

לעילוי נשמת
מרת עקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



עֵלֵי דֶשֶׁה

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur

Chanukah Collection

Sefarim point out that חנוכה shares the same letters as ח' הוּכַן—*eight [days] were prepared*. Let us share a beautiful allusion in this.

The *Imrei Emes* explains¹ the background of the flask of oil discovered by the *Chashmona'im*. Many years earlier, the *kohanim* prepared to fill a flask with oil for the menorah—a routine task. They poured in the

flask, and it was hidden away until a time when it would be needed. At the time of the *Chashmona'im*, the Yidden felt an intense longing to kindle the menorah with pure oil, and so it was revealed that such oil had been prepared and stowed away for them.

This contains an important lesson. We do not always feel that we have the ability to serve Hashem properly. But we must know that the *kocho*s are already there, stowed away for us. All that is necessary is a strong desire on our part to serve Hashem with purity.

Chanukah has the same letters as ח' הוּכַן, because that is its essence and message: that Jewish people strove to serve Hashem with purity, so they found eight days' worth of oil prepared and waiting for them, allowing them to serve Hashem in the best way possible.

The Gemara (Shabbos 23a) states: נשים—חייבות בנר חנוכה, שאף הן היו באותו הנס—*Women are obligated to kindle Chanukah lights, because they too were part of the miracle*. The *Rishonim* disagree on the meaning of “they too were part of the miracle.” The Rashbam² explains that

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Adding On

וַיִּכַר יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר צְדָקָה מִמֶּנִּי

Yehudah recognized; and he said, “She is right; it is from me.” (Bereishis 38:26)

Chazal praise Yehudah highly for admitting his fault. The Gemara (Sotah 10b) states that Yosef, who was *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* in private, had one letter of Hashem's Name added to his name, as the pasuk says (Tehillim 81:6): עֲדוּת בְּיְהוֹשֻׁפָּט—*He appointed it as a testimony for Yehosef*. Yehudah, who sanctified Hashem's Name publicly, merited to be called entirely by Hashem's Name.

This is difficult to understand. Yosef was granted an extra letter to his name after he was *mekadesh Shem Shamayim*, but Yehudah had been called this way since he was born! What was added now? One might suggest that he was named Yehudah based on these future events. But this is not so, since Leah had her own reason for the name, as the pasuk says (29:35): וַתֹּאמֶר—מֵרַחֵם הַפֶּעַם אוֹדָה אֶת ה' עַל כֵּן קָרָאתִי שְׁמוֹ יְהוּדָה—*She declared, “This time I will gratefully praise Hashem”; therefore, she named him Yehudah.*¹²

Moreover, what does the Gemara mean that Yehudah was “called entirely by Hashem's Name”? “Yehudah” is not the Name of Hashem. At most, it could be said that Yehudah's name contains all the letters of Hashem's Name.

12 See Maharsha, *Chiddushei Aggados* to *Sotah*, *ibid* cont. on page 3

The more acutely we feel our inadequacy in *ruchniyus*, the greater a connection we can achieve to the *yom tov* and salvation of Chanukah

prescribed amount, yet the flask did not fill. Intrigued, they poured in the same amount again. Still, the flask was not full. This was repeated again and again. Finally, after eight times, the flask was full. Realizing the significance of this, the *kohen gadol* affixed his seal to the

1 See *Likutei Yehudah*, Chanukah; *Michtavei Torah*, 12

2 Pesachim 108b

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the miracle of Chanukah occurred through a woman, i.e., Yehudis, who killed a Greek general. *Tsafos*³ argues that this does not fit with the Gemara's language, since "ךָ אָהָן—*they too*" implies that women were not central to the miracle, but accessory to it.

