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CHANUKAH 5785 – IGNITING THE LIGHT, BY RABBI ZISHA KOHN

THIS ARTICLE IS DEDICATED BY THE LIDSKY FAMILY FOR THE SHEMIRAH OF ALL CHAYALEI YISRAEL AND THE PEOPLE OF ERETZ YISRAEL

On Pesach, we do Mitzvos to commemorate the freedom and redemption of our nation. On Sukkos, we do Mitzvos to recall the protection Hashem gave us in the Desert. On Purim, we do Mitzvos to remember how our people were rescued from destruction. Based on this pattern, on Chanukah we should commemorate the tremendous victory of our nation – but we don't. Rather, we just light the Menorah to memorialize a seemingly side miracle of the oil burning eight times longer than expected.

Furthermore, there appear to be two totally separate miracles that took place. The first was the victory of the war – 13 weak, but holy Jews (not warriors!) combating the greatest army and winning against all odds. The second was finding a small jug of pure oil that could only burn for one night and lasted for eight until they were able to produce more pure oil. So why is it that for the miracle of the oil we light the Menorah (a physical action), while for the miracle of victory, we only praise Hashem (no action, just prayers like Hallel and *Al Hanissim*)?

Let's explain with a story. Dovi, a pleasant American Israeli boy, wanted nothing more than to get into the high school of his dreams. So, when he took an entrance exam, he should have been accepted on the spot. However, to get into that particular yeshivah, one had to come from a home that was also worthy. Although Dovi's parents were wonderfully kind, they owned a television and for this yeshivah, that was a red flag. Dovi, painfully aware of the tight spot he was in, said a chapter of Tehillim every night, begging Hashem that his parents should throw out their TV, to no avail. One day, Dovi decided to travel to Bnei Brak, and asked permission from his school to make the trip. He wanted a private audience with the **Steipler Gaon**, ZT"l. Maybe, Dovi hoped, the Steipler could somehow pull off a miracle and get Dovi's parents to throw out their TV.

At this point in time, the Steipler was no longer able to hear. As such, when a visitor wanted to ask him for a berachah, he had to write down his request on a little piece of paper. Dovi carefully wrote out his request. The morning finally arrived. Dovi had received explicit instructions that he had to be back home by 10:30 at night. His rebbi, who'd arranged the trip, made that clear. He had to attend yeshivah the next day and be there on time; he couldn't come late because of a trip the night before. By the time he arrived in Bnei Brak, Dovi was exhausted. He didn't know his way and wandered around the city until he finally found the Steipler's home. When he walked in, he saw that there was a long wait, and the line was moving ever so slowly. After a long time, the attendant came out and said, "I'm sorry, but the Rav is very tired and will be taking a nap. He will resume seeing people in two hours."

Dovi had lost his opportunity. It was already late, and he had to head home to Yerushalayim, to be home by 10:30. With a broken heart, he got on the bus, leaving Bnei Brak - and his dreams - behind. He cried the entire way home. The next morning, he walked into school and his Rebbi asked him how it went. Dovi told him and the Rebbi felt so bad, patted his student on the back, and promised that it would work out. A few hours later, the phone rang in yeshivah; Dovi's mother was on the line.

"Dovi, we threw out the TV. I went into your room yesterday afternoon and as I was cleaning up, I found a piece of paper. It was filled with smudged ink from all the drafts you wrote but then had to discard because tears stained them. I managed to make out what it said, and my tears joined yours, Dovi." This is what she read: "*I ask the Rav to pray to Hashem to give my parents the wisdom to remove the television from our house. This is very, very difficult for me. Thank you.*"



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His mother continued, "I thought to myself: How can we NOT throw it out? We need our child to go to a Rav secretly and to ask him to make a miracle happen? So right away, I decided to get rid of it. Today, I did and I wanted to share the news with you." No, the Steipler hadn't performed a miracle. It was something even more formidable - with even more of an impact that affected the change. The hopes, dreams, and tears of a growing child (from "*Touched by a Story*" by R'Spiro)

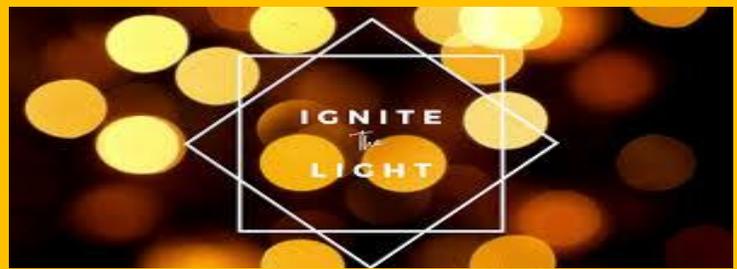
To understand, we really didn't have to fight the war with the Greeks if we had agreed to accept their beliefs and become Hellenists. However, we realized that it was worth fighting a clearly losing battle, to only live for a short amount of time with light and purity instead of a long life as Hellenists. We must remember that the Greeks were not trying to destroy the Beis Hamikdash. They tried defiling it and making it impure, because Greece stood for darkness, and darkness is not about destruction but taking the light of Hashem and the Jewish people and bringing impurity to it? We know that miracles happen for a specific reason, so why was only one jug found that lasted for eight days when, for the same price, eight jugs could've been located? What's the lesson for us?

Rav Nissan Kaplan, shlita, says that if there is a room full of darkness and one wants to chase it out, one can come with bats and sticks, guns and bombs, and the darkness won't leave. However, if one ignites just a small light, the darkness will disappear. Somehow, darkness just leaves with the arrival of light. There are many times in life people have challenge in the spiritual or material arena, or perhaps there are emotional difficulties that people go through.

