

Parashas

Mikeitz

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ל' כסלו תשפ"ו

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י"ל ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הר"צ

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רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

אין אדם שומע לי ומפסיד

No one who listens to me loses out

טיב המערכת

ויריכוהו מן הכור

And they rushed him from the pit

Yosef HaTzaddik sits in the dreadful pit in the prison. He has already been there for ten years, and for even one moment he does not stop believing in Hashem Yisbarach. He is certain that at any moment his salvation can come. And when an opportunity presents itself, his fellow inmate is going to become a minister in the government of Pharaoh, then he also makes his *hishtadlus*. He asks the chief cupbearer (40:14), 'וכזכרתי... והזכרתני' - "For if you remember me... and you will mention me." But with HaKadosh Baruch Hu this action does not find favor, and it is decreed upon him to remain in the pit for another two years, and at their end the salvation arrived in a surprising manner (41:14), 'ויריצוהו מן הכור' - "and they hurried him from the pit," without any *hishtadlus* on the part of Yosef.

And now to matters of the day, 'ויונים נקבצו עלי אזי בימי חשמונים' - "Greeks gathered against me then, in the days of the Chashmonaim." (Maoz Tzur) The wicked Greeks wanted to destroy the people of Israel by uprooting the religion, and to the great pain of the heart there were many of the people of Israel who followed them and became "Hellenizers." But there were also many who did not agree to go in their evil path and gave over their lives, and certainly there were also those who prayed to HaKadosh Baruch Hu that He should save them. But the salvation still did not come. And if we think that this was a short period, that is not so. Rather, it was several decades that the Greeks ruled in the Land of Israel, persecuted us and harassed us in every possible way, killed without mercy anyone who dared to oppose them and did not obey their decrees. And nevertheless, the salvation did not come, until the sons of the Chashmonaim arose and did an illogical act. But that was their *hishtadlus*. They went out to fight the Greek army, which was the strongest and largest in the world, and then HaKadosh Baruch Hu performed a miracle for them and delivered them into their hands.

Seemingly there are here two contradictory messages. Yosef HaTzaddik is punished for making a logical *hishtadlus*, whereas with the Chashmonaim the salvation does not arrive until they make a *hishtadlus* that is not logical. The answer to the question is a great foundation in faith. In matters that pertain to physicality we must believe that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will send what is needed at the time and at the correct moment. But when it comes to spirituality, and particularly to the fundamentals of Judaism, one does not wait. Rather, one does everything that one can, even if it is "certain not to help." The general principle is: in matters of physicality it is possible to rely on faith, but in spirituality one must act with everything that is possible.

Tiv HaMoadim – Chanukah, Tiv HaTorah - Mikeitz

וַיָּכִינוּ אֶת הַמִּנְחָה עַד בּוֹא יוֹסֵף בְּצַהֲרָיִם (מג, כה)

They prepared the tribute before Yosef's coming at noon (43:25)

Rashi explains: This means they prepared; they decorated it with pretty vessels.

In the *posuk* before us and in Rashi's commentary upon it there is an illumination that has the power to straighten the crookedness in the heart. For behold, at times the Torah imposes upon a person a certain obligation, and the *yetzer*, who seeks to dissuade him from fulfilling it, tries to frighten him with all kinds of fears. At times it shows him that the matter involves enormous humiliation that is very difficult to withstand, and at times it tries to blur his mind and entice him that the matter also involves danger or tremendous loss, and as a result his will to fulfill his obligation weakens. However, when he understands that this is only a "stratagem" on the part of the *yetzer*, he will no longer feel its prattle. And this is what the holy tribes revealed to us in their conduct as stated in the *posuk* before us.

