

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

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Chanukah Insights

based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנחם | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | לרפואה שלמה יוסף בן מלכה מטל

The Pesikta writes, “We read Hallel on Chanukah because the Pasuk says, ‘Hashem enlightened us.’ On Purim the Pasuk says ‘To destroy and to kill all of the Jews,’ so why don’t we say Hallel? This is because we only say Hallel on the downfall of the kingdom. On Purim Achashverosh’s kingdom endured, therefore we don’t say Hallel. However, regarding Pharaoh and Yavan, where their kingdoms were completely destroyed they began to praise Hashem and say, ‘We were slaves to them and now we are servants to Hashem.’”

A fascinating insight can be derived from this Pesikta. On Purim Klal Yisrael was saved, Mordechai was elevated to royalty taking over Haman’s position of power, and Esther was the queen. The situation completely turned around and we were free to serve Hashem without any restrictions. However, there was one thing lacking: Achashverosh was still king. They were still under his control, and therefore they couldn’t properly say Hallel and praise Hashem by saying “Now we are servants of Hashem.” As long as we were being externally controlled, it was too difficult to feel that we were servants of Hashem.

Another insight in regards to our Avodas Hashem can be derived from a Tosefta in Maseches Sotah. The Tosefta says, “Yochanon Kohen Gadol heard from the Kodosh Hakodashim on Yom Kippur as follows: ‘The young people destroyed Antiochus in battle at this time.’ He wrote that on this day that salvation came to Klal Yisroel.”

Based on this Chazal it is difficult to understand why our Sages instituted Chanukah on the 25th day of Kislev. We just said in the above Pesikta that Hallel is being said over the destruction of Antiochus which happened on

Yom Kippur. In addition the Ramban says that if not for the victory of the Chashmonaim (which took place on Yom Kippur), Torah and Mitzvos would have been forgotten from Klal Yisrael. It seems that the primary celebration of Chanukah is the survival of Torah and Mitzvos which took place through the destruction of Antiochus. If so, why would Chanukah be established at the time of the miracle of the oil, and not at the time of winning the war, which is the more significant event?

Perhaps we can answer this question based on the Rambam. The Rambam writes in discussing the Mitzvah of Ner Chanukah, “The purpose is to make the miracle known, and to add more appreciation for the miracles.” The Rambam implies that through the miracle of the oil we will be able to appreciate the miracle of winning the war, and the survival of Torah. This can be explained that in order for a person to fully appreciate the survival of Torah he first needs to fully appreciate the priceless value of a Mitzvah. The miracle of the oil demonstrated to Klal Yisrael how significant a Mitzvah is to Hashem. Klal Yisrael was exempt from lighting the Menorah as they had no pure oil. In addition, they were allowed to use the impure oil Bdieved, based on the rule of Tumah Shehutrah Btzibbur. Yet, Hashem did a miracle to allow them to do a Mitzvah in the best way possible. By internalizing this message they were then able to appreciate the true value and significance of the survival of Torah. Therefore Chanukah was established at the time of the miracle of the oil, as this miracle was the key to appreciating the additional miracles. Without the appreciation of the privilege of performing a Mitzvah, we cannot fully appreciate the survival of Torah and Mitzvos.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

My Beloved is mine, and I am His, Who grazes among the roses.

(Shir HaShirim 2:16)

My Beloved is mine, and I am His: He demanded all His needs from me; He commanded only me: Make a Passover sacrifice, hallow the firstborn, make a Tabernacle, sacrifice burnt offerings, and He did not demand these things of any other nation. *And I am His:* All my needs I demanded of Him, and not of other deities. *Who grazes:* His flock among the roses, in a good, pleasant, and beautiful pasture. (Rashi)

It is understandable that one's dedication to fulfill all of another's needs would be a demonstration of love. However, here Klal Yisroel describes the great love between them and Hashem by the fact that we ask exclusively of each other, to the exclusion of all others, for the fulfillment of all of our needs. How does asking exclusively of a specific person to provide your needs demonstrate your great love for them?

When one is in a loving relationship with another they tend to feel free to ask them to fulfill some of their needs, however, whenever possible, they will ask of others as well so as not to overburden their beloved. Klal Yisroel expresses the otherworldly love between us and Hashem by stating our realization that the fulfillment of each other's needs is not a burden upon us at all. Rather, it is the very focus of our existence and Hashem's purpose of Creation. As such, we don't feel the need to lighten this burden by sharing it with others. Fulfilling another's needs is an expression of love, in this case the love that the entire universe was created for!



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Fortunate is the man who places his trust in Hashem and does not turn towards the haughty.

(Tehillim 40:5)

Fortunate is the man who places his trust in Hashem - This refers to Yosef, *and does not turn towards the haughty* - for as a result of his asking of the butler, "Remember me and mention me," Hashem added two years to his imprisonment. (Medrash)

This Medrash is very hard to understand, for in the first part it refers to Yosef as the example of one who places his trust in Hashem. However, it immediately goes on to say that he was punished for turning towards others for his salvation.

The Beis Halevi explains: To enable us to climb the ladder towards true Bitachon, the Torah allows us to perform Hishtadlus - natural efforts to obtain our needs. This is in order to make it easier for us to trust in Hashem's ultimate salvation. Therefore, the level of Hishtadlus one is permitted to perform is dependent upon his level of Bitachon. The higher one's level of trust in Hashem, the less Hishtadlus he is expected to perform. Our Medrash teaches us that because Yosef had reached such a high level, becoming the very example of one who places his trust in Hashem, even the Hishtadlus of merely saying a few words to the one who it seemed clear was sent by Hashem to be a conduit of his salvation, was considered, on his level, a lack of trust in Hashem.