



ALTER RAUBVOGEL

Through a Lens Oily

Everyone knows that Chanukah is eight days long because of the miracle of the menorah, where one day's worth of oil lasted eight days. So it's curious that "Al Hanissim," which we add on Chanukah to the Amidah and *Birkas Hamazon*, doesn't mention the wonder of the oil at all. It only gives thanks for the miraculous victory of G-d-fearing Jews over the Syrian Greeks. In fact, the words of "Al Hanissim" imply that the other addition to our prayers on Chanukah, *Hallel*, was also instated to commemorate our military victory—not the miracle of the oil!

You, in Your abundant mercy, stood up for them in their time of trouble. You fought their battle... And afterwards, Your children came to Your holy Sanctuary... and established these eight days... to thank [you] and say Hallel... ("Al Hanissim")

Why is that?

Rav Moshe Feinstein, in *Darash Moshe*, asks an even more basic question: Why did Hashem perform the miracle of the oil in the first place?

He answers by pointing out that the miracle of Jewish survival is practically guaranteed. In the Torah, Hashem guarantees (spoiler alert!) that when the saga of world history winds down to its conclusion, the Jews will still be around. Hashem promised our forefathers that their children would ultimately inherit the greater Land of Israel, that there will always be Torah-observant Jews.

A corollary of this idea is that when Hashem intervenes in history and saves us, it doesn't necessarily mean that our relationship with Him, at that point, is on friendly terms. He may be simply keeping His end of the deal, as it were. He may be acting out of mercy, despite His displeasure with our behavior. Or,

to take an extreme view, it may actually be a bad thing, G-d forbid—witness the Satmar Rav's dismissal of the miracles surrounding the establishment of the modern State of Israel.

That is why the miracle of the oil was so important. It was a clear sign, far away from the battlefield, that the Jewish People had been spared not out of historical necessity, but because Hashem loved us. It was only after the miracle of the oil that we could look back on our triumph over the Hellenists and know that our relationship with Hashem was not just intact but thriving—that our victory was worth commemorating with a festival of thanksgiving and *Hallel*.

The eight days of Chanukah celebrate the successful end of our long war against the Syrian Greeks. But the holiday is pegged not to the day when the last pagan was killed, nor to the anniversary of the armistice, but to the period of the miracle of the oil, in light of which we could clearly see that we'd emerged from battle closer to Hashem and His Torah. ❧

FROM THE BAIS HALEVI

Too Much Effort

"Praiseworthy is the man who places his trust in Hashem..." (Tehillim 40:5) This verse refers to Yosef.

"...And does not turn to the haughty..." (ibid.) This refers to when Yosef correctly interpreted the Cup-Bearer's dream, and he implored him, "If only you would remember me when you are released from prison, and do a kindness for me, and mention my plight to Par'oh. You will then take me out of this prison." (40:14) Yosef was punished and he remained

in prison for an additional two years—one for each time [he asked the Cup-Bearer to remember him]. (B'reishis Rabbah 49:3)

IF ANYBODY ELSE WERE TO FIND HIMSELF IN Yosef's situation—sentenced to life due to trumped-up charges—not only would we not fault him for pulling every string he could, but we would even encourage him to utilize every connection at his disposal, in order to terminate his unjust imprisonment. Why, then, do we look askance at Yosef's attempts to do the same thing, to the point that we would justify *extending* his incarceration

another year for each time he asked?

The fact of the matter is that while it may be true that everyone (even Yosef) has an obligation to do *hishtadlus* (to toil at a project in a normal manner so that the natural result is achieved), Jews believe that, ultimately, it is not the *hishtadlus* that achieves the desired results; we trust that Hashem, and only He, will provide the desired results. We merely engage in *hishtadlus* because it is the key to unlocking Hashem's bounty, since this world was not made to function with overt miracles.

This begs the question: How large of a key do we need, in order to unlock Hashem's bounty?

