

Solving an Enigma:

Why Did Our Sages Only Mention the Military Miracle in the Berachah of Modim and Not the Miracle of the Candles?

We have learned in the Gemara (Shabbas 21b): “מאי חנוכה, דתנו רבנן בכ”ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה תמוניא אינון דלא למספד ודלא להתענות בהון, שכשנכנסו יוונים להיכל טמאו כל השמנים שבהיכל, וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום, בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול, ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד, נעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים—what is the significance of Chanukah? As the Rabbis taught: On the 25th of Kislev, the days of Chanukah begin; they last eight days, on which it is not permitted to eulogize or fast. For, when the Greeks entered the Sanctuary, they contaminated all of the oil in the Sanctuary; when the royal house of the Chashmonaim gained the upper hand and defeated them, they searched and found only one flask of oil that way lying with the Kohen Gadol’s seal. It only contained enough oil to kindle for one day. A miracle happened with it; they kindled with it for eight days. In the following year, they established and rendered these days as festivals with respect to the recital of Hallel and words of gratitude.

Regarding “the recital of Hallel and words of gratitude,” Rashi explains the redundant language: “לקרות הלל ולומר על הניסים בהודאה.” In other words, we recite Hallel in the Shacharit service on all eight days of Chanukah. “Words of gratitude,” refers to the recital of “Al HaNissim” in the berachah of Modim in every Shemoneh Esreh and in Birkas HaMazon in the berachah of “Nodeh lecha.” Tosafos (ibid. 24a) comment that “Al HaNissim” constitutes an utterance of gratitude but is not an actual prayer.

We must endeavor to explain why our blessed sages saw fit to institute the recital of “Hallel and words of gratitude” and were not satisfied with Hallel alone. For, on the Shalosh Regalim—and on Pesach in particular, commemorating the miracles of the exodus from Mitzrayim—they only instituted the recital of Hallel; they did not institute the recital of “Al HaNissim” in Modim.

Furthermore, let us examine the formula of “Al HaNissim.” They mention at length only the details of the military victory of the Chashmonaim over the Greeks:

“בימי מתתיהו בן יוחנן כהן גדול חשמונאי ובניו, כשעמדה מלכות יון הרשעה על עמך ישראל, להשכיחם תורתך ולהעבירם מחוקי רצונך, ואתה ברחמיך הרבים עמדת להם בעת צרתם, רבת את ריבם, דנת את דינם, נקמת את נקמתם, מסרת גיבורים ביד חלשים, ורבים ביד מעטים, וטמאים ביד טהורים, ורשעים ביד צדיקים, וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך, ולך עשית שם גדול וקדוש בעולמך, ולעמך ישראל עשית תשועה גדולה ופורקן כהיום הזה, ואחר כך באו בניך לדביר ביתך, ופינו את היכלך, וטיהרו את מקדשך, והדליקו נרות בחצרות קדשך, וקבעו שמונת ימי חנוכה אלו להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול.”

In the days of Matityahu, the son of Yochanan Kohen Gadol, the Chashmonai, and his sons, when the Greek regime rose up against Your people Yisrael, to make them forget Your Torah, and to compel them to stray from the statutes of Your will, You in Your mercy, which is abundant, stood up for them in their time of distress. You championed their cause, judged their claim, and You avenged their wrong. You 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 tzaddikim, and the willful sinners into the hands of the diligent students of Your Torah. For Yourself You made a name that is great and holy in Your world, and for Your people Yisrael You performed a victory of great magnitude and a salvation as this very day. Thereafter, Your children came to the Holy of Holies of Your house, cleansed Your Temple, purified the site of Your Mikdash and kindled lights in the courtyards of Your sanctuary; and they established the these eight days of Chanukah to express gratitude and praise to Your great name.

The commentaries are astounded by this formula! What prompted the Chashmonaim to institute this formula of Al HaNissim as an expression of gratitude solely for the miracle of the military victory—without any mention whatsoever of

the miracle involving the lighting of the menorah? They merely state: **“And they kindled lights in the courtyards of Your sanctuary.”** They should have also mentioned the miracle involving the single flask of pure oil; it only contained enough oil to kindle the menorah for one day and yet, miraculously, it sufficed for an entire eight days.

