

Yaakov's Image Appeared to Yosef on "Zos Chanukah" in the Window that He Lit the Eight Chanukah Candles

In our parsha, parshas Vayeishev, we read about the difficult ordeal Yosef experienced with the wife of his master (Bereishis 39, 11): **“וַיְהִי כַּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וַיָּבֹא הַבַּיִתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלָאכְתּוֹ וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאֲנָשֵׁי הַבַּיִת — שֶׁם בְּבֵית — and it was on that day that he entered the house to do his work, and not one of the men of the household was there in the house.** Concerning this incident, we have learned in the Gemara (Sotah 36b): **“בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה בָּאתָה דִּיקְנָהּ שֶׁל אָבִיו וְנִרְאָתָה — באותה שעה באתה דיוקנה של אביו ונראתה — at that moment, the image of his father appeared to him in the window.** The commentaries struggle to explain why Yaakov's image — coming to help Yosef overcome the influence of his yetzer — appeared specifically in the window and not inside the house.

We shall begin our enlightening inquiry by presenting the remarks of the holy master, Rabbi Aharon of Belz, zy”a, as brought down in Leket Imrei Kodesh (Vayeishev p. 194a). He presents a magnificent explanation in the name of his esteemed father, Rabbi Yissachar Dov of Belz, zy”a, based on what we have learned in the following Gemara (Berachos 34b): **“אִל יִתְפַּלֵּל אָדָם אֲלָא בְּבֵית — שִׁישׁ שָׁם חֲלוֹנוֹת, שְׁנֵאמַר (דְּנִיָּאל ו־יָא) וְכוּיָן פְּתִיחֵן לִיה בְּעֵלְיָתָהּ נִגַּד יְרוּשָׁלַם — a person should only pray in a house with windows, as it states: “He had windows open in his upper chamber toward Yerushalayim.”** This, in fact, is the accepted halachah, as stated in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 90, 4): **“צִדִּיק לִפְתּוֹחַ פְּתָחִים אוֹ חֲלוֹנוֹת כִּנְגַד — צִדִּיק לִפְתּוֹחַ פְּתָחִים אוֹ חֲלוֹנוֹת כִּנְגַד — one should open doors or windows in the direction of Yerushalayim and pray toward them.**

The Gemara (Berachos 30a) explains that while davening, a person should direct his thoughts toward Eretz Yisrael, toward Yerushalayim, toward the Beis HaMikdash, toward the Kodesh HaKodashim and toward the “kapors”: **“נִמְצָאוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכּוּוֹנִין אֶת — נִמְצָאוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכּוּוֹנִין אֶת — thus, all Jews are directing their thoughts to a single location.** This teaches us that Yosef HaTzaddik prayed regularly toward a particular window in his master's house — which faced toward Yerushalayim, the Beis HaMikdash, the

Kodesh HaKodashim and the “kapores.” Therefore, his father's likeness appeared to him in the very same window that he always prayed toward. This concludes his holy remarks.

Yosef's Difficult Ordeal Occurred on the Eighth Day of Chanukah

In honor of the auspiciously approaching eight days of Chanukah, I was struck by a wonderful and novel idea, based on a tremendous chiddush that I learned from the teachings of the Imrei Noam (Zos Chanukah). Yosef's ordeal with his wife's master concerning matters of kedushah, and the appearance of his father's image in the window, occurred on the eighth day of Chanukah — commonly referred to in our holy sefarim as **זאת — “Zos Chanukah.”** He writes:

“בַּפְּסוּק וַיָּבֹא הַבַּיִתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלָאכְתּוֹ. יֵשׁ לֹמֵר כִּי בְּלֵיל זֹאת חֲנוּכָה הַכוּוֹנָה הִיא [הַמְדָּה הַשְּׁמִינִי מִגְּמֵדוֹת שֶׁל רַחֲמִים] נִצְרָה חֶסֶד עוֹלָה בֵּית, וְתִיבַת מְלָאכְתּוֹ עוֹלָה זֹאת חֲנוּכָה, וְתִיבַת לַעֲשׂוֹת עוֹלָה שְׁמִין זֵית.”

