." It is the holiday for the people imprisoned by the *yetzer hara*. On this holiday, Hashem comes to them, and they can become free and begin to serve Hashem properly.

We light Chanukah *lecht* outside, below ten *tefachim*, on the left side of the door. These details indicate that we light the Chanukah *lecht* to inspire and give life to those on low levels.

The Meor Einayim writes, "The *Shechinah* never descends below ten *tefachim* (see *Succah* 5). However, Hashem makes sure that no Jew will be detached from Him. So, during the miracle of Chanukah, Hashem *kiveiyachol* comes down below ten *tefachim*. He comes

close to the person to bring him back up to Him."

One night, before lighting Chanukah *lecht*, the Tolna Rebbe *zt'l* asked a chassid who had a short wife, "When you speak to your wife, does she climb up on a chair to speak to you or do you bend down to speak with her?" After asking this question, the Rebbe lit the Chanukah *lecht*. Rebbe Mordechai Dov of Hornosteipel *zt'l* explained the Tolna Rebbe's intention. The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 59.) says, "If you have a short wife, bend down to seek her counsel." The Tolna Rebbe hinted that on Chanukah, Hashem *kiveiyachol* bends down to whichever level we are on to elevate us.

In *Avodah Zarah* (20:), Reb Pinchas ben Yair teaches ten steps for success in avodas Hashem. They are, תורה מביאה לידי זהירות, וזהירות מביאה לידי נקיות, נקיות מביאה לידי פרישות, פרישות מביאה לידי טהרה, טהרה מביאה לידי חסידות, חסידות מביאה לידי ענוה, ענוה מביאה לידי יראת חטא, יראת חטא מביאה לידי קדושה, קדושה מביאה לידי רוח הקודש. Ten levels are mentioned here. Chazal (*Succah* 5.) state, "The *Shechinah* never goes down below ten." This indicates that one must achieve at least one of the ten levels mentioned here to connect with the *Shechinah*. But on Chanukah, we light the menorah below ten *tefachim*. This hints that on Chanukah, even if one is at a very low level and hasn't even begun serving Hashem, the *Shechinah* will come to him and help him rise from there.⁷

7. The Rambam (*Hilchos Chanukah* 4:12) writes, מצות נר חנוכה מצוה חביבה היא עד מאוד וצריך אדם להזהר בה, "The mitzvah of lighting Chanukah *lecht* is an extremely beloved mitzvah, and a person must be cautious with it."

The expression מצוה חביבה, "a beloved mitzvah," is only used in reference to Chanukah *lecht*. The Rambam even adds the words מצוה חביבה היא עד מאוד, "it is an extremely beloved mitzvah." What is so special and unique about the Chanukah *lecht*?

It reveals that Hashem loves us, no matter our spiritual level.

We will explain with a *mashal*:

A poor girl married a wealthy man. She felt honored to live in the large mansion that he provided. She had never experienced such vast wealth before. However, one day, she told her husband that she would prefer to live in her previous home, where she had lived before they got married.

Her husband agreed, and together they moved into the tiny home. This move made his wife extremely

A Time for Teshuvah

חנוכה comes from the word חנינוך, which signifies that חנוכה is a time for teshuvah, a time when we are מחנך ourselves to improve our ways.⁸

Al HaNissim discusses the miracles Hashem performed for us in the war against the *Yevanim*. We say, מסרת גבורים ביד חלשים ורבים, "You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of few." Until here it is understood. It was a great miracle that the few and the weak won against the many and the mighty. However, after this we say in the *Al HaNissim*, וטמאים ביד טהורים, ורשעים ביד צדיקים, וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך, that Hashem delivered "tame'im into the hands of the *tehorim*, *resha'im* into the hands of *tzaddikim*, sinners into the hands of those who study Torah." Why is it miraculous that

sinners and *resha'im* were given over into the hands of the righteous and those who studied Torah?

Sefarim write in the name of the Bardichover Rav *zy'a*, that the final words refer to the wave of teshuvah that happened at that time. טמאים ביד טהורים, the impure people did *teshuvah* and became pure. רשעים ביד צדיקים, the *resha'im* changed their ways and became *tzaddikim*. וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך, sinners began to study Torah. When they saw the miracles that Hashem did, there was a great movement of teshuvah that followed.

The *resha'im* at that time were called the מתיונים. They were *Yidden* who wanted to be like the Greeks. When they witnessed the miracles, they did teshuvah and returned to their heritage.⁹

happy because now she knew with certainty that her husband truly loved her. When she lived in her husband's wealthy estate, she thought, "He brought me into his fancy that he enjoys. This doesn't prove that he loves me." But when she saw that her husband was prepared to give up on his pleasures and comfort to please her, that proved that he truly loved her.

Chanuka *lecht* an extremely beloved mitzvah because on Chanukah, Hashem comes down to our low levels. This proves that He loves us. He comes down to us to elevate us so we can be close to Him.

When a person knows that Hashem loves him, even as he is, at his low level, this will give him strength to overcome the yetzer hara. The yetzer hara tries to convince a person that he is insignificant and that it makes no difference whether he performs aveiros or mitzvos. But the light of Chanukah, lit below ten tefachim, reminds us of our importance.

8. The Beis Aharon *zt'l* adds that since Chanukah is a time for *teshuvah*, it is recommended to say *Tehillim* on Chanukah because *Tehillim* helps a person along on his path of *teshuvah*. The Beis Aharon writes, "A person must believe that by saying *Tehillim*, he can leave all his foolish ways... and overcome thoughts of *yeush* (despair) that the yetzer hara brings upon a person."

9. Some sixty years ago, a Yid from Eretz Yisrael traveled to Australia. He didn't know how to find a beis medresh and couldn't ask anyone either, because he didn't speak a word of English. Shabbos was approaching, and he needed a place to stay.

He came up with an idea. On Friday morning, he went to the fish store. He figured that if he saw someone buying a large, kosher fish, he would ask him whether he was a Yid.

The plan worked. A man entered and purchased a large carp fish, so he asked him whether he was a Yid. The man replied that he was and invited him to stay with him on Shabbos. "It isn't every day that I have the opportunity to perform *hachnasas orchim*," he said.

They spent a pleasant Shabbos together, singing *zemiros* and speaking *divrei Torah*.

On Motzei Shabbos, after thanking his host, he said, "From the looks of your beautiful house, I understand that Hashem blessed you with wealth. But there is something I was wondering about."

Reb Yechezkel of Kuzmir *zt'l* lit his *Chanukah lecht* with his family and wouldn't permit his chassidim to watch him perform this mitzvah. He said this is alluded to in the Chazal (*Bava Basra* 57:), which says, "It is forbidden to look at women when they are washing." He said that "women" represent Jewish souls, and "washing" refers to when a tzaddik washes the Jewish souls from their blemishes. When Rebbe Yechezkel of Kuzmir would light the *Chanukah lecht*, he purified and washed the souls of the Jewish nation, and Chazal said, "It is forbidden to look" when this washing takes place.

Meir Einei Chachamim (12:2) writes, "Believe with *emunah sheleimah* that when you stand to light *Chanukah lecht*, all the sparks of your *neshamah* and the *neshamos* of your father and grandfathers, all the way up to

Adam HaRishon are standing there with you. This applies to every Yid who lights *Chanukah lecht*. The *neshamos* hope that perhaps with your *hislahavvus* and inspiration by the *Chanukah lecht*, they will merit a rectification and reach their origin and source."

Taking Advantage of These Days

The *Kedushas Levi* (*Kedushah* 2) tells a *marshel* of a king who opened his treasury for a day, and everyone could come and take whatever they desired. "Woe to the fool who doesn't take advantage and sleeps all day." These are extraordinary days. We can gain so much from each moment of *Chanukah*—woe to those who don't take advantage of this fantastic opportunity.

"Go ahead and ask," the host said.

The guest said, "I noticed a broken olive oil bottle in your dining room China closet. Why is it there? It looks very out of place, between all your valuable items."

The man replied, "That oil bottle is very precious to me. It carries my life's story. Listen well, and I will tell you:

"My father was *niftar* when I was young, and being the oldest child, the responsibility of supporting my widowed mother and younger siblings fell on me. Some kind people had *rachmanus* on me and helped me get into business. Baruch Hashem, I was met with immediate success. There was plenty of money in the house. However, together with my financial success came my spiritual decline. The first thing to go was my *yarmulke*. Within a short time, I was completely non-religious.

"One afternoon, I saw a young Jewish child sitting on the curb, crying. It always pained me to see a child crying, probably because I was orphaned as a child, and I knew what it felt like to be sad. I asked the child why he was crying. The child said, 'Chanukah is approaching, and my father sent me to buy olive oil. He warned me to be careful with the bottle because we are poor and we can't afford more oil if the bottle breaks. I tried to be careful, but a cat ran right up to me. Startled, I fell, and the bottle broke.' The young boy showed me the broken bottle lying in the gutter. He said, 'How can I go to my father without the Chanukah oil?'