People try to find strategies like books or therapy to help them cope and find solutions to their struggles, which is great. However, there is something that is superior to this: when light enters a person's life, and one is happy from that light. The darkness gets chased away. At times, we may be having a rough time, but then we hear about a Simcha, and we feel happy. Hashem wanted us to understand that the battle against Greece in a physical way was not going to get rid of the Greek threat, which was spiritual. The Hellenists posed a threat to our identity and the holiness of the Torah.

They tried getting rid of true light by bringing darkness into it and then telling us we need the pleasures of the world to eliminate the pain that darkness brings. This doesn't work as many of us can testify. As such, Hashem was teaching us an important lesson: just find a tiny bit of pure light (one jug) and the darkness of Yavan will disappear on its own. The oil wasn't a miracle on its own; rather, a finishing touch and lesson to the miracle of war. This helped us understand the reason that Hashem made just a few pure Tzaddikim and not many Jewish warriors overpowered and eradicated Yavan. It was to teach us that getting rid of evil is done through accessing the light.

To get rid of them is through accessing the light. When we celebrate the Yom Tov of Chanukah, we don't commemorate the physical war against the Greeks like we do with Purim (which was a threat of physical eradication); rather, we commemorate it by discussing the spiritual war for light. How does one bring light into their lives?



Hashem says, just make one drop of pure, unadulterated light and that will chase away all the darkness. In the Al Hanissim prayer, we are taught that the Yom Tov of Chanukah was established "L'hodos U'Lehallel – to praise and to thank Hashem." This praise, writes **Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner**, ZT"L, is different than all the other holidays, where we can say *Al Hanissim* (or *Ya'aleh V'yavo*), but that's not the focus of the day. Yet, Chanukah's entire purpose is to praise and thank Hashem, as that's the way to bring light into one's life! When the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, no one knew the reason until they came to Hashem Himself and He said (Nedarim 81a): the Jews didn't make Bircas HaTorah – brachos on the Torah.

Now that's not a sin. Rather, as **Rav Ahahon Kotler**, ZT"L, explains, the problem was that when we didn't appreciate what we had, it didn't have the power to help us. Since we were not thankful enough for the Torah in those times, it couldn't stop the destruction of the Holy Temple. The potency of the Torah is dependent on us – on how much we appreciate it. Chanukah is the holiday of thanksgiving, and it's our task to bring appreciation for what we're alive for. We say during Shacharis (Tehillim 106:47), "*Deliver us, Hashem, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to Your Holy Name and glory in Your praise.*" The purpose of Mashiach coming and us being redeemed is so that we can give thanks and praise to Hashem.

A Rabbi was walking with his talmid next to the Swiss Alps. He asked, "how many tiny pebbles can you fit into the mountains? We have blades of grass and red trees – how many blades of grass can you fit into the red trees?" When it comes to a *domeim* (plain rock, an object that doesn't grow) we have pebbles, and we have mountains. When it comes to something that grows, we have grass and tall trees. When it comes to a living object, we have a fly and a hippopotamus. However, when it comes to man, we only have a seven times size difference at most from smallest to biggest?" The Rabbi answered: "that's because a human is not his body but his *nefesh* (soul). On the soul-level, there are people whose greatness is trillions of times larger than others, even greater than the size differences in the physical world!"

The question is, what makes the greatness of a person? The answer is how much of a thankful person one is for what Hashem has given him, and how much Hashem loves him. Just like when Dovi (in the story) realized that there is a darkness in life that we don't have the ability to chase away; rather, we just must ignite a small pure light/fire and then Hashem will create the greatest miracles for us. We then find one thankful thing after another and instead of forgetting the past, build on previous goodness. We add on another light each night with each day celebrating yesterday's light while bringing in a new one.

Let's bring the small light of Hallel and Hoda'ah – the pure recognition of all the good that Hashem has given us and we will B'Ezras Hashem see great miracles in our lives, with the ultimate light of Mashiach, speedily in our days.

Last week's question: Pharaoh has a dream, and he needs an interpreter to explain the bothersome aspects of the dream. Yosef interprets the dreams properly, but why does that "promote" him into the second-in-command to the king of the Egyptian empire? In what way is the dream interpretation a skill needed to run a country?

Answer: Why couldn't the interpreters decipher Pharaoh's dream? Our holy sources tell brings down that this dream was sent directly from Hashem and since the interpreters used *sheidim* (demons) to decode dreams, they had no access to a prophecy-like dream, they were locked out. As such, everyone understood that Yosef was connected to a totally different Power than they were.

The **Rambam** (Bereishis 41:38) explains that, "Because he was a Jew, the members of which race were repugnant to the Egyptians, who would not eat of the things the Jews touched or have any contacts with them as they considered them unclean, Pharaoh did not want to appoint Yosef viceroy without their permission. Therefore, Pharaoh said to them that they would find no Egyptian comparable to him, as the Spirit of G-d is in him." We saw that Pharaoh fathomed the greatness of Yosef, but why was that enough for Pharaoh to appoint him second in command?