The passuk states that **“he entered the house to do his work.”** We can suggest that this took place on the evening of “Zos Chanukah” based on the following allusions from the passuk: (1) The eighth of the “midos harachamim” is **נִצְרָה חֶסֶד** (412), which possesses the same numerical value as the word **מְלָאכְתּוֹ** (“his work”) possesses the same numerical value as **זֹאת חֲנוּכָה** (497) and (3) the word **שְׁמִין זֵית** (“to do”) possesses the same numerical value as **לַעֲשׂוֹת** (807), meaning olive oil.

According to the Imrei Noam's allusions, we can interpret the passuk as follows: **“וַיָּבֹא הַבַּיִתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלָאכְתּוֹ — He entered the house to do his work” — he entered the house to perform the holy task of lighting the Chanukah candles; this occurred on the eighth day of Chanukah, as alluded to by the word מְלָאכְתּוֹ,**

which equals **זא"ת הנוכח**. Hence, in the merit of the mitzvah of lighting the Chanukah candle, he merited safeguarding from the performance of an **"aveirah"** — consistent with the notion of (Koheles 8, 5): **"שומר מצוה לא ידע דבר רע"** — **one who observes a mitzvah will know no evil.**

This coincides amazingly with what the Megaleh Amukos on Vaeschanan writes (252): **"אנטיוכ"ס שהוא בגימטריא יוס"ף, שהיה מל"ך (Antiochus) possesses the same numerical value as יוס"ף (Yosef); he was מל"ך יו"ן (the King of Greece), which also possesses the same numerical value as יוס"ף (156).** The great Rabbi of Ropshitz, zy"a, explains in Zera Kodesh (Chanukah fifth night) that the klipah of Yavan (Greece) involves immorality--transgressions in matters of kedushah--as explained by Rashi (Shabbas 23a). It is precisely for this reason that they abolished the mitzvah of milah. Hence, the kedushah of Yosef HaTzaddik, the representative of the attribute of "yesod," counteracted the klipah of Yavan — which attempted to breach and destroy Yisrael's barriers in matters of kedushah. Here are his holy words:

"והנה קליפת מלכות יון היתה בקליפה נגד מדת יוסף, כמו שכתב בספר מגלה עמוקות שמל"ך יו"ן גימטריא יוסף... ולכן גזרו היוונים לבטל המילה שהוא בחינת יוסף, גם גזרו על בנות ישראל (רש"י שבת כג. ד"ה היו) שכל בתולה הנישאת תבעל לטפסר תחילה, כי רצו להגביר קליפת ערות הארץ, היפוך יוסף שגדר את עצמו מן הערוה ועמד בניסיון, הגם שהיה במצרים ערות הארץ שהיו כולם שטופי זימה."

He points out that the klipah of the Greek regime stood diametrically opposite Yosef's attribute of kedushah. It was for precisely this reason that the Greeks outlawed the mitzvah of "milah," which represents Yosef's sanctity. Their goal was to intensify and enhance the klipah of immorality — "ervas ha'aretz"; whereas Yosef accomplished just the opposite. He personally avoided immorality, even though he found himself in Mitzrayim, "ervas ha'aretz," the hotbed of immorality.

It seems obvious that these words of the great Rabbi of Ropshitz, zy"a, in Zera Kodesh are the source for what his outstanding talmid, the great Rabbi of Sanz, zy"a, writes in Divrei Chaim (Chanukah): **"ידוע שקליפת יון היא החופפת על הברית, — it is known that the klipah of Yavan is the one that covers (conceals) the 'Bris'; hence, the King of Yavan, אנטיוכ"ס, possesses the same numerical value as יוס"ף; for, they oppose each other.**