"I gave the child some money and asked him to buy two bottles of olive oil: one for me and one for his father.

"I hadn't lit *Chanukah lecht* in years, but when the child said, 'How can I go to my father without the Chanukah oil?' I remembered how my father lit *Chanukah lecht* each year. I thought to myself, 'The day will come when I go up to heaven, and I will meet with my father again. I asked myself, 'How can I meet with my father without *Chanukah lecht*?' I took the broken bottle shards from the gutter because something told me this was a turning point in my life.

"That year, I lit *Chanukah lecht*. Soon afterward, I was keeping Shabbos. Then came *tefillin*. Now, *baruch Hashem*, I have a beautiful family, all following the Torah's ways. It all began with the broken olive oil bottle. Now you understand why I saved it all these years!"

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 21) says, "On Chanukah, one mustn't give *hespedim* (eulogies)." We can explain that the Gemara hints that after Chanukah passes, we shouldn't give *hespedim* and eulogies over lost opportunities. Let us act wisely and use our time well while the opportunity is here.

In *Moaz Tzur* we say, בני בינה ימי שמונה קבעו. This can be explained as the בני בינה, the wise people, ימי שמונה קבעו, draw as much as they can from these holy, eight days.¹⁰

The Sfas Emes (תרמ"ד ד"ה לשנה) writes, "The yomim tovim are called שלש רגלים (literally, 'three feet') because they are the pillars that hold up the world. In earlier generations, three holidays were sufficient. Hashem knew that in later generations, three holidays wouldn't be enough for us, so Hashem added Chanukah and Purim. About us, it states, אין, שוטה נפגע, a fool doesn't feel.' [We are like fools because we don't realize just how important Chanukah and Purim are to us.] But the early scholars and the true *ovdei Hashem* certainly felt and realized that it is impossible to exist without [Chanukah] and without Chanukah *lecht*, which illuminates the darkness.

"I think we can gain more during these holidays [of Chanukah and Purim than during the three *regalim*] because we can keep Chanukah and Purim in their entirety.

By the other holidays [Pesach, Shavuot, Succos], we lack the mitzvah of עליה לרגל, to go up to the Beis HaMikdash, which was the primary joy of the holiday. Chanukah and Purim are exactly the same as they were when originally established, which is a quality these days have over the other *yomim tovim* due to the Churban Beis HaMikdash."

How to Light the Chanukah Lecht

The Baal Shem Tov zt'l (quoted in בן פורת יוסף דרשת (שבו"ג) tells a mashal of a student who studied to be a smith. After several years of study and practice, he was an expert and was able to fix everything given to him.

He began working alone. On his first job as a smith, someone gave him a utensil to fix, and he did nothing at all. This is because he never learned how to start a fire from stones. He knew how to be a smith, but he didn't know how to create a fire.

The *nimshal* is that to serve Hashem, there must be "a fire". Even when you know what you must do, but without the spark of fire, the *avodah* is incomplete.

This is alluded to in the pasuk (*Shir HaShirim* 1:11) תורי זהב נעשה לך עם נקדיות הכסף. You can know how to make gold utensils and how to be a smith, and you can know how to serve Hashem, but you need the נקדיות הכסף, the fire

10. Consider the following story:

A man was trekking through a forest and found a great treasure of gold, diamonds, and precious stones. The hiker emptied his backpack of his personal items and began filling his bag with gems.

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

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

"I found a mountain of precious gems in the forest and am stuffing my pockets and bag."

"You are gathering gems, and you need *chizuk*?!" the rebbe exclaimed in disbelief.

During Chanukah, people come over to me and ask for *chizuk*. I wonder, "How can you need *chizuk* now? Every moment of Chanukah, you gather treasures, *b'gashmiyus* and *b'ruchniyus*. No one should be happier than you, and you need *chizuk*?!" With Hallel, the *neiros* Chanukah, *Al HaNissim*, *Tehillim*, Torah study, Chanukah seudos, and simply by being happy on Chanukah, we are picking up priceless treasures. So, how can we feel a need for *chizuk* now?"

and the spark of excitement, so your avodas Hashem will be done properly.¹¹

Rebbe Hershel of Riminov zt'l (Be'eros HaMayim, Toldos, Haftarah) explains the pasuk (Malachim 1, 1:1), וְהַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד זָמַן בָּא בַּיָּמִים וַיְכַסְּהוּ בְּבָגְדִים וְלֹא יָחַם לוֹ, "And the King Dovid was old, advanced in years and they covered him with garments, but he did not become warm", in the following way:

King Dovid represents Melech HaMoshiach, בָּא בַּיָּמִים, days have passed, and it is time for Moshiach to come. So, what is preventing him from coming? וַיְכַסְּהוּ בְּבָגְדִים?

Clothes represent mitzvos (see Zohar Vayichi 226b). The pasuk is saying that Klal Yisrael perform mitzvos, the problem is וְלֹא יָחַם לוֹ, the mitzvos lack hislahavus, love and warmth. This prevents Moshiach from coming.

Perhaps this is the reason we light Chanukah lecht with lamps of fire. It is to tell us that everything we do for Hashem should be with "fire". This is also hinted in the pasuk (Tehillim 132:17) עָרַכְתִּי יֵרֵךְ לְמִשְׁחָי, "I have prepared a lamp for my anointed." This means Moshiach will come when we perform mitzvos with a fire of hislahavus.

One year, on Chanukah, Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzinski zt'l was in Krakow. He came to a tailor's home and asked the tailor to fix his jacket.

"I haven't lit Chanukah lecht yet," the tailor replied.

"I'll wait," Reb Chaim Ozer replied. He thought it would be just a few moments; however, it took much longer than a few moments. Reb Chaim Ozer watched in astonishment and admiration as the tailor, dressed in his Shabbos clothing, sang songs for a half hour near the lecht, with obvious happiness for the mitzvah.

Reb Chaim Ozer said, "Now I understand the reason the city Krakow produced so many great *talmidei chachamim* over the generations." It is because the mitzvah of Chanukah lecht is *mesugal* for children *talmidei chachamim*. As the Gemara (Shabbos 23:) states, הָרִגִּיל בְּנֵי הָיִין לִיה בְּנִים תַּלְמִידֵי חַכְמִים, "A person who is cautious with lighting the candles, he will merit children *talmidei chachamim*, as it states, כִּי נֵר מְצוּהָ וְתוֹרָה אֹר." This will undoubtedly occur when the mitzvah is performed with love and passion.

It is important to prepare oneself for the mitzvos. When one prepares himself for a mitzvah, it will be a far greater mitzvah than a mitzvah performed without preparation. One will receive the "light" and kedushah of the mitzvah and of the yom tov according to the extent he prepared for it.

יסוד is gematria חנה, foundation, because the foundation of a mitzvah is in its preparation.

Tzaddikim have said that preparing for a mitzvah is greater than the mitzvah itself. We see this concept from the menorah in the Beis HaMikdash. Anyone can light the

11. When a person takes out a piece of meat from the freezer, he has to first let the meat thaw, and then he can put it into a pot on the fire or into a frying pan. You don't put frozen meat directly into the fire. It has to defrost first. This tells us that if a person wants to feel the heat of hislahavus when he lights Chanukah lecht, he should begin by removing all the cold and frozen habits. This refers to the matters that are distant from kedushah. There are many examples, each person according to his level. But just as excitement for the holy mitzvos can be called fire, excitement for matters we shouldn't be interested in can be called "frozen." If you want to serve Hashem with hislahavus when lighting the Chanukah lecht, first remove all those matters that make you freeze. Then you can attain the warmth and fire of the Chanukah lecht.

Chazal (Shabbos 21b) say that one should light Chanukah lecht from shekiyah עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק, until there are no more people out in the marketplace. The word רגל can be translated as רגילות, familiarity, routine. We should light the Chanukah lecht and train ourselves that our avodas Hashem should always be with fervor, and with new excitement. We shouldn't be bored with the mitzvos and perform them by rote.

menorah, but preparing the menorah can only be performed by kohanim.¹²

The Pele Yoetz (ויהי נעם) writes, "Before every good deed... you must say the pasuk (Tehillim 90:17) ויהי נועם ה' אלקינו עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננה עלינו ומעשה ידינו כוננהו, "May the pleasantness of Hashem our G-d be upon us, and the work of our hands establish for us, and the work of our hands establish it."

He explains: Each mitzvah has profound ideas, purpose, and kavanos, and we don't know them. Nevertheless, when we perform the mitzvos even in their simplest form, they will achieve all these secrets, but it would be far better to know the *kavanos*. Therefore, we request with the ויהי נעם that Hashem should consider in heaven as if we intended all the proper thoughts.