Why are women only secondary in the Chanukah miracle? The Sfas Emes teaches⁴ that the salvation of Chanukah applied to each person varyingly. When the *Yevanim* outlawed observance of mitzvos, there were disparate reactions. Some people inwardly rejoiced: now that they were unable to keep the mitzvos, they would finally be free of them. Others felt pained by the situation. Yet others felt as if a part of themselves were torn off; they simply could not live like this. Because of those who could not tolerate living without mitzvos, Hashem performed the Chanukah miracle. Each person was positively impacted by the salvation in accordance with his former level of pain.

The three *mitzvos* the *Yevanim* outlawed were Shabbos, *Rosh Chodesh*, and *milah*. Shabbos applies to men and women equally, both in its requirements and its prohibitions. The same is true of *Rosh Chodesh*.⁵ *Milah*, however, does not apply to women at all. Since they were not affected personally by the prohibition against *milah*, they were pained by the *tzarah* to a lesser degree than men. Because of this, they experienced a smaller degree of the miracle. Thus, *they too were part of the miracle*—to a lesser extent.

This concept applies to us, as well: the more acutely we feel our inadequacy in *ruchniyus*, the greater a connection we can achieve to the *yom tov* and salvation of Chanukah.

(בנאות דשא – וישב-ימי החנוכה תשפ"ג)



Al Hanissim begins by describing the miraculous victory of the *Chashmona'im*. It continues, ואחר כך באו בניך לדביר ביתך, ופינו את היכלך, וטהרו את מקדשך, והדליקו ופינו את היכלך, וטהרו את מקדשך, וקדשך—*And afterwards, Your children came to Your holy abode, and cleaned out Your Sanctuary, purified Your Beis Hamikdash, and kindled lights in Your holy courtyards.*

Why are the events broken up at this point, so that what occurred beforehand is "before," and henceforth is "afterwards"?⁶ If anything, the institution of Chanukah (described later in *Al Hanissim*) should be termed "afterwards," since it occurred only the following year.⁷ Additionally, the expression "ואחר כך" is very unusual in *tefillah*.

*Bnei Yissaschar*⁸ points out another anomaly. Earlier in *Al Hanissim*, the Jewish nation is described as עמך ישראל—*Your nation, Yisrael*. Why does it change here, referring to them as "Your children"?

Let us recount a well-known parable of the Midrash.⁹ A father once took a stroll with his young child on his shoulders. As they walked, they passed an acquaintance of the father. The child called out to him, "Have you seen my father anywhere?"

Incensed, the father shouted, "You ride on my shoulders and ask where I am? I will toss you down and make you vulnerable to the enemy!" The Midrash explains that in the same way, Amalek attacked Bnei Yisrael just as they questioned Hashem's Presence in their midst.¹⁰ Through their miraculous victory over Amalek, Bnei Yisrael became aware once more that Hashem was protecting them as His child.

At the time of Chanukah, too, the Jews reached this realization; both through the miraculous victory itself, and through Hashem's love which they felt through the miracle.

We may now understand the wording of *Al Hanissim*. The Jewish people waged war and were miraculously victorious. *Afterwards*, upon contemplating this, they gained clarity that they were Hashem's children, Who held them aloft as a child riding his father's shoulders. As *Hashem's children*,¹¹ they came to the *Beis Hamikdash*, and felt emboldened to *clean out the Heichal and purify the Beis Hamikdash and kindle lights in the holy courtyards*.

What is the lesson for us? When we truly feel that אַתֶּם לֵה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ—*You are children to Hashem, your G-d (Devarim 14:1)*, we become empowered to beautify Hashem's *Mikdash* that is ourselves, and to kindle the lamp of Hashem, the *Yiddishe neshamah*.

(בנאות דשא – ימי החנוכה תשפ"ג)

3 Ibid

4 See Chanukah 5641 s.v. Chazal

5 Actually, *Rosh Chodesh* applies to women to a greater degree than to men, as it is considered a *yom tov* for them (see Rashi, *Megillah* 22b).