Accordingly, we can suggest that is the reason why Yosef lit Chanukah candles; because the Chashmonaim defeated

and subdued the klipah of **מל"ך יו"ן** by means of the power of the kedushah of **יוס"ף** — both possessing the same numerical value. It turns out, therefore, that Yosef shares a part in the Chashmonaim's victory over the Greeks. This being the case, it is entirely fitting for him to fulfill the mitzvah of **"hadlakas ner Chanukah."** Thus, we find that the following statement in the Gemara applies to Yosef (Pesachim 25b): **"הרי זה בא ללמד ונמצא — on the one hand, Yosef and his kedushah had a profound influence upon the Chashmonaim; adhering to his kedushah enabled them to defeat the Greeks. On the other hand, by fulfilling the mitzvah of 'hadlakas ner Chanukah,' he derived moral strength from their kedushah, enabling him to remain steadfast in his kedushah in Mitzrayim.**

ל'מד ו'ן ג'רות ח'נוכה Is an Acronym for חל"ן

We have now been enlightened as to why the visage of his father appeared to Yosef specifically in the window. For, we have learned in the Gemara (Shabbas 21b): **"תנו רבנן גר חנוכה מצוה להניחה: על פתח ביתו מבחוץ, אם היה דר בעלייה מניחה בחלון הסמוכה לרשות הרבים" — the Rabbis taught that it is a mitzvah to place the "ner Chanukah" at the doorway to one's house, on the outside; however, if one lived in an upper chamber, he should place it in the window adjacent to the public domain.** With this in mind, we can humbly suggest a novel explanation. When in his master's house, Yosef HaTzaddik lit the Chanukah lights in the window of his room; clearly, he could not light them outside the doorway of his Egyptian master's house. In his own room, he could make the excuse that he merely wanted to illuminate the room and the window seemed a good place to him.

Upon further consideration, this coincides very nicely with the Maharid's explanation that this window faced the place of the Mikdash and this was Yosef's designated place to pray. Accordingly, we can postulate that this is why Yosef specifically chose this spot to light his Chanukah candles; for it faced the Mikdash and commemorated the miracle that HKB"H was destined to perform on behalf of the Chashmonaim in the Mikdash — enabling them to kindle the menorah with pure oil.

The Chashmonaim would institute the kindling of these lights in the future to commemorate their victory over the Greeks, which prevented them from corrupting the kedushah of Yisrael. Seeing as the visage of his father Yaakov appeared in order to save him from a transgression of kedushah with his master's wife, it appeared to him specifically in the window that he lit the Chanukah lights. Similarly, in the merit of Yosef's

exemplary kedushah, the Chashmonaim were able to overcome the Greeks, as implied by the Megaleh Amukos's allusion: מל"ך יו"ס possesses the same numerical value as מל"ך יו"ס. Thus, as explained above, Yosef influenced the miracle of Chanukah with his kedushah and in return also received kedushah from that miracle, which enabled him to conquer his yetzer.

Now, as we know, we follow the view of Beis Hillel (Shabbas 21b). Every night, we add an additional candle. Thus, during the eight days of Chanukah, we light ל"ז (36) candles. [This sum does not include the "shamash," which is lit each night.] Therefore, on the last night of Chanukah--"זאת חנוכה" — when Yosef experienced the ordeal with his master's wife, he had already finished lighting all thirty-six Chanukah candles. This then is the allusion Chazal provided for us with the statement: "באותה שעה באתה דיוקנו של אביו ונראתה לו בחלון". They specifically employ the word ל"ז alluding to the ל"ז (36) candles, which he lit that night in the window. Additionally, the word for "window" -- חלון — is an acronym for חנוכה ו' נרות ח' נוכה — **thirty-six Chanukah candles.**

This agrees very nicely with the formula instituted by the "Beis-din" of the Chashmonaim to be recited in the "Al HaNissim" for Chanukah: "ולעמך ישראל עשית תשועה גדולה ופורקן כהיום הזה" — **and for Your people Yisrael, You performed a great salvation and redemption on this very day.** The commentaries toil to explain the significance of the phrase: "ופורקן כהיום הזה". Yet, based on what we have learned, we can suggest that they were providing us with the following allusion. The root of the miracle of Chanukah, enabling the Chashmonaim to defeat the Greeks, stemmed from the power of Yosef HaTzaddik's kedushah. Describing his ordeal with his master's wife, the passuk states: "ויהי כהיום הזה" ויבוא הכיתה לעשות מלאכתו. In the merit of Yosef, where the Torah employs the term: "כהיום הזה", they adopted the formula: "ולעמך ישראל עשית תשועה גדולה ופורקן כהיום הזה".