Pele Yoetz adds, "This pasuk, itself, has many divine secrets, with every letter and with every word, and it would be proper to say ויהי נעם on the saying of the ויהי נעם."

Kav HaYashar (ch.96) writes, "Have a lot of kavanah when you say the brachos for lighting Chanukah lecht. Say the brachos

with joy because this is a very beloved mitzvah that comes once a year. Also, you should say the brachos with kavanah in honor of the holy malachim who came to your house for this mitzvah... The first brachah has 13 words, and one must think that he is arousing the 13 attributes of mercy. There are 13 words in the second brachah, which also arouse the 13 attributes of mercy. Together, they are 26 words, corresponding to Hashem's name (הו"ה, which is gematria 26).... *Malachim and Serafim come to the house of every Yid*, and they watch his holy avodah when he lights the Chanukah lamps, and they answer amen to his brachah. A hint to this is that מלאך is gematria 26."

The Yaavatz (Mor Ketzia siman 672) says that the brachos on the Chanukah lecht are different than most brachos that we say before performing a mitzvah. The brachos on the Chanukah lecht are *part of the mitzvah* (because the brachos express the reason we light the lamps, so they are part of the *pirsumei nisa*). The brachos turn the *lecht* into *lecht* of a mitzvah. Therefore, one must be extra cautious about saying the brachos with hislahavus, with the same enthusiasm he has when lighting the lecht.¹³

12. Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zt'l would tell that when Reb Avraham Elimelech of Karlin zt'l prepared the wicks for Chanukah lecht, his face shone brightly, like a person standing by an open hot oven when matzos are being baked.

13. A chassid hid in the Yismach Yisrael's zt'l room to watch his Rebbe prepare and light the Chanukah *lecht*. The chassid watched the Rebbe's joy and *hislahavus* as he poured the oil and prepared the wicks, but when the Rebbe lit the *lecht*, his *avodah* seemed very regular. The chassid wondered, "Shouldn't the mitzvah be performed with even greater *hislahavus* than the preparations?"

He couldn't come out of his hiding place to ask the Rebbe this question since he was there without permission, so he kept his question to himself.

The next day, the Yismach Yisrael approached the chassid and said, "A person's part in a mitzvah is the preparations. The actual performance of the mitzvah isn't in his hands anymore. Either Hashem gives him inspiration, or He doesn't."

The Chofetz Chaim zt'l told a *mashal* of an oil merchant who came to a town. The townspeople brought pots and containers and asked the merchant to fill them with oil. When all their vessels were filled with oil, the merchant said, "You want to buy more oil, and I want to sell you more oil. But I can't sell you oil if you don't have containers."

This *mashal* helps us understand why it is important to prepare for Chanukah lecht. Hashem wants to give us light, kedushah, brachos, and salvations on Chanukah, but we can't receive it without proper vessels. Every preparation creates another vessel, into which Hashem will pour His blessings.

The Navi in (Melachim 2, 4) writes that the wife of one of the *nevi'im*, a widow, cried before Elisha that she has debtors, who want

to take her children as slaves for the debt. Elisha told her (ibid. 4:3) לְבִי שֹׁאֵלִי לָךְ גְּלִים מִן הַחוּץ, מֵאֵת כָּל שְׂבָנֶיךָ גְּלִים רָקִים אֶל תִּמְעִיטִי, "Go borrow

Rebbe Dovid Moshe of Chortkov *zt'l* said: Place a gem on a velvet cloth, and it appears beautiful. Put the gem in a gold ring, and it is even more beautiful. Place the same stone in a paper bag or a dirty bowl, and it won't have the same appeal.

The same is true with the light of Chanukah. We must create an atmosphere that is conducive for it to shine beautifully. This is hinted at in the words ולכל בני ישראל היה אור במושבת (Shemos 10:23). The אור, brilliant light of Chanukah varies, במושבת, with its setting. The setting is created with our preparations.

A young man arrived at the Beis Yisrael's residence. He told the *gabbai*, Reb Chanina Shiff, "My grandfather, the Biala Rebbe (Rebbe Yechiel Yehoshua of Biala *zt'l*), sent me here to watch the Beis Yisrael as he prepares for Chanukah *lecht*."

The *gabbai* opened the door and saw the Rebbe pacing in his room, his face aflame. The *gabbai* quickly shut the door and said to the young man, "I don't dare disturb the Rebbe now. If you want, go in on your own."

The grandson opened the door, but when he saw the Beis Yisrael's holy face aflame, he too quickly shut the door. He was afraid to disturb him.

He returned to his grandfather and told him what he saw. His grandfather replied, "That's exactly what I wanted you to see."

After the Yesod HoAvodah of Slonim *zy'a* was *niftar*, the chassidim debated who should be their next Rebbe. One elderly person recommended that they choose the Divrei Shmuel *zt'l* (the Yesod HoAvodah's grandson). To explain his rationale, he shared the following story:

The Divrei Shmuel felt a special connection with the mitzvah of Chanukah *lecht*. He studied the halachos very well, and every year, he spent a lot of time importing olive oil for the mitzvah. One year, on erev Shabbos, he filled his menorah with his special oil and went to his grandfather's house to watch the Yesod HoAvodah light Chanukah *lecht*. When he returned home to light his menorah, he saw that someone had already lit the wicks he had prepared in his menorah. Since Shabbos was approaching, there wasn't enough time to prepare another olive oil menorah, so he lit one candle made from animal fats, and that was his mitzvah that night.

The elderly chasid concluded the story, saying, "The *chiddush* was that when he lit that one candle, he performed the mitzvah with immense joy. If he can be happy with his mitzvah, even when it wasn't performed *b'hidur*, as planned, he is worthy to be Rebbe."

The elderly chassid's suggestion was accepted, and the Divrei Shmuel became the next Rebbe of Slonim.

The Divrei Shmuel's attitude was passed down to his son, the Beis Avraham of Slonim *zt'l*. One year, on a Friday, the Beis Avraham was about to light the Chanukah menorah, and his child ran by and knocked over the menorah. The oil spilled, and there wasn't enough time before Shabbos to prepare the menorah again. The Beis Avraham said with a smile, "The same Creator Who commanded us to light Chanukah *lecht* commanded us not to become angry."

One year, Rebbe Yochanan of Tolna *zy'a* (Bayit v'Gan, Yerushalayim) lit Chanukah *lecht*, and was saying *zemiros* and *Tehillim*. Many people were present. Due to pushing, a child fell on the Rebbe's Chanukah menorah, and it turned over. The Rebbe said, "My dear child, I'm so grateful to you. Now I can keep Chazal's ruling, כבתה אין זקוק לה, if the candles blow out before a half-hour passes, one isn't obligated to light the candles again. How often can I fulfill this Chazal? Thank you for giving me this opportunity!"

Instead of being angry with the child, he rejoiced that he could practice a statement from Chazal. (Afterwards, the Rebbe lit the candles again because the Mishnah Berurah rules that if a half-hour hasn't passed, one should be *machmir* and rekindle the candles.)

vessels for yourself from the outside, from all your neighbors – empty vessels. Do not be sparing." She had a drop of oil in her home, and miraculously, the oil increased, and she poured it into all the utensils. On the words (ibid. 4:6) וַיְהִי בְּמִלֵּאת הַכֵּלִים, "When all the containers were full," the Radak quotes from a Midrash that the woman said to her son, "Bring me the broken vessels." She said to her son, "HaKadosh Baruch Hu made a miracle that the oil filled all the utensils. HaKadosh Baruch Hu can make a miracle that the broken utensils will become fixed."

Her son gathered the broken utensils. He piled them up, one on top of the other, and they all combined and became one large utensil, and the oil filled those utensils, as well.

Then the son said, אֵין עוֹד כֵּלִי, that there aren't any more utensils, and then וַיִּצְמַד הַשֶּׁמֶן, the oil stopped.

Let us learn from this episode that each person should prepare "utensils" to accept the light of Chanukah and the light of the Chanukah lecht. He should prepare himself for this mitzvah. One shouldn't say, "I am not able to prepare myself properly. All I can do is prepare some broken utensils." Broken utensils are sufficient to receive Hashem's wondrous light. Hashem will fix the utensil so that it can hold the light...

One way to make a hachanah and prepare oneself for Chanukah and for Chanukah

lecht is to study Torah. Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Kotzk zt'l said that the chachamim concealed the light of each yom tov in the divrei Torah that discusses that yom tov.

This is especially true for Chanukah. The Yevanim wanted לְהַשְׁכִּיחַ תּוֹרַת, that the Yidden should forget Torah. It is therefore obvious that we won't be able to receive the lights of Chanukah without the light of Torah.