The **Ben Ish Chai** (in *Sefer Aderes Eliyahu*) brings down a story (Bereishis Rabba 81:12). "Rav, we beseech you," the townspeople of Simonia called out, approached Rav Yehuda HaNassi. "Rav, send us someone to lead us, to teach us Torah, and to take care of our needs. Send us someone like you." To this request, Rav Yehuda HaNassi gave them Levi bar Sisi. The people of Simonia were thrilled by news that their spiritual leader would soon be among them. In anticipation, they constructed a large bimah, with a throne-like chair upon which Levi bar Sisi would sit. When he arrived, they placed him upon that chair and praised him due to their excitement. Soon, they began to approach him with their Halachic questions, and each left again without an answer. For throughout all the questions, Levi bar Sisi remained silent. "Rav Yehuda!" they cried, "Is this how you help us?"

Rav Yehuda was confused. "Bring him here," he suggested. Rav Yehuda sat down with Levi bar Sisi and softly asked him one question after another and Levi bar Sisi answered each question in a thoughtful, scholarly, and pious manner. "Why did you not answered when asked by the townspeople?" Rav asked, astonished that his experience could be so different than that of the people of Simonia. "They made me this huge bimah and sat me upon it," Levi said sadly. "I became so enthralled by my own self-importance; I could not function properly."

We see that Yosef was taken out of a pit, the lowest place to be and had to do a job that no human being could answer. What does Pharaoh see? Yosef doesn't lose himself because he doesn't take any honor for himself, as the (ibid. 41:39): "**Not I! Hashem will see to Pharaoh's welfare.**"



To Yosef, this had nothing to do with him; he simply saw himself as a messenger of Hashem. So, when Pharaoh saw Yosef's ability not to make this about himself and to answer with precision, which no one else could do. A leader can't lose himself, and that's what Pharaoh said (ibid. 41:39): "**Since Hashem has made all this known to you, there is none so discerning and wise as you.**" Because Yosef didn't attribute any of his wisdom to his own abilities, the wisdom to interpret stayed with him.

To be a leader, one has take care of the nation and not get drunk with power and authority. **Rav Tzvi Kaplan** adds that we see this later in the Parshah (ibid. 41:40-41): "You will be in charge my court, and by your command shall all my people be directed; only with respect to the throne shall I be superior to you. Look, I put you in charge of all the land of Egypt." Why did Pharaoh have to tell Yosef, "look" and repeat that he would be appointed?

Rav Kaplan writes that this was because Yosef did not show any emotion or visual reaction due to his appointment since he was not haughty, so Pharaoh wanted to make sure that Yosef understood what honor he just received. We must learn from Yosef that if one wants to be a leader, one cannot take pride in what they are doing. Instead, one must attribute every success and ability to Hashem and only Hashem.

This week's question: Pharaoh asks Yaakov how old he was. Yaakov's answers Pharaoh (Bereishis 47:9): "The days of the years of my sojournings are one hundred thirty years. The days of the years of my life have been few and miserable." Why would Yaakov say these seemingly negative comments?

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MAY THE LEARNING IN THIS NEWSLETTER BE A ZECHUS FOR THE SAFETY/PROTECTION OF OUR FAMILY IN ERETZ YISRAEL. IT SHOULD ALSO BE A ZECHUS FOR A COMPLETE REFUAH OF LEEBA MIRIAM GEULAH BAS LEAH.

In this week's parsha, we see how deep Yosef and Binyamin's love was for each other. The Pasuk tells us (Bereishis 43:30): Then Yosef rushed out because his feelings of compassion for his brother were aroused and he wanted to cry, so he went into the room, and cried there. Think about this, Yosef is thirty years old, and he rushed out of his throne room so he could CRY? What touched him so deeply that it forced him to rush away so he could burst into tears, privately?

Rashi answers this question by filling in the details for us. He says on the words, "Because his compassion for his brother had been aroused": "Yosef asked Binyamin, do you have a brother from your mother?" He said to him, "I had a brother, but I do not know where he is." Yosef went on to ask Binyamin, "do you have sons?" He answered, "I have ten." He then asked Binyamin what are their names? So, Binyamin listed their names, he said to him Bela, Becher, etc. Yosef then asked him, "what is the nature of these strange names?"

Binyamin answered him, *"they are all names for my brother and the troubles that he encountered. Bela because he was swallowed up among the nations, Becher because he was the first born of his mother, Asbel because G-d made him a captive. Gera because he lives in an inn, Neeman because he was exceedingly pleasant, Achi and Rosh because he was my brother and he was my chief, Muppim because he learned from the mouth of my father, Chuppim because he did not see my chuppah, and I did not see his chuppah, and Ard because he went down among the nations."* Right away this aroused Yosef's compassion. It's no wonder that Yosef had to rush out of the throne room to cry!

Binyamin had not forgotten him even for one second during all of the years he was missing on the contrary Binyamin had named every single one of his children for his lost brother. The depth of their love is obvious from this incident. They would do anything for each other but even more striking they had each other in mind 24/7 - all day, every day. Any time Binyamin called one of his children he thought about his lost brother. It is natural for Yosef to pine for home and for his family but for Binyamin who was just a child when Yosef was sold, to have never moved on and to have kept Yosef in the fore front of his thoughts is truly impressive.

This is the kind of Shalom Bayis we aim to have, as the **Rambam** writes – *Ohava K'gufo*, he should love her as himself. The kind where our spouse is never far from our thoughts. Whatever we are doing throughout the day, we are thinking of our spouse, if it's what supper they would prefer, or how can we help our spouse.

The reason we go to work or when we learn Torah it is so our spouse will be supported in the next world and in this world. The reason we do anything in life, should have some part dedicated to our spouse and their happiness. This deep love and appreciation can be developed after much work. Our Shalom Bayis can never reach a point of "AUTO PILOT" rather the more effort we put in the more our love will grow, the dividends are worth the effort.

