

Nourishment for the Neshama

<http://lvracha.com>

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Chanukah Mikeitz and Ein Od Milvado Gd Consciousnes – The simple unity of Hashem

As we reflect on the miracle of Chanukah, the Maccabees knew exactly what they were giving up their lives for – to rectify the sin of laziness that had brought the decrees to lose the sanctuary service. They fought with super human dedication believing that Hashem could, if He chooses, grant them success even though the natural order of such a small group winning was clearly to lose. Because they were on a level of understanding that a person's power and effort and even good deeds and merits are not the cause for success, because they knew that Hashem gives us a free gift of all that we need, Hashem treated them above nature and granted success. The miracle of Chanukah was given by Hashem in recognition of the Maccabee's correct understanding of reality – that *nature and miracles are all due to free gifts from Hashem, the Bestower.* The Maccabees took it upon themselves to resist the forces of the Greeks who wanted the Jews to forget Torah and to compel the Jews to stray from the statues of Hashem. Hashem stood up for the Maccabee's efforts. Hashem took up their grievance, judged their claim and avenged their wrong. Hashem delivered the strong 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 wanton into the hands of the diligent students of Hashem's Torah.

What is the connection of Chanukah to Mikeitz? Why do we read Mikeitz every year at Chanukah?

Rabbi Binyomin Adler explains it from the Sfas Emes

<http://www.torah.org/advanced/shabbos/5769/vayeishev.html>

"Chanukah teaches to reveal the miracles into the realm of nature ...The miracle of Chanukah was that the Chashmonaim found oil that was sufficient for the lighting of the Menorah for one night, and HaShem made a miracle and the oil burned for eight nights. The Sfas Emes (Chanukah 5631 Third Night) writes that the idea that we express in the passage of al Hanisim that Chanukah is a time lehodos ulihallel, to thank and give praise, corresponds to Yehudah and Yosef. The Sfas Emes explains this idea in various places and I would like to suggest a novel interpretation to this idea. The words Hallel and Hodaah appear to be similar. Yet, we know that every word in Scripture and in rabbinic literature is used for a specific reason. Hallel is similar to mallel, speech, and hodaah means to give thanks. Yehudah reflected the idea that one must thank HaShem for miracles, as we find that Leah named her son Yehudah because she received more than her share of sons being born. Yosef, however, symbolizes the idea that one must constantly be seeking ways to praise HaShem, even when things are not going well and one feels that there are no miracles occurring. We know that even what is referred to as nature is essentially a miracle, and it was Yosef who brought out this idea. Regarding the first dream that Yosef had, it is said (Bereishis 37:7) *vihinei anachnu mialmim alumim bisoch hasadeh vihinei kamah alumasi vigam nitzavah vihinei sisubenah alumoseichem vatishtachavenah laalumasi*, "behold! – we were binding sheaves in the middle of the field, when, behold! – my sheaf arose and also remained standing; then behold! – your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf." This verse alludes to the idea that while the brothers were gathering their bundles in the field, Yosef would reveal that even nature, reflected in the growth of grain, is a miracle. It is for this reason that the Torah states that Yosef's bundle arose and remained standing, as we find that the word used for miracle, *nes*, also is used for something held high, as it is said (Bamidbar 21:8) *visim oso al nes*, and place it on a pole. Thus, Yosef reflects the idea that nature itself can be extended into the realm of miracle, as nature is also a miracle."

The Sfas Emes in Flow from the Source p. 67-69 tells us that

"Yosef ruled over mitzrayim because of his future role in Klal Yisrael. ...Yosef was the flame that brought the fire of the Torah to the lowliest parts of creation (Yosef is called the flame that burns Esav – Rashi, Bereishis 30:25)) The Torah says 'And Yosef was the ruler of the land (aretz) He controlled the physical, the artzios. By defeating the yeitzer hara he shattered the darkness.