The Gemara (Shabbos 21b) elaborates on the halachos of Chanukah, and then it asks, מַאי חֲנוּכָה, "What is Chanukah?" Shouldn't it be written in the opposite order? First, the Gemara should describe מַאי חֲנוּכָה, "What is Chanukah? Which miracle occurred for which we have this holiday?" After that, the Gemara can give the halachos. But we can answer that a person must first learn a *daf* Gemara, and then he can understand מַאי חֲנוּכָה, what Chanukah is all about. But if he doesn't study Gemara, he won't be able to understand מַאי חֲנוּכָה, what Chanukah is.

Another indication of the importance of studying Torah on Chanukah is the renowned question of the Beis Yosef (siman 670) on Chanukah, which has many, many answers.¹⁴ I think there is no other question like this one that has so many answers. HaKadosh Baruch Hu arranged it that way to teach us that the yom tov of Chanukah is about learning Torah in depth, and making true chidushim.¹⁵

14. The Beis Yosef's question is why Chanukah is eight days, instead of seven? The miracle seems to be seven days, since they had found enough oil for the first night.

15. The Yesod HaAvodah told a mashal of a doctor who said to his patient, "For your refuah, pour wine into your oven. The scent of the wine will spread throughout the house. Breathe the scent of the wine deeply. This will heal you."

The person did so, but he didn't see any improvement. He went back to the doctor to complain, "Why did you give me bad advice?"

The doctor asked him to describe exactly what he did. After he finished saying how he prepared the remedy, the doctor exclaimed, "Oh, you fool! I intended that you should pour the wine into a hot oven. That would spread the scent of the wine throughout the house. Of course, pouring wine over a cold stove didn't help you."

Gazing at the Chanukah Lecht

The brachos and the lighting of the Chanukah lecht can be done relatively quickly, but many spend half an hour looking at the Chanukah lecht, praying and praising Hashem.

Chavas Ya'ir (הגהות מקור חיים תרע"ב ב') writes, "In my opinion, the essential part of the mitzvah is that the one who lit the *lecht* should stay near the *lecht* for a half hour and look at them and be happy with them." Yeitav Panim writes, "The *minhag* in Klal Yisrael is to sit and gaze at the lecht. This draws down the miracles of Chanukah."¹⁶

The Yismach Yisrael *zt'l* said that those who have pure eyes can see Hashem's name shining on the Chanukah *lecht*.

It states (*Bamidbar* 21:8), עשה לך שרף ושים אותו על נס והיה כל הנשך וראה אותו וחי. This *pasuk* hints at the *brachos* of Chanukah. שרף is a hint at the

brachah, להדליק נר חנוכה, because שרף means to burn. ושים אותו על נס is the *brachah* שעשה ניסים. And וחי hints at שהחיינו. Literally, the *pasuk* means, "Make a snake, place it on a staff, and whoever was bitten will see it and live." In relation to Chanukah, we can explain that if someone was bitten by the snake, the yetzer hara, the solution is to gaze at the Chanukah lecht, וראה אותו וחי, and he will become like a new person.¹⁷

The Beis Avraham (נר ד' ד"ה רק) says that אלא implies that looking at Chanukah *lecht* is a *refuah* and rectification for sins related to guarding the eyes.

Sefer Zechirah (69:1) writes, "A *segulah* that helps to be protected the entire year is to say seven times (Tehillim 91) וישב בסתר עליון, each night of Chanukah after lighting the candles."

Some say chapter קי"ט in *Tehillim* because it has many requests for success in Torah and mitzvos.¹⁸

The lesson is that there is great kedushah and light in these days, but the first step is to ignite one's heart and desire for the mitzvos. When he has hislahavus for the mitzvah, he has made a good preparation to receive the kedushah of the mitzvos.

16. Rebbe Dovid Moshe of Tchartkov *zt'l* related that there was a person who was prone to sadness and depression. The Apter Rav *zt'l* advised him to look at the Chanukah lecht. He followed that advice and was healed. (Binas Yisrael, Chanukah שמעתי).

17. The Divrei Chaim *zt'l* teaches: An expert doctor can diagnose an illness by looking into his patient's eyes, and he would know how to treat that illness. Similarly, by looking into the Chanukah *lecht*, one can attain a spiritual *refuah* for all ailments of his *neshamah*.

We say, ואין לנו רשות להשתמש בהם אלא לראותם. The Divrei Chaim translates these words as, "We don't have permission to use the lecht, only *through* looking at them." This implies that looking at the Chanukah *lecht* is how we use the *lecht*. This is because by looking at them, we achieve spiritual purity and growth.

Nesivos Shalom *zt'l* (Chanukah p.85) explains the *pasuk* (Tehillim 30:6) כי רגע באפו, "For His wrath lasts but a moment," that באפו is gematria חנוכה (as is written in the holy sefarim). The *pasuk* is saying כי רגע באפו, that on Chanukah, one can attain purity in a moment. It is generally hard to correct one's evil deeds and destructive habits, but by looking intently at the Chanukah lecht, everything can be rectified in a moment.

This is also alluded to in the *pasuk* (Tehillim 91:8) רק בעיניך תביט ושלמת רשעים תראה, "You will but gaze with your eyes, and the retribution of the wicked shall you see." By merely gazing at the Chanukah lecht, שלמת, one attains *sheleimus*, perfection, רשעים, in all areas where he is lacking and still considered a rasha.

The Nesivos Shalom says, "When a Yid says the brachos on the Chanukah lecht and looks at them and accepts on himself that from now on he won't return to his foolish ways, with the strength of Chanukah, this is sufficient to rectify everything in just one moment.

18. Leket Yosher (p.43) writes that his rebbe, the Terumas HaDeshen, would recite chapter קי"ט of *Tehillim* every day of the year.

Whenever one performs a mitzvah, it is a good time for tefillah. As is brought in Tosefta (*Maasar Sheni* 5:15), "When one performs a mitzvah, it is an ideal time to daven to Hashem." This is particularly true after lighting the lecht of a mitzvah (Such as Shabbos or Chanukah lecht). Rabbeinu b'Chaya (19:3) writes, "When a woman lights the Shabbos candles, she should daven that she merit children *talmidei chachamim*, who will shine with Torah because *tefillos* are more accepted after performing a mitzvah."¹⁹ Lighting Shabbos and Chanukah lecht are mesugal for children *talmidei chachamim*, so one should daven for this at this auspicious time.

Praying for Miracles

We say *Al HaNissim* in *Shemonah Esrei* and in *Birkas Hamazon* to praise Hashem for

the miracles of Chanukah. *Shulchan Aruch* (187:4) states, "If one forgot to say *Al HaNissim* [in *Birkas Hamazon*], he can say it in the הרהרמן... הרהרמן הוא יעשה לנו נסים כמו שעשה בימים ההם בזמן הזה... בימי מתתיהו בן יוחנן..." "May Hashem perform miracles for us just as He performed miracles in those days..." and then he says the rest of *Al HaNissim*.

Similarly, if one forgets *Al HaNissim* in *Shemonah Esrei*, he should say this הרהרמן at the end of *Shemonah Esrei* (see *Mishnah Berurah* 682:4). He prays that Hashem should make miracles for us, as He made in those days... and then he says the rest of *Al Hanissim*.²⁰

The Shoel u'Meishiv (*Divrei Shaul*) *zt'l* asks that it is known that one shouldn't pray for miracles, so how can we say הרהרמן הוא יעשה לנו נסים, "May Hashem perform miracles for us"?²¹

19. Reb Shimon Daskal, a Satmar chassid from Bnei Brak, was once deliberating between buying a small store on Reb Akiva St., corner Yerushalayim St., a prime location, or a store triple that size, on a side street.

The Satmar Rebbe told him, "The *Tana'im* and *Amora'im* wrote many *tefillos* (see *Brachos* 17.), but few people say them. But there's a *tefillah* written by an *acharon*, the Chayei Adam, it is called תפילת זכה, and it is widely recited. This is because תפילת זכה is said when Yom Kippur is approaching. So, you see that it's all about location... Therefore, I advise you to buy the smaller store in the premium location."

When one lights Chanukah lecht, he is at a *prime location* and should utilize this location and auspicious time for tefillah.

20. When one says *Al HaNissim* in the correct place, he doesn't daven for miracles. However, when one forgets *Al HaNissim*, he earns a bonus and can pray for miracles.

Perhaps the explanation is that when one forgets *Al HaNissim*, he becomes heartbroken that he lost out on such a unique opportunity. His broken and humble heart makes him a worthy candidate for miracles.

21. Shoel u'Meishiv proves that we don't daven for miracles from the following Gemara (*Taanis* 24:):

Rava's beis din administered *malkus* to a sinner, and the person died. The king heard what happened and wanted to punish Rava. The king's mother warned her son, "Don't start up with the Yidden. Whatever they ask from their G-d, He gives them. When they pray for rain, it rains!"

