

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



עקב

אלוי דשמיא

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

Two Perspectives on Nissim

זה היום עשה ה' נגילה ונשמחה בו
This is the day that Hashem has made; let us exult and rejoice in Him (Tehillim 118:24).

The Midrash¹ wonders whether the word בו refers to Hashem (*This is the day that Hashem has made; let us exult and rejoice in Him*) or to the day (*This is the day that Hashem has made; let us exult and rejoice in it*). Citing a pasuk from Shir Hashirim

the true value of the miracle is that it demonstrates Hashem's omnipotence and His care for us before the eyes of the world.

(1:31)—*The king has brought me into his chambers! We will be glad and rejoice in You*—the Midrash concludes that the correct reading is, "*This is the day that Hashem has made; let us exult and rejoice in Him*." On the other hand, The Zohar Hakadosh comments, "בו means rejoicing 'in the day' and בו means rejoicing with Hakadosh Baruch Hu,

and they are both one thing." What does the Zohar Hakadosh mean by this? Rabbeinu Yonah² explains that when the pasuk says, *Then, our mouths will fill with laughter, and our tongues with song. Then, they will say among the nations, "Hashem has done great things with these"*—it means that the basis for our joy will be the open display of Hashem's might and deliverance, not our own joy and relief. As support for this idea, he cites the Midrash quoted above that concludes that נגילה ונשמחה בו means we will rejoice in Hashem.

This, then, seems to be the meaning of the Zohar: There are two ways to conceptualize the *simchah* of Chanukah. One can focus on the miraculous *yeshuah* that we experienced, or one can focus on the greatness of Hashem and his love for us. The Zohar teaches us that ultimately, even focusing on the magnitude of the *nissim* is about praising Hashem and reflecting on Hashem's love for us, because the true value of the miracle is that it demonstrates Hashem's omnipotence and His care for us before the eyes of the world.

With this in mind, we can explain why Chazal always speak of "*pirsumei nisa*" in the singular, and never of *pirsumei nissim*. Although the various *nissim*

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Yeshuos at the Ready

ויהי מקץ שנתים ימים ופרעה חלם והנה עמד על הניאר.

It was at the end of two full years, Pharaoh was dreaming, and behold, he was standing by the river.

Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh wonders why the pasuk says פרעה חלם, literally *Pharaoh is dreaming*, in the present tense, rather than simply saying, "Pharaoh dreamed." The Ohr HaChaim suggests that Pharaoh had the same recurring dream throughout the entire two years but forgot about it each morning. At the end of the two years, for the first time, Pharaoh remembered his dream and was distressed about its meaning. Why did Hashem cause Pharaoh to have this recurring dream for an entire two years, and what lesson can we learn from this?

Rav Pinchas Koritzer explained based on a story:

The Baal Shem Tov was once traveling with Rav Mendel, the *maggid* of Bard. While at a deserted spot along the way, R' Mendel felt extremely thirsty and at risk of dying if he did not have a drink. The Baal Shem Tov asked R' Mendel if he truly believed that Hashem could send him water to revive himself, even in a deserted area where there are no people. As soon as R' Mendel said yes, they saw a peasant coming toward them carrying two buckets of water across his shoulders. The peasant graciously gave them to drink. What brought him to the area? The water carrier explained that his *poritz* had recently had the strange idea to

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¹ Shir Hashirim Rabbah 1:31.

² Berachos 21b.

Two Perspectives on Nissim

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we've experienced as a people give the appearance of being disparate events spread across time, they are in fact one. They are just repeat demonstrations of Hashem intervening and subverting nature on behalf of Klal Yisrael, with the goal of amplifying Hashem's honor and presence in this world.