For behold, earlier (*posuk* 11) Yaakov commanded his sons, וְקָחוּ מִזֶּמֶר תְּבִיאָה לְאִישׁ מִנְחָה - "Take of the choice produce of the land and bring down to the man a gift." At a superficial glance it appears to us that Yaakov Avinu chose a simple step that any shrewd person would choose. A shrewd person who sees that someone has attached himself to him and is harassing him with claims that have no basis does not try to remove him from himself by "ways of justice," meaning arguments that convince that the justice is with him. He understands that if the nuisance who attached himself to him were an upright person, he would not dare at all to come with claims that have no beginning, and since uprightness did not restrain their beginning, it will also not influence their end. Therefore, he does not choose the path of "be just," but rather the path of "be wise," and he removes him from himself with a certain gift that honors the one who receives it. He understands that this is what will already find the way to bring a swift end to his claims. Thus, we would have thought that Yaakov Avinu also acted in this manner. Behold, he heard from his sons that the ruler of Egypt attached himself to them without any wrongdoing on their part, and without any justified proof accused them with a libel of being spies, and in addition mocked them and returned to each of them his money in the mouth of his sack. From all this he understood that this was not a person whose claims are a means to seek justice, but rather a means to arouse strife and contention. And he understood that it was necessary to do an act and to give that man a gift, and thereby to improve the relationship between him and his sons.

However, when one sees what was the content of the gift that he demanded to bring before the strange ruler, we see that Yaakov

Avinu had a different view with him, and beings of material like us did not merit to grasp it. For the aforementioned "shrewd" person would not give a gift to Yosef of "the choice produce of the land." In his opinion, this would not be considered a "gift" for so great a ruler who merited storehouses filled with all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruits and vegetables. And furthermore, Yaakov requested to give of each thing only "a little," *מֵעַט צֵרִי וּמֵעַט דֹּבֶשׁ* - "a little balm and a little honey." And in the opinion of the aforementioned "understanding" person, there is not in such a simple gift enough to influence such a great and wealthy ruler to change his attitude toward the giver. What a gift of this sort could do, "in his opinion," is humiliation and disgrace to the one who brings it. And who knows, the understanding one will continue and say, if this will not also be a reason to add sorrow upon the sorrow of the giver, for the ruler will become angry that they are belittling him and sending him gifts of this sort, and he will seek to punish their givers.

All this the *shivtei Kah* also knew. And as we see in these portions, the sons of Yaakov were not quick to seek to use their supernatural powers to fight with the one who was harassing them. And it was a reason and a decree from Hashem that they would not be able to overcome him. And in any event they sought to conduct themselves with him as nature requires. And it is therefore possible to estimate that they too would not have chosen from the outset a gift of this sort, and presumably their desire was that their father send to the ruler some object of great value hidden in the house of his treasures. However, in practice they did not remark anything to their father. They

understood that their obligation to honor their father has force in every situation, and their fear of the ruler of Egypt is not a reason to nullify it in order to explain to their father that he is not "understanding" what needs to be done at such a time.

And after they conducted themselves with honor toward their father, and as a result their father did not change his instruction, they were also compelled to fulfill it as it was. And indeed we see that in this as well they did not recoil. And in the words of Rashi before us we see that not only did they not refrain from fulfilling it, they further saw fit to adorn it and crown it with fine vessels. In the way that a person does with an object with which one performs a mitzvah, that one beautifies it at the time of its performance in order to express that the mitzvah is beloved to him, so did the *shivtei Kah* beautify this gift, through whose giving they fulfilled the mitzvah of honoring a father, despite the fact that they feared very much the consequences of such a mitzvah. For they understood that no calculation stands in the face of the fulfillment of a mitzvah.

And what was the truth? They did not at all imagine how happy Yosef was with this gift. They did not at all imagine that the ruler standing beside them valued this modest gift a thousandfold more than all the honorable benefactions of royalty to which he had merited. They did not at all imagine how far the true reality is from the reality that the *yetzer* shows to the eyes of the flesh.

This is what we said, that here the Torah illuminates for the person, and teaches him what is the path that he should choose at this hour when his *yetzer* causes him

anguish and threatens him if he will fulfill the commandments. There is no need to multiply words to explain how much the *yetzer* causes the person anguish with these threats. It brings the person into doubts that pressure him greatly. On the one hand he wants to fulfill his obligation, and on the other hand he does not know if it is fitting for him to fulfill it, or perhaps by it he brings himself into unbearable situations. How many are the sighs of a person at times such as these, his entire being says, "Woe is me from my Maker, woe is me from my inclination"...