May Hashem fill our home with the light of Shalom Bayis.

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The *halacha* is that if one forgot to recite על הניסים על הרהמן, when one recites the הרהמן הזה and says זהו הוא יעשה לנו ניסים כמו שעשה לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה. In other words, one is asking Hashem to perform miracles, and we know (Ta'anis 20b) that one should not ask for miracles. **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**, ZT"l, was asked this question, as were many others, and his answer was that we're asking for the miracles of the *geulah*, and it says in the *Navi* that many miracles will be performed during that time, and now is a good time to ask for it.

Change – the word or concept that incorporates so much. Why is it so hard for us? Why are we expected to do things that are so hard for us?

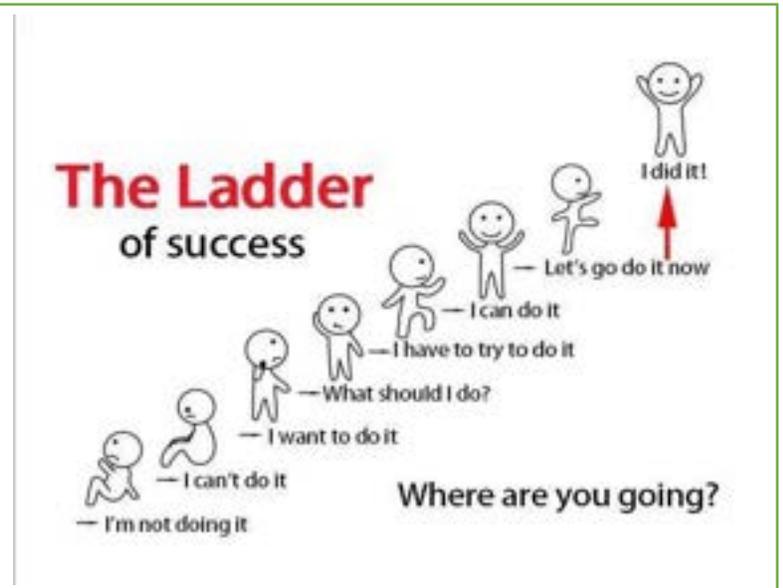
A story is told of a course one takes to be a researcher. The final course takes three years and culminates with a difficult exam. Those who succeed are usually chosen to lead top research and the salaries are staggering. One of the students had learned hard for three years and on the day of the exam he woke up late. Not believing his bad fortune, he sped over to the exam and begged to be admitted so as not to have three years of intense studies flushed down the drain. The faculty debated his request and finally acquiesced.

The test comprised of three questions, where the first one he managed to answer with relative ease and the second as well. The third question stumped him; he didn't have a clue how to answer it. Looking around, he saw the other examinees handing in their exams and leaving, and he didn't have a clue how to save his three years of learning when he couldn't even begin to answer the third question. He stared at the test and with a brainstorm he got the answer and wrote it down and handed in his exam.

Four months later, they go the results, and when they called to speak to him, the first question they asked him was whether he was late for the exam, to which, out of pure shock, shouted yes but he got permission to take the exam. But you came late, was the question, to which again he blurted yes, but he was okayed.

The voice on the phone said, "what you didn't know was that because you were late you missed the announcement that said that you were only required to answer the first two questions, the third was a bonus that was added as a question the top scientists of the U.S. could not answer. Nobody answered the third question except you!! You thought you had to - so you found an answer."

We are expected to change because we can. Indeed, it's hard but we can change and become and do whatever we want. It is we who place barriers before our progress. The Chashmonaim realized that Torah and Yiddishkeit were about to be lost from K'lal Yisrael and decided to fight for Hashem's honor. They gathered a small and pitiful army but full of confidence that Hashem would not forsake them in their quest to save Yiddishkeit.



They could have joined the Greek ranks and would have been given tremendous honor and respect as leaders of the Jews, and yet they chose to battle mighty armies who were victorious worldwide. Hashem saw their *gevurah* and fought their wars, and to show how much He appreciated their sacrifice, He made the candles burn for eight days. Mind boggling! Imagine you place enough oil for one night of Chanukah and you wake up in the morning and you see it still burning. You immediately ask all members of your household if they added oil, and when they say no, you look behind your menorah to see if there's a pipe feeding oil.

When there's no pipe to be found, you freak out. When the Chashmonaim broke their barriers of fear and self-preservation for Hashem's sake, He followed suit and one the wars for them. That's p'shat in ועל המלחמות, and then made the candles burn past their natural barriers. Changing ourselves means going past one's natural barriers and breaking out. Out of one's comfort zone because we must, because this is what we're alive for.

Chanukah is the time to ask for *siyata dishmaya* to change, to be better, and Chanukah is the time Hashem sends miracles of *siyata dishmaya*. Indeed, it is hard, but there is nothing stopping us from changing.

There is no Greek decree at the pain of death if we change. It is the mental barrier we place before ourselves that prevent us from changing, and when we realize that we only have ourselves to blame, we must draw courage from the Chashmonaim who went past their barriers to do what's right and change our ways.

Change means to overcome *nisyonos*, and to reach the next level. We face many challenges every day and we fail to overcome them because we're scared what people will say; what will we look like; what we will become; who will I be. All these questions are not real, they are in the mind – a hallucination, and it is these thoughts that hold us back. Don't allow them to distract you. Tell yourself that they are a דמיון, not real, and choose to do what's right.