There is a clever interpretation of the pasuk וַיְהִי כְּמִשְׁלַשׁ חֳדָשִׁים...וַיֵּאמֶר יְהוָה חַסִּידִים הוֹצִיאוּהוּ וְתִשְׂרֶף. Chassidim explain: כְּמִשְׁלַשׁ חֳדָשִׁים after three months have

passed since the intensive spiritual work of the *Yamim Noraim*, וְתִשְׂרֶף, one must rekindle the fire of *avodas Hashem* with the Chanukah lights.³ Additionally, the Gemara (*Sotah* 10b, 36b) says, "Yehudah, who sanctified Hashem's name in public, merited that his entire name is called by the name of Hashem." Maharsha explains that יהודה contains the letters of שם הוי"ה. The Sefas Emes, however, explains that when a tzaddik binds himself to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and

publicly sanctifies Hashem's name—as Shevet Yehudah did by forging ahead into the Yam Suf with perfect trust in Hashem—his very name becomes identified with Hashem. According to Sefas Emes, the connection between this pasuk and Chanukah is stronger. The common denominator is *pirsumei nissa*, publicizing the might and glory of Hashem.

נר א' דחנוכה תשפ"ד מאמר ב

3 See *Kol Simcha*, *Vayeshev*; *Beis Yisrael*, *Chanukah* 5714, etc.

Yeshuos at the Ready

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have him draw water from a spring at a considerable distance, and the area where they were standing was along the route he took. The Baal Shem Tov then explained to R' Mendel that Hashem pre-arranges a *yeshuah* for a tzaddik so that it is available as soon as the tzaddik expresses the requisite *emunah*.

Based on this, Rav Pinchos Koritzer explains the events of our parshah. Rashi explains that for repeatedly asking the *sar hamashkim* to remember him and draw Pharaoh's attention to his plight, for this imperfection of *emunah*, Yosef was punished with an additional two years of incarceration. During those two years, Yosef was meant to refine and work on his *emunah*. The *hashgachah* had it that Pharaoh had this dream for the entirety of the two years—so that just as soon as Yosef had sufficiently purified and improved his *emunah*, the *yeshuah* could spring into motion.

This idea from Rav Pinchos Koritzer sheds new light on the pasuk וַיְהִי כְּמִשְׁלַשׁ חֳדָשִׁים...וַיֵּאמֶר יְהוָה חַסִּידִים הוֹצִיאוּהוּ וְתִשְׂרֶף regarding the dream being repeated to Pharaoh two times: because the matter

is fixed by G-d and G-d is hastening to do it. When Yosef speaks of the dream being repeated, he refers not only to Pharaoh's viewing two versions of the same dream, but also to the fact that the dream was repeated on a nightly basis over two years. Yosef explains that נִכּוֹן הַדְּבָר מֵעַם הָאֱלֹהִים—Hashem wanted a *yeshuah* to be ready and pre-arranged for the moment that his *emunah* was great enough to merit it.

This idea that Hashem pre-arranges a *yeshuah* well in advance features in the Chanukah story as well. The Gemara (*Shabbos* 21a) relates that the Chashmonaim found but one jar of oil with which to light the menorah, but "a miracle occurred with it, and they were able to light from it for eight days." The Imrei Emes asks why the Gemara focuses so narrowly on the jug of oil. Since the main point of the *nes* was that they were able to light the Menorah for eight days until more oil could be procured—would it not have been more appropriate to say: "it had only enough oil for one night, but a miracle occurred and they were able to light the Menorah for eight days"?

The Imrei Emes explains that indeed, the object of the *nes* was the jug. Some years prior, a Kohen was filling this jug with oil; to his shock, the jug fit eight times the volume of oil it normally did. He brought it to the attention of the Kohen Gadol, who recognized the significance of the phenomenon, sealed this special jug with his personal imprint, and hid it away. The true *nes* happened well before the Chanukah story! This is why in retelling the story, Chazal portray the *nes* as primarily concerning the jug of oil.

The *nes* was arranged and ready for the moment that Klal Yisrael were ready for it. When rededicating the Beis Hamikdash, the *halachah* allowed the use of oil that was *tamei*. But the Chashmonaim deeply desired to use oil that was pure. Hashem saw their burning passion—and the *yeshuah* revealed itself to them.