The Maharal of Prague: The Military Victory Was the Main Miracle

We shall begin our illuminating journey with the words of the Maharal of Prague in Chidushei Aggados (Shabbas 21b). Sensing this difficulty, he concludes that the military victory of the Chashmonaim over the Greeks constituted the primary miracle of Chanukah. Here is what he writes:

“ואם תאמר וכי בשביל שנעשה להם נס בהדלקה, ולא היה זה רק לעשות מצות הדלקה היו קובעין חנוכה, וכל נס שחייב להודות ולהלל הוא בשביל הצלתו, ולא בשביל שנעשה לו נס לעשות המצוה, וראיה כי בעל הניסים לא הזכירו הנס של הנרות כלל. ויש לומר שעיקר מה שקבעו ימי חנוכה בשביל מה שנצחו את היוונים, רק שלא היה נראה שהיה ניצחון על ידי נס השי"ת שעשה זה, ולא מכוחם וגבורתם, ולפיכך נעשה הנס על ידי נרות המנורה, שידעו שהכל היה בנס המלחמה גם כן.”

One might suggest that the miracle involving the lighting of the menorah was merely for the sake of performing a mitzvah; whereas one is only obligated to express praise and gratitude for a miracle involving salvation. The formula of Al HaNissim seems to corroborate this notion, for it contains no mention of the miracle involving the lighting of the menorah. Yet, it seems that the festival of Chanukah was established primarily to commemorate the victory over the Greeks. For, it is not as obvious that this was a miracle performed by the hand of G-d, rather than an extraordinary feat accomplished by the Chashmonaim with their own might and bravery. Therefore, a miracle also occurred involving the menorah, so that everyone would recognize that the military victory also involved a miracle.

He teaches us that the significant miracle that took place on Chanukah was the military victory. The priestly, holy Chashmonaim waged a holy war—a “milchemes mitzvah”—despite the overwhelming odds against them; they were much fewer in number and much weaker than their formidable foe. The evil Greek regime opposed Yisrael, intending to make them forget and abandon Hashem’s Torah. Had it not been for the military victory against the Greeks—whose decrees prohibited Yisrael from observing the mitzvot—the miracle involving the lights would have served no purpose.

Yet, it is possible to conclude erroneously that the military victory, although unlikely, occurred by natural means. For, occasionally, the outnumbered, weaker, stubborn force defeats its superior opponent. Therefore, HKB”H performed the miracle with the lights—a supernatural feat indicating that the military victory was also a miracle, albeit a miracle concealed within the confines of nature. For this reason, only the miracle of the military victory is mentioned in Al HaNissim.

Nevertheless, the Maharal’s explanation requires further amplification. Accepting the fact that HKB”H performed the miracle with the lights in order to prove that the military victory was also a miracle, still our blessed sages considered the miracle of the lights extremely significant; so much so that they instituted a special mitzvah commemorating the event—the lighting of the Chanukah candles. This being the case, why didn’t they include mention of this miracle in the berachah of Modim? Here is what the Sefas Emes writes about this matter (Chanukah 5635):

“הלל והודאה. נראה דהלל נתקן על נס הנרות, כי בהודאה לא נזכר הנס, וגם כי הודאה שייך על דבר שאין יכול להתקיים בלא זה ומודה להשי"ת שעזרהו, כמו (ברכות נד): ארבעה שצריכין להודות, ולכך ההודאה נתקן על ההצלה. והלל על נס הנרות שהיה רק לתוספות חיבה ולשמחה יתירה, ועל זה שייך הלל.”

“Hallel and expressing gratitude”: It seems that Hallel was instituted regarding the miracle of the lights. For in the expression of gratitude this miracle is not mentioned. Furthermore, the expression of gratitude applies to something that could not have happened without the intervention from above; hence, the individual thanks Hashem for his help. We find this in the Gemara (Berachot 54b) regarding the four who are obligated to give thanks. Therefore, the expression of gratitude was instituted in relation to the salvation. Hallel was instituted regarding the miracle of the lights—an added bonus expressing adoration and extreme joy.

So, according to the Sefas Emes, the recital of Hallel--“הלל”--relates specifically to the miracle of the lights; the expression of gratitude--“הודאה”--relates specifically to the military victory. Yet, this, too, deserves further explanation. Why did they see fit to differentiate between the two miracles rather than combining them together as one with the recital of Hallel? Additionally, with all due respect to the Sefas Emes, why was Hallel instituted regarding the miracle of the lights while “הודאה” was instituted with regards to the military victory—and not the other way around?