And what indeed should a person do at this difficult hour? At the outset he must know that "the deeds of the fathers are a sign for the children," and he must go in the footsteps of these forefathers, these holy tribes. Just as they ignored the threats of the *yetzer*, so too must he ignore the threats of the *yetzer*, even if there is truth in the mouth of the *yetzer* that the mitzvah that he wishes to do will not benefit him, for still this is not a justified reason to refrain from his obligation. However, in addition he can also strengthen himself and understand from the experiences of the holy tribes that in truth "one who guards a mitzvah will not know any evil," and there is no truth whatsoever in the claims of the *yetzer*, even if in the eyes of the flesh one sees black upon white that it is impossible to deny. And after he too will give over his soul to fulfill the will of Hashem, he will also see tangibly that all the words of the *yetzer* are vanity. And as we say among the thirteen principles of faith, that HaKadosh Baruch Hu bestows good upon those who guard His commandments.

‘מומחה מרשב’

סיב ההשגרה

‘An expert from Rabban Shimon bar Yochai’

A married man with a family came to me who had become addicted, *lo aleinu*, to drugs, to the extent that even on Shabbos he was not able to restrain himself from smoking his drugs. After many efforts on his part and hard work, he was weaned off the drugs.

However, then a story of insomnia began for him. After eight months had passed, he asked that I permit him to use drugs only in order to sleep. I consulted with knowledgeable people who told me that this was a very dangerous gamble, because such a person can easily fall back into drugs, and the drugs before sleep are nothing other than the counsel of the *yetzer*, and from here he enters a slippery slope straight to the lowest depths of the abyss...

He continued to ask and to request permission from me, because he promised that he would never return to drugs ever again. It was before Shabbos that I traveled to Meron. I told him that in Meron I would pray for him that Rashbi should give me correct advice for him. When I returned, he appeared and again his request was in his mouth, that he cannot sleep and that he needs a solution...

"What is the answer that Rashbi gave you?!" he asked, and sat down outside. He himself is a special person and a person of a lofty soul who truly and sincerely seeks a real solution and does not play games. He truly cannot sleep...

In the meantime, an elderly Jew entered to me at *kabbalas kahal*. I asked him what he does in his life. The Jew answered me that he is a doctor and that his specialty is sleep problems. Anyone who suffers from insomnia, he is the great expert in the field... I heard this and I already understood everything.

I called him from outside and connected them. I said to him: "Rebbe Shimon did not answer with an answer, he sent here the expert to you to treat you personally"!!!

It is superfluous to note that the excitement, both of the expert and of the patient, soared to the heavens!!!

I do not ask everyone what he engages in, and here Hashem placed it in my heart to ask him, with wondrous Divine providence [hashgacha]!!!

Moreinu HaRav shlit"a

They Illuminated the Eyes and Hearts of Yisrael

וְהָאֵרֶץ הָיְתָה תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ – “And the earth was unformed and void, and ‘darkness’ (Bereishis 1:2)—this refers to the Greek exile, which darkened the eyes (and some versions add the hearts) of Yisrael with their decrees...” (Bereishis Rabbah 2:4).

In a single word, the Midrash defines the Greek exile and the essence of the decrees of the wicked Greek kingdom as “darkness.” They intended to darken the eyes and hearts of Yisrael, chas veshalom. Similarly, Rashi comments at the beginning of Parashas Vayechi (Bereishis 47:28): “When Yaakov our forefather passed away, the eyes and hearts of Yisrael were closed due to the distress of the enslavement.”

What does it mean to “darken the eyes and the heart”? How does one darken the eyes and the heart?

