



Moor Lane More Torah

A Monthly Publication From The Manchester Montefiore Community Kollel

Sponsored Leilu Nishmat Yehudah Ben Shmuel HaCohen Breslauer



Kindle Time

by Rabbi Moshe Stamler

You are in the middle of a job-of-a-lifetime interview [Chief Recruitment Officer for Labour Friends of Israel] when from your pocket your phone emits a special 'pinging' noise which only your wife knows how to make [and you forgot to de-activate her], and you realise you have forgotten that tonight is Chanukah and you are meant to be lighting, right now, surrounded by your bright-eyed family; an oversight which could produce severe doughnut-rationing retribution. Do you have to cut short the interview and rush off, or is there some leeway here?

You see the Shulchan Aruch is very definite that you have only half an hour from nightfall for lighting and no more, and the Yalkut Yosef writes that a person who is at work until late should rather have his wife light in his absence than lighting himself when he comes home.

This does not seem to the prevailing way of doing things for

people stuck at work, and here is why: firstly, the half hour limit is because that is when passers-by were frequent in the streets. In those days everyone lit at the external door, but even in Talmudic times lighting inside was allowed when danger prevented lighting at the door. For those who light inside, the 'spectators' are the family, not the passers-by, and so there is more time to light, as the glosses of Rabbi Moshe Isserlis point out, and it becomes only 'good to be particular' to light at dusk.

Secondly in the good old days before nasty things like light pollution [and global warming and ozone holes, not to mention antibiotics and anaesthetics], the dark streets soon emptied out. Our illuminated streets are full until late, which lead many authorities to extend the lighting time until 9pm or even later in busy streets.

Despite all this wiggle-room, people should try to light their Chanukah lights at dusk, and family and social events should be arranged around this ideal lighting time rather than vice versa, especially this year when Chanukah falls at a holiday time. However, for someone stuck at work, one can light later, so you can stay in your interview, take the recruitment job [and the doughnuts], and may G-d be with you!



Light in the Darkness

by R' Shmuel Oppenheimer

After years of persecution, with the Beit Hamikdash derelict and in need of major repair, the Chashmonaim triumphed over their persecutors. But when they came into the Beit Hamikdash wanting to do the necessary Avoda/service, they could not find a single sealed bottle of oil for lighting the Menorah. Eventually they found a small bottle and a miracle occurred and it provided for 8 days until they were able to produce more, pure oil. One could ask, what was so exciting or memorable about the fact that they found this little bottle, how much did it help things in the larger picture? Everything was in ruins, so much had been vandalized. But on the contrary, the fact that they found this little 'light' in all the 'darkness' gave them hope and courage and most of all it reminded them that Hashem was with them even in the hardest of times.

But it goes further. The Pnei Yehoshuah explains that the whole miracle of the oil was not even necessary: We have a principle that tuma hutra bezibbur, [Temple service in a state of] impurity is allowed when the entire people are impure, and so technically they could have used the impure oil. The fact that Hashem did the miracle for them showed us the unyielding love that He has for us. That is why, explains the Pnei Yehoshua, we primarily celebrate the miracle of the oil with the lighting of the Menorah: the miracle of the war was absolutely necessary for the future of the Jewish people, but the miracle of the oil - which was not strictly needed - shows His love.

In parshat Vayeshev, the passuk tells us that the caravan on which the Arabs to whom the brothers sold Yosef were travelling, was carrying spices. Rashi asks: Why does the passuk need to tell us what merchandise was on the caravan? Rashi answers that it wasn't standard for Arabs to carry spices; usually they would carry oil and resin. For Yosef however, Hashem ordained that it should be spices

so that Yosef shouldn't have to suffer from a bad smell.

A simple question can be asked: Yosef was in a terrible situation, he had just been dumped into a deep pit full of scorpions and then sold as a slave to a passing caravan of Arabs on their way to Egypt. And he had been ripped away from his father Yaakov, to whom he was so close. Would it really make such a difference to him what the smell was like in the caravan? If it smelt a little better would that help things?!

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz zt"l famously explains that, on the contrary, at this dark time when his world had come crashing down, Yosef could have easily come to despair with thoughts like 'Hashem has forsaken me' and 'I've been forgotten by Hashem'. So, Heaven sent him a little hint that it's not the case, Hashem hadn't 'forgotten' him and he was still under Hashgacha/Divine Providence and should therefore not lose his trust in Hashem.

These 'spices' were the little light in the darkness. With this 'light' Yosef strengthened himself to rise above any feelings of despair in his most difficult situation.

