

Torah Wellsprings

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Torah Wellsprings

Mikeitz - Chanuka

Bitachon: Trust in Hashem Alone

It states at the end of last week's parashah (40:23) וְלֹא זָכַר ה' אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיִּשְׁכַּחְהוּ, "The Sar HaMashkim didn't remember Yosef and he forgot him."

The *meforshim* ask why there is a double expression.

Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe, end of Vayeshev) writes, "The Sar HaMashkim didn't speak at all about Yosef. This is the meaning of וְלֹא זָכַר ה' אֶת יוֹסֵף, he didn't mention Yosef with his mouth. This resulted in Yosef also forgetting the Sar HaMashkim, as it states וַיִּשְׁכַּחְהוּ. Yosef forgot the Sar HaMashkim, and he lost hope of being saved through him. And after this *yeush*, (41:1) וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ שְׁנַתִּים יָמִים וּפָרְעָה חָלָם, 'It happened at the end of the two years to the day: Pharaoh was dreaming....'

because man's help is false, and only Hashem can save."

In other words, it was for Yosef's benefit that he lost hope in the Sar HaMashkim. This brought him to only trust in Hashem. When that occurred, immediately, Pharaoh had his dream, and Yosef's salvation began. (We are saying this so that we can learn lessons from it. But obviously we have no perception of Yosef's greatness, and his high level of bitachon.)

The Gemara (Gitin 7a) states, "If a person sees that his parnassah is tight, he should give from his money to tzedakah." What is the explanation of this Gemara? Why will tzedakah, more than any other mitzvah, help him earn parnassah in abundance? Furthermore, if he is tight on money, shouldn't he be cautious with his money and hold on

to it? Why should he give tzedakah now?

Kedushas Levi (*Chidushei Agados, Agadata d'Sabei Atuna, Shaalah 6*) explains that when one gives money to tzedakah, "He shows that he doesn't trust in his money. On the contrary, he trusts Hashem." Thereby, he is attached to Hashem, "and this will bring him brachos. Wherever he will turn, he will succeed, and his parnassah will increase immensely." As it states (*Mishlei 11:24*) וְנוֹסֵף עוֹד, "There is one who scatters and yet is given more." He is generous with his money, he is מְפַזֵּר, he spreads out his money to give to others, and because he trusts in Hashem, וְנוֹסֵף עוֹד, he will earn even more.¹

Benefits of Hardships

It states (41:52) וְאֵת שֵׁם ה'שְׁנִי קָרָא אֶפְרַיִם בִּי הַפְּרִי אֱלֹקִים בְּאֶרֶץ עֲנִי "The name of the second he called Efraim, for 'Hashem has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

Mei Hashiluach (ד"ה ויקרא) writes that Yosef understood that he merited בִּי הַפְּרִי אֱלֹקִים, success, because he was בְּאֶרֶץ עֲנִי. He thanked Hashem for the suffering because he understood that through it, he attained his success.

The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba 91:10*) states, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, 'I am working to make his son the king of Mitzrayim, and he says, (43:6) לָמָּה הִרְעֵיתָם לִי לְהַגִּיד, 'Why have you done bad to me, by telling the man that you

1. Reb Rafael of Bershad zt'l said that if someone doesn't have bitachon, he should have bitachon that Hashem will help him, even without his bitachon.

The Satmar Rebbe zt'l said to a person who told him that he doesn't have bitachon, "For this problem, you should also utilize bitachon. Have bitachon that Hashem will help you attain bitachon."

have another brother?" The Ramchal (Daas Tevunos פ"ה בד"ה ואמנם) writes, "This is a lesson for all areas (בנין אב) that when Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires to give greatness to a person, or to the world, the good will only come in concealed ways, and therefore, he will suffer some tzaar first. This is as Chazal (Brachos 5a) say, 'Hakadosh Baruch Hu gave three precious gifts to Bnei Yisrael, all of which were

given only by means of suffering."

We learn this concept from the *shamesh* that stands above the Chanukah lecht. The shamesh isn't as kadosh as the other lecht, as it's not part of the mitzvah. Nevertheless, it stands above them all. The Maharil (Hilchos Chanukah 3) explains, "וסיון לשום שפלים למעלה", "A hint is 'to place the humble on high' (Iyov 5:11)." Its lowness is why it is raised higher.²

2. It states in parashas Vayeishev (37:2) יוסף בן שבע עשרה שנה היה רעה את אחיו בצאן והוא נער את בני בלהה ואת בני זלפה נשי אביו ונבא יוסף את דבתם רעה אל אביהם, "Yosef was seventeen years old, being a shepherd, he was with his brothers with the flocks, and he was a lad, and was with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and Yosef brought evil tales about them to their father." The Chasam Sofer zt'l (יישב ד"ה היה) explains that Yaakov sent Yosef to befriend his brothers, בני הגבירות, the sons of Leah. But the brothers didn't want to befriend him and sent him to בני השפחות, the children of the handmaids. This was the lashon hara that Yosef told his father. He told his father that his brothers refused to accept him, and they were pushing him away. When his brothers heard what Yosef was saying about them, they said (37:8) המלך תמולך עלינו אם מושול, "Will you reign over us, or will you govern us?" What they meant was that since Yosef wasn't accepting his humiliation, he couldn't become king. "This is because there is a concept: from prison one becomes king. This means that from the lowest level, one reaches the highest. As it states (Tehillim 113:7) מִצִּלְעֵי אֲבִיוֹן, Hashem raises people from the lowest depths. Therefore (37:8) ויוסף

It states (42:1) וַיִּרְא יַעֲקֹב כִּי יֵשׁ אֶשְׁכֵּר בְּמִצְרַיִם, and the Beis Aharon (Vayigash) writes that אֶשְׁכֵּר can mean hope (as in Tehillim 146:5) שְׂכָרוֹ עַל ה' אֱלֹהֵי, "His hope is in Hashem, his G-d." This implies that in Mitzrayim, representing hard times, there is hope.