**SUCCULENT SHORT BITES BY R' MEYER FRIEDMAN:
CHANUKAH INSIGHTS - PUBLICIZING THE MIRACLE**

Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg of Ner Yisroel points out that although the Greeks conquered many parts of the world, they did not impose their culture everywhere in their empire. They only made a point of doing so for the Jewish people. Why did they treat the Jews differently? Chazal say that the only reason why Jews ever wanted to worship idols was because that type of belief system gives an allowance for any pleasures that a person wants.

The idols are not making up any rules and as long as they are appeased, a person has license to engage in the most depraved behavior. The Greeks had no problem with their subjects following this ideology, but they could not tolerate the uniquely Jewish ideology that all of one's behavior must be guided by rules that come from Hashem. To the Greek mind, all of life was guided by what brought a person the most benefit and pleasure. They could not allow the Jewish people to spread the concept that there is a Higher Being to which each individual must submit his own desires.

The primary Mitzvah of Chanukah is to light the menorah in our houses in a way that can be seen by anyone walking by. Why is this the way that we are instructed to commemorate the Chanukah miracle? Chazal made it this way because it is important for us to show that we are proud to have a Jewish home. We publicize the miracle of Chanukah in a way that makes our homes look different and we are proud to have this distinction visible from the street.

The celebration of Chanukah is meant to reinforce the awareness that Hashem chose us from among all the nations and raised us to a higher plane. We should be proud of that and not shy away from the fact that we are unique. Public displays of commemorating Hashem's miracles also help us as they require us to have conviction in our belief in Hashem.

"Once we do that and solidify our recognition of the Creator, it makes it easier for us to connect to Torah observance. After all, if we know that there is a Creator and that He gave us a manual for how to live, and we must follow it. Strengthening emunah is the first step to improving our Mitzvah observance.

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**MEANINGFUL LIVING BY MICHAEL SZPILZINGER
A HEALTHY CHANUKAH: AVOID OVERINDULING**

Why is it that we eat so much oily and fattening food on Chanukah? **Rabbi Y. Y. Jacobson** famously quips that Greek culture glorified the body and celebrated those with muscular physiques. To celebrate our victory over their influence, we eat foods that will help us never look like them!

We're already a few days into Chanukah but it's not too late to look at some ways to avoid taking this too far. After all, Chanukah is a time to celebrate our spiritual victory over physicality. While we are encouraged (but not obligated) to make Seudos (meals) to celebrate, indulging would be missing the point. Here are a few strategies that can help you avoid an additional eight Chanukah pounds.

Don't Show Up Hungry – When attending Chanukah parties, especially ones that start late and where you know there will be an abundance of food, it's a good idea to eat something before you go. This could be a small bit of protein like nuts or fish, or some fruit. When we have a huge appetite our eyes get wide and we tend to cram as much as we can on our plate. By taking the edge off, we can spend a little more time interacting with others and being strategic with our food choices. This leads into the next tip...

Use the One Plate Rule: More often than not, Chanukah parties have a wide array of different food options. Our default is that we want to have some of everything besides the items that we don't care for. Take some time to look around and think about the following: *What are some healthy options that I can enjoy? What am I likely going to really love? What here is unique and novel or haven't had in a while?* After you have surveyed the field and made your choices, take one plate of food broken down as follows: half of the plate should be vegetables, one quarter should be protein, and the other quarter should be carbs.

When you finish your plate mindfully throw it out: This signals to your brain that you are done and makes it easier to not take more.

Dessert/Treat: here's where to be a food snob. Choose the BEST item (donut, cake or another treat) and mindfully focus on slowly enjoying it. You don't even have to finish it. Refer to our advice from Parshas Vayishlach: Feel the gratitude and connection to Hashem who created it and bestowed this enjoyment onto you. You most likely will find that you will extract as much pleasure from half a portion than you would from a second helping. I hope this helps you turn Chanukah celebrations into a truly enjoyable and empowering experience.

A lichtege Chanukah to one and all!

**DEDICATED BY MR. EDDIE DZHURINSKIY IN
MEMORY OF EPHRAIM BEN BENTZION AND
FEIGA BAS AVRAHAM**



Parshas Mikeitz starts with Pharaoh having a dream. The Torah (Bereishis 41:1) tells us Pharaoh was standing by the *ye'or*. Rashi (ibid.) explains that the *ye'or* was the Nile River. This makes sense since the Nile River represented Egypt, as it was their source of sustenance. It would overflow and fill all the canals and irrigate the land. Pharaoh was the king and he was on the Nile. The **Ramban** (ibid.) disagrees and writes: *"In my opinion the fact is as Onkelos said, as...ye'or and nahar convey the same concept, both being an expression for orah, light."* This is because all water has its source in light. Whenever Sefer Iyov refers to water and light, the ideas overlap. What is the relationship between water and light?

This concept connects well to the holiday of light, Chanukah. The theme of Sukkos is water. We take the water and pour it on the Mizbeach (Altar). We do Tefillas Geshem, as well. The Gemara (Sukkah 55b) writes that Sukkos is the judgment day on *mayim* (water). Then, there are 70 days from Sukkos until Chanukah. (We brought 70 oxen on Sukkos for the 70 nations of the world).

Chanukah is all about light, as that is the Mitzvah of the day. The Midrash says that when the Jews lit the Menorah, the light shone all over Yerushalayim. Every courtyard in the city was illuminated from the light that was emanating from inside the Beis Hamikdash (Holy Temple).