The king replied, "That's because they pray for rain in the winter season. It was going to rain, regardless. Let them pray now, in the summer, and see if they can bring rain!"

The king's mother had *rachmanus* on Rava, so she sent him a message, warning him to daven for rain. Rava davened, but it didn't rain.

Rava said, "Ribono Shel Olam, (*Tehillim* 47) אלקים באזנינו שמענו אבותינו ספרו לנו פועל פעלת בימיהם בימי קדם 'with our ears we heard, our forefathers told us; You performed miracles in their days, in days of old,' but we haven't seen these miracles with our eyes."

Suddenly, it started to pour – although it was in the middle of summer (and it never rains in the summer in Bavel)!

The Shoel u'Meishiv (*Divrei Shaul*) zt'l answers that throughout the year, Hashem leads the world according to the rules of nature, and therefore, it is wrong to ask for miracles. On Chanukah, Hashem leads the world in miracle mode. Therefore, during Chanukah, we may daven for *nisim*.²²

It states (*Mishlei* 9:1), חֲצֵבָה עֲמֻדָּיָה שִׁבְעָה, "Hashem set up the world on seven pillars." Many aspects of the world are related to the number seven, such as the seven days of the week, seven notes of music, seven types of wisdom, and so on. In the future, the world will be run according to the number eight, as it states (*Tehillim* 6:1), לִמְנוּחָה עַל הַשְּׁמִינִית, "A song played on a harp of eight strings." This represents a world beyond the nature of this world. Chanukah is eight days because, on Chanukah, the world runs beyond the rules of nature.

The Maharal (*Ner Mitzvah*) writes, "The natural world is made up of seven. Eight is

beyond nature... The Torah was given after seven, as it states (*Devarim* 16:9), 'Count seven weeks...' and on the fiftieth day, the Torah was given. Chapter 119 in *Tehillim*, which discusses Torah, contains eight *pasukim* for each letter of the alef beis (תְּמִנָּה אָפִי) representing Torah, which is beyond nature." The Maharal explains that the Chanukah miracle came in the merit of the Torah, which is beyond nature. This is why the menorah miraculously remained lit for eight days.

Chazal (*Shabbos* 21:) say, according to Beis Shamai, יוֹם רֵאשׁוֹן מְדֻלֵּק שְׁמוֹנֶה, "The first day, he lights eight [lamps]." The Chidushei HaRim zt'l says that this refers to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. [His proof is that it is written in singular, "he lights," and it doesn't state מְדֻלֵּקִין, "we light."] On the first night of Chanukah, Hashem lights eight, which means He brings into existence the world of eight, a world beyond nature. On Chanukah, the world is led beyond the rules of nature,²³ and

The streets of Mechuzah became flooded, and the water flowed into the Chidekel River. Rava's tefillos were answered, and he was spared the king's wrath.

That night, Rava saw his father in a dream. His father said, "How could one make Heaven work so hard [to bring rain in the wrong season]?"

His father instructed him not to sleep in his bed that night. Rava got up from his bed and slept elsewhere. In the morning, Rava saw that his bed was stabbed and cut with knives. Rashi explains that *sheidim* had come to harm Rava.

We learn from this Gemara that it is dangerous and improper to daven for miracles. This is because Hashem desires to lead the world according to the rules of nature, and it is wrong to try to alter those rules and ask for miracles.

Yet, on Chanukah, we daven for miracles. What is the explanation? As we explained above, during Chanukah, Hashem leads the world in the mode of miracles, and therefore, we may daven for miracles on these days.

22. Sarah Imeinu gave birth to Yitzchak Avinu when she was ninety years old. It was a great miracle, and the Torah elaborates on it. Everyone was astounded by this miracle. However, Yocheved gave birth to Moshe Rabbeinu when she was even older. She was 130 years old, and we don't find that this was surprising to people, and that people were astounded by the miracle. What is the difference?

The Dubno Magid zt'l replied that in Mitzrayim, miracles were happening all the time. Six children were born with every birth, and other miracles occurred daily. Therefore, when another miracle occurred, it didn't make such an impact on people.

We can say the same, regarding these days of Chanukah. It is a time of miracles, and therefore, we shouldn't be so surprised when a miracle happens.

23. A member of our chaburah related that his wife wasn't feeling well for a few weeks, and her doctor

therefore, on Chanukah, we pray for miracles.²⁴

The Miracles Return Each Year

Chazal (Shabbos 21:) say, לשנה האחרת קבעום בהלל, והודאה, that the *chachamim* established Chanukah as a holiday "on the following year." Why did they wait a year to establish Chanukah instead of establishing the yom tov on the year that it happened? The

Kedushas Levi (Kedushah Rishonah, see also Ben Yehoyada) explains that initially they thought that the miracles of Chanukah were a one-time matter, a miracle to save the Yidden then. The following year, the *chachamim* perceived that the miracles were recurring. They understood that the miracles of Chanukah would happen yearly, so they established Chanukah as a holiday to be celebrated again and again.²⁵

ordered an MRI. The scan showed she had a cancerous growth *r"l*. The husband arranged a consultation with a specialist. He scheduled the meeting for the nighttime after he lit Chanukah lecht, so that he could come to the appointment armed with this holy mitzvah. The specialist scrutinized the MRI results and declared, "There is no growth here. You have nothing to worry about."

Another story we know (from a member of our chaburah in Elad) is of a boy who was involved in a serious car accident on rosh chodesh Kislev and remained unconscious for weeks. Miraculously, he began talking on the first night of Chanukah. They had their personal Chanukah miracle in the merit of Chanukah, a time of miracles.

24. The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 18.) relates that Reb Meir's sister-in-law was imprisoned, and Reb Meir tried to bribe a prison guard to free her. The guard asked, "What should I do if I am caught?"

Reb Meir told him, "Say אלקא דמאיר עני, "The G-d of Meir, answer me!"

The guard agreed and freed Reb Meir's sister-in-law. The government caught him and sentenced him to death by hanging. The verdict was about to be carried out when he said אלקא דמאיר עני, and miraculously, he was saved.

Chazal (Bereishis Rabba 94:5) say that one mustn't associate Hashem's name with someone alive. We say אלקי אברהם, אלקי יצחק, ואלקי יעקב, after their petirah, but when they lived, it wouldn't be proper to attach Hashem's name to a human being, for even if he is pious now, he has free will, and his future isn't yet determined. So how did Reb Meir instruct the guard to say אלקא דמאיר עני, "The G-d of Reb Meir"? Reb Meir was still alive!

The Maharsha answers that אלקא דמאיר עני means, "The G-d who shines should answer me." The intention is: "You are the G-d Who shone Your light for us in ancient Yavan with the miracles of the Chanukah lecht... He should answer my tefillos and save me in miraculous ways."

Many people recite the words אלקא דמאיר עני when they give tzedakah. According to the Maharsha's explanation, we are asking Hashem to perform miracles for us, as he had in the days of Chanukah, years ago, for the Chashmonaim.

25. The Gemara (Shabbos 21:) asks, מאי חנוכה. The Ben Ish Chai (Ben Yehoyada) explains that the Gemara is asking: "Why is it called חנוכה, with a ה"א at the end of the word? Chanukah means chinuch, and is named for the *chanukas hamizbeich*, the rededication of the mizbeich that took place at that time. So, it should be called חנוך, not חנוכה.

After asking מאי חנוכה, the Gemara relates the story of Chanukah and concludes that the following year they established it as a yom tov. As we explained, when the *chachamim* saw that the miracles returned each year, they established it as an annual holiday. We now have the answer to the question. מאי חנוכה, why is it called חנוכה, with a ה"א at the end? Why isn't it called חנוך? The answer is that the *heh* makes the word feminine, indicating birth. They recognized that miracles would give birth to more miracles. It wasn't a miracle for a particular time; instead, it would grow and bear fruit yearly. This is why it is called חנוכה.

We can also say that לשנה אחרת means "a different kind of year". When the miracles of Chanukah occurred,

The Bnei Yissaschar (Kislev 4:9) teaches that the miracles of Chanukah happen again each year. We aren't only commemorating a miracle that occurred in ancient times, millennia ago. This is hinted in the Chazal (Masechta Sofrim 2:1), which says אסור להדליק בנר ישן, "It is forbidden to light Chanukah lecht in an old lamp." We aren't only remembering the miracles of olden times but rather the *nissim* that occur now.²⁶

About Purim, Chazal (Megillah 17.) say, הקורא, מגילה למפרע לא יצא. The Bnei Yissaschar repeats from his Rebbes, הקורא מגילה למפרע, if one reads the megillah like it was an episode that happened in the past, לא יצא, he didn't

perform the mitzvah correctly. This is because the miracles of Purim aren't only about something that happened in the past. Every generation has its Haman (or Hamans) who want to destroy us, r'l, and each year, Hashem saves us anew, in the merit of the mitzvah of reading Megillas Esther and all the other mitzvos we perform on Purim.