In fact, specifically because of hard times, Hashem raises us to the highest levels.

Tzror HaMor writes that this is what happened to the *Chashmonaim*. They reached the lowest level; they were the only people fighting

hungry. Once, the rebbetzin had some דִּיסָא, porridge, but she didn't have a pot in which to prepare it. So she went to a neighbor and borrowed a pot. She was happy that her holy husband would finally have something to eat to satisfy his hunger.

The problem was that the food was still in the pot when the neighbor came to take it back, and the rebbetzin didn't have a dish to pour the food into. She asked the neighbor to wait a few minutes until her husband came home from his learning, but the neighbor insisted that she needed the pot immediately. During these moments that she was pleading with the neighbor, the pot fell, and all the porridge spilled on the ground. Everything was ruined. There was nothing edible to eat.

This was the proverbial "straw that broke the camel's back". The Rebbetzin broke down and cried bitterly over her sad financial situation, which they have endured for several years. Just then, her holy husband came home. He heard her cries and saw her tears. He asked her what happened, and she told him the entire story. Reb Meir calmed her down and told her, "This was the last test.. For now on, we will be eating from silver dishes." A few days later, the leaders of the city of Stavanitz came to their home to invite Reb Meir to be their rav. On Pesach, a wealthy person from Stavanitz gave them a present: silver dishes! (written in Gedulos HaTzaddikim). When they came to their lowest place, that is when they received their salvation.

against the large army of the Yevanim. But from that low place came their salvation.

He writes that this is alluded to in the chapter (Tehillim 30), which discusses the Chanukas Beis HaMikdash during the days of the *Chashmonaim*. It states there, כִּי הִנֵּעַ בָּאֵפוֹ חַיִּים בְּרִצּוֹנוֹ בָּעָרָב, "For His wrath lasts but a moment; life results from His favor; in the evening, weeping may tarry, but in the morning, there is joyful singing." There was a moment of worry and despair, but from that low place came the joy of the salvation.³

One of the benefits of hardships is that the Shechinah is with the person then.

Reb Shmuel Wosner (Chanukah Drush 13) tells that his Rebbe, Reb Meir Shapiro zt'l, went to perform the mitzvah *bikur cholim* for one of his outstanding students who had become deathly ill, r'l. The student was a giant *talmid chacham*, and despite his illness, he was happy. Reb Meir Shapiro asked him how he was able to be in this state of contentment. The student replied, "Chazal (Shabbos 12b) say that the Shechinah is above the head of the ill. But they also say (Shabbos 30b) that the Shechinah won't reside on someone who is sad. Now that the Shechinah is above my head due to my illness, should I banish the Shechinah by being sad? I must force myself to be happy so that

3. It states (Tehillim 69:2) הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי אֱלֹהִים כִּי בָאוּ יָמַי עַד נַפְשִׁי, "Save me, Hashem, for water has come up to my soul." And then it states (ibid pasuk 14) וְאַתָּה יְהוָה תִּפְלִלָּתִי לְךָ ה' עַתָּה רָצוֹן, "But, as for me, may my tefillah to You, Hashem, be in an acceptable time." The Mei HaShiloach zt'l (ד"ה) (האלקים) says that this tells us that when one goes through hard times, he should pray to Hashem, for these times are an *eis ratzon* for his tefillos to be answered.

the Shechinah will remain with me."

The Maharal (Gur Aryeh, יח"י (ד"ה שהשכינה teaches that when Chazal say the Shechinah resides above the head of the ill, it isn't just the ill. Whoever feels down and broken, Hashem is there with them. The reason Hashem resides above the head of the ill is that it states (Yeshayah 57:15) אֲשַׁכֵּן וְאֵת דָּכָא וְשַׁפֵּל "I am with the despondent and lowly of spirit," to revive them. And no one is more דָּכָא than someone who is sick. But if he is down for some other reason, Hashem will be with him, as well, to encourage him.

The holy Ruzhiner zt'l would say, "The yesurim of the nefesh are like the yesurim of the body, and they are even worse." So, also for them, the Shechinah is above their heads.

Whoever suffers יסורי הנפש וגוף, afflictions in the realm of his soul or in the realm of his body, he should know that the Shechinah is with him. (And who doesn't have these yesurim?) And now that the Shechinah is with him, he must be cautious not to banish the Shechinah from himself by remaining *b'simcha*.⁴

4. Sometimes, the Shechinah is concealed, and the person doesn't see the hashgachah pratis in his life. It can be compared to a dreidel that is turning swiftly, and at that time, no letters can be seen. Similarly, in his life, he doesn't see any letters of Hashem, any sign of hashgachah pratis or of Hashem's kindness. But he shouldn't despair. Continue dancing, and the time will come when you will see the letters, and you will understand how it was all for the good.

The dreidel's primary function is to spin quickly on its axis. When it spins, and you can't see the letters, that is a sign that the dreidel is functioning correctly. So, too, at these concealed times in a person's life, he should understand that those times are correct

Zerizus

It states (43:6) וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמָהּ הִרְעֵיתֶם לִי לְהַגִּיד הָאִישׁ הָעוֹד לְכֶם אָח, "Yisrael said [to his children], "Why have you harmed me, by telling the man that you have another brother?"

Yaakov was upset with his children for telling the ruler that they had another brother, because now the ruler was asking for Binyamin. Yaakov's children explained that the "ruler" of Mitzrayim knew everything about them. He even knew what type of wood they used for cribs. So, when he asked them whether they had another brother, they felt obliged to tell him the truth.