Yaakov Appeared to Yosef on the Eighth Day of Chanukah Corresponding to the Eight Days of Milah

After giving the matter much thought, I would like to propose an explanation for why HKB"H, Who orchestrates everything in the universe, subjected Yosef to this unimaginably difficult ordeal on the eighth day of Chanukah — prompting his father's image to appear in the window that he had lit the eight Chanukah lights. It states in Megillas Antiochus (11) that when the evil Greek regime oppressed Yisrael in an effort to make

them forget and abandon Hashem's Torah, they decreed that three mitzvos be abolished: חודש שבת ומילה — **sanctification of the new month, Shabbas and milah.**

I saw in Imrei Noam (Zos Chanukah 3), from his son, the author of Ateres Yeshuah, zy"a, that this is why they instituted that the formula of "Al HaNissim" for Chanukah begin with the words: "בימי מתתיהו ב"ן יוחנן" — which have the numerical equivalent of: ח"ש שבת מילה (1099). This, however, requires further explanation. The Chashmonaim established the eight days of Chanukah as a time of praise and gratitude. Where do we find any reference to the fact that HKB"H spoiled the Greeks' plans to prevent Yisrael from fulfilling these three mitzvos?

We find in the writings of the Bnei Yissaschar (Kislev-Teves 4, 88) a wonderful answer presented in the name of the great Gaon Chida in Rosh David (Mikeitz). Within the eight days of Chanukah, there is always one day that is Shabbas kodesh and one day that is Rosh Chodesh Teves — on which we also recite "Al HaNissim" for sparing the mitzvos of Shabbas and Rosh Chodesh. Additionally, the eight days of Chanukah themselves correspond to the eight days of milah. Thus, we have an allusion during the eight days of Chanukah to all three of these mitzvos that the Greeks wished to abolish; because HKB"H interceded and spoiled their plans.

Based on this notion, the Chida reconciles the famous question of the Beis Yosef (O.C. 670) regarding the establishment of Chanukah as an eight day festival. After all, the Gemara (Shabbas 21b) informs us that they found one flask containing enough oil to provide one day of kindling. Thus, when the oil lasted for eight days, only seven of the days were actually the result of a miracle. So, why indeed was Chanukah established as an eight day festival? Yet, based on what we have just discussed, the eighth day commemorates the fact that as a result of the Chashmonaim's victory, the mitzvah of milah was miraculously restored to Yisrael. This concludes his remarks.

With this in mind, we can explain very nicely why Yisrael customarily refer to the eighth day of Chanukah as "זאת חנוכה". For, the word "זאת" alludes to the mitzvah of milah, as explained in the Midrash (S.R. 38, 8):

"באיזה זכות היה אהרן נכנס לבית קדשי הקדשים, אמר רבי חנינא בנו של רבי ישמעאל, זכות המילה היתה נכנסת עמו, שנאמר (ויקרא טז-ג) בזאת יבא אהרן, זו המילה, כמה דאמר (בראשית יז-י) זאת בריתי אשר תשמרו."

In what merit was Aharon able to enter the domain of the Kodesh HaKodashim? Rabbi Chanina the son of Rabbi

“כיון שנולד שטנו של אותו הרשע, ויאמר יעקב אל לבן שלחני. לשון שליחות למה. יעקב ז' הוי"ת יוסף ו' הוי"ת, סך הכל י"ג הוי"ת בגימטריא של"ח, ובהכרח י"ג הוי"ת לעורר י"ג מדות הרחמים, לבטל קליפת לבן הארמי ועשו הרשע והבן. וזה (תהלים עז-טז) גאלת בזרוע עמך בני יעקב ויוסף סלה, הגאולה הזאת היא תמיד בלי הפסק, כי (ר"ה יז:) ברית כרותה לי"ג מדות שאינן חוזרות ריקם.”

Once the nemesis of that wicked person was born, Yaakov requested that Lavan allow him to leave — “שלחני”. Why is the language of “שליחות” employed? The name Yaakov equals seven times Havaya (7x26=182); the name Yosef equals six times