The Visible Miracles Serve to Help Us Recognize the Concealed Miracles

It appears that we can defend the position of the righteous Maharal of Prague by introducing an incredible principle, which the Ramban teaches us at the end of Parshas Bo (Shemos 13, 16), concerning the miracles surrounding the exodus from Mitzrayim. The purpose of those supernatural miracles that HKB”H performed on our behalf was to make us aware of the incredible miracles that are performed on our behalf daily within the guise of natural occurrences. Here are his famous words:

ומן הנסים הגדולים המפורסמים, אדם מודה בנסים הנסתרים שהם יסוד התורה כולה, שאין לאדם חלק בתורת משה רבינו, עד שנאמין בכל דברינו ומקרינו, שכולם נסים אין בהם טבע ומנהגו של עולם, בין ברבים בין ביחיד, אלא אם יעשה המצוות יצליחנו שכרו, ואם יעבור עליהם יכריחנו ענשו, הכל בגזירת עליון כאשר הזכרתי כבר.”

The amazing miracles, recognized by all, help a person recognize the concealed miracles which underlie the entire Torah. A person is not entitled to a portion of the Torah until he believes wholeheartedly that everything that happens to us is miraculous; there is no such thing as nature. This applies both to events affecting individuals as well as to events affecting the masses. Everything is decreed and controlled from above.

It is well known that it is not permissible to pray for a miracle. This is expressed by the Sefer Chassidim as follows (794): **“אסור להתפלל שיעשה לו הקב”ה נס בשינוי העולם”**. He proves his point from the Gemara (Taanis 26a) which states that one is prohibited from praying that a tree should bear its fruit prematurely. The reason being that HKB”H created the world to operate in accord with the laws of nature; yet, it is essential that a person believes with all of his heart that HKB”H governs nature.

So, it is prohibited to pray for a miracle, because HKB”H does not want to change nature. At the time of the exodus from Mitzrayim, however, Yisrael had sunk to the forty-ninth level of impurity. As a consequence, HKB”H performed supernatural miracles on their behalf in order to instill in them faith in Hashem. Still, the main purpose for these extraordinary feats was to bring the people to the realization that even nature is governed by Hashem’s hand—as stated by the Ramban: **“ומן הנסים הגדולים המפורסמים, אדם מודה בנסים הנסתרים שהם יסוד התורה כולה—due to the obvious miracles, a person becomes aware of and grateful for the hidden miracles, which are the basis for the entire Torah.**

י”ן Equals ל”ג Indicating that They Believed in the Wisdom of the Zodiac Cycles

With this Ramban in mind, we can better appreciate the formula instituted for **“Al HaNissim”**: **כשעמדה מלכות יון הרשעה “when the Greek regime rose up against Your people Yisrael, to make them forget Your Torah.** As we know from our holy sources, the Greeks believed only in the laws of nature. They denied that Hashem worked within the realm of nature. This is expressed by the Midrash as follows (B.R. 2, 4): **“והושך זה גלות יון שהשיכה עיניהם של ישראל בגזירותיהן, —שהיתה אומרת להם, כתבו על קרן השור שאין לכם חלק באלקי ישראל—”** “darkness” represents the exile of Greece, whose decrees threw Yisrael into a spiritual darkness; they ordered Yisrael to write on the horn of an ox that they have no association with the G-d of Yisrael.

In Shaarei Simchah (Chanukah), the great Rabbi Simchah Bunem Sofer (the son of the Ktav Sofer) explains the rationale behind the decree to write this declaration specifically on the horn of an ox based on the passuk in Yeshayah (1, 3): **“ידע שור—an ox knows its owner.** Seeing as an ox recognizes its master, they decreed that Yisrael write specifically on an ox’s horn that they have no association, chas v’shalom, with the G-d of Yisrael. Rather, they should believe in themselves and their own powers, in keeping with the motto (Devarim 8, 17): **כוחי ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה—my strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth.**

How sweet are the words of the illustrious Bnei Yissaschar (Kislev-Teves 4, 47), who interprets the phrase **“when the Greek regime rose up against Your people Yisrael, to make them forget Your Torah”** as follows:

“יון זה שמם לדראון ולחרפות, יו”ן בגימטריא גלג”ל, זה היה כל מגמתם להשכיח מישראל התורה, רק להאמין שאין שום הנהגה למעלה מן הגלגלים, והכל הוא בטבע הגלגלים ושפיטת הכוכבים... והנה מלכות הזאת מצד הסטרא אחרא אשר רצונם ומגמתם היה להשכיח התורה, זה היה שמם בסטרא אחרא יו”ן בגימטריא גלג”ל.” The name יו”ן is derogatory and has negative connotations alluding—**ל”ג** possesses the same numerical equivalent as the word to the zodiac cycle. This was their method of making Yisrael forget and abandon the Torah; they were taught to believe that there was no governing force superior to the constellations. Everything is controlled by the constellations and the stars... Since this evil regime wished to make Yisrael abandon the Torah, their name reflects the possesses the same יו”ן, negative forces at play in the universe; hence **ל”ג** numerical equivalent as the word