Rashi (43:7) writes, אפילו עצי, "He even revealed to us the wood of our cribs." With these words, Yaakov Avinu's children explained to their father that

the ruler of Mitzrayim knew everything about them.

What was unique about the cribs in their home? It certainly isn't a coincidence that this conversation took place, and that it is recorded in Rashi and in midrashim for all generations to know.

קרן אור פני משה (printed in 5546) quotes another Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 53:10) regarding cribs. It states, לא נדנדה עריסה, תחילה אלא בביתו של אברהם אבינו, which means that the first rocking crib was in Avraham Avinu's home.

We must understand the significance of this statement as well.

קרן אור פני משה explains that Avraham Avinu excelled in the trait of *zrizus*, as Chazal (Pesachim 4a) say, זריזין מקדימין, למצוות, that the *zrizim* are quick to perform mitzvos. We learn this from Avraham

and good, because his primary purpose is to pass tests like those. Things don't occur randomly or out of control. These difficult situations are tests Hashem prepared for mankind.

Avinu, as it states (Bereishis 22:3) וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם בְּבֹקֶר, "Avraham woke up early in the morning."

Avraham also excelled in the trait of chinuch, as it states (Bereishis 18:19) כִּי יִדְעָתִי לִמְעַן, "For I have loved him, because he commands his children..."

Zerizus has two primary benefits. One is that it helps people perform mitzvos. Mesilas Yescharim (ch.6) writes, "One needs to be very clever and have foresight to grasp mitzvos and to merit to perform them and not lose them. Because just as the yetzer hara tries with his tricks to cause people to fall into the trap of sin, he also tries to prevent people from performing mitzvos... If a person is lazy... he will end up being empty of mitzvos. This is certain. See that man's nature is to be very heavy... He doesn't want to work hard. But if a person desires to attain avodas Hashem, he has to be strong

and go against his nature... and to act with zerizus."

Another benefit of zerizus is that it develops hislahavus in people's hearts. Mesilas Yescharim (Zrizus 7) explains that it is human nature to rush to the matters that a person desires and yearns for. He adds that even if a person doesn't want something, if he rushes towards it, his external "rushing" will cause him to want it. He writes, "If a person doesn't have a fiery desire [for Torah and mitzvos], a good counsel is to act with *zerizus*. This will naturally arouse his desire."

For these reasons, Avraham taught his children and descendants the important trait of *zerizus*. The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 10:5) states, כל מעשיה של צדיקים, בזריזות, "All deeds of the tzaddikim are with *zerizus*."

This is the reason Avraham developed the rocking crib. Before Avraham, cribs were stationary. But Avraham

understood that a rocking crib will develop *zerizus* in his offspring, and *zerizus* will result in hislahavus.⁵

The Maharal of Prague (Nesiv Zerizus, ch.1) explains the pasuk (Malachim 1, 2:2) וְחִזְקֵת וְהִיִּית לְאִישׁ, "Be strong and become a man," that if a person doesn't have *zerizus*, he isn't

a man. He isn't a human being.

The Maharal (ibid. ch.2) writes, "Someone lazy, it's like he isn't in the world at all..."⁶

The Sfas Emes said that Chazal learned *zerizus* from the pasuk (Bereishis 22:3) וַיִּשְׁכֶּם

5. Later, the rocking crib became a universally accepted standard. קרן אור פני משה writes that many things became the custom of the goyim, without them knowing that their origin comes from kedushah. The goyim saw that Yidden rock a crib, they thought that this helps the child sleep, so they adapted this custom. But the real reason was to train children in the trait of *zerizus*.

6. The following are some sources:

Beneyahu ben Yehodah is praised as being a בן איש חי (Shmuel 2, 23:20) and Rashi (Divrei HaYamim 1, 11:22) writes, כִּי כֵן מִנְהַג בְּנֵי הָאָדָם כְּשֶׁרֹאִים אָדָם, זֶרִיז אֲדָמִים זֶה כֹּלּוֹ הִי, "This is the custom of people. When they see a person with *zrizus*, they say, 'This person is fully alive.'" Benayahu was called בן איש חי, alive, because he had *zerizus*.

Also, it states (Shmuel 1, 25:6) וְאָמַרְתֶּם כֹּה לָחִי, "Say such for life," and Rashi writes, "This is a worthy portion for an איש חי, which means a person who is a *zariz* and is *chashuv*."

Hashem told Noach to take into the teivah מכל הַחַי live animals. Tosfos (Avodah Zarah 6, ד"ה אלא) writes that this means שִׁיחָא כֹּלּוֹ בְּרִיא וּזְרִיז, the animals should be entirely healthy and with *zrizus*.

From these sources, we see that people, and l'havdil, animals, when they have *zrizus*, are considered alive. Otherwise, they are not considered alive.

אֲבְרָהָם בִּבְקֹר, "Avraham woke up early in the morning" because the important time for *zerizus* is in the morning, when one wakes up.

Rebbe Fishel of Stropkov zt'l said that sometimes the Satan will arrange for it to snow throughout an entire country, all so that one person will not awaken early in the morning. The Satan knows the great avodah of tzaddikim who wake up early to serve Hashem, and the Satan knows the immense nachas ruach this creates in heaven. So, he arranges tests in this area. When one understands this, he will fight with all his might to overcome this yetzer hara.