6 See *Sfas Emes*, 5640 s.v. *B'nusach*

7 Shabbos 21b

8 *Ma'amar* 4 no. 87

9 *Shemos Rabbah* 26:2, cited by *Bnei Yissaschar*, *ibid*

10 ר'יש' ה' בקרבנו אם אין—*ton ro su gnoma mehsaH sI* (7:71 *somehS*)

11 See *Sfas Emes*, 5642 s.v. *B'nusach*

Just Passing Through

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The Gemara (Bava Basra 75b) teaches, “In the future, *tzaddikim* will be called by Hashem’s Name, as the *pasuk* says (Yeshayah 43:7), כֹּל הַנִּקְרָא בְשֵׁמִי וְלֹכְבוּדִי בְרָאֲתִיו, —*Everyone who is called by My Name and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have fashioned, even perfected.*” The Maharsha¹³ explains that the names of *tzaddikim* will be appended with Hashem’s Name; they will be called ‘צדיק לה’, a *tzaddik of Hashem*.

The Maharal¹⁴ explains differently. When a *tzaddik* follows the ways of Hashem and cleaves to Him, Hashem’s

Yehudah as His own, declared through a *bas kol*, “She is right; it is from Me!”

The Sfas Emes concludes: this is what the Gemara means that Yehudah was called entirely by Hashem’s Name. After Yehudah was *mekadesh Shem Shamayim*, he came to be called by Hashem’s Name, so that the *pasuk* uses his name for Hashem’s.

This *avodah* is incumbent upon each of us. Every Yid, according to his level, is called by Hashem’s Name. As we say in the *tefillos* of *Yamim Nora'im*, ושמונו קראת, בשמך—*You have called our name upon Your Name*. Some people merit one letter of Hashem’s Name; some people more. Everyone, however, must be cognizant that he was created for Hashem’s glory; that he must create, *k’vayachol*, new Names for Hashem.

The Satan does his best blind us from this truth. People become deeply sunken into worldly matters, entirely forgetting the purpose of their lives—to sanctify Hashem’s Name and reveal His glory.

There are times, however, when Hashem lifts us up, inviting us to remember our true goals in life.

R. Bunim of Peshischa said that if he wanted, he could cause the wood-laden rafts on the Veisel River to float upstream. But what would be the point? The newspapers of Berlin would report the anomaly wrought by Wunderabbiner Bunim of Peshischa—but nobody would change their lives around. What would Hashem gain from this?

But when Hashem Himself performs a *nes*, it is different. Hashem does it to elevate

us, to lead us to change and remember our life’s purpose of *kiddush Shem Shamayim*. In this vein, our *rebbeim* interpreted the *pasuk* (Tehillim 60:6) נִס לְהִתְנוּסָה, as, “A miracle to become raised up.”

We may now understand an enigmatic expression in *Al Hanissim* of Chanukah. ולך עשית שם גדול וקדוש בעולמך—*And You created for Yourself a great and holy Name in Your world*. Did Hashem create a new Name for Himself through Chanukah? Shouldn’t it rather say, *You made Your Name great and holy?*

According to what we have learned, the answer is clear. When *tzaddikim* bring about *kiddush Shem Shamayim*, their names become new Names for Hashem. At the time of Chanukah, Klal Yisrael as a whole was raised up to high *madreigos* of *kiddush Shem Shamayim*, and thus, *Hashem created for Himself a great and holy Name in His world*, with the addition of multitudes of new Names of Hashem.

A person might think, *Who am I to create a Name for Hashem with my actions? I’m just a regular Yid*. But that is not so. In any case, everything we accomplish is with Hashem’s help;¹⁸ we just need to do our part.

This, as well, is clearly indicated in *Al Hanissim*: since Hashem’s new Names were created by our actions, shouldn’t it say, *We made You a great and holy Name?* Why does it say *You made Yourself a great and holy Name?* The answer is that it was, indeed, accomplished by our actions—but only with Hashem’s help.¹⁹

(בגאות דשא – וישב-ימי חנוכה תשפ"ב)

Some people merit one letter of Hashem’s Name; some people more. Everyone, however, must be cognizant that he was created for Hashem’s glory.