This idea can be taken further. When Hashem has decreed upon someone that they have to suffer something, they will only suffer the exact amount decreed and 'needed'. Even a small amount more, in this case the cargo's unpleasant smell, if not decreed will not be given.

Many times it happens that Hashem sends us a test, we are in a hard situation, and then in some other area something good happens to us. We feel 'Why now in my hard situation is this good thing happening? I thought everything was working against me!' Hashem is telling us that He knows just how much we 'need' of this suffering and that He hasn't 'forgotten' us.





Two Celebrations

by Rabbi Chaim Tangy

The two main events we seem to be celebrating and commemorating are the miraculous defeat of the Hasmoneans over the Greeks and the one-day supply of oil which lasted eight days. Interestingly, when the Gemara in Shabbat discusses Chanukah, the battle is hardly mentioned; the focus is on the miracle of the oil. By contrast in 'al hanisim' there is no mention of the oil; it is all thanks and praise to Hashem for the triumph in the war of the few over the many, the impure in the hands of the pure etc.

Maharal explains that when the Jews won the battle against the Greeks, the Sages of the time were unsure whether this was an absolute open miracle, worthy of being accepted as an annual celebration for all future generations, or maybe the events were due to the tactics and bravery of the Maccabees: an immense triumph but not definitely a miracle. When the miracle of the oil took place, that was unmistakable. It was a clear open miracle, completely above nature. That was Hashem's way of saying to the Sages that indeed it was a miracle.

R' Gedaliah Shor expounds: when the prophet Zechariah foresaw the rebuilding of the 2nd Temple, he was shown a menorah with two olive trees to the right and left and was told

that they refer the 'shnei benei hayitzhar' 'the two sons of the oil': these refer to the scholars of Eretz Yisrael and Babylon [Sanhedrin 24a].

The history of the Second Temple was by no means a happy one for the Jews. For the most part, they were under the dominion of various different rulers and empires, and were constantly degraded and oppressed. But amongst all that suffering and darkness, shone the light of Torah coming from Eretz Israel and Bavel. Zechariah foresaw that the happiness and joy of that era would be the light of the menorah and the oil which symbolize the Oral Torah, the time when the scholars of Bavel and Eretz Israel were in their prime, when they were most fruitful.

This was the sign through which Hashem chose to convey the message that this war was miraculous: the light of the menorah, the symbol of the Oral Law; the scholars of the Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi.

This allowed the Jews understand that their struggle was not one merely for self-respect, honour and freedom; it was above all a battle of light against darkness, a fight to overcome the decrees against the Torah and its observance. And that is what we commemorate, that very point of Divine communication to us. And indeed, when we thank and praise Hashem, it is for the ultimate miracle that took place: when Hashem fought our cause, and gave over the mighty in the hands of the weak, the many to the few.



Two Shining Lights

by Rabbi Namir Cohen

There was a nation called the 'Chavrei', whose festival of lights would sometimes coincide with Chanukah. They forbade us to light our Chanukah lights outside at the external door, and instead we had to light inside [Talmud Shabbat 45].

Why were they so opposed to our lights?

There are two answers we can offer.

We have many Mitzvot which are connected with lights: Shabbat candles, ner Chanukah, the candle of bedikat chametz and learning Torah which is compared to light – 'ki ner mitzvah veTorah ohr'. Light can be shone towards you, putting you in the limelight, showcasing your abilities. This light is also blinding for the person it is shining on. Alternatively, it can be used to shine ahead of you, leaving you in the dark, but light up the way ahead of you.

Ner Chanukah may not be used for personal use; they are just to be seen, to awaken in us the memory of what the Almighty did for us, allowing a few brave Jews to conquer a mighty nation. Those Jews fasted as they fought, to emphasize their total reliance in Hashem; to deflect any sense of personal prowess, 'kochi v'otzem yadi'. This is deflecting the light away from us.

When we search for chametz, which represents the yetzer harah [tendency to evil] within us, again, we use the light, not to glorify ourselves but rather as a search-light to detect and rid us of the chametz, bringing us towards the matzah which represents humility.

Ner Shabbat is to promote Shalom Bayit, harmony in the home. Shalom Bayit can only be achieved by placing our family's needs before our own and not focusing on our own needs.

Torah is described in the Zohar as 'Tarya'g Itim',

613 eitzot, guides to emunah and self-perfection. Again, the light which illuminates the way ahead.

The Chavreis' idea of light was to promote their own ego and self-image; they could not accept our light which was for guidance and to deflect self-importance. They had to extinguish our lights which shone ahead of us and replace them with the light of self-aggrandisement.

A place where people come together to pray and where Torah is studied and shared spreads the light from even the quietest room!