The very first halachah of Shulchan Aruch is: יְתַגַּבֵּר כְּאֵרִי לְעֻמּוֹ בְּבֹקֶר לְעִבּוּדַת בּוֹרְאוֹ שְׂיִהֶא, הוא מְעוֹרֵר הַשָּׁמַיִם, "Be strong like a lion to get up in the morning to serve His creator. He should awaken the morning." Reb Elya Lopian zt'l (who placed a lot of effort to encourage the students of his yeshiva to awaken early) would often say that in the future, after 120 years, when a person will stand before the court in heaven, the court will open up a Shulchan Aruch before him, and read through the halachos to see whether he kept them or not. How great will the embarrassment be if it is discovered that he didn't even keep the first halachah (to awaken early)?⁷

7. One morning, someone came to the home of Reb Boruch Yitzchak Freund zt'l and found him lying on the ground! Reb Boruch Yitzchak explained, "He (the yetzer hara) was here today, when I woke up. He told me that since I'm old and ill, I don't have to get up. He spoke with wisdom, and I considered accepting his opinion and remaining in bed. But then I told him, 'I am prepared to discuss this with you and consider your advice, but not while I'm lying in bed.' I didn't have the strength to stand up, so I threw myself down to the ground."

A baal simchah made a chasunah for his child, and in the morning,

Yosef is the Mashbir (Mashpia
of Parnassah)

על הארץ הוא המַשְׁבִּיר לְכָל עַם הָאָרֶץ,

"Yosef – he was the viceroy

It states (42:6) וַיֹּסֶף הוּא הַשְׂלִיט

over the land, he was the

he was up early for the minyan. Someone asked him, "Don't you have a yetzer hara? You were up so late at the chasunah. Why didn't you sleep in a bit?"

He replied, "In fact, I do have this yetzer hara. He came to me in the morning and wanted to prevent me from rising early. I told him, 'I don't speak before davening,' and I stopped the conversation right away."

Reb Dovid Povarsky zt'l, rosh yeshivas Ponevezh, would awaken early every morning and learn in the yeshiva before Shacharis. One morning, in his older years, he said to the student who accompanied him to yeshiva, "The Alter came to me this morning."

The student was shocked and asked, "Which Alter? The Alter of Slabodka or the Alter of Kelm?"

Reb Dovid Povorksy replied, "No, I meant the alter, the old yetzer hara!" (Alter is Yiddish for old, and the yetzer hara is called זקן ובעיל, the old, foolish king.)

"What did the yetzer hara want?" the student asked.

"The yetzer hara wanted to convince me to sleep another five minutes. I battled him fiercely for those five minutes because I knew that if I gave in and gave him those five minutes, tomorrow he would ask for ten minutes, and eventually, he would take everything away from me."

Reb Noson Vachtfogel zt'l, the mashgiach of Lakewood, once said, "This morning, I saw two captives. I tried to perform the mitzvah of pidyon shvuyim, to save them from their imprisonment, but I failed." People wondered what he was referring to. Where did he find these captives? He explained, "There were two bachurim who were captives of the yetzer hara. They didn't want to get up. I tried to free them from their captivity, but I failed."

provider to all the people of the land." In Yosef's merit, the entire land had *parnassah*. It is written in *sefarim* (and an early source is the Midrash), that this was because Yosef passed the test related to *kedushah*. This brings *brachos* for *parnassah*.

Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz *zt'l* (זרע קודש ד"ה הוא המשביר) quotes the Midrash that Yosef was rewarded to be the financial supporter for the entire land in the merit of passing his test. He explains that Chazal are translating *הַמְשִׁבִּיר*, "the supporter" as *הַמְשִׁבֵּר*, "the one who broke". Yosef broke the *yetzer hara*, and therefore, he was rewarded with being the supporter of the country and of his family. He was the *צדיק יסוד עולם*, the *tzaddik* in whose merit the world was supported and fed.

The Gemara (Kiddushin 40a) states, "Whoever had a *nisayon* of *arayos* and was saved, a miracle will happen to him." The Gemara learns this from the *pasuk* (Tehillim 103:20) עֲשֵׂי דְבָרוֹ לְשִׁמּוֹעַ בְּקוֹל דְּבָרוֹ, "Who do His bidding, to

obey the voice of His will." The Maharsha explains that the *tzaddikim* עֲשֵׂי דְבָרוֹ, pass tests and do Hashem's will. Therefore, לְשִׁמּוֹעַ בְּקוֹל דְּבָרוֹ, Hashem will listen to their *tefillos* and perform miracles for them.

The Beis Avraham said that it is alluded to in this week's *parashah* (43:31) וַיִּתְּאֶפֶק (43:31) "He withheld himself, and said 'serve food.'" He explains that when one is וַיִּתְּאֶפֶק, holds back from *aveiros*, the reward is שִׁימוֹ לָהֶם, *parnassah*, for all his needs.

Rokeach writes, "Therefore, close your eyes from looking at bad... If you refrain, you will merit to be like Yosef."

Maalas HaMiddos (Midas Yetzer Hara) writes, "Whoever was tested with a *yetzer hara* and he refrains because of his love to Hashem, and not because he fears people, he will merit to become great (עוֹלָה לַגְּדוּלָה). Know that it is so, because Yosef attained greatness *after* he refrained

from an aveirah from his mistress, the wife of Potiphar."

Similarly, the Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 90:3) states, "For every limb that one refrains from an aveirah, he merits honor and greatness on this limb."

