

LET'S BE REAL

Chanukah 5782

On Chanukah we make the bracha each night הזו בימים ההם בזמן הזה. The Ramchal (*Derech Hashem*) teaches us that even today during Chanukah there is הארה of the נס of Chanukah. This concept is a tremendous chizuk. This implies that we have the ability to tap into the light of the Menorah of the Bais Hamikdash. The question is how do we apply this to our practical life in a way that will transform our Chanukah? בע"ה, I would like to offer some suggestions.

The Rambam says that one is supposed to sell his בגד to buy ונרות שמן. He derives this from ארבע ארבעות. What's the connection to ד' כוסות? If you examine the story of יציאת מצרים at its core and the story of Chanukah, you will notice a great similarity.

Klal Yisroel was in מצרים on the ט"ט שער טומאה, seemingly without much hope. – ויתערבו בגוים – they felt like they were one of them, רח"ל. So Hashem pulled them out of the mud, step by step. This is what the ד' כוסות represent – ולקחתי, וגאלתי, והצלתי, והוצאתי. Each expression alludes to the steps they were taking upwards, out of the mud, until they reached great heights.

It's the same with Chanukah. Klal Yisroel were influenced to join the Greek culture. Those who were influenced were known as מתיונים, and there are sources that say that most of Klal Yisroel were influenced. Those who resisted were persecuted, and many people died, ה' ינקום דמם. Klal Yisroel was going lost. Hashem, with His great רחמים pulled us out of the mud, and brought us back to him. Obviously the details of these two great events are different, but in the big picture it's the same.

It's interesting to note that on Pesach the theme is סיפור יציאת מצרים to praise and thank Hashem. Likewise, when the Gemara recounts the story of Chanukah in Maseches Shabbos, the Gemara concludes that the days of Chanukah are set aside ולהלל ליהודות. This is how we celebrate the salvation of נשמת ישראל. The נר of the מנורה also represents that Klal Yisroel's neshama still burns on, and the Rambam seems to learn that when the Gemara says the word ליהודות this alludes to lighting the Menora. Now we can understand why the Rambam connects the ד' כוסות to the Menora.

We can take this even deeper. We know the גמר of יציאת מצרים was קבלת התורה. I would like to present a חידוש. We know that the בית המקדש is known as משוש כל הארץ. It was the source of שמחה for the Yidden. We know that the שולחן was the מקור for parnassah and the Menorah was the מקור for the חכמת התורה, as the Gemara says, הרוצה להחכים ידרים. We know כי נר מצוה ותורה אור. The Menorah is the source for נר ה' נשמת, as well, תורה שבע"פ and the Torah represents our neshama, as well, נר ה' נשמת. אדם.

Applying this lesson to contemporary times, like we started off, בימים ההם בזמן הזה: If we have to pick ourselves up and segregate ourselves from the גוים in this bitter Galus, where nebach so many of our brethren have been lost ויתערבו בגוים. Even many of our fellow Jews are extremely affected to the extent that they are not aware that they are under the influence of the Greeks. If we elevate ourselves in this time, we can have a יציאת מצרים, to an extent. Let's do it! The *Nesivos Shalom* says that that's why the Menorah is under 10 tefachim to show that even the lowest people can be elevated these days. Let's do it! Let's make these days holy!

The Greeks understood that the Yidden draw their energy and fire from the הדלקת המנורה. Therefore, they were מטמא כל השמנים. As a result, without the energy and fire of the Menorah, many Yidden fell victim to the Greeks. However, when the חשמונאים arrived in the Bais Hamikdash, they immediately scrambled to get oil to relight the Menorah. They understood how crucial it was to Klal Yisroel at large. They understood that this would reignite the Neshama of Klal Yisroel and enable them to return.

How great was their simcha when they found the oil, and they immediately lit it to restore the flame in Klal Yisroel. To bring out this concept, I will bring a story that's pretty well known (as told by R' Meilech Biderman), but according to this Yesod it takes on a deeper meaning.

There was an informer who was causing a lot of pain to his brethren. It came to a point that they couldn't tolerate it. They went to the Chozeh of Lublin and they gave his name to the Rebbe to bring the person down. The Chozeh looked at the name and exclaimed that this person's neshama was shining. They looked into it and realized that at that moment the informer was lighting Chanukah candles.

