

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

Parshas Mikeitz Chanuka 5786 Year 16, #660

שבת ראש חודש

פרשת מקץ חנוכה תשפ"ו

The main significance of the victory over the Greeks

וּקְבַעוּ שְׁמוֹנֶת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל: (על הניסים)
"They established these eight days of Chanukah as a time to thank and praise Your great name." These are the concluding words of the *"Al Hanissim"* prayer in Chanukah. We celebrate eight days of Chanukah. The Bais Yosef, a commentator on the Tur Shulchan Aruch, asks a question that has been termed *"The Bais Yosef's Question"* on Chanukah, (Orach Chayim 670) due to the popularity of the question. Why is the miracle of Chanuka celebrated for eight days, when there was oil in the flask to last one day, then the miracle was for the latter seven days. however, we celebrate Chanukah for eight days! What is the reason behind the eight-day celebration?

The Pri Chodosh answers, that the 8th day of Chanukah comes as a commemoration for the miracle of defeating the Greek powerful army. Therefore, the oil burning was a 7 day miracle and day 8 was to commemorate the winning of the war. However, the Pri Megadim asks on this answer, why do we commemorate winning the war with lighting a candle, it doesn't seem as if that is was meant to commemorate the victory?

To answer this difficulty of the 8 days of miracle: We recite in the *Al Hanisim: Hashem waged their battles, defended their rights, and avenged the wrong done to them. He delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the sinners into the hands of those who occupy themselves with Your Torah.* The Satmar Rebbe, Reb Yoel Zitzal, talks about strength, *"גְּבוּרִים בְּיַד הַלְשִׁים"*, that there are two types of strengths. There is a typical type of strength, a brutal force of energy, which is physical power. Here we are talking about this type of physical strength. Then there is another strength of spirit, a resolve. A strength that comes from the energy of a driven person who is focused. That energy also appears in this world. It is the energy of a mother who miraculously lifts the car to save the life a child who is underneath. It is the energy of a small army that is focused, that can defeat a great army. The Kesef Mishneh says such a defeat is not a Neis, a miracle. Because when the small army is focused, it can defeat a large army.

This is one act of spiritual strength, But there is a second type of spiritual strength, and that is to defeat the Yetzer Hara who was disguised as the Greek army, to entice the

Yidden to sin and deviate from the Torah. This was a difficult battle, and the Chashmanoyim were able to win the battle against the Greek army, who's main objective was, as it says in *Al Hanissim* *"when the wicked Hellenic government rose up against Your people Israel to make them forget Your Torah and violate the decrees of Your will"*. This spiritual strength was not only then, but also eternal to pave the way for the Yidden in exile to conquer the Yetzer Hara.

It states in Mishlei 20:27 בָּטֶן אָדָם הוֹפֵשׂ כָּל חֲדָרָיו בָּטֶן
Man's soul is the Lord's candle, which searches out all the innermost parts. The lighting of a candle on the eighth day was to commemorate the winning of the battle, which was the battle of the soul with the Yetzer Hara, and it's done with a candle. This paved the way for the spiritual war of the innerparts.

Chazal teach us that the acts of the Avos which was done with *Mesiras Nefesh* made it easier for their children to perform. In the war of the Greeks, the purpose was to eradicate three things from Klal Yisrael. The three mitzvos that were given before the Torah was given on Har Sinai: One: the Mitzvah of Milah, was given to Avraham Avinu. Two: the Mitzvah of Kidush Hachodesh, to sanctify the New Moon, was given to the Children of Israel in Egypt. The third was the Mitzvah of Shabbos, which was given at Marah. All three of these Mitzvos are the root and foundation of the Torah, therefore, the Greeks sought to uproot them all.

The Greeks wanted to disconnect Klal Yisrael from the Torah, and without these three foundational mitzvos, it is impossible to access its depths. They did not want to destroy the Jews physically; they wanted to destroy Judaism in spirit, the uniqueness of Am Yisrael. Hence, we greatly appreciate the victory to this day. The eighth candle is a symbol of the Torah, Orah Zu Torah, which was the intention of the Greeks to nullify. For this we have to thank Hashem eight days.