Shevet HaLevi (parashas Vayeshev) discusses the Rashi at the beginning of parashas Vayeshev that states that Yaakov wanted to dwell in peace, קפץ עליו רוג'ו של יוסף, and then he suffered from the loss of Yosef. Shevet HaLevi explains that Yaakov wanted to dwell in peace and tranquility because he

figured that it would be better for his avodas Hashem. But when he saw the high levels Yosef attained specifically due to the difficult tests he had, he understood that he shouldn't seek peace and tranquility. Facing and passing difficult tests is living on a higher level.⁸

Shabbos Chanukah

Reb Henoch of Alexander zt'l (Chashava I'Tovah) taught, "The good Yidden (tzaddikim) say that this Shabbos is a great Shabbos, and on this Shabbos, one can attain clarity in emunah

8. When Yosef passed the test, it states וימאן, he refused to sin. There is a שלשלת on top of וימאן, which is a trop that goes up, and up, higher and higher. The Divrei Shmuel zt'l explains that a person can work for his parnassah all day and into the night, but still struggle with his parnassah. When does his mazal change and everything turns around? That is when he is presented with an exception financial opportunity, and earns ten times what he invests. The same can be said with avodas Hashem. There are times when one can perform a good deed, and the reward will be enormous. It is a moment of greatness, which doesn't present itself all the time. This happens specifically when one passes tests. Therefore, there is a שלשלת over the word וימאן. When Yosef passed this test, he rose to very high levels.

b'Hashem." He explains that every Shabbos teaches us emunah, as it states (Shemos 31:13) אַךְ אֶת שַׁבָּתִי תִשְׁמְרוּ... לְדַעַת כִּי "Only keep My

Sabbaths! ... to know that I am Hashem..." Chanukah is also a time of learning emunah and believing in His miracles.⁹ When both

9. Yosef said (41:16) בְּלִעְדֵּי אֱלֹקִים יַעֲנֶה אֶת שְׁלוֹם פַּרְעֹה, "Not I; Hashem will give an answer that will bring peace to Pharaoh."

And Yosef said (41:28) אֲשֶׁר הָאֱלֹקִים עֹשֶׂה הִרְאָה אֶת פַּרְעֹה, "What Hashem is about to do, He has shown to Pharaoh."

Shlah Hakadosh (אות ס"ט) writes, "See how Hashem's name was always on Yosef HaTzaddik's lips. He attributed the greatness to Hashem. He said, 'Who am I? I am a nobody. It is Hashem Who gave me this honor.' This is a great mussar: A person, with everything he does, should praise his Creator. Hashem alone has the greatness, strength, and kingship; everything is His."

Rebbe Yankele of Antwerp (Pshevorsk) zt'l brought proof that shidduchim are from heaven. He said it with humor to bring out his point. He said, "There are two Yaakovs: Yaakov Avinu and me, Yankele. Shouldn't it be that my shver (father-in-law) be Lavan the rasha, and Yaakov Avinu's shver Rebbe Itzikel of Pshevorsk (a great tzaddik)? Shouldn't the great tzaddik, Yaakov Avinu, receive a fitting shver? How did it happen that the opposite happened, that I received a holy shver, and Yaakov Avinu became son-in-law of Lavan the rasha? This proves that shidduchim are from Heaven, and as Hashem desires it, that is what will be."

He said this to a person who was turning down every shidduch because he felt that he was too honored and respected, and he couldn't do a regular shidduch. Rebbe Yankele was telling him to lower his head and accept the shidduch that Hashem chooses for him.

For our purposes, this story is a reminder that everything, including shidduchim, is from Hashem. Everything is from Hashem, and we should recognize that and praise Hashem for everything we do and achieve, because everything is from Him.

come together on Shabbos Chanukah, it is a very special time to acquire emunah in Hashem.¹⁰

The Meor Einayim (*Mikeitz*) writes, "Hashem gave Shabbos to the Jewish nation so we can be close to Him. When one keeps Shabbos, all his sins are forgiven.

However, it is hard to tap into the holiness of Shabbos because it is so exalted. שבת is Hashem's name, how can a person ascend to this high place? On Chanukah, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, *keviyachol*, comes down lower than ten *tefachim* to the people at very low levels

10. In Lecha Dodi we say התעוררי התעוררי כי בא אורך קומי אורי. The Beis Avraham zt'l teaches that אורך and אורי allude to the light of Chanukah. This is because אורך can be read as for אורך, the light of Chanukah, which is placed lower than twenty amos (כ is twenty). And אורי stands for אור י, that the Chanukah lecht must be higher than ten tefachim (י is gematria ten). It hints at the great light of Chanukah, and therefore, it states התעוררי התעוררי, awaken! These are great holy lights that illuminate the world. Let's awaken and lean into this unique opportunity!

A chasid came to Rebbe Asher of Stolin zt'l for Shabbos Chanukah. It was also rosh chodesh. In the afternoon, this chasid slept on a bench in the beis medresh. Every few moments, he woke up and said with love, "Ah, Shabbos! Shabbos!" A few moments later, he said, "Ah, Shabbos Chanukah." A short while later, he awoke again and said, "Ah, Shabbos rosh chodesh!" The son of Rebbe Asher (the Beis Aharon zt'l) saw this, and he quickly called his father to the beis medresh to see how this chasid slept. The rebbe came and watched this chasid for a while and said, אורי שלאפס ער ווי א איד, "He definitely sleeps like a Yid!"

Even if someone feels that this level is distant from him, the story is a reminder of how the early chasidim would invest in the special days of the year. Even in their sleep, they remembered and felt the kedushah of the day.

and draws them up so they too can experience Shabbos. This is the explanation of פתילות שאין מדליקין בשבת מדליקין בהן בחנוכה, 'Wicks that one can't use on Shabbos, one may light with them on Chanukah.' The wicks represent people, שאין מדליקין בשבת, who don't become illuminated on Shabbos, מדליקין בהן בחנוכה, they can become illuminated on Chanukah. Hashem, *keviyachol*, lowers Himself down to the person and kindles his neshamah."

Reb Yisrael of Ruzhin *zy'a* would repeat in the name of his father, Reb Shalom Shachna of Prohovitch *zy'a*, that the Shabbosim until Chanukah are alluded to in the words (Bereishis 1:2) והארץ היתה תהו ובהו, "The earth was astonishingly empty..." Even the Shabbosim at the beginning of the year lack an element of shine and brilliance. But when Chanukah comes, it states, ויאמר אלקים יהי אור, "Hashem said, there should be light," as from then on,

one can more easily attach himself to the holiness of Shabbos.