Let's ask: What's the difference between water and light? Water is the ultimate *chomer* (raw material), since it does not have a form. Put it in a tall and thin glass, and it will be tall and thin. Put it in a small and shallow bowl, and it will be shaped as small and shallow. It takes on the form that it gets put into. The goal is to take that raw material and give it a purpose. Light is only *tzurah*, as it has very little existence on its own. **Dr. Gerald Schroeder** explains that light is the least physical item that exists in this world and it's the most esoteric. This is why the first thing Hashem created is photon energy (light).

The Jewish people are a nation, the **Maharal** (in the beginning of *Gevuras Hashem*) writes, are *tzurah* without *chomer*. As such, any *chomer* – if we are not living up to our *tzurah* – can overwhelm us. Light is that *tzurah*, that form. We come out of Sukkos, where we get the blessing of all the raw material, and it is our job to turn it into something real. The Ramban is telling us that water has its source in light and the goal is to turn that water into light.

Now that we have completed the 70-day process of going from Sukkos to Chanukah, now at the darkest time of the year, we can light up the darkness from what we have created, to make it brighter. At the *Kiddush Levana*, we say the moon will one day will get brighter and brighter until it's as bright as the sun. Then, there will be no more darkness. We should go into a time of light, *Im Yirzteh Hashem*.

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On Chanukah, we thank Hashem for saving us from the hands of the *Yevanim* (Greeks) and for enabling the Chashmonaim to overpower them and come out victorious. However, to truly appreciate this we must realize what spiritual ruins our nation was in at that period. The **Rambam** (Chanukah 3:1) writes that the Yevanim made decrees and did not allow them to be involved in Torah and Mitzvos. They took control of their money and their daughters. They oppressed them excessively. The **Ramban** (Bereishis 49:10) writes that if not for the Chashmonaim, the Torah and Mitzvos would have been forgotten from the Jewish nation!

The Rambam writes in *Igeres Teiman* (Letter to Yemen) that the Yevanim made terrible decrees to destroy our religion. They decreed that we desecrate Shabbos and do away with Bris Milah. Also, everyone was to write on their clothing that they have nothing to do with Hashem and engrave the same on the horn of their ox which they plow with. These decrees lasted for approximately 52 years until Hashem destroyed the rule of the Yevanim along with their idealism.

It is from this seemingly hopeless situation that the great Kohanim, the Chashmonaim arose with Mesiras Nefesh (self-sacrifice) for the sake of Hashem's Torah and His service. We attempt to imagine what they might have been thinking when they first set out, not knowing the outcome of their efforts. They saw in front of them a world of spiritual darkness.

They were going to war against a mighty army of tens of thousands, not knowing what was in store. However, they placed their trust in Hashem and merited His great mercy; superhuman strength was granted to them from Above. The rest, as they say, is history. **Rav Shlomo Brevda**, ZT"l, points out that although they themselves may have not known that they would be victorious at the time, this great victory was hinted at in the Torah and was foretold through the words of the Prophets. The Ramban (Beginning of Parshas Beha'aloscha) brings a Midrash which states that Aharon felt bad that he did not partake in the dedication of the Mishkan. Hashem said to Moshe, "*go tell Aharon that he is destined to a greater dedication, that is the lighting of the Menorah which with it I will perform great miracles through the Kohanim, the children of Aharon*".

The Midrash (Bereishis 99:2) states: "Moshe appointed the tribe of Levi which is the third tribe to defeat Yavan (Greece) who is the third kingdom (to rule over the Jews). These (the Greeks) were many and these (Levi) were few, the "many" fell in the hands of the "few". The Midrash bases this on a Pasuk in Devarim (33:11). The **Vilna Gaon** writes (commentary to Tefillas Chana) that Chana, the mother of the Prophet Shmuel, prophesied the victory of the Chashmonaim over the Yevanim as she said (Shmuel 1, 2:9) "*Not with strength will a man be powerful*." This refers to the fact that though the Chashmonaim were weak and few (a "man", singular indicates that they were few) they overpowered the mighty and many. The **Zohar Chadash** (Parshas Noach) states regarding the Pasuk about the dove who brought an "olive" leaf to Noach: If not for the fact that Hashem aroused the spirit of the Kohanim (during the period of Chanukah) to kindle the Menorah with "olive" oil there would be no remnant of the Jewish people.

From the above sources we learn that although the Chashmonaim themselves may not have been aware of their great destiny at the time, they were willing to give their lives for Hashem's Torah, albeit naturally there was no foreseen redemption from a world covered in darkness. Yet, Hashem had already set the stage way back in time for this great salvation as is hinted in the Torah and foretold through His prophets. Rav Brevda tells us that this can be taken as a very important lesson for everyone. At times one may find himself surrounded by difficulty and complex issues. Sometimes one sees only darkness in front of him and one Chas v'Shalom wants to give up on any salvation, especially regarding spiritual success.

However, he does not realize that his success has already been pre-ordained by Hashem. If he will only strengthen himself in Torah and Mitzvos he will eventually merit to see great *Siyata Dishmaya* (Heavenly assistance) for his already destined growth and greatness.



After Yosef was stuck in prison for 12 years, suddenly the servants of Pharaoh rushed him out of his cell and brought him to Pharaoh to interpret his dreams. The Seforno uses this episode to teach us that Hashem's salvation comes in a blink of an eye, unexpectedly and out of nowhere. So, too, the Final Redemption - the coming of Mashiach - will come in the blink of an eye.