To note an interesting point in the Neis of Chanuka. When the Gemarra Shabbos 21b asks מאי חנוכה "What is Chanukah"? The answer given is the emphasis in on the miracle of the oil burning for 8 days, but only a slight mention of the victory over the Greeks. Whereas, in *Al Hanissim*, the main emphasis is on the victory of the Torah, and a slight mention of the oil miracle. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

******The Last night of Chanuka lights brought home their lost father******

R' Zalman lived in the city of Szerencs in Northern Hungary. He was a rich man but was not blessed with children. He and his wife never gave up, prayed to Hashem and went to Tzaddikim for Brachos. His hard work paid off, and was blessed with a son who he named Chaim Chaikel. However, he soon lost his fortune. R' Zalman took comfort in being blessed with a child, and was satisfied and adapted to a simpler life. He still managed to sell off some of his belongings in order to get the best teachers for his son, and it paid great dividends.

Soon tragedy came, when Chaim Chaikel was ten years old, R' Zalman and his mother passed away, and Chaim Chaikel was left an orphan without a Torah education. The good-hearted people of the city took pity on him, and he was divided among the people, so Chaim Chaikel should have a place to stay. R' Zalman, before he passed away, told his son that he was once very rich and had lost everything, but one antique Chanukah Menorah that he had inherited which was very valuable, he left to himself, which he held on with dedication, and he begged Chaim Chaikel he should pay close attention to it and wished him that the Menorah should always illuminate his life.

Chaim Chaikel was not thrilled at having to constantly be on the move, and being a burden on the city, so he decided to find a job and support himself. He met a carpenter in another city who was ready to take him in to his home and teach him the trade. Chaim Chaikel was very happy, and being very smart, he quickly learned the trade and became a master carpenter, and his boss was very happy with him, and Chaim Chaikel found a stable home.

Years later, he met a fine girl from another city, and Chaim Chaikel had to go live there. He got married and hoped to earn a living as a carpenter; However, in that city there were already many carpenters, and Chaim Chaikel struggled to make ends meet, and when the family grew, it became very difficult, and Chaim Chaikel told his wife that he wanted to return to his former city for a while and thus be able to make a living and then come home.

Chaim Chaikel embarked on his first journey to Szerencs, visited his parents' graves, cried, and prayed for success. He then traveled from city to city, accepting jobs and his reputation as a master carpenter grew. A friend advised him that in France there was a demand for his expertise work, and he traveled to France, but got frustrated as he didn't know the language, and out of desperation he began to drink. The bartender recognized that Chaim Chaikel was not the typical drunkard, and started talking to him and realized who

he was and asked him to be in charge of his bar. Some time passed, and Chaim Chaikel got used to the Gentile life, and left everything behind, forgetting about his home. Meanwhile, his wife and children were devastated because they didn't know where he was and had no trace of him.

Just then, the Rov of her town was about to get married, and the Rov invited the heilige Shinova Rov [eldest son of the Divrei Chaim of Sanz,] and the whole city went to welcome the Shinova Rov. Chaim Chaikel's wife remained at home with a broken heart. A neighbor noticed that she did not want to go, and advised her to go and ask for a blessing from the Shinova Rov that her husband should come home to her! She was embarrassed to meet the Rov and begged the neighbor to come with her and ask for a Bracha. The Shinova Rov listened to the neighbor and took a bag of money and said to hand it over to Chaim Chaikel's wife. When she saw the money, she burst into tears and was glad that someone was thinking of her. She now gained courage and went to the Rov, thanking him for the money, but this is not what she came for! The Rov asked her to tell her story, and the Rov thought for a long time and called out to her, You have your husband's Menorah. I advise you that on the last night of Chanukah, you should make sure that the Menorah will be lit all night, and Hashem will help you! She thanked the Rov and went home.

Meanwhile, Chaim Chaikel was working in the bar and was very happy, and when one day he went down to the cellar to bring some wine, he heard someone following him, and he saw an elderly Yid yelling at him, Why did you desert your wife? This happened a few times, and Chaim Chaikel shrugged it off until the Yid grabbed him and lifted him up and threatened, "If you don't go home today, I'm going to make a pile of bones out of you!"

This shook him up, and he got into his wagon and drove home. He was in a state of fear and intended to get home as fast as possible! The wintery weather brought heavy rains and cold, and finally Chaim Chaikel arrived in the middle of the dark and rainy night, and the city was dark, and he didn't know where to go! But from a distance he saw a house that was light, and he drove there and knocked on the door, and when the door is opened, there was Chanukah joy: Our father is here! Everyone was happy and danced with their father. The Menorah of his father brought back memories and feelings of regret for his behavior. After Chanukah they went to the Shinova Rov, who blessed them with success in their livelihood and gave Chaim Chaikel a path to repent, and they built a nice Jewish home together.

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