Rosh Chodesh

In the Musaf of *Rosh chodesh*, we say, ראשי חדשים, לעמך נתת זמן כפרה לכל תולדותם, "You gave Rosh chodesh to Your nation, a forgiveness for all their תולדות." The Beis Yosef (Tur 423) writes that תולדותם means deeds. Rosh Chodesh atones for all the bad deeds we might commit throughout the coming month, תשועת נפשם מיד שווא, "to save their souls from the enemy." The enemy is the yetzer hara. In the merit of Rosh Chodesh, Hashem saves us from our enemy, the yetzer hara.

Hashem promised Avraham that (Bereishis 15:15) תקבר בשיבה טובה, that he will be buried at an old age. Reb Shmshon Ostropoler zt'l (in his commentary on sefer Karnayim 6:1) says that the first letters of טב"ת תקבר בשיבה טובה. Hashem hinted to Avraham Avinu that he will be niftar

on Rosh Chodesh Teves. There are three great merits and kedushos on this day. It is Chanukah, it is Rosh Chodesh, and it carries the merits of Avraham Avinu, too, because it is his yahrtzeit.

Avraham davened for Sedom, but the cities were overturned. Lot davened for Tzoar, and it was saved. We can explain, b'derech tzachus, that this is because Lot began his tefillos by praising Hashem. He said in his tefillah (Bereishis 19:19) הנה נא מצא עבדך חן בעיניך ותגדל חסדך אשר עשית עמדי להחיות את נפשי "See now, Your servant has found favor in Your eyes, and Your kindness was great which You did with me to save my life..." After this praise, Lot prayed that Hashem save Tzoar, and Hashem accepted his tefillos. This is because a tefillah that is said amidst praise is a very powerful tefillah.

Let's use this auspicious time of Chanukah when we praise Hashem to also ask Him for all our needs.

Zos Chanukah

Reb Yisrael of Ruzhin zt'l taught, "What tzaddikim accomplish on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, simple Yidden can accomplish on Zos Chanukah."

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

The Maharal says that the number seven represents nature (as there are seven days in the week, seven notes for music, seven wisdoms, etc.), and Chanukah is for eight days because Chanukah is beyond nature. Zos Chanukah is even higher because it is double eight (the eighth day of the eight days of Chanukah, שמיני שבשמינית). It is a day of miracles, and even simple Yidden can draw *yeshuos* from this day.

Throughout the year, we must construct miracles in heaven in order to draw them down. Not everyone can construct miracles in heaven; therefore, the average person cannot perform miracles throughout the year. But on Zos Chanukah, a time beyond nature, miracles are prepared in heaven. All that is needed is to draw them down.¹¹

The Bnei Yissaschar (*Kislev Teives* 2:10) writes, "The earlier Rabbanim often said that Chanukah is *mesugal* for פקידת עקרות, for barren women to bear children. In my

opinion, the *segulah* is primarily on Zos Chanukah."¹²

Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz *zt'l* said that Zos Chanukah is *mesugal* for *parnassah*. He learned this from the eight praises we say in ויברך דוד (*Divrei HaYamim* I 29:11). לך ה' הגדולה (1). והגבורה (2). והתפארת (3). והנצח (4). וההוד (5). כי כל בשמים ובארץ לך ה' הממלכה (6). והמתנשא לכל לראש (7). והעושר (8).

והעושר, wealth, is the eighth praise, corresponding to the eighth day of Chanukah.

11. It states (Tehillim 92:7) "A boorish man does not know; neither does a fool understand זאת." לא יבין את זאת. It can be explained that he doesn't understand the significance of זאת חנוכה.

if you were wise, you would understand the importance of זאת חנוכה, and בזאת אני בוטח, in the merit of Zos Chanukah, I trust and will experience Hashem's salvation.

Rebbe Shlomo (the first Rebbe) of Bobov *zt'l* said that the miracles of זאת חנוכה are alluded to in the *pasuk* נפלאות בעינינו. נפלאות זאת חנוכה, wonders occur on זאת חנוכה.

12. Rebbe Aharon of Belz *zt'l* would repeat this idea from the Bnei Yissaschar every year at his Zos Chanukah *tisch*.

The other days of Chanukah are also *mesugal* for *parnassah*, as the Arugas HaBosem *zt'l* (*Vayigash*) teaches on the *pasuk* (*Bereishis* 45:5) כִּי שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֶיכֶם לְפָנַי, "for the sake of *parnassah*, שלחני, Hashem sent me before you..." The word שלחני is *roshei teivos* להדליק נר חנוכה שמונת ימים, "To light the candles of Chanukah eight days."¹³

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

The Beis Aharon (p.42) writes, "The primary miracle occurred on the eighth day.

Although there was a miracle for all seven days, the primary miracle was the eighth day, because it is above seven. As people say about miracles, 'Miracles are above this world.'"

The Ostrovtza *zt'l* said that the miracle that a lamp can remain lit for seven days had happened before. Sarah Imeinu's Shabbos lecht remained lit all week, from erev Shabbos to erev Shabbos. But a miracle that lasted eight days happened only by the Chanukah miracle. The eighth day revealed to everyone that it was above nature. It revealed that also the first seven days were a miracle beyond nature.

Every day of Chanukah, we read in the Sefer Torah

13. Chazal say that a kameia (amulet) that heals people doesn't accomplish anything for an animal. The Meiri explains this because the kameia doesn't work if one doesn't believe in it.