Many times, we hear the refrain, "May we merit to see the complete redemption speedily in our days." Sometimes, people give up hope in the Redemption, so how do we help strengthen them and ourselves? Rav **Nachman of Breslov** offers a *mashal* (parable) of a mother who has a fetus in her womb. The unborn is visited by a *malach* (angel) who informs him that soon the unborn will graduate into a world filled with people, colors, trees, and food. The fetus is excited and the following month, the incident repeats itself with the malach notifying the fetus that this "graduation" will happen.

However, after months and months of having this promise told, the fetus is fed up and tells the malach, "I am still in this dark place after all this time. I don't believe you anymore!" The malach tries to convince the fetus to be patient, but the fetus wants to hear none of it.

Then, suddenly - boom - the fetus is pushed out into the very world that the malach was telling him about, with all the details that the malach promised would be in this world. Just like Yosef who was in the lowest pits and out of nowhere, Pharaoh summons him, and he becomes one of the most powerful people in the world. The same thing will happen soon, and we will have a world filled with goodness and happiness, no more war or sorrow. The Final Redemption should come speedily in our days, Amen V'Amen!



Question: If one goes away and does not sleep in his house for one or two nights of Chanukah, must he ask a neighbor to light Neiros Chanukah in his house on the nights he is away?

Short Answer: Nowadays, when we light indoors, we don't need to ask a neighbor to light in our house. In places where they light outdoors, such as in Israel, the poskim disagree whether he needs to appoint a neighbor or friend to light in his house the nights he is away. The majority opinion is that one does not need to ask a neighbor to light for him. Let's explain.

I. Guests & The Taz

The **Shulchan Aruch** (O"C 677:1) discusses where a guest should light neiros chanukah where he sleeps in his own room with its own entranceway, such as a basement, but eats with the host in the dining room. The **Rema** writes that nowadays, where we are anyway lighting indoors and *pirsumei nisa* is for those indoors, the guest may light at the dining room table.

The Taz (677:2) comments that the Rema is only talking about a guest who is sleeping in his host's house. A guest who merely eats at his host's house but goes to his own house to sleep should light in his own house. In the course of this discussion, the Taz comments that even though a guest may light at the host's house, that is only where he sleeps there for that night. The Taz implies that eating and sleeping, even for night, in someone else's house entitles the guest to light in his host's house for that night and he does not need to have someone light in his own house that night.

II. The Famous Pri Chadash

The Pri Chadash (O"C 677:1), however, writes that a son and his entire family that goes to sleep and eat at his parents' house for all eight days of Chanukah should light in his parents' house. This is true regardless of whether the son will eat some meals in his own house during the duration of Chanukah. Since there is no one remaining in his own house, for whom would he be lighting, especially nowadays where the *pirsumei nisa* is for the people in the house? The Pri Chadash concludes by noting that this case is different than the Gemara's requirement that a person light by all his entranceways lest someone suspect him of not lighting, as here there is no one left in the house to suspect him. This Pri Chadash is codified by the **Biyur Halachah** (O"C 677:1, s.v. b'makom). The Pri Chadash is interesting because he appears to disagree with the Taz by assuming that only a person who travels away from his house (i.e. sleeps out of his house) for all eight days is entitled to light with his hosts and not at his own house.

III. The Ruling of R' Y.S. Elyashiv

R' Y.S. Elyashiv, zt"l (cited in Shvus Yitzchak, Chanukah, p.107) follows this Pri Chadash. R' Elyashiv initially writes that the Pri Chadash is confusing to understand, as he first appears to write that even when the lighting was done outside as *pirsumei nisa* for those outside, one should light at his hosts, as "there is no one home in his own house to light for."



The Pri Chadash then discusses that the guest should certainly light at his host nowadays where we light inside, as his whole family is in the host's house. R' Elyashiv, based on **the Chayei Adam's** understanding of the Pri Chadash, reconciles these two statements by setting forth a fundamental principle with respect to neiros chanukah. When the lighting is done inside, however, the lighting is a *din* in the person, as the Pri Chadash states in his second statement.

Wherever he sleeps, he lights. Based on the above, R' Elyashiv rules that in places where lighting is done outside, such as Israel, a guest who only goes away for a day or two would need to appoint a shaliach to light in his house for him, lest others think that he is not lighting. However, R' Elyashiv qualifies that this is only if the guest is home for most of Chanukah (i.e. more than four nights). If he is away for most of Chanukah, there is no need to get a shaliach to light in his home for the nights he is away, as he has changed his residence to the place he is visiting. Importantly, in places where lighting is done inside, a guest, even if only away for a night, would not need to appoint a shaliach to light in his own house, as the house is empty, and it is based on where everyone is sleeping that night.

To address the contrary ruling of the Taz, R' Elyashiv explains that the Taz and Pri Chadash do not disagree. The Taz is merely holding that, in a place where they light outside and the guest is away for only one night, the guest may ALSO light in the host's house. However, certainly the guest would need to have a neighbor light in his own home.

IV. Many Dissenting Poskim

Many poskim disagree with R' Elyashiv. For example, the **Chazon Ish** and **Rav Chaim Kanievsky**, ZT"L hold that a guest need only light in his host's house, even if it is a place where they light outside and the guest is only away for one night. **R' S.Z. Auerbach**, ZT"L (Halichos Shlomo 14:18) similarly rules that a guest need only light in his host's house, even if it is a place where they light outside and the guest is only away for one night. Yet, he goes even further and holds that this is what the Pri Chadash himself holds! While the Pri Chadash seemed to indicate that only a guest who is away for eight days is entitled to only light in his host's home, the words "eight days" are "*shigra d'lishna* - just semantics." What he means is that in those days, when travel was hard, travelers would typically leave for eight days.