The passage continue, 'he was the provider for all the people of the land (am haaretz). The hebrew word am (people) is also used to describe glowing coals – *gechalim amimim*. Yosef found hidden kedusha in all the

'coals of the land." The power of Yosef is exactly that: to gather the hidden sparks of kedushah into a flame. The Medrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 14:5) says that the angel Gavriel taught Yosef seven languages and added the letter hey to his name (see tehilim 81:6 Yehosef – He planted when he went out over the land of mitzrahyim, A language I did not know I could comprehend, in this verse Yosef's name is spelled with an extra hey). Why did he perform these two acts? Using the words of the Torah, Hashem created the world giving every object on earth a corresponding word in heaven to sustain it. The original language of the world was lashon hakodesh, the holy tongue. When Hashem divided the world into seventy nations at the tower of Bavel, seventy languages were also created. The midrash says that when Moshe Rabbeinu began to explain the Torah he taught it in seventy languages. Each language has unique sounds and expressions, and brings spiritual life to a different part of creation. Yosef ruled over Egypt, the source of all exiles, with the power of the Torah, and he had to know how to connect every part of the physical world to its roots in lashon hakodesh. The Talmud (Menachos 29b) says that the physical world was created with the letter hey (the letter heh is opened at the bottom symbolizing the possibility of sin and "falling out" the bottom of the world to Gehennom. The opening in the side of the heh shows the possibility of repentance and entering the world again.) The angel added a hey to Yosef's name and taught him seventy languages to provide him with the exact tools he needed for his new role.

The Zohar Hakodesh says that Yosef started his trial in the bor (pit): And they [the brothers] threw him to the bor; and that he rose to power from the bor: And they rushed him into [to Pharaoh] from the bor [dungeon] We can elucidate this with the passage from Mishlei "Drink water from your cistern (bor) and flowing water from your well (be'er).

The yetzer hara can be compared to a pit that hides man's spiritual self. The Torah, like water, descends into the depths and elevates man from his personal bor; his struggle against the evil inclination reveals the spiritual worlds the yetzer conceals. A pit can be used as a cistern, to contain a fixed amount of water. A spring, on the other hand, provides the world with an unlimited flow from a hidden source. The flowing water from your well (be'er) represents the soul's connection to its roots. During the week a Jew's link to the spiritual is proportional to his Divine service. On Shabbos he is coupled to a flow from the Source and can reach spiritual heights far beyond his own preparations. This is why Shabbos is called yomin d'nishmasim, the day of the extra soul.

Yosef and his brothers parallel these two levels. Yosef's natural connection to the spiritual earned him the title of nazir echav (separated from his brothers). Perhaps because Yaakov recognized this, he favored him and taught him the Torah he had learned in the halls of Shem and ever. [Yaakov had a prophecy that he would have a son through Rachel who would counteract Esav. This is why after Yosef was born, Yaakov knew he could leave the house of Lavan and go back and face Esav.] Yosef had the quality of Shabbos: the be'er that brings the spiritual flow into the world. His brothers, on the other hand, were on the level of the bor, whose limited spiritual content was apparent only after struggling to overthrow the yetzer hara.

Yosef was thrown into the bor, devoid of the water he was accustomed to. His connection to Yaakov and his Torah was severed. Alone in Mitzrayim he was forced to battle the yetzer hara by himself and to search for light in the darkness of exile. He learned to appreciate the greatness of his brothers, who lived constantly on this level. With Hashem's help he succeeded and was ready to leave the bor and return to his level of be'er.

Let's bring out some of the points above to look at together:

1. Alone in Mitzrayim he was forced to battle the yetzer hara by himself and to search for light in the darkness of exile
2. Yosef, symbolizes the idea that one must constantly be seeking ways to praise HaShem, even when things are not going well and one feels that there are no miracles occurring. We know that even what is referred to as nature is essentially a miracle, and it was Yosef who brought out this idea.
3. Yosef ruled over Egypt, the source of all exiles, with the power of the Torah, and he had to know how to connect every part of the physical world to its roots in lashon hakodesh
4. Because they [the Maccabees] were on a level of understanding that a person's power and effort and even good deeds and merits are not the cause for success, because they knew that Hashem gives us a free gift of all that we need, Hashem treated them above nature and granted success. The miracle of Chanukah was given by Hashem in recognition of the Maccabee's correct understanding of reality – that nature and miracles are all due to free gifts from Hashem, the Bestower

The Nefesh HaChayim tells us

"It is a great matter and a wonderful segula to nullify all judgments and forces against a person (so that they won't be able to rule over a person and won't have any effect on him) is when a person sets in his heart and resolves,

Behold Hashem is the true Gd and that there is nothing else other than Him. Every force in the world and in all of the worlds is filled only with His simple unity."