We have to believe in these days and in the miracles and salvations we can attain from them, and then they will have the desired effect.

the end of Parshas Naso which discusses the korbanos that the nesi'im brought during the *chanukas hamizbeach* in the desert. On the eighth day, we read all the remaining korbanos of the nesi'im, and we conclude with the pesukim that discuss the menorah (which is written at the beginning of parashas *Behaloscha*) בַּהֲעֵלְתָּ אֶת הַנֵּרוֹת, etc. On the final day of Chanukah, we read in the Torah about the נֵרוֹת, which is directly related to Chanukah. This is another indication that the primary day of the miracle was the final day, the eighth day.¹⁴

The Beis Aharon writes, "I think the eight lamps of Chanukah are of the same concept as שְׁמִינִי עֶזְרָת. Tzaddikim say Zos

Chanukah is the גִּמְרֵי הַתִּימָה when we are inscribed for a good year."

Parashas Emor (*Vayikra* 23) talks about the *yomim tovim*, concluding with Succos and Shemini Atzeres. Then, the Torah discusses the menorah (see *Vayikra* 24:2). The Rokeach says that the menorah, mentioned after the *yomim tovim*, hints at Chanukah. Chanukah is written after Succos, so it is compared to Succos. Just as Succos is for eight days, so is Chanukah for eight days.

Accordingly, the final day of Chanukah represents Shemini Atzeres.

Rashi (*Vayikra* 23:36) explains the essence of Shemini Atzeres: "It can be compared

14. It is nice to receive the aliyah of shlishi on Zos Chanukah because we read there about the immense wealth donated to the Beis HaMikdash for chanukas habayis. We say there (*Bamidbar* 7:84) קָעֵרֶת כֶּסֶף שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂר מִזְרָקִי כֶּסֶף שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר כְּפֹת זָהָב שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂר "There were twelve silver bowls, twelve silver basins and twelve gold spoons..." and so on. However, remember that many brachos come from being mevater, too. So, it certainly isn't worthwhile to fight over this aliyah.

to a king who invited his children for a meal for several days. When it was time for his children to leave, the king said, 'My children, please, remain with me one more day. קשה עלי פרידתכם, it's hard for me when you leave.'"

Similarly, after seven days of Chanukah, Hashem says to the Jewish nation, "I enjoyed your mitzvos so much. Your Chanukah *lecht*, your Hallel, your Al HaNisim... Stay with me one more day. It's hard for Me when you leave."¹⁵

About Shemini Atzeres, the *Zohar* (vol.3, 32.) states, "At this joyous time, the Jewish people are alone with the King. And when one is alone

with the king, whatever he asks for will be given to him." We can say that the same applies to Zos Chanukah. Whatever we ask Hashem for on this day will be granted.

The Beis Aharon *zt'l* teaches that we should say *Tehillim* on Chanukah. Certainly, one should say *Tehillim* on זאת חנוכה.

The Yismach Yisrael (*Chanukah* 53) says that when the Torah says זאת, it refers to something one can see with his eyes. זאת חנוכה¹⁶ means the *kedushah* is so great on this day that tzaddikim can physically see it. "But this revelation is only for the perfect tzaddikim. It states (*Tehillim*

15. This can be another answer to Beis Yosef's renowned question. True, Chanukah should be for seven days because there was enough oil for the first day, but Hashem requests that we keep an extra day, an eighth day, because it is hard for Hashem to part with us.

16. It states (*Shemos* 12:2) החדש הזה לכם, and Chazal explain that הזה indicates that Hashem showed Moshe the new moon. Because when it says זה, it refers to something visible.

118:23), מאת ה' היתה זאת, we believe that Hashem gives this revelation on זאת חנוכה; however, היא נפלאה בעינינו, we can't see it... Although we don't see or feel this special revelation, we are happy for the tzaddikim, for we believe that they see it, and we rejoice in their joy."

בזאת ידעתי כי הפצת בי (Tehillim 41:12). The Yismach Yisrael explains בזאת, since You gave us זאת חנוכה, I know that You desire me and that You want to grant me goodness and kindness.¹⁷

Chanukah All Year Round

The Beis Aharon (p.45:) said, "Once, on Zos Chanukah, my father [Rebbe Asher of Stolin zt'l] asked

הדרן עלך, his chassidim to sing, מסכת חנוכה והדרן עלן מסכת חנוכה, 'We will return to you, masechta Chanukah, and return to us, masechta Chanukah.'" The Beis Aharon adds, "Who am I to explain my father's words?"

We certainly aren't on the level to grasp the depths of Rebbe Asher of Stolin's ideas and lessons, but one aspect of it could mean that we want to draw the impression of Chanukah for the rest of the year. At the end of Zos Chanukah, we completed all the mitzvos of the holiday. We pray הדרן עלן, that the light of Chanukah should return to us. The spiritual impressions we gained on Chanukah and

17. The Divrei Chaim zt'l explains that there was a time when the yomim tovim from the Torah were sufficient, but the Chachamim understood that in the later generations, Yidden needed more holidays to help them survive in galus. This is why they added Chanukah and Purim.

These additions aren't solely for ruchniyos. They are for gashmiyos too. We wouldn't survive the galus, even with respect to gashmiyos, without Chanukah and Purim; therefore, the Chachamim established these holidays.

the miracles we attained should return and remain with us all year long.¹⁸

The Sfas Emes (Chanukah 5637) teaches that the purpose

of a miracle is so that we should never forget that Hashem loves us and leads us in a special, unique way beyond the rules of nature. Hashem could save us from

18. Once, Reb Shmuel Minkus *zt'l* felt that he needed *chizuk* in *avodas Hashem*, so he went to the marketplace to seek out someone who could take him to Liadi, where his rebbe, the Baal HaTanya *zt'l*, lived. A merchant of hard drinks (vodka, etc.) told him he was traveling in that direction, but he only had space in the wagon's uncovered section next to the spirits' barrels.