Based on what we have learned from the Ramban, we can add a pleasant tidbit concerning the phrase: “להשכיחם תורתך”—**to make them forget Your Torah.** We cited above the Ramban’s statement that an individual can have no part of the Torah until he believes that all of our experiences are a form of miracles and that nature is actually an illusion. So, when the Greeks wished to undermine and eliminate the belief in Hashem’s management of the world within the guise of nature, their goal was to essentially cause Yisrael to abandon Hashem’s Torah.

We have now gained a better understanding of the Maharal’s position that Chanukah was established primarily to commemorate the military victory over the Greeks. The ultimate purpose of “emunah” is to believe wholeheartedly that even that which appears to be a natural phenomenon is in fact Hashem acting within the guise of nature. This belief is the true victory over the Greeks; for, they intended to uproot the very concept of “emunah” and to attribute everything to the workings of nature.

To this the Maharal adds: “רק שלא היה נראה שהיה ניצחון על ידי נס השי”ת שעשה זה ולא מכוחם וגבורתם—the victory over the Greeks did not appear to be a miracle wrought by Hashem, and people were liable, chas v’shalom, to fall prey to the klipah of Yavan and the misguided belief that the victory was a purely natural phenomenon; וּלְפִיכֵךְ נַעֲשֶׂה הַנֵּס עַל יְדֵי נִרְוֹת הַמְּנוֹרָה שִׁדְעוּ שֶׁהַכֹּל הִיא בְּנֵס הַמְּלַחְמָה גַּם כֵּן. In other words, HKB”H performed an additional miracle, an obvious supernatural feat involving the lights of the menorah, precisely as described by the Ramban. As a result of this latter obvious miracle, they would come to appreciate that the military victory, although appearing to be a natural phenomenon, was also in truth a miracle. This is why they only mentioned the miracle of the military victory in the berachah of Modim; for it served the primary purpose—to instill in Yisrael the “emunah” that even natural phenomena are supervised and governed by Hashem.

The Term “Hallel” Relates to Supernatural Miracles

Taking the high road, let us now focus on the explanation provided by the Sefas Emes. We learned in the Gemara: “קבעום—they established and rendered these days as festivals with respect to the recital of Hallel and expressions of gratitude. Hallel was instituted regarding the miracle of the lights; “הודאה”, expressions of gratitude, was instituted solely for the miraculous military victory. So, let

us present an essential principle concerning the difference between “הלל” and “הודאה”. “הודאה” relates to miracles performed beyond the realm of nature; whereas “הודאה” relates to miracles concealed within the realm of nature.

We can substantiate this fact by referring to the following statement in the Gemara (Shabbas 118b): “הקורא הלל בכל יום—the one who recites Hallel daily is thereby belittling and blaspheming Hashem. Now, this is curious seeing as Chazal themselves instituted the practice to praise Hashem three times daily in the berachah of Modim: “על חיינו ועל המסורים בידך, ועל נשמותינו הפקודות לך, ועל נסֵיך שבכל יום עמנו, ועל נפלאותיך וטובותיך שבכל עת ערב ובוקר וצהריים”—for our lives that are committed to Your hands, and for our souls which are entrusted to You, and for Your miracles which accompany us daily, and Your wonders and favors that are at all times—evening, morning and afternoon. Thus we see that we express gratitude to Hashem on a daily basis for the miracles and wonders He performs on our behalf. If so, why is a person who recites Hallel every day considered a blasphemer and one who belittles Hashem?

It appears that we can provide an answer based on an explanation from the Meshech Chochmah (Bechukosai):

“הענין דההנהגה הניסיית היא אינה תכליתית, שהשם ברא העולם שתתנהג באופן הטבע... והטבע הוא רק ניסים רצופים אשר מתרגל עין הרואה... ולמען שלא יטעה האדם וישכח בורא ומסדר ומשגיח מהטבע, ויחשוב לרוב הרגלו כי הטבע היא בעצמה להפרידה מיוצרה לכן יש ניסים, אבל אינם תכליתיים, והניסים הוא רק להעיר לבות בני אדם על מפעלות הבורא ברוך הוא בהטבע כי היא ידו והשגחתו הטהורה.