The Bnei Yissaschar says that something similar occurs with the Chanukah lecht. When we light Chanukah lecht, the miracles recur. Thus, Chazal say, אסור להדליק בנר ישן, "It is forbidden to light in an old lamp." It isn't an "old lamp". It is *yeshuos* that are happening to us today.²⁷

the chachamim saw how the Yidden improved their ways, and lived more spiritually than before, causing more miracles and chesed to descend to the world. When the chachamim understood how Chanukah changed the Jewish nation for the better, they established it as an annual holiday.

26. The simple meaning of this Chazal is that, on Chanukah, it is forbidden to use a clay lamp (כלי חרס) that has already been used in the past. This is because once it is used, it loses its beauty; it turns black and ugly, and it is a *בוזי מצוה*, a disgrace to use for a mitzvah. However, the Bnei Yissaschar explains that this reason isn't sufficient because if it is a *בוזי מצוה*, it would be forbidden to use such a lamp on Shabbos and yom tov, as well. Instead, Chazal are hinting at another lesson, related specifically to Chanukah, and that is that we aren't focusing only on the miracles of the past, נר ישן. Instead, we celebrate the miracles that occur each year.

27. The Gemara (Shabbos 23.) states, "When one lights Chanukah lecht, he must make a brachah. מאי מברך, What brachah should he say? אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר חנוכה, "Bless are You Hashem... Who sanctified us with His mitzvos and commanded us to light Chanukah lecht."

The Gemara asks, היכן צונו, "When did Hashem command us to light Chanukah lecht?" [Chanukah is a yom tov instituted by the chachamim!]

The Gemara replies (Devarim 32:7), שאל אביו ויגיד, "Ask your father and he will tell you..." Hashem commands us to obey our chachamim. (The chachamim commanded us to light Chanukah lecht, and Hashem obligated us to listen to them, so it is as if Hashem commanded us to light Chanukah lecht.)

Rebbe Yisrael of Tchartkov zt'l explains the Gemara *b'derech remez*:

The Gemara begins, "When one lights Chanukah lecht, he must make a ברכה." A ברכה or הרכבה can also be translated as grafting, when you merge two plants to grow as one. The Gemara is saying that when one lights Chanukah lecht, he must say a ברכה. This means he must create a connection from the source of miracles to the Jewish nation.

This is because the miracles of Chanukah repeat themselves each year, and Klal Yisrael can receive many *yeshuos* and salvations, but we must make the connection. We have to create a הרכבה between the source of salvation, so that they should come down to the entire Jewish nation.

The Gemara asks, מאי מברך, "How does one make this connection?"

The Gemara replies וצונו, that we should become connected with Hashem. (The word צונו can mean connect, as in the word צוותא).

The Kedushas Levi writes, "Due to the righteousness of Matisyahu ben Yochanan Kohen Gadol and his children, the gates of *chesed* and miracles open during the eight days of Chanukah. It is likely that the gates open when we light the Chanukah *lecht* and when we say *Hallel* and *Al HaNisim*. These draw down the *chesed* and miracles below."

Over one hundred years ago, in the year 5683, someone came to Reb Itzikel of Antwerp zt'l and told him that he must travel immediately, but the problem was that he didn't have a passport. Waiting for one after he applied would be too late since he had to travel immediately. Rebbe Itzikel gave him a bencher and said, "If you need a passport, take this."

The man traveled with the bencher. The policeman at the passport control skimmed through the pages and stamped permission for entry next to the words על הניסים²⁸.

This miracle didn't happen on Chanukah, but it originated on Chanukah. It is an example of the miracles that recur each year.

Or HaGanuz

The Gemara (Chagigah 12.) says, "With the light that HaKadosh Baruch Hu created on the first day of creation, a person could see from one end of the world to the other." This light wasn't the light of the sun because the sun was created on the fourth day of creation. It was a unique light, about which it states (Bereishis 1:4), וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב ויבדל אלקים, "Hashem saw the light that it was good, and Hashem separated it..."

The Gemara says that Hashem concealed the light, so resha'im won't benefit from it, "As it states (Iyov 38:15) וימנע מרשעים אורם, 'Their light shall be withheld from the wicked.' For whom did Hashem store the light? For the tzaddikim of the future... When the light saw that it was being reserved for tzaddikim, it was happy, as it states (Mishlei 13:9) אור צדיקים ישמח, 'The light of the tzaddik will rejoice.'"

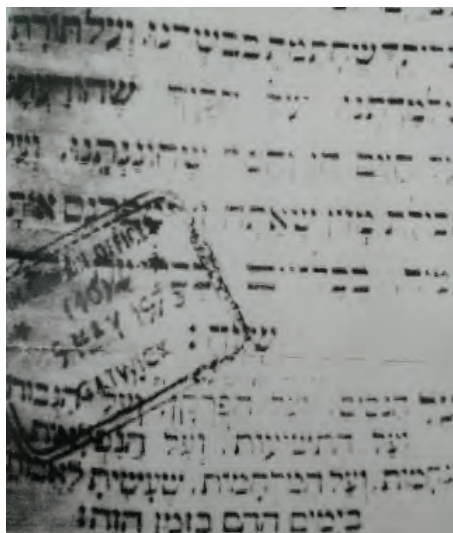
Where was this light concealed?

The Baal Shem Tov zt'l says that this holy, concealed light is in the Torah. One can tap into this sacred light when studying

The Gemara continues, היכן צונו, how does one connect with Hashem?

The answer is שאל אביך ויגדך, ask the tzaddikim and follow in their ways. Emulate their good deeds. Do as they do, and you will be connected to Hashem, thereby drawing down the blessings and salvation of Chanukah.

28. Here is a copy of this incredible bencher, stamped by the U.K. Government.



Torah. Another time to connect with this holy light is when we light the Chanukah lecht. The Bnei Yissaschar (Kislev 2:21) writes, "I have brought you the testimonies of three trustworthy witnesses that the light of Chanukah is the Or HaGanuz (concealed light of creation). They are (1) the holy tzaddik, the Rokeach, who received his lessons from Eliyahu HaNavi z'l. (2) The Maharal of Prague. It is known that his teachings were said with ruach hakodesh, and he would use Sefer Yetzirah. (3) And the holy Rav, who lived close to our times and was renowned for his ruach hakodesh, Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz zt'l.²⁹ Chazal hardly mention Chanukah. The Zohar mentions Chanukah once (vol.1, 238:); the same is true with Tikunei Zohar (29.). Even when they mention Chanukah, it is a side topic, not the primary issue being discussed.³⁰ This is because Chanukah is the concealed light, the Or HaGanuz, and Chanukah was also concealed in the Oral Torah. But as we approach the geulah [when the Or HaGanuz will shine], tzaddikim began speaking about the mitzvah of Chanukah *lecht*, ideas that gedolim of previous generations didn't imagine..." They began to reveal that the light of Chanukah is the concealed holy light, the Or HaGanuz.

The Taz's Answer to the Beis Yosef's Question

The Beis Yosef asks if there was enough oil for the first night, so the miracle was actually for seven days. Why do we celebrate Chanukah for eight days?

The Taz (670:1) answer begins with a story from Navi (II Melachim 4). It states that a woman told Navi Elisha that she had debts, and the creditors threatened to take her two sons away as slaves. Elisha asked her *מה יש לך בבית*, "What do you have in your home?"

She replied that she had some oil.

Elisha said, "Borrow empty vessels from your neighbors and pour the oil into those vessels." Miraculously, the oil kept flowing until all the utensils were filled with oil. She was able to pay her debtors.

The Zohar explains that the miracle occurred solely because this woman had a drop of oil in her home. If she had nothing in her home, the brachah wouldn't flow because "when nothing is there, the brachah will not come to create something new." If there is even a tiny drop, the brachah can increase it.

29. The Bnei Yissaschar (Kislev-Teves 4:65) writes that the gates of Gan Eden are closed at night, but it seems from the teachings of Reb Pinchas Koritzer that when Yidden light Chanukah lecht, the gates of Gan Eden open.

The number and the name of the simanim in Shulchan Aruch are associated with the mitzvah that siman discusses (as is written in Agra d'Pirka, Naso, regarding the mitzvah of Viduy, and several other sources teach this idea). The Beis Yisrael zt'l said that Hilchos Chanukah begins with siman תר"ע, which is similar to תרע"א, which means "gate" in Aramaic. This hints that the gates of salvation open when we light the Chanukah lecht. The Beis Yisrael zy'a teaches that the gates of heaven are opened on Chanukah, and everyone can enter. The Gemara (Bava Kama 80:) states, "When a door is locked, it won't open so quickly." We understand that the opposite is undoubtedly true. When the gates of heaven and salvation open, they don't close so quickly, and we will merit salvation beyond the rules of nature.

