

Kinder Torah

Parashas Miketz

Only Pure Oil

The miracle of Chanukah: one flask of pure oil, normally just enough for one day, burned eight days. Rav Moshe Feinstein asks (in the name of the Re'ame) the following question. Hashem does not like (so to speak) to perform miracles. Since the entire congregation was *tomei* (impure), it was permissible to light the menorah with *tomei* oil. Why then did Hashem perform a miracle, making the *tahor* (pure) oil burn, when the *tomei* oil could have been burned in its place? The answer to this question begins in the very beginning of the Torah.

"There was darkness on the face of the deep" (Bereshis 1:2). The Medrash explains that darkness was the *golus* (exile) of Yavan (Greece), who darkened the eyes of Klal Yisrael with their *gezeiros* (decrees against the mitzvos) [Bereshis Rabba 2:4]. What darkness did Yavan bring? The ancient Greeks are usually regarded as an "enlightened" society, excelling in architecture, philosophy, and sport. However, their field of vision was limited. They saw nothing Divine in the creation. Klal Yisrael's service to Hashem disturbed their illusion that man was the greatest power. Therefore, they set out to force Hashem out of the picture.

They outlawed the observance of Shabbos, Bris Milah, and Kiddush Ha'chodesh. Shabbos testifies that Hashem created the world. Kiddush Ha'chodesh demonstrates holiness in time. Bris Milah shows that our bodies are to be used for serving the Almighty. These three mitzvos exemplify Hashem's presence in the world, therefore the Yevanim wanted to stamp them out. They entered the Beis HaMikdash, plundered it, and defiled its purity.

Their rule spread spiritual darkness throughout the land of Israel. Most Jews became *Misyavnim* (Hellenists), joining the Greek way of thinking. Loyal Jews were afraid to protest, until there Mattisyahu and his sons arose. These twelve Chashmonayim stood up for the honor of Hashem and His Torah. They began a revolt, which eventually led to the overthrow of Greek rule in the Holy Land. They expelled all of the evil and brightened the darkness. They purified the Beis HaMikdash and lit the menorah.

Rav Moshe explains that they could not be lenient and allow the use of *tomei* oil at such a time, when evil forces sought to destroy the holiness of our nation. This small amount of oil was the beginning of a new era of purity and holiness. The spiritual light of the menorah would shine for millennia. Therefore, only the purest

oil could be used. Never mind that it was small in quantity. Mattisyahu and his sons were also small in quantity, yet they succeeded in spreading great light in the darkness. Why? Because they were absolutely pure in quality. So too the pure oil, spread, and continues to spread spiritual light throughout Klal Yisrael.

*Kinderlach . . .
The miracle of Chanukah is an inspiration to all of us. We have the power to push away the darkness that surrounds us. Our Torah learning, mitzvos, and acts of kindness can light up the world. However, we must guard their purity. What we see, hear, read, and say must be tahor, without even a trace of tumah. Be on the lookout for books, magazines, music, and electronic gadgets that contain improper material. Guard your mouth to say only words of purity. Keep yourself as pure as the oil. B'ezrat Hashem kinderlach, your light will shine forever.*



Pipe Dreams

"It happened at the end of two years to the day: Paroh was dreaming" (Bereshis 41:1). The Noam Elimelech has an exotic interpretation of this verse. The word *shenatayim* (two years) hints to two aspects of every mitzvah. The mitzvah itself is a holy act, and engaging in performing it brings additional holiness from Heaven to a person. The word *yomim* (days) refers to *kedusha* (holiness) which is called *yom* (day). A person may think that he has reached the pinnacle in his performance of mitzvos. He has performed it in perfect holiness and brought down the *kedusha* from Heaven. This is only a deception, foisted upon him by the body. "Paroh was dreaming." The word Paroh has the same letters as the word *oref*, which hints to the body, which is full of fantasies. If you think that you have reached perfection, you are dreaming. There is always room for improvement.

*Kinderlach . . .
"I washed my hands and said the blessing before I ate bread. What more can I do?" Much more. You can learn the halachos (laws) of washing and blessing to make sure that you are doing the mitzvos 100% properly. You can learn the perushim (explanations) of the words of the blessing. You can study the reasons behind this mitzvah and blessing. Can you imagine how much better you will perform the mitzvah, and how much deeper you will appreciate and understand it? You have plenty to do!*

Plenty of Unity

"And behold, seven ears of grain were sprouting on a single stalk – healthy and good" (Bereshis 41:5). The Keli Yakar explains that the good healthy grain, which represented the years of plenty, all grew on a single stalk. This represents unity. Similarly, the seven lean cows, symbolizing the years of famine, are referred to as *acheiros* (others). Each one distanced himself from his friend. Therefore, we see that the years of plenty are characterized by unity and the famine is fraught with separation.

This is not so difficult to understand. When people are unified, they can accomplish much more. Additionally, they get more *Siyata Di'shmaya* (Heavenly assistance) because Hashem loves unity and rewards those who humble themselves to get along with others. The opposite is also true. Working alone, you accomplish much less. And lack of unity and fighting is the source of much trouble with the Jewish people.

*Kinderlach . . .
The seven years of plenty in Mitzraim were filled with prosperity and blessings. Wouldn't we all love to receive those types of blessings? Let's begin with unity. Let us all work together this Shabbos, serving the meal and clearing the table. Let Imma assign a job to everyone. Then do your jobs cheerfully without fighting. See if that does not increase the peace and unity at the Shabbos table. Remember, prosperity and unity go together.*

Parasha Questions

- In whose sack was the goblet found? (44:12)
- Were the brothers powerful warriors? (Rashi 44:13)
- What questions did Yosef ask Binyomin and what were his answers? (Rashi 43:30)
- Who was the "other brother" that Yaakov Avinu was referring to? (Rashi 43:14)

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