Name is revealed through him so that the *tzaddik’s* name becomes a Name of Hashem.

The Sfas Emes employs this concept in explanation of a different Gemara:¹⁵ When Yehudah admitted his guilt, a *bas kol* called out, “From Me, secret matters went forth.”¹⁶ The Sfas Emes¹⁷ reads this into the *pasuk*: ויזכר יהודה ויאמר צדקה ממני—*Hakadosh Baruch Hu, Who “adopted” the name*

13 ד"ה ג' דברים *Chiddushei Aggados*

14 *Chiddushei Aggados*

15 *Sotah* ibid, *Makkos* 23b

16 Rashi explains that it was secretly decreed in Heaven that Yehudah’s kingship would come through Tamar.

17 Ad loc.

18 See *Sukkah* 52b, *Kiddushin* 30b

19 In the case of Chanukah, the help Hashem always provides was augmented by the *nes* He performed, which, as above, elevates a person to high levels.

Oil Heist

It is told that in his younger years, the Divrei Shmuel of Slonim once went to watch his grandfather, the Yesod Ha'avodah, light the menorah on Erev Shabbos Chanukah. The Divrei Shmuel had prepared his own menorah at home, and planned to return and light it before Shabbos. Arriving home, he found that a guest had lit his menorah—and he did not have time before Shabbos to prepare more *neiros*. Keeping his calm, he said, “The same Hashem Who commanded us to light Chanukah candles also commanded us not to become angry.” He thus greeted Shabbos joyously.

This story is told for the greatness in *avodas Hashem* it demonstrates. Nonetheless, we must analyze it as Torah.²⁰ Was this the proper course of action? After all, it would seem the guest did not fulfill his mitzvah, as *ner Chanukah* cannot be fulfilled with stolen oil.²¹

Why may *ner Chanukah* not be performed with stolen oil? First, based on the principle of *mitzvah haba'ah b'aveirah* (a mitzvah performed through an *aveirah*).²² Second, *ner Chanukah* has a requirement of *לך*—of yours, just like *daled minim*, so that one must own the materials to fulfill the mitzvah.²³

If, indeed, the guest did not fulfill the mitzvah, and thus the flames were not *neiros Chanukah*, it would seem the Divrei Shmuel should have extinguished them and relit the *neiros* himself. Presumably, there was plenty of oil left, since on Erev Shabbos Chanukah one must prepare more oil than other nights.

Perhaps, with the guest's act of lighting the menorah, he caused the *neiros* to become *assur b'hana'ah* (prohibited for benefit) as kindled *neiros Chanukah*—and through this *shinui* (change) to the oil, he acquired it. If so, it was considered the guest's oil, and he fulfilled the mitzvah with

it. Thus, the Divrei Shmuel didn't extinguish the *neiros*.

But there is a rule that *אין אדם אוסר דבר שאינו שלו*—a person cannot forbid something that doesn't belong to him. So how could the guest make the oil *assur b'hana'ah*, when it didn't belong to him beforehand?

We may suggest that this is, indeed, possible. The Rashba²⁴ writes that if a person steals an object and then declares it *hekdesh*, it is prohibited as *hekdesh*. It hadn't been his until then, but he acquired it by *shinui* through making it *hekdesh*—which, at the same time, enabled him to declare it *hekdesh* to start with (a concept known as *ba'in k'echad*²⁵). The same can be said here: by lighting the *neiros* for the mitzvah, the guest effectuated a *shinui* of *issur hana'ah*—which, at the same time, enabled his acquirement of the oil. He thus fulfilled the mitzvah.

Yet, although the guest created a *shinui* in the oil, he (presumably) didn't perform an act of *kinyan* on it, e.g., by lifting it up or placing it in his own property.²⁶ So how could he acquire it?