30. Also, in Mishnayos, Chanukah is mentioned only once (see Mishnayos Bava Kama 6:6), and even there it is mentioned in passing. It states there, *הניח חנוני נרו מבוהץ החנוני חייב*, "If a storeowner leaves a candle outside, he must pay for any damages it caused. *ר' יהודה אומר בנר חנוכה פטור*, Reb Yehudah says that if it was a Chanukah lecht that was left outside, he isn't obligated to pay," because he was permitted to place the lamp there.

This is the only place that Chanukah is mentioned in Mishnayos, and it isn't even discussing Chanukah! It discusses the laws of damages. This is because Chanukah represents the Or HaGanuz, the concealed light, so also in the Oral Torah, it is concealed.

The Taz says that this proves that when the Kohanim lit the Menorah in the Beis HaMikdash on the 25th of Kislev, the oil wasn't entirely consumed. Some of the oil must have miraculously remained until the morning. If all the oil was consumed at night, there wouldn't be any oil left for the miracle to come upon it.

The Taz writes, "In retrospect, they realized that a miracle happened on the first night. Had the oil been completely consumed on the first night, there couldn't have been a miracle the next night. Certainly, some oil remained from the first night, and then the brachah came upon that remaining oil. So, we see that there was a miracle on the first night, too."

Reb Aryeh Leib zt'l, the Maharal Tzin (קומץ למנוחה, דרוש לחנוכה ז') explains the Taz with a *mashal*:

Someone had ten crates filled with gold coins. Nine crates were stolen, and one wasn't. With the remaining gold coins, he hired police to search for the nine stolen crates. He vowed that if the gold was recovered, he would give three gold coins from each box to *tzedakah*.

The crates were eventually found, and true to his promise, he gave a *gabbai tzedakah* 27 gold coins, three from each stolen box.

However, the *gabbai tzedakah* requested three gold coins from the tenth crate. The man replied, "That crate wasn't stolen. My gratitude to Hashem is that He brought back the nine crates. Why must I thank Hashem for the tenth crate, which was never stolen?"

The *gabbai tzedakah* replied, "Had the tenth crate also been stolen, you wouldn't have had any money to pay for the search. The fact that it wasn't stolen is part of the miracle, and you should thank Hashem for that, too."

On Chanukah, we praise Hashem for the menorah that lit seven days more than expected, and we also praise Hashem for the oil that was left over on the first night because, without that oil, the miracle couldn't have occurred.

We learn from this to praise Hashem for all the miracles we receive, including those that prepare the path for other miracles.

We shouldn't praise Hashem only for those times when we had serious problems, and Hashem miraculously and kindly saved us. We should also praise Hashem for all the good we have, for all the problems that we don't have. We have much to be grateful for, and Chanukah is a holiday to praise Hashem for all His kindness.

Hallel and Al HaNissim

Reb Shlomo Kluger zt'l (חכמת שלמה תרפ"ג) discusses the following scenario:

A prisoner was granted the right to leave prison on Chanukah for a few hours. The prisoner's question was whether he should go out at nighttime, so he can light Chanukah lecht, or should he leave in the morning so he can say *Hallel* and *Al HaNissim* in beis medresh.

Reb Shlomo Kluger answered that he should leave prison in the morning to say *Hallel* and *Al HaNissim* with a minyan.

From this discussion, we understand the importance of *Hallel* and *Al HaNissim*. They are among the highest points of Chanukah. Therefore, we should certainly invest in saying *Hallel* and *Al HaNissim* with kavanah.³¹

Chazal (*Shabbos* 21:) say ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד נעשה בו גם והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים לשנה אחרת קבעום ועשאום ימים טובים בהלל ובהודאה "The oil was sufficient for one day. A miracle occurred,

³¹. *Masechta Sofrim* (20:9) states, "We say the entire *Hallel* during the eight days of Chanukah...and we make a *brachah* before and after *Hallel*, and one must say it בנעימה (with sweetness, pleasantly)."

and they used this oil for eight days. The following year, they established these days as a *yom tov* with Hallel and *Al HaNissim*."

The Sfas Emes says that the Gemara's words, קבעום ועשאום ימים טובים בהלל והודאה, imply that saying Hallel and *Al HaNissim* make and create the holiday. קבעום ועשאום, it became established, and it became a holiday בהלל והודאה, when we say Hallel and *Al HaNissim*.³²

The Tchebiner Rav *zt'l* said, "Hallel on Chanukah shouldn't be like Hallel on Rosh Chodesh because Hallel on Rosh Chodesh is a *minhag*, while Hallel on Chanukah is a *mitzvah*." Some Rishonim say that Hallel is a *mitzvah* from the Torah (see Reb Yeruchem Fishel Perlow's commentary on *Sma'g, mitzvas ase* נ-ט, p.258).

It states (*Mishlei* 27:21), מצרף לכסף וכור לזהב ואיש, לפי מהללו, "The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, and a man according to his praise." The Chida explains that while the refining pot and the furnace purify silver and gold, איש לפי מהללו, man becomes cleansed and pure when he praises Hashem.³³ It states (*Tehillim* 106:47), להשתבח בתהלתך. This means that a person becomes improved, בתהלתך, by praising Hashem.³⁴

The Gemara (*Pesachim* 117) says, "We say Hallel על כל צרה וצרה שלא תבא עליהן, "for every *tzarah* that shouldn't come..." The Ben Ish Chai says that these words imply that Hallel is *mesugal*, על כל צרה וצרה שלא תבא עליהן, that troubles won't come.

The Bnei Yissaschar (*Kislev*, 4:134) teaches that when one praises Hashem, he can use that praise as a prayer to Hashem. For example, in the second *brachah* of *Shemonah Esrei*, we praise Hashem, רופא חולים, "Who heals the ill." As one says these words, he can intend a prayer, "Hashem, please heal so-and-so."

When one says a standard *tefillah*, the *malachim* may prevent it from going up, claiming that the person doesn't deserve his requests to be considered. But *malachim* never prevent praises from going up before Hashem. The praises go up, and Hashem hears the concealed plea and fills his request.

This is the meaning of the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 18:4), מהולל אקרא ה' ומן אויבי אושע, "I call out to Hashem with praises, and I am saved from my enemies." Similarly, it states, אודך כי עניתני, "I praise You when I'm suffering, and I will certainly have my salvation."

The Sfas Emes *zt'l* said that when one says אנה ה' in Hallel, all his requests can be fulfilled. Chassidim thought that the Sfas Emes was referring to the *pasuk*, ה' הושיעה נא, "Please Hashem, save us, now." The Imrei Emes *zt'l* said that he thinks the Sfas Emes was referring to the *pasuk*, אנה ה' כי אני עבדך, "Please Hashem because I am Your servant."³⁵

We will be saying the same words of Hallel for eight days, but don't allow the

32. Sfas Emes explains that the ב' in בהלל והודאה implies that קבעום they made it a holiday, through the Hallel. The Hallel makes it a holiday. Otherwise, it would state, קבעום להלל והודאה, "They established these days to say Hallel and *Al HaNissim*."

33. A person plagued by a *dibbuk* was brought to the Divrei Chaim of Sanz *zt'l* on Chanukah. The Divrei Chaim said, "Bring him to the beis medresh when we say Hallel." They did that, and the *dibbuk* immediately left the body and flew out a window. This is because every *tumah* inside a person can be extricated through Hallel.

34. If להשתבח means to praise Hashem, it would state לשבח. It says להשתבח because a person becomes praised and better, בתהלתך by praising Hashem.

35. When we say the *brachah* על המזחיה, we don't add a line for Chanukah (as we do on Shabbos, *yom tov*, etc.) This is because praise must not be a one-liner. Praise requires elaboration.

When someone did a favor to Reb Aharon of Belz *zt'l*, he would make it a point to thank him personally. His *gabbaim* asked, "Why do you take the effort to thank people yourself? For more important matters, you

routine to make you tired. Remember, saying *Hallel* is one of the highlights of Chanukah. The same applies to *Al HaNissim*. Try to make every *tefillah* unique and special.

Undeserved Kindness

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

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

Parnassah and all the brachos come down when we light Chanukah *lecht*, but that shouldn't be our focus. We light the *lecht* because it is a mitzvah and because we want

to publicize the *nisim*. The *parnassah* and bounty will certainly flow in this merit, but we shouldn't think about that when we perform the mitzvah. This is hinted in Chazal (*Shabbos* 22.), *אסור להרצות מעות כנגד נר חנוכה*. We can translate it to mean, "It is forbidden to *want* money when lighting the Chanukah candles." However, when we perform the mitzvah properly, we will receive many brachos and *yeshuos*, *b'ruchniyos* and *b'gashmiyos*.³⁶

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

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

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

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

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

send your *gabbaim*. Why can't you send us to thank those who helped you?"

