



Parashat Mikeitz & Chanukah

לא להתייאש

הגמרא בשבת (דף כא.) אומרת על נר חנוכה שמצוותה משתשקע החמה. מצות נר חנוכה בעיקר בזמן שקיעת החמה, בזמן שהחושך מכסה ארץ והלב מתכווץ מבידודת ויאוש, ונדמה שאין תקוה וניצוץ של אור – דוקא אז מצוה להדליק נר חנוכה, להעלות אור, לגרש את היאוש ולשאוב בטחון ואמונה!

The “Light” of Chanukah

In the beginning of creation the Torah hints at the four exiles that the Jewish people will have to endure. The Pasuk states (Bereishit 1:2) "And the earth was empty and desolate, and darkness was upon the face of the depths. And the spirit of Hashem was hovering over the face of the water." On this Pasuk the Medrash (Bereishit Rabbah 2:4) comments, "'And the earth was empty', refers to the exile of Babylon, 'and desolate' refers to the exile of Persia, 'darkness' refers to the exile of Greece, 'upon the face of the depths' refers to the Roman exile. 'And the spirit of Hashem was hovering', this refers to the spirit of the Mashiach." The Medrash is telling us that the Greeks are synonymous with darkness. The Chanukah Menorah on the other hand is synonymous with light. It is the light of the Menorah which drives away the darkness of the Greeks; and it is the light of the Menorah which until today helps us drive away the influences surrounding us; and will continue to do so until the day that the spirit of Hashem will hover over us and Mashiach will come.

A Chanukah Story

The following incident occurred in Bergen Belsen on Chanukah during the middle of the Holocaust. Erev Chanukah had been a particularly grim day in the camp. Many Jews had been randomly shot, and their bodies were still lying on the ground as the day ended. The Jews who remained found an old shoe, made some oil out of shoe polish, made a wick out of threads of a garment and wanted to light Ner Chanukah. The Rabbi of Bluzheve, being one of the leaders in the camp, proceeded to light Ner Chanukah and recite the appropriate blessings. He recited the first blessing "...to kindle the Chanukah candle". Then he made the second blessing "...who has done miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time." Then he came to make the she'hechyanu ("... who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this occasion"). Before he made the she'hechyanu he paused and hesitated. He looked around and then made the blessing. There was a Jew who witnessed this scene and later came to the Rebbe and said

bitterly, “Spira, I understand how you can make the first blessing and I can understand how you make the second blessing but tell me, Spira, how can you in this terrible place with dead Jews lying around us make the she’hechyanu blessing thanking Hashem for keeping us alive and bringing us to this time?” The Rebbe looked at the Jew and said “You know, I had the same problem. But then I looked around and saw that these Jews in these worst of circumstances, surrounded by death and destruction, got together and insisted on fulfilling the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles even in these horrible conditions, and I said to myself for this alone one can and should make the blessing “she’hechyanu v’kiyamanu v’higeeyanu lazman hazeh.”

In The Blink of An Eye

When Pharaoh heard that Yosef was able to interpret dreams, the Pasuk states (41:14): “And Pharaoh sent and called Yosef, and they ran with him from the prison.” The Chofetz Chaim zt”l takes note that when the time came for Yosef’s liberation, he wasn’t let out of prison slowly. Rather he was rushed out of his captivity with great speed. This is the way Hashem brings about redemption. A person may not always realize it, but their salvation is continuously being prepared. When the time is right the salvation will occur in the blink of an eye. This is how it will be with the final redemption as well. As soon as the right time comes we will immediately be delivered from our exile.