"When a person totally nullifies in his heart every power and force in the world and doesn't pay attention to them at all..and when a person subjugates and attaches the purity of his thoughts in the one Master only...

then Hashem will provide for him that as a result of his resolve will be nullified all of the forces and powers in the world so that they won't have any power against him at all. The person who resolves the above will make spiritual decrees and they will happen so he will be able to do wonderful miracles which are the opposite of the natural order of nature. This occurs because he subjugates and attaches the purity of the faith in his heart only to Hashem in truth without stopping. And Hashem gives this person the power to do whatever he wants, to work within the order of nature or totally the opposite of the order of nature."

We see from the story of Rabbi Chaninya ben Dosa, in the story of his daughter who lights vinegar and it burns like oil, this same principle – that when a person understands that nature and miracle are not different, then Hashem removes His mask and treats the person above nature.

Yosef came to understand the simple unity of Hashem because of his being thrown into the pit by his brothers. In the process of being sold and taken to Egypt, the Meam Loez tells us that Yosef cried at Rachel's tomb, asking his mother for help. Rachel Imeinu tells him that even though it looks this way, it is for the good and will turn out for the best. Rachel gives Yosef insight into the same ein od milvado consciousness that brought her to give Leah the signals. There is nothing but the simple unity of Hashem and our responsibility is to use our free willed choice to bring His light, His Torah, His attributes into the world and thereby tell Him that we love Him and are here to serve Him, not ourselves, especially when we are being squeezed and negativity is coming out of us! When we pierce the barrier that free choice provides [free choice blocks the knowledge of Hashem's simple unity in every act and matter] then the light we can bring is from the Source to the earth. We can shine light.

What does this all come to mean to us as individuals in our daily life and struggles?

What does battling and overcoming the yeitzer hara have to do with this? The yeitzer hara rules the darkness when we contain our options to an egocentric set of free-willed choices. It is only when we recognize to add to our options choices to sanctify Hashem's name which do not apparently benefit us that we tell Hashem that our actions are purely out of love and fear of Hashem and for service to Hashem - that we accept matters and know that it is for our ultimate growth and development and good.

Free will is the Divinely given shield that blocks our sensorily knowing that all there is in this world is the simple unity of Hashem. Torah learning and observation are intended to help us take the natural resources Hashem gives us and bring ourselves to ein od milvado consciousness and emotional love and fear of Hashem. What is that key natural resource? It is the subconscious emotional bonding that we have towards disempowering thoughts, such as I want to be right, I need to correct that person, I have to stop that person, and other emotional reactions squeezed out of us when under stress that seem to perpetuate rather than resolve emotional negative charges and complaints. These negative charges often subconsciously run our lives and seem impossible to overcome. But that is not true. We need Hashem's help to do it, but we can direct our hearts and remove that Divinely given natural resource, that emotional bonding that we have to things that trap us, and tell Hashem that we want to use that glue to stick ourselves emotionally to love and fear of Hashem, in devekus. Imagine if a person had some gold nuggets in his pocket but didnt know it was gold and the person was impoverished and starving to death, begging for money. In his pocket is unrefined gold but he sees them as pebbles, worthless, junky rocks. If he understood what was in the rocks, his life would change.

Through suffering and emotional discomfort we can see where the natural resources of Gd-given emotional bonding, divinely given emotional glue are, free it from the negativity, and find the path to perfecting ourselves, as did Mattisyahu ben Yochanan, Rachel Imeinu, Rabbi Chaninya ben Dosa and Yehoseph HaTzaddik King of Egypt!

May this Chanukah message invigorate us to become more like the aspect of the Diviine within us, beginning today.

Here are some resources:

Rabbi Yaakov Zalman Labinsky <http://www.becomingdivine.com>

Rabbi Aryeh Nivin <http://www.newchabura.com>

Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller <http://www.dutiesoftheheart.net>

Rebbetzin Tzipora Harris <http://www.clarityseminar.com>

Jewish women's project for ahavas Yisrael <http://www.ayproject.com>

Rabbi Rietti Jaiwish Inspiration Anatomy of Hatred

http://www.jewishinspiration.com/watch_videos_lectures.php