He replied, "When the *chazan* says *מודים*, the congregation says *modim* along with him. This is because when it comes to thanking, one must do so himself and not rely on a *shaliach*."

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

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

The Sar Shalom of Belz zt'l answers that we are referring to the courtyards of every Jewish home. On Chanukah, one's courtyard (where he lights Chanukah lecht) becomes חצרות קדש, holy like the Beis HaMikdash.³⁷

The Chiddushei HaRim zt'l said that lighting the Chanukah lecht is in some ways even greater than the Menorah in the Beis HaMikdash. If the lamps of the Menorah of the Beis HaMikdash were blown out, the kohen is obligated to light them again. But when the Chanukah lecht are extinguished, they don't need to be relit. This is because the light of the Chanukah menorah shines in the neshamah of the Jewish nation, even after the light was extinguished.

Reb Chaim Palagi (Refuah v'Chaim 71) quotes the Zohar that when the kohen lit the Menorah in the Beis HaMikdash, there was

rachamim in the world, like when we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. Reb Chaim Palagi says this also occurs when we light the Chanukah lecht. Immense *rachamim* flows, like what is achieved with the shofar, and *midas hadin* becomes *rachamim*.³⁸

Segulos of Chanukah

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

The Kedushas Levi (Drushim l'Chanukah ד"ה להדליק נר) adds that the roshei teivos of נר (בחנוכה) is gematria 88, פ"ח. So, the pasuk refers to Chanukah, and it states, ואנחנו נמלטנו, that we escaped and were saved. This alludes to the salvations that occur on Chanukah.³⁹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is also alluded to in Mishlei (16:15) **בְּאוֹר פְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ חַיִּים**, "In the light of the King's countenance is life." With the light of Chanukah, we merit life.

Another hint is from Chazal (Shabbos 22): "The light of Chanukah should be on the left and the mezuzah on the right." The mezuzah represents long life as it states (Devarim 11:21) **לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם וְיְמֵי בְנֵיכֶם**, "So that your days may increase and the days of your children..." Also Chanukah lecht are *mesugal* for long life.

Rebbe Moshe Kobriner zt'l said that Chanukah lecht brings *refuos* to the world.⁴⁰

He explained that in addition to his debts, he also had children to marry off, and no money for the dowry and expenses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A hint is from the tefillah יקום פרקן (which we say on Shabbos). It states there בריות גופא ונהורא

מעליא, "Health for the body and a divine light." We understand that when we have

40. Rebbe Leibele Eigar zt'l taught that the letters that make up the word רפואה can be divided into two words: אור. There is another word for healing. It is ארוכה. This word can also be divided into two words, אור כ"ה. This hints that on the 25th of Kislev, when we light Chanukah lecht, refuos begin to come to Klal Yisrael.

I heard from a chashuve Yid from England that fifty years ago, in the summertime, his wife gave birth to a girl, but the child was born without a stomach, r'l! The doctors informed him that she would live no longer than a day or two. When he heard this, he decided to name his daughter quickly. He told Rebbe Itzikel of Pshevorsk (Belgium) zt'l that he wants to give a name quickly because of what the doctors told him. The Rebbe advised him not to rush, and he should wait until Shabbos to name the child. The father tried explaining to Rebbe Itzikel the gravity of her situation and that the doctors don't expect her to survive until Shabbos, but Rebbe Itzikel wouldn't budge. And, indeed, the child was named on Shabbos.

The medical team tried feeding her, but whatever they gave her, she spat up. She couldn't hold down food, but surprisingly, and miraculously, she was still alive. Every moment she lived with miracles beyond nature.

This went on until the first day of Chanukah. On that day, a doctor told the parents that a miracle had occurred, and he had no way of explaining it medically. The child is beginning to develop a stomach. It started very small, but something was improving. "Perhaps there is hope," the doctor said. The day that we light the אור, the doctors began to see עור, a skin membrane, growing in the girl's stomach, the beginning of a stomach.

Two weeks later, the stomach was clearly there.

Later that year, on Rosh chodesh Nisan, the parents went to Rebbe Itzikel, and they wrote their daughter's name in the kvitel. The Rebbe said, "When the girl was born, and I spoke with the father, I understood from the father that it was impossible for the girl to survive. Therefore, I waited until there was an eis ratzon, the first night of Chanukah, and I pierced the heavens with my tefillos until I felt that I brought a yeshuah for this girl."

When the mother heard this, she fell and fainted, because it was exactly on that day, the first day of Chanukah, that the membrane began to grow in their daughter's innards. They told the Rebbe that it was indeed that day that the miracle occurred, only they hadn't realized the significance of the timing until then.

I heard from a Yid from chutz l'aretz, a story that happened to him. Four-and-a-half years ago, doctors found a very rare disease in two of his sons, r'l. Many askanim were called, and they sought a cure for this illness, but the illness was so rare, no refuah was known. Erev Chanukah (תשפ"א) the father heard about the segulah of refuos that come from Chanukah, and especially from the first night of Chanukah. With emunah sheleimah, on the first night of Chanukah, he poured out his heart for the healing of his children. After Chanukah, another doctor became involved in their sons illness, and he recommended a certain medical approach. It worked! Today, there is almost no sign of the illness that had once been there. This isn't surprising, because on Chanukah, miracles beyond nature occur.

A father brought his infant son to the Ribnitzer Rebbe zt'l (when the rebbe was in Los Angeles for Chanukah). The father told the rebbe that his son was born prematurely and was placed in an incubator with a bandage over his eyes to protect him from the strong light. However, the bandage fell off, and the child became blind in both eyes, r'l.

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

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

the "divine lights" of Chanukah, there will be health.

Furthermore, להדליק נר חנוכה is gematria מלך רופא נאמן.⁴¹

Chanukah is also mesugal for parnassah and wealth. The Chiddushei HaRim zy'a

(quoted in Sifsei Tzaddik, Chanukah, 3) explains the pasuk (Mishlei 3:16) ארך ימים בימינה בשמאולה עשר וכבוד, "Length of days is in its right hand; in its left hand are riches and honor." The left hints at the Chanukah lecht which are lit on the left side of the entrance. From this mitzvah comes riches and honor.⁴²

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

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

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

This occurred during Chanukah. As he sat before the Chanukah lecht, he stared continuously at the lit menorah; tears were flowing as he poured out his heart to Hashem. His tefillos were answered, and his eyesight returned, to the amazement of the doctors. This isn't surprising because these are days of miracles and refuos, beyond and above the constraints of nature.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chazal (Beitzah 32b) say, "Whoever has to come onto the table of others, the world is dark for him." On Chanukah, there is light. This means that in the merit of the lights of Chanukah, there will be parnassah, and everyone will be self-sufficient. No one will feel that the world is dark for him.

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

Serve Hashem with Warmth

One of the primary segulos of lighting Chanukah lecht is to have children who are *talmidei chachamim*.⁴³ As Chazal say, הרגיל בנר, "When one is accustomed to lighting Chanukah lecht, he will merit children talmidei chachamim."

The Gemara also says, הזהיר בציצית זוכה לטלית, נאה, "When one is cautious with the mitzvah of tzitzis, he merits beautiful clothing. When one is cautious with kiddush on Shabbos, he merits having barrels of wine." These times the word הזהיר "When one is cautious" is used. Whereas, when discussing lighting Chanukah lecht, the Gemara says הרגיל בנר, when he is

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

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

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

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

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

The Rayatz replied with a mashal:

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

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

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

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

The poor man didn't understand what he did wrong and why he wasn't paid like the person at the resort. One day, he gathered courage and returned to the wealthy person with humility and tears and asked for an explanation. The rich man understood that he sincerely wanted to understand, so he explained it to him. "When I am in a sauna, each painful message I receive goes deeply into my flesh, and it is good for me emotionally and physically. I am willing to pay a lot of money for that massage. It is the mixture of the message with the heat that works so well. But you hit me without any heat... and therefore, you deserved to be punished."

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

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

accustomed to lighting Chanukah lecht. Shem Mishmuel (5680) explains that the Gemara is hinting to us הרגיל בנר, one should become accustomed to serving Hashem with a נר, a fire of *hislahavus*. That is mesugal for children talmidei chachamim.⁴⁴

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

44. When we serve Hashem, there should always be a feeling of newness in our hearts, like we are performing this mitzvah for the first time. We shouldn't feel bored and disinterested. This can be hinted at in the words (Shabbos 21b) עד שתכלה רגל, "We light Chanukah lecht until the רגל, feelings of familiarity, cease, and every time we serve Hashem it is fresh and new.