The *Kedushas Levi* (Vayigash, d’h Vehinei Eineichem), quoting his teacher, the great Maggid of Mezeritch, explains: “My teacher, the righteous Rav Dov Ber, said that just as

there is ‘light and darkness’ in the world, so too there is ‘light and darkness’ in the human mind.” These holy words teach us that “darkness” does not merely refer to the absence of physical light but also to the state of obscurity within a person’s intellect and mind.

When one’s mind is clouded, he cannot find a spark of clarity to illuminate his way. Such a person is like a blind individual groping in the darkness. Even if the sunlight brightens the streets, all remains shrouded in darkness within the heart and mind. As the *pasuk* in the *tochachah* section (*Devarim* 28:29) attests: וְהָיִיתָ כְּאִישׁ בְּלֵיל וְלֹא יָדָע – *You shall grope at noonday as a blind person gropes in the darkness.* (See *Mesilas Yesharim* chapter 3 for further insight.)

To counteract this darkened state, the Chashmona’im arose, purified the Beis Hamikdash, and “*lit candles in Your holy courtyards*” to illuminate the eyes and hearts of Yisrael.

For this reason, the primary establishment of Chanukah was not centered on the victories, battles, or deliverances but rather on the lighting of the pure olive oil in the Menorah by the holy *kohanim* in the Beis Hamikdash. This is explicitly stated in the Gemara’s discussion of “What is Chanukah?” (*Shabbos* 21b). The essence of the *chag* is reflected in its central mitzvah: “*to light the Chanukah candles*” and bring light to the eyes and hearts of Yisrael.

A prosperous family of the upper echelons of society lived in one of the wealthiest cities overseas. Among the wealthiest elites, they built a luxurious villa in an exclusive high-class suburb. The large house was an exquisite architectural masterpiece, surrounded by decorative gardens and lush lawns. It was meticulously furnished with the finest and most elegant décor, exuding grandeur and luxury.

However, the legendary wealth that adorned every corner of their lavish estate brought no joy to its owners. The mansion’s vast, empty halls were filled with sorrow and grief. The one thing they desired most was missing—a child. The elderly couple who owned the home had not been blessed with children, and their hearts yearned deeply to embrace a small child who would bring light and happiness to their melancholy and darkened home. They did everything humanly possible, spending enormous sums on treatments and remedies, and constantly prayed and beseeched Hashem, the sole keeper of the keys to childbirth (*Taanis* 2a), to grant them the gift of parenthood.

At long last, after many years, Hashem heard their prayers, and their cries ascended before Him. They were blessed with a beautiful and healthy son, a radiant child who brought a luminous light into their home.

Their joy knew no bounds. Their only son grew and flourished into a fine and admirable young boy. His devoted parents poured endless love and warmth upon him, as was fitting and proper for their beloved only child, the prince of their home.

One day, the beloved son fell gravely ill, unfortunately contracting a severe and dangerous disease that posed a threat to his life. His loving father cared for him with boundless devotion. Driven by his great love for his son, he spared no effort to heal and restore him. He spent a significant fortune bringing the finest doctors to his bedside. Renowned specialists and experts came from near and far to find a cure for the critically ill child. The father, constantly worried and anxious for his son’s wellbeing, barely left his bedside. With Hashem’s help, the merciful and faithful Healer, the child eventually recovered and regained his strength. After his recovery, the son expressed heartfelt gratitude to his devoted father for his loving care and compassion. He said, “Father, I have always known how much you love me, but during my grave illness, I truly realized the depth of your love. I saw your extraordinary concern, your unwavering dedication to all my needs, and how you never left me for even a single day during my sickness.”

Out of the great love that had now deepened between them, the son grew closer to his devoted father, and they began to spend a fixed time together every day in the luxurious parlor of the palace. The father dedicated this hour of tranquil joy to bond with his beloved son, listening to him, discussing everything in his life, and addressing his needs. The time was especially precious and pleasant for both of them, as the son made it a daily practice to bring a distinguished steaming cup of tea, served on a golden tray, and present it to his esteemed father.

One day, however, when the son entered to meet his father as usual, he did not bring the tea. When the father inquired why today was different and why he had come empty-handed, the son apologized, explaining that he felt weak and didn’t have the strength to prepare the tea.