Granted, R. Akiva Eiger writes²⁶ that a thief can acquire an item through *shinui* alone, even without an act of *kinyan*, but that may not apply here. R. Akiva Eiger says this where a physical change—e.g., *shechitah*—is made to the stolen object. In our case, the change is halachic—that the oil becomes prohibited through the mitzvah. And, as above, this halachic status is subject to the principle of *ba'in k'echad*. As we shall see, *ba'in k'echad* may not extend to enabling a new *kinyan gezeilah*.

The *Acharonim* explain²⁷ that in the above case of the Rashba, the thief had already performed an act of *kinyan* (such as lifting up) on the stolen item; only, his obligation to return it prevented his *kinyan* from taking effect. Thus,

when he declares it *hekdesh*, the principle of *ba'in k'echad* allows this “prevention” to be bypassed, so that the acquisition is completed.

The *Acharonim* write that this is the only way *ba'in k'echad* works: it can bypass a “prevention” to a *kinyan*. It cannot, however, facilitate the creation of a new *kinyan*.

If so, even in accordance with R. Akiva Eiger, the guest's use of stolen oil could not constitute a *kinyan gezeilah* in the absence of an actual act of *kinyan*, because *ba'in k'echad* cannot create a new *kinyan*. Accordingly, the guest did not acquire the oil, and did not fulfill his mitzvah. So why didn't the Divrei Shmuel extinguish and relight the menorah?

Perhaps the Divrei Shmuel was *mochel* the guest for his theft of the oil, and thus, the guest fulfilled his obligation. This seems counterintuitive, since the halachah is that *הדלקה עושה מצוה*—the mitzvah is performed by the kindling, at which time the oil didn't belong to the guest. However, one could argue that if a person possesses kindled *neiros* that he lit—even if at the time he lit them they were not his—he has fulfilled the mitzvah. If so, the Divrei Shmuel's *mechilah* of the guest's theft would enable the guest to fulfill his mitzvah.

But could the Divrei Shmuel grant his guest *mechilah*, at the expense of which he would be unable to fulfill his own mitzvah? Wouldn't his own responsibilities take precedence, in keeping with *חייך קודמין*—your life takes precedence?²⁸ We may suggest that since if he wouldn't grant *mechilah*, the guest's *berachah* on lighting the *neiros* would be considered *l'vatalah* (in vain), the Divrei Shmuel was permitted to be *mochel* him, so that his mitzvah would be deemed valid.

(בנאות דשא – ימי החנוכה תשפ"א)

20 It has been pointed out that a different version of the story is recorded in *Ya'ir Ohr* of Rav Y. Schwartzman (p. 313), whereby the menorah was simply overturned. If so, our discussion is only theoretical.

21 See *She'elos U'Teshuvos Shoel U'Meishiv, Telisa'i*, 349, cited in *Mishnah Berurah*, 673:2

22 In our case, this may be explored from two angles: A. Does *mitzvah haba'ah b'aveirah* apply to *mitzvos d'Rabanan*? (see *Sdei Chemed*, vol. 4, *Ma'areches Mem*, 77:7; *She'elos U'Teshuvos Eretz Tzvi*, O.C. 52.) B. If a mitzvah is performed through an *aveirah* accidentally (as may have been the case here), does that invalidate the mitzvah? (see *Chasam Sofer*, Sukkah 30a; Maharam Schick, O.C. 295.) If we combine these two questions, it might constitute a *sefeik sefeika*, which means the guest fulfilled his mitzvah (at least in terms of *mitzvah haba'ah b'aveirah*).

23 See Ran, Pesachim 4a (*dapei haRif*); *Pri Megadim, Eishel Avraham*, 679:1; *Sdei Chemed*, Chanukah 15; *Beis Yitzchak, Y.D.* end of 142

24 *Gittin* 55b

25 See *Gittin* 77b

26 *Kesubos* 34b

27 See *Yalkut Shiurim, Kiddushin, Mahadura Basra*, 20:2 s.v. *Omnam*

28 See *Yalkut Shiurim, Sugyos* 16:7.