Nowadays, however, even a traveler for one day is entitled to light in the host's house and is not required to get a neighbor to also light in his own home for him. R' Shlomo Zalman cites proof from the ruling of the **Maharsham** that a person traveling on a train all night may light on the train (and not in his house). **Rav Moshe Sternbuch** (Teshuvos V'Hanhagos, 1:391) likewise writes that the guest only needs to light in the host's house. He explains that the Pri Chadash agrees to this ruling.

HALACHAH: CANDLES IN YOUR HOUSE WHILE SLEEPING ELSEWHERE

The Pri Chadash was only talking about a case where the guest is sometimes eating at his house, as the Pri Chadash himself mentions. In such a case, the guest must be sleeping all eight days at the host to entitle him to light there. If the guest, however, goes out of town completely for one day and doesn't eat one meal in his house, he certainly may light in his host's house. The **Igros Moshe** (Y"D 3:14:5), without mentioning the Pri Chadash, rules that a guest who is away for one night may light at his host's house and need not light in his own house. There is no issue of "*chashad*" – that people might think that he is not lighting – because he is not sleeping in his house the entire night. It is only a problem of chashad where neighbors see someone sleeping in your house that night.

V. *Practical Application*: The Sefer **Ma'areh Davar** (3:36) writes that one should rely on the majority of poskim that disagree with R' Elyashiv. He decries the newfangled minhag of certain yeshivah bochurim who want to go home for a night of Chanukah and therefore create new solutions to avoid R' Elyashiv's ruling.

They either have the yeshiva "forbid" them from sleeping in their dorm room, thereby obviating any need to light there, or stay in their parents' house for the majority of Chanukah. The Ma'areh Davar states that these solutions are unnecessary, as even R' Elyashiv would not have wanted these results. The sefer **Oran Shelchachamim** (Vol. 1, p.147) writes that one should not be "choshesh" for the opinion of R' Elyashiv, as it could lead to problems. For example, if the shliach makes a brachah, according to the other poskim, it is a *b'rachah l'vatalah*. Having a shliach light in his house may also cause the guest to be lax about lighting (or paying a peruta) in his host's house, which is imperative according to the other poskim.

VI. Final Word - **Teshuvos V'Hanhagos** (6:160), despite his earlier ruling not like R' Elyashiv, cites a case where one should appoint a shaliach to light in his house. If one leaves home before *plag hamincha* to fly somewhere, and he will not be in a house until the next night, he should appoint a shaliach to light in his house.

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SUGAR RUSH ON THE 613

MITZVOS BY R'ELI REIT

MITZVAH # 143: GIVING PARTS OF AN ANIMAL TO A KOHEN

When slaughtering a cow, sheep, or goat, we must give to a Kohen the front right leg and the jawbone and one of the stomachs, which is called "*keiva*". As the Pasuk (Devarim 18:3) says, "*this shall be the law that the people who slaughter cow or sheep have to do for the Kohanim. The zeroa and the lichoyayim and the keiva shall be given to a Kohen.*"

Women are also obligated in this Mitzvah. This Mitzvah does not apply to a Kohen who slaughters an animal. According to most authorities, this Mitzvah is applicable nowadays.

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SHORT AND SWEET STORY OF THE WEEK BY YONI SCHWARTZ

The **Chasam Sofer** related how when he was a *bachur* studying away from home in yeshiva, he stayed at a certain family's house, which at the time, was also hosting a non-Jewish soldier. Slowly, he and the soldier began conversing and grew fond of each other. One day, they struck a deal: the Chasam Sofer would teach the soldier German, and in the return, the soldier would do the Chasam Sofer's house chores. They spent much time together and developed a meaningful relationship. However, later in life, the Chasam Sofer related that he deeply regretted spending so much time with the soldier instead of learning more Torah. Little did he know, this relationship would play a critical role later in life.

Years later in Pressburg, antisemitism was raging, and while there, a group of rabbeim with the Chasam Sofer at the head were arrested on trumped-up charges. The situation was so dire that the antisemites wanted to sentence him to death. They brought him to court merely for the formality of the trial. Walking through the doors, knowing that his life may be in the balance, he was shocked when he saw that his old soldier friend was the judge. The former soldier immediately recognized the Chasam Sofer and understood that there's no chance he did what the antisemites accused him of. Before the trial even began, the soldier released the Chasam Sofer with all the rabbeim.

Comment: In this week's parsha, Mikeitz, we witness the unfolding of Hashem's Providence over Yosef as he's taken from the depths of prison and made one of the most powerful rulers of the ancient world. Faith doesn't mean we will always get what we want. It means that even when we don't get what we want, we know there is a purpose, and it is for our best. Nor is faith the belief that things will get better, despite being difficult presently. Instead, faith is the serenity we feel knowing that things are already good now, despite seemingly being bad, and that G-d's loving Hand is guiding us each step we take.

SUGARY SAYING BY RABBI MENACHEM LOMNER

"We never know what's going on with someone else behind closed doors."

When the brothers came to Mitzrayim, Yosef accused them of being spies. Then, he took Shimon and put him in jail and sent the rest of the brothers home with food. The Pasuk (Bereishis 42:24) says that he put Shimon in jail "to their eyes". Right after they left, he took Shimon out of jail.

The brothers clearly thought for the rest of their trip that Shimon was in jail while in actuality, he wasn't. We also see things "to our eyes" without knowing the reality of the situation. Because of this, we must always judge others favorably.

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