The father immediately became alarmed and, with great concern, asked, “What happened? Could it be, *chas veshalom*, that the old illness has returned? Or perhaps some dangerous infection has taken hold?” The son quickly reassured his father, explaining that there was no illness at all, not even the slightest hint of one. “It’s just a bit of weakness that made me feel slightly lazy about preparing the tea... but it’s nothing serious.”

As expected, the devoted father was neither calm nor convinced. “One does not play around with health!” he declared firmly. He immediately summoned the city’s most renowned professor to thoroughly examine his cherished and pampered only son, who had suddenly become a little weak, wasn’t feeling great, and even

coughed once or twice.

Soon enough, the expert physician arrived at the palace gates—not without first collecting a hefty fee. He conducted a comprehensive and detailed examination and concluded that the son was completely healthy.

The esteemed doctor

issued a clear diagnosis: “The patient is perfectly fine and requires no medication! It is simply temporary fatigue. Let the boy rest at home for a day to regain his strength.”

Following the doctor’s advice, the son remained in his luxurious room that day to rest, recover, and regain his energy.

To the son’s astonishment, throughout the entire day, his loving father constantly inquired about his wellbeing and hovered around his bedside. The father repeatedly entered his room to ensure his son’s comfort, personally served him a delicious, hearty meal and a soothing cup of tea, going to great lengths to make his son’s rest as pleasant as possible.

The son, puzzled by his father’s intense concern, finally asked, “I don’t understand. When I was seriously ill, I understood your worry and your tireless efforts to ensure my recovery from that dreadful illness. But now, as the doctor clearly stated, I’m not sick at all. I’m just resting a little to regain my strength. Why are you so anxious about me today?”

The father responded with deep emotion, “I doubt you can fully comprehend my heart... Listen to what I have to say. My love for you is immense, far greater than you can imagine. You were born to us after many years of pain and lengthy anticipation, and my heart is bound to you with an unbreakable and profound love. Therefore, even though I knew perfectly well that there is no illness, only minor fatigue that you’ll recover from easily, my closeness to you and the burning love within me would not allow me to refrain from caring for your every need today, so that you may quickly return to full strength.”

From that day onward, the son’s affection for his father grew immensely, multiplying many times over, as it is written (*Mishlei* 27:19), כַּיֶּסֶד מַיִם לְפָנֵי לֵב הָאָדָם – *As water reflects a face, so does one person’s heart to another.* After witnessing, on a day when he barely required his father’s care and could have managed all his needs independently, how his father nevertheless continued to ensure that everything was perfectly arranged for him so he would not have to exert himself in his weakened state, the son came to realize the boundless love his father had for him. If he had previously estimated the depth of his father’s love during his serious illness, he now saw that it was far greater than he had ever imagined. Thus, on that very day, his affection for his father grew tenfold.

The famous *Chanukah question* posed by the *Pnei Yehoshua* regarding the pure jug of oil that miraculously burned for eight days is well known. His golden words are as follows: “*One must wonder why was there any need for the miracle at all? After all, we hold the principle that ‘tumah is permitted*

for communal offerings,' so they could have lit the Menorah with impure oil. Granted, according to the opinion that tumah is overridden only in communal offerings,' it makes some sense to require effort here to acquire unadulterated oil, but according to the opinion that tumah is permitted outright, as derived in Yoma (6b), why was this miracle necessary?"

He answers in his holy words: "It seems that the primary purpose of the miracle was to demonstrate Hashem's love for Klal Yisrael. We find that such miracles were often performed, as noted in Avos (5:2), where it says that no disqualifying factors were ever found in the Omer offering or the Two Loaves [of the lechem hapanim], and so on. Similarly, this miracle was performed with the oil of the Menorah, which serves as testimony to Yisrael that the Shechinah dwells among them. In those days, a time of favor, this miracle was meant to show that they had returned to their original beloved status."