Reb Shmuel agreed and got on. It was cold in the uncovered wagon, and Reb Shmuel asked for permission to drink some vodka from the barrels to warm up. Permission was granted.

When Reb Shmuel came to the Baal HaTanya, he said *shalom aleichem* and *tzeischem l'shalom* simultaneously.

"You just came!" the Baal HaTanya said. "Why are you leaving already?"

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

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

Reb Shmuel said, "I sat among barrels of alcohol, but the barrels didn't warm me up. I only warmed up when I drank the alcohol. I learned from this that it isn't sufficient to learn chassidic ideas. To warm up, one must allow these ideas to seep in and become part of his being."

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

all troubles without performing miracles, but Hashem prefers to perform miracles at times so we can remember our special connection with Him. When the impression and inspiration of a miracle weaken over time, Hashem brings on another problem and then another miracle and salvation, so we will never forget Hashem's love for us.

The *nes* Chanukah was the final miracle (see an indication of this from Yoma 29.). The Sfas Emes says that this means we don't need another miracle to receive inspiration. There is enough inspiration and awareness of Hashem's love for us from the Chanukah miracle to last us throughout the long galus.

We quote the Sfas Emes:

"Hashem doesn't necessarily need to perform miracles to save us because He can arrange for the enemies not to harm us... Rather, the purpose of the miracles is to show Bnei

Yisrael that Hashem leads them above the rules of nature. The miracles are uniquely the portion of Bnei Yisrael. The four malchiyos (galus) are so that Bnei Yisrael will always need miracles. And when Hakadosh Baruch Hu performed a miracle for our forefathers, they received chiyus, inspiration, from it. They recognized that Hashem protects them and leads them with rules above nature. When the inspiration from one miracle wore off - the miracle became old to them due to the heavy galus - they needed another miracle to inspire them, and Hashem performed another miracle for them. This was the pattern that recurred repeatedly in galus. After the Chanukah miracle, Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't perform another revealed *nes* for Bnei Yisrael. This proves that the inspiration from the Chanukah miracles continues to shine... it has new inspiration for us, until the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days, when

Hakadosh Baruch Hu will perform new miracles for us. חנוכה, from the word חנינך, means newness because this miracle is always new to us until Moshiach comes, speedily in our days."

Moshiach

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

Another hint to משיח is from מדליקין שמונת ימי חנוכה. The first letters spell משיח.

The gematriya of the letters נגה"ש on the dreidel is משיח.

It states in this week's *parashah* (41:14) וישלח פרעה ויקרא

את יוסף ויריצהו מן הבור, "Pharaoh summoned, and he called Yosef, and he was rushed out of the dungeon." The Siforno writes, "[Yosef was saved quickly, as it states ויריצהו, they rushed him out], like all of Hashem's salvations that happen quickly and immediately. As it states (Yeshayah 56:1), כי קרובה ישועתי לבוא, 'My salvation is near.' This is what happened in Mitzrayim, as it states (Shemos 12:39) כי גרשו ממצרים, 'they were banished from Mitzrayim.' Chazal tell us that their dough didn't have time to rise before the King of kings, Hakadosh Baruch, redeemed them. This will also occur in the future, as it states (Malachi 3:1), ופתאום יבוא אל היכלו האדון אשר אתם מבקשים, 'Suddenly, he will come to his *heichal*, the master (Moshiach) whom you await.' May it be speedily in our days.

We share the following amazing story, as recently shared with us by the Rosenberg family from New York:

My son went on a trip as a reward for completing several Masechtos. He and my husband davened vasikin and left on a three-hour trip. While my son was high up on a mountain, he slipped off a 50-foot cliff and landed on his head. The rescue team was dispatched by helicopter. It was a nes in its own that my son was still able to communicate his location to the rescue team before his brain started bleeding and he slipped into a coma. He was flown to the hospital. The doctor's prognosis was bleak, and they prepared us for the worst ch"v. They warned that even if he ever woke up, his condition would be terrible. This was on the 21st day of Kislev.

Sitting next to my son in the ICU, I remembered that I had read in the Torah Wellsprings about a baby who was born without a stomach. The doctors gave her a zero chance of survival, but, after receiving a bracha from Rebbe Itzikel of Pshevorsk zt'l, they experienced a miraculous Yeshuah on Chanuka. Reb Itzikel commented later, "When the girl was born, and I spoke with the father, I understood from the father that it was impossible for the girl to survive. Therefore, I waited until there was an eis ratzon, the first night of Chanukah, and I pierced the heavens with my tefillos until I felt that I brought a yeshuah for this girl."

I decided then and there that this was our cure. We were in the right month. Chanukah was coming! He would recover!

My son was in a deep coma, but we ordered new eyeglasses because he lost the old ones. We overnighted them because we were getting ready for the big nes that was going to come. I also bought him a new winter jacket. My family thought we were crazy. I kept saying we were getting ready to bring home my son, but the doctor spoke of brain damage. The doctors complained to my husband that I am acting as though I don't understand English because I'm not reacting to their terrible prediction. I ignored them, knowing that Chanukah is coming. Instead, we davened, we looked for zechusim, and waited for Hanukkah to begin.

My son's situation grew worse. My son listened to the sound of his family lighting the menorah the first three nights, but with no reaction, no response. He was in a deep coma. I sat next to him and cried. I believed that only a nes would save my child, and the world davened for him without let up.

And then on the fourth night of Chanukah, my son opened his eyes. By the fifth night of Chanukah, he was off the respirator. He did not even have one broken bone! The doctors could not explain any of it. By Zos Chanukah, our son was eating, talking, reading, and growing stronger every day. There was, Baruch Hashem, no brain damage whatsoever!

It is now three years from his amazing nes, and we decided to publicize our story so that everyone should realize the tremendous koach that lies in these lechtige days of Chanukah.