This idea is alluded to in the very name of the Yom Tov. The letters חנוכה can be rearranged to spell הוכן ח'—the *nes* of eight days was pre-arranged.

ליל שבת מקץ חנוכה תשפ"ב מאמר א

Talking In Learning

The Gemara (Yoma 24a) states that kindling the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash is not considered an act of *avodah* and therefore a non-kohen who lights the Menorah is not liable. The Rambam is of the opinion that it is permissible *lechatchilah* for a *zar* to kindle the Menorah; the Raavad contends that it is only acceptable *bedieved*.

The *Minchas Chinuch* struggles to understand either position. A *zar* lighting the Menorah is really a moot point, because the Menorah is situated

behind “*hadlakah oseh mitzvah*” is that the mitzvah of *ner Chanukah* parallels the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash.

And we cannot say that the Menorah might be carried out to where a *zar* can light it, because if that were the case, it would be forbidden to light the Menorah on Shabbos: *chillul Shabbos* could be avoided by lighting a Menorah prior to Shabbos and carrying it to the *Heichal* at the designated time.

Later Acharonim take issue with this argument of the *Minchas Chinuch*. They argue that the lighting of the menorah took place *bein ha'arbayim*, in the afternoon, as evening approached. Thus, if the *Minchas Chinuch* means to prove his thesis from the lighting of Friday is not relevant, since it is completed before Shabbos begins. If the *Minchas Chinuch* was referencing the lighting of Shabbos afternoon—it would not be feasible to have the candles burning a full twenty-four hours in advance. Furthermore, the Rambam is of the opinion that in addition to the afternoon lighting of the Menorah, the Menorah was also kindled each morning. Certainly, according to this Rambam, it would be impossible to light in advance.

Perhaps we can explain the proof of the *Minchas Chinuch* as follows. The term *hadlakah oseh mitzvah* includes two elements: that setting the *neiros* in place (*hanachah*) is not the mitzvah, and that the mitzvah consists of the act of kindling. But used loosely, “*hadlakah oseh mitzvah*” may mean, not that the mitzvah is the actual kindling, but that the mitzvah consists of having kindled

lights in the *Heichal*. So, while in the context of *ner Chanukah*, “*hadlakah oseh mitzvah*” means the actual act of kindling, in the case of the Menorah it means that the mitzvah is to have kindled the lights.

There is more evidence for this distinction. While the halachah is that *כבתה אין זקוק לה*-- if one kindled Chanukah lights and they were extinguished, he is not obligated to rekindle them—in the case of the Menorah of the Beis Hamikdash, the Gemara (*Menachos* 88b) is clear that if one of the candles was extinguished, one needs to refill it with oil and rekindle it. Why the difference? This lends support to our distinction. In the case of Chanukah lights, the mitzvah is the act of kindling the lights; our primary concern is not with the final product. But in the Menorah in the *Heichal*, the mitzvah is mainly to have the flames burning. Hence, if the candles were extinguished, they must be lit afresh.

A close reading of the Rambam in *Sefer Hamitzvos* (*Aseh* 25) yields the same idea: “The Kohanim are commanded to kindle lights constantly before Hashem.” Clearly, constantly kindling lights does not mean holding a fire to the wicks of the Menorah on a constant basis. Rather, the Rambam is stressing that the mitzvah is the continuous burning of the flames.

תורתך שעשועי פ' תצוה

Hashem saw their burning passion—and the yeshuah revealed itself to them.

in the *Heichal*, where a *zar* is not allowed entry! And we cannot say that the Menorah might be carried out to where a *zar* can light it. While there is a *machlokes* concerning *neiros Chanukah* if the act of kindling the *neiros* constitutes the mitzvah, or if placing the pre-lit candles suffices [the practical difference being, if one lit the menorah in a place that was disqualified and then carried the lit candles and placed them at the appropriate location],—in the case of the Menorah, it is obviously uncontested that the mitzvah is the actual kindling of the flames. Rashi states clearly that the reasoning



Miketz	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbos
Brooklyn	4:13	5:22
Lakewood	4:16	5:24
Baltimore	4:27	5:31
Chicago	4:01	5:09
North Miami	5:15	6:12
Los Angeles	4:28	5:29

Parshah Spark

וַאֲנִי שָׁמַעְתִּי עֲלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר תִּשְׁמַע הָלוֹם לִפְתָּר אֹתוֹ.