Following the holy path of the Pnei Yehoshua, I suggested, with Hashem's help, an explanation for the words of our master the Rambam (Hilchos Chanukah 4:12): "The mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles is exceedingly precious, and one must take great care to publicize the miracle, increasing in praise of Hashem and thanksgiving for the miracles He performed for us. Even if one has nothing to eat but from charity, he should borrow or sell his clothing to purchase oil and candles to light."

We do not find such language of "exceedingly precious" regarding any other mitzvah throughout Rambam's writings. Indeed, every word and letter in Rambam's language is precise and invaluable. Even regarding the four cups of wine on Passover night—where the Rambam similarly learns the obligation for the poor, as explained by the Maggid Mishneh here—he does not use the term "precious mitzvah." He simply rules plainly that a person should not have fewer than four cups (Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah 7:7). What, then, distinguishes the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles that Rambam calls it "exceedingly precious" more than other mitzvah?

Upon reflection, we can begin to understand. During all other Yamim Tovim, we are like the beloved son during his severe illness, when the father was compelled to save him from death. All the miracles and wonders performed on those occasions were, as it were, necessary to save Yisrael from destruction, transforming their fate from death to life and from slavery to redemption. Without those miracles, no remnant or survivor would have remained among the enemies of Yisrael, as in the exodus from Mitzrayim celebrated on Pesach, the downfall of Haman on Purim, and similar events.

Therefore, even though the mitzvot associated with other festivals undoubtedly foster great love between Yisrael and Hashem due to the miraculous efforts that Hashem undertook to save them—similar to the way a son's love for his father grows when he witnesses the father's tremendous care to rescue and heal him during illness—this still does not compare to the miracle of Chanukah. Chazal specifically established it to commemorate the miracle of the oil container, as concluded in the discussion of, "What is Chanukah?" (Shabbos 21b; Rashi).

The Pnei Yehoshua explains that the miracle of the oil was not one of necessity. There was no threat to life, no grave illness, but rather a minor inconvenience akin to a mere weakness. The miracle of the oil was

not required to save Yisrael, nor was it needed for the service of the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash, since impure oils could have sufficed due to the principle that "impurity (tumah) is permitted in communal offerings." This situation is akin to the day the beloved son felt slightly weak, where there was no illness or danger but only minor fatigue. The Jewish people could have resolved the issue themselves, using the impure oils that the Greeks had defiled. Nevertheless, out of His immense love for Yisrael and to demonstrate their elevated status, akin to a father's extraordinary care for his son even on a day of minor weakness, Hashem performed this wondrous miracle, enabling them to light the Menorah with pure oil for eight days.

This perspective helps clarify Rambam's precise wording, where he describes the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles as "exceedingly precious." The institution of Chanukah, which is based on the miracle of the oil container, signifies unparalleled affection, even more than other Yamim Tovim. It is comparable to the son's heightened love for his father on the day of minor weakness, surpassing even the gratitude felt for his father's devoted care during a critical illness. This explanation aligns beautifully be'ezras Hashem Yisbarach. Additionally, we can enhance this understanding with the advice offered by the professor before leaving the wealthy household. To maintain the son's health and prevent the recurrence of his severe illness, he advised that from now on, whenever the son felt even a slight weakness, he should not dismiss it as insignificant. Instead, he should take proper care to strengthen his body and regain vitality. Although he had, baruch Hashem, recovered from his dangerous illness, he remained more vulnerable than others to a relapse.

Thus, at the first signs of fatigue, the son should rest, consume warm, nourishing foods and drinks, take beneficial vitamins, and perform similar measures. The reasoning is clear: if the patient disregards these early warning signs that the body sends and continues to push beyond his physical limits, these minor symptoms could gradually escalate. Before long, he may find himself once again facing the severe illness from which he was barely saved.

The young son did not understand and asked innocently: "Why must I take every feeling of weakness so seriously? After all, it soon passes. Isn't it better to simply move on, ignoring such minor weaknesses?"

"Good question!" replied the senior doctor. "Indeed, one must strengthen oneself. Not every cough or minor weakness should stop a person from his tasks and responsibilities. However, ignoring it completely is also incorrect, especially in your delicate state. You must be attentive and monitor those 'symptoms' that start minor, gradually weakening your immune system, until the body collapses.