Obviously, when a person performs any mitzvah, his neshama is illuminated. I'm not sure with regard to an informer, if this is the case. However, regarding lighting the Chanukah Menorah, we see that it has the power to illuminate even the מתיונים to bring them back. So too, we can apply this to this story, as well. This informers neshama was illuminated through the Mitzva of Chanuka. **Can we imagine how much our Neshama illuminates when we preform a Mitzva with fire? Especially the mitzvah of Chanukah, which the Rambam says, חביבה היא עד מאד**, and now we can start having an appreciation to understand this.

Therefore, this Chanukah, we should learn Torah and perform mitzvos with fire and love, and hopefully this will flame up our souls, that have become so dim. We can't get carried away with Chanukah parties. I once heard that a certain Rosh Yeshiva got fed up with all the Chanuka parties that were taking place every day. He realized that the Bachurim were not learning much. So he got up and said the following. **"The war between the Yidden and the Yivanim is an ongoing struggle, and we can be sure that this Chanuka the Yivanim won"**. A Chanuka party is important, but more important is to focus on the עיקר, which is to ignite our flame, and not get caught up with the טפל. **Indulging in food is the Greek way.**

Let's move on. We said earlier בימים ההם בזמן הזה. Chazal teach us that as the Yidden were standing at the Yam Suf the מקטרג said ע"ז והללו עובדי ע"ז. We have to know why did the מקטרג come with this קטרוג right then as they stood at the sea?

I believe the answer lies in a Gemara (Brachos 4b). The Gemara says that essentially in the time of Ezra, Hashem should have performed great miracles like by the Yam Suf. However, the Gemara says they were not worthy. We see that in order for Hashem to perform miracles for the nation, they need to be worthy. That's why the מקטרג came with his קטרוג to show that Yisroel was not worthy for miracles.

How did Klal Yisroel get around it? There are different approaches to this. One of them is with their כח of Mesiras Nefesh of jumping into the Yam Suf that enabled them to be zoche to נסים. The reasoning is that with Bitachon and Mesiras Nefesh they superseded nature, transcending טבע, which deemed them worthy of נסים.

I would venture to suggest a tremendous chiddush. We know that Moshiach can come any day, like Eliyahu Hanavi told Rav Yehoshua ben Levi – היום אם תשמע בקולי. In other words, we need to be worthy to be Zoche to the great Nissim of the ultimate Geula, even though the time might be ripe for the Geulah. I would venture to say that Hashem wants to bring huge נסים because that's the ultimate Geulah, but we need to be worthy for it.

Chazal say בניסן עתידין להגאל. This means that ניסן has the סגולת הזמן for the Geula to come even if we're not totally worthy, because the זמן has in itself the השפעה of נסים. So one may wonder, if that's the case, why have many months of Nissan passed, and the Geulah has yet to come? I believe the answer is that we too have to do something, like נחשון did—either with מסירת נפש or other zechusim.

We showed earlier that Chanukah is rooted in Pesach. Maybe we can say פשט in Chazal בניסן עתידין להגאל. We see the great מסירת נפש the חשמונאים had which brought about their ישועה. Therefore, let's be מוסר נפש for Hashem this Chanukah and keep the kedusha, learn Torah and do mitzvos with our heart and soul. When we sit by the candles daven for Malchus Shomayim.

The Aruch Hashulchan actually brings Chanuka together with Sukkos. (you can look it up, its fascinating). If that's the case then this is another Chizuk for the Geula on Chanuka. There are tons of Seforim that connect Moshiach to Sukkos. There are Chazals as well. **Rav Daniel Gladstein brings down that Chanuka is the Chanukas Habayis for the Third Bais Hamikdash.**

Rabbosai, the Seforim teach us that on Chanukah the Shechinah comes down למטה מעשרה. Can we imagine the כח that we have this Chanukah תשפ"ב a year where all סמני משיח are blatantly in front of our eyes. In a time of נסים הזה, בזמן הזה, we have to sit by the Menorah and storm the heavens for רחמי שמים that the חבלי משיח should not be severe and Moshiach should come with all the נסים as prophesized by the נביאים. **We should Daven to Hashem to ignite our נר and the נר of all of Klal Yisroel.**

Rabbosai, let's not squander such an opportunity. Let's take full advantage and ask Hashem to bring back the מנורה הטהורה, and may we be zoche to see with our own eyes Aharon Hakohen lighting the Menorah בימינו אמן במהרה.