And I heard it said about you that you can hear a dream to interpret it (Bereishis 41:15).

It seems superfluous to say that Yosef can hear a dream. Can't everyone? Rashi explains that hearing doesn't simply mean auditory processing; it means listening with concentration and understanding. Perhaps another understanding is that Yosef was the only one who listened with the sole intent of interpreting the dream. The various government ministers all skewed the interpretation of the dream to suit their interests. For example, the minister of war tried to impose an interpretation that suggested a war was imminent, etc. Only Yosef approached the dream without an agenda.

קידושא רבה מקץ תשפ"ד

The Sefas Emes(633:1) points out that lighting *chanukah* light to

commemorate the *nes* that occurred in the *Bais Hamikdash* is in a sense a vestige of the *avodas Heis Hamikdash* that we practice to this day. Why, of all the *avodos*, is menorah singled out as the one that is still practiced today? Perhaps, as the one *avodah* that may be performed by both a kohen and a zar, the menorah signifies the unity of the Jewish people. The *menorah*, which represents the equality of all Jews before Hashem, without the usual hierarchy of *Kohanim* over *Yisraelim*, is a fitting holdover from the *Bais Hamikdash*, because only *achdus* can sustain us through the long *galus*.

זאת חנוכה תשפ"ד מאמר ג

From the Desk of the Rosh Yeshivah

When physical light and warmth are lacking, one can still find his footing in his *avodas Hashem*, and one can adjust, although it may take some time. However, when the heart is dark and cold, that is a situation that must be rectified. And one cannot assume that others will work things out for him; it is his own responsibility to rectify it.

It says in Tehillim (147:17), *He gives forth snow like wool; He scatters frost like ash*. The *vort* from our Rebbes is well-known: Heaven does not send snow to such a degree that the available wool cannot shield us from it, nor frost that the available firewood cannot warm it.⁴ That is, Hashem never confronts a person with concealment and *nisyonos* beyond his capacity to contend with them.

Perhaps we can understand this in another, similar vein. 'Wool' alludes to the Jewish souls.⁵ The spiritual cold of the *yetzer hara* and *Olam Hazei* is proportionate to the capacity of the Jewish soul to resist it with warmth. 'Ash' alludes to the souls of the wicked⁶—for them it is chilling.

The solution to dealing with this can be learned from the words of Chazal (*Pesachim* 38a), that the oven in the *Beis Hamikdash* was always hot, for, as Rashi explains, it was used daily. Similarly, we fire our spiritual oven daily by reciting *Krias Shema*. The Jewish soul is also a *Mikdash*, as it says (*Shemos* 25:8), *And I shall dwell within them*, meaning within every individual. In *Gittin* (56a) it states "the Rabbis praised the one who promised to provide firewood"—his can be understood as alluding to the spiritual power that fuels a Yid's inner oven. This also connects to the *Navi* Yeshayah's metaphor (*Yeshayah* 44:16-17), *He burns half of it... he warms himself and says, "Aha! I am warm; I see the flame," and yet its remnant he makes into his idol!* The *Navi* exclaims: if one has inner warmth available for faith, how can he misuse it for wayward faith?!

"Blessed is our G-d Who separated us from those who stray." Contrary to them, we strive that our "burning should be from the inside (*Pesachim* 30b)"; that our passion should be internal.

Your friend,
Shaul

(From a letter of 14 Teves 5774, when a heavy snow caused a prolonged electric and heat outage)

⁴ See Rashi.

⁵ As per *Ibra D'Dasha*, Chanukah, p.95.

⁶ See *Rosh Hashanah* 17a; Maharsha ad loc.