ולכן האומר הלל הגדול בכל יום, שמורה שראוי להודות רק על הנך פעולות שעל דרך נס, אבל מפעלות הטבע אין צריכים להיוצר אחרי שבראן הרי זה מחרף ומגדף, אבל (ברכות ד:) כל האומר תהלה לדוד בכל יום, שזה מדבר על מפעלות סידור הטבעי אשר בכל יום, כמבואר, מובטח שהוא בן העולם הבא.”

Miracles are not the ultimate goal of creation; for Hashem created the world to function based on the laws of nature... Nature is merely a series of miracles that a person has become accustomed to. Miracles merely serve to remind us periodically of the Creator’s existence and constant supervision; lest we erroneously begin to believe that the laws of nature exist on their own.

Therefore, a person who recites Hallel daily--indicating that one only need express gratitude to Hashem for supernatural feats and not for the daily wonders of nature—belittles Hashem’s actions and is a blasphemer. In contrast, a person who recites

“Tehillah l’David” (Ashrei) daily, extolling the marvels of nature, is guaranteed to be a member of Olam HaBa.

Here we find explicit confirmation that Hallel is recited only in relation to miracles and supernatural feats. This is why our blessed sages instituted the recital of Hallel on the Shalosh Regalim, which commemorate the exodus from Mitzrayim—events associated with miracles beyond the realm of nature. Therefore, a person who recites Hallel every day belittles Hashem and is a blasphemer. For, he is indicating his belief that it is only necessary to thank Hashem for miracles performed beyond the confines of natural law. This is the message conveyed by the Sefas Emes, in the name of the Chiddushei HaRim, that “הלל” is related to the notion of “בהלו גרי”—the revelation of the light by means of a miracle performed beyond the laws of nature, without any concealment.

The Term “הודאה” Relates to Miracles Concealed within the Confines of Nature

We can now address the subject of “הודאה”. Whereas “הלל” relates to miracles performed beyond the realm of nature, “הודאה” expresses gratitude to Hashem for miracles concealed within the guise of nature. I became aware of this distinction through the incredible teachings of the Avodat Yisrael (end of Parshas Re’eh). He writes in the name of his teacher, the Maggid of Mezritsch, zy”a:

“והנה מי שמסיר המסך המבדיל נקרא המאמין, כי אמר לנו אדומו”ר הגאון מוריגו הרב דוב בער זצ”ל, כי לכן נקרא הוד מלשון (עירובין יב.) מודים מכלל דפליגי, כי במקום שאין פלוגתא לא שייך לשון הודאה, רק במקום דפליגי אז מכונה בלשון הודאה, כלומר אף על גב דפליגי יש לך מי שמודה בדבר.”

The concept of “הודאה” is only relevant and applicable where a dispute exists and a difference of opinions. In other words, even though there is a dispute, one party admits to the fact of the matter. [Translator’s note: In Hebrew “modeh” means to admit or to thank. So, “הודאה” has a dual connotation—to express gratitude and to admit.]

Thus, we can explain the association of “הודאה” with Hashem’s supervision and management within the confines of nature. To all outward appearances, it is not evident that a particular event was orchestrated by the hand of Hashem. Consequently, there is room for heretics to deny Hashem’s involvement and to claim falsely that events were dictated entirely by the laws of nature. Yet, we--the holy descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak

and Yaakov--“מודים”, express gratitude to Hashem for managing our lives and existence according to the laws of nature. The term “מודים” applies here: “מודים מכלל דפליגי”—since this truth is not accepted by all. There are those who deny that Hashem operates within the guise and confines of nature; but we express our gratitude to Hashem for governing our lives by means of ever-present miracles concealed within nature.

Amazingly, let us add to this idea what we have learned in the Gemara (Niddah 31a):

“דרש רב יוסף, מאי דכתיב (ישעיה יב-א) אודך ה’ כי אנפת בי ישוב אפך ותנחמני, במה הכתוב מדבר, בשני בני אדם שיצאו לסחורה, ישב לו קוץ לאחד מהן התחיל מחרף ומגדף, לימים שמע שטבעה ספינתו של חברו בים, התחיל מודה ומשבח, לכך נאמר ישוב אפך ותנחמני, והיינו דאמר רבי אלעזר, מאי דכתיב (תהלים עב-יח) [ברוך ה’ אלקים אלקי ישראל] עושה נפלאות לכדו, וברוך שם כבודו לעולם, אפילו בעל הנס אינו מכיר בנסו.”