The answer, of course, is: it depends.

► CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE ►

At the Kollel

Every Day

👤👤 “Dirshu” Gemara Shiur

(Maseches Sota)

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....

Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM

Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

👤👤 Kollel Yisgaber K’ari

(amud-a-day of Mishnah B’rurah)

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....

Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

👤👤 Kitzur Shuchan Aruch

Live video conference!

Rabbi Dani Schon.....

Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

👤 Daf Yomi

Rabbi Meir Minster.....

Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM

Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

👤👤 Nightly Halacha Chabura

Rabbi Dani Schon

& Binyamin Teitelbaum.....

Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

Chavrusa Learning

(private & small groups).....times vary

Sunday *Free brunch!*

👤👤 America Runs on Torah

(Jewish Law & Parasha)

Rabbi Dani Schon

and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM

Grand Deluxe breakfast served

Tuesday

👤 Mishnah

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....8:10–9 PM

👤👤 Partners in Torah at the Mayerson JCC

Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

👤👤 Around the Table

(Parasha & Pirkei Avos)

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9 PM

Wednesday

👤👤 Torah Treasures for Seniors at the Mayerson JCC

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....10:30–11:15 AM

👤👤 Downtown Lunch-n-Learn at Strauss & Troy

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....12–1 PM

Thursday

👤👤 Halacha (based on the parasha)

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM

Homemade refreshments served.

Minyanim for Standard Time

Shacharis

Sunday.....8:15 AM

On Sundays when the Kollel is not

in session, Shacharis is at 8 AM

Monday–Friday.....7:20 AM

Mincha

Sunday.....1:15 PM

Mon.–Thurs. thru January.....2:30 PM

Sun.–Thurs., Feb.–Mar.....5:45 PM

Shabbos.....2:40 PM

Ma’ariv

In the Beis Midrash:

Sunday–Wednesday.....9:45 PM

Thursday.....10 PM

KEY: 👤👤 Beginners

👤 Intermediate

👤👤 Advanced

👤👤 for men and women

Looking for a chavrusa? See Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!

Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

Too Much Effort CONTINUED

Each person needs a different amount of *hishtadlus*, some more, some less. One who is very close to Hashem, and recognizes His hand in everyday events, needs to put forth very little effort in order to unlock Hashem’s bounty, since he anyway recognizes the Source from where it all stems. On the other hand, someone a little more mired in the material world, and has a harder time recognizing Hashem’s hand in everyday events, needs to put in a little more *hishtadlus* before he will merit to see Hashem bestow on him the expected results.

It is important to bear in mind that one gains nothing by overshooting the mark. If, for example, on a scale ranging from 1 to 100, one only requires 50 points’ worth of *hishtadlus* before

he opens up Hashem’s bounty, but he insists on 75, then the punishment will fit the crime. He will not merit to see Hashem’s bounty until he puts forth that 75—when he really could have achieved the same result with less exertion on his part!

Putting it a different way, if a person leaves room for Hashem to do the heavy lifting, he’ll be rewarded with a less stressful life. If a person does not have enough faith, and he insists on working hard, his punishment will be just that—lots of stress and hard work!

To return to our story, Yosef certainly needed to put forth a bit of *hishtadlus*. After all, someone who sits there, with his hands folded in his lap, will not get the ball rolling at all in order to see

Hashem’s salvation. So making one request of the Cup-Bearer was, indeed, appropriate. But the fact that he asked him an additional time was overkill. To quote the adage: “To buy one lottery ticket is *hishtadlus*. To buy two tickets smacks of a lack of faith.” If you are meant to win, then one ticket should do the trick. An additional ticket purchased is just another dollar wasted, to achieve the same result!

But now we arrive at another question, which we will leave the reader to answer: Why was Yosef punished with an additional *two* years in the clink? If his first request was, in fact, appropriate, and only the second was deemed excessive, shouldn’t he have only spent one additional year in prison, not two? 🍷