"When the Creator fashioned mankind, He wondrously designed within the human body a robust immune system capable of fighting off any virus or bacteria that may invade it. On its own, the body can combat most routine ailments, preventing them from causing harm—similar to how a wound heals itself. As soon as an illness takes hold, the body fights back until it subsides and disappears before developing into something serious.

"This is true for a healthy body. The situation is different, however, when the body is weakened. When the immune system is compromised, it no longer has the strength to fight off even minor bacteria, leaving the body vulnerable to harm. This is why the elderly, frail, and young require extra care, as their immune systems are inherently weaker," concluded the professor.

The body serves as a "parable" for the soul. The ailments of the body mirror those of the spirit. Just as the body's 248 organs and 365 sinews correspond to the 248 positive commandments and 365 prohibitions, so does every bodily illness originate from weaknesses or flaws in the spiritual organs corresponding to specific mitzvot.

In maintaining spiritual health, we must safeguard the soul's "immune system," especially after it has already experienced damage or sin.

Sometimes, the soul suffers from a "weakness" that may not yet qualify as a clear transgression but shows preliminary symptoms of spiritual decline. If a person does not promptly address this spiritual decline, it may rapidly escalate into a more significant downfall, *chas veshalom*.

This principle is explicitly taught in the Gemara (Shabbos 105b): "Such is the way of the evil inclination: today it says to a person, Do this, (a seemingly minor infraction), and tomorrow it says, 'Do that,' until eventually, it tells him to commit idolatry, and he goes and does it." For this reason, Rabbi Shimon Ben Elazar ruled in the name of Rabbi Yochanan Ben Nuri, saying, "One who tears their garments in anger or breaks their vessels in anger should be regarded as one who serves idolatry!" Because if a person does not immediately regard these actions as preliminaries to idolatry, they may eventually push him to full-blown idolatry, *chas veshalom*.

Therefore, as soon as a person senses a weakness in his Torah study, prayer, or *avodas Hashem*, he must quickly strengthen himself to keep his soul resilient. Otherwise, the evil inclination will find an open door to infiltrate, introducing severe "illnesses" in the form of destructive temptations and deceptions that lie in wait for every Jew in our times, Heaven help us.

Immediately after the victory of the Chashmona'im and the triumph of holiness, when they had just been saved from the decrees of destruction by the wicked Greek empire, and while the sovereignty of Yisrael had not yet been firmly established nor the sanctity and redemption of Yisrael fully solidified from the depths of Greek culture and its oppressive spiritual grip—it was particularly necessary to have the miracle of the oil jug. They could not rely on the leniency of "impurity is permitted in communal offerings." Through this miracle, a special light of Divine love was brought down from heaven to illuminate the eyes and hearts of Yisrael, strengthening and fortifying their delicate souls to prevent them from falling back into those catastrophic spiritual maladies of the Greeks.

Through the love inherent in publicizing the miracle, Yisrael drew strength, encouragement, and closeness to their Father in Heaven. This firmly established the purification and sanctity of Yisrael, leading to the restoration of Jewish sovereignty, as Rambam writes (Hilchos Chanukah 3:1), "And sovereignty returned to Yisrael for more than two hundred years"

From the story above, we derive practical guidance: the days of Chanukah, with their profound and elevated sense of Divine love, have the power to instill immense strength—like a spiritual injection—into the hearts of Klal Yisrael for the entire year. These days provide extraordinary encouragement and inspiration to even the weakest and most distant souls in the lowest spiritual states, "illuminating the eyes and hearts of Yisrael."

By fulfilling the mitzvot of Chanukah, we emerge spiritually strengthened, equipped to withstand any challenge or spiritual ailment that may arise.

Through the merit of Chanukah and this special Shabbos of Chanukah, Yisrael will ultimately be redeemed, transitioning from darkness to light with the revelation of the light of Mashiach, speedily in our days, Amen.