Rav Yosef expounds on a passuk in Yeshayah (12, 1). He states that the passuk concerns two merchants who embarked on a business trip. One of them got a thorn lodged in his foot and was unable to continue; he began to curse. Several days later, he received news that his friend’s ship had sunk at sea; he began to thank and praise G-d for saving his life. We see that often a person does not recognize the good performed on his behalf.

This is an illustration of “הודאה”: there are two conflicting views on the matter. On the surface, it appears as if getting stuck with a thorn was a negative occurrence; however, it subsequently became evident that everything was orchestrated from above for this person’s ultimate benefit. Therefore, even though it is prohibited to recite **Hallel** on a daily basis, because this service was instituted only for obvious, visible miracles such as those associated with exodus from Mitzrayim and their like; nevertheless, we express our gratitude to Hashem on a daily basis in the form of **Modim**: ועל נפלאותיך **and for Your miracles which accompany us daily, and Your wonders and favors that are at all times—evening, morning and afternoon.** This is appropriate and permissible, because “הודאה” expresses our gratitude for the daily miracles HKB”H performs on our behalf within the confines of nature.

We can now rejoice at having achieved a small degree of enlightenment with respect to Chazal’s insight concerning the establishment of Chanukah as days of “הלל” and “הודאה”.

We recite Hallel all eight days to commemorate the miracle of the lights—a supernatural feat. Yet, as we learned from the Ramban: **“ומן הניסים הגדולים המפורסמים, אדם מודה בניסים הנסתרים שהם יסוד התורה כולה”**—the incredible and obvious miracles teach a person to recognize and admit to the concealed miracles, which are the foundation of the entire Torah. Therefore, our blessed sages instituted the recital of the formula of **Al HaNissim** in the berachah of Modim, as well. This additional expression of gratitude is directed at the Chashmonaim’s military victory. For, specifically concerning this feat, there is the possibility of misconstruing it as a purely natural occurrence.

This explains quite nicely why this expression of gratitude was instituted specifically in the berachah of Modim. For, that berachah is designated to thank Hashem for the management of our existence according to the laws of nature. As we have learned, this is the domain of Modim: **“מודים מכלל דפליגי”**—areas that are not apparent to all and, thus, involve controversy. At this point, we can add a pleasant tidbit elaborating on a teaching of the Arizal’s in Pri Eitz Chaim. He points out that in the berachah of Modim, there are precisely 86 words—the numerical equivalent of the name **אלהים**. The Ramak explains in Pardes Rimonim that Hashem’s management of the universe according to the laws of nature emanates from the name **אלהים**—which possesses the exact same numerical equivalent as the word **הטבע**, the realm of nature. On the other hand, Hashem’s management that is above and beyond the realm of nature emanates from the name **הוי”ה**, the source and cause of all that exists.

This also explains why the berachah of Modim is comprised of precisely 86 words, the numerical value of the name **אלהים**—which equals **הטבע**. This teaches us that the expression of

gratitude contained in Modim is especially for matters that occur within the confines of nature. It is essential that we know and believe that HKB”H oversees everything; he conducts the universe according to the laws of nature via the name **אלהים**—a name which alludes to the realm of nature, **הטבע**. For this reason, they instituted the expression of gratitude for the military victory specifically in the berachah of Modim. In this manner, we thank Hashem even for events that appear to be natural phenomena.

Based on what we have discussed, we can now appreciate why our blessed sages established the eight days of Chanukah as a festival characterized by **“הלל”** and **“הודאה”**, each with its own respective time and place. Hallel to commemorate the miracle of the lights—a supernatural feat—is recited during Shacharit. Our expression of gratitude, **“הודאה”**, for the miraculous military victory—which transpired within the guise of nature—is recited in the berachah of Modim (and **“Nodeh lecha”**). The **“הודאה”** is meant to inculcate in us an everlasting **“emunah”** to bow down to Hashem in gratitude for all natural phenomena. In this manner, we successfully uproot and dispel the heresy championed by the Greek regime—not to bow down to Hashem in acknowledgement of His benevolent involvement in our everyday existence—a heresy they tried to impose upon Yisrael. Therefore, they intentionally made no mention in the berachah of Modim of the miracle involving the lights—which transcended the boundaries of nature. They wished to emphasize that this is the place to express our gratitude to Hashem for everything that occurs within the realm of nature.



Donated by Dr. Ralph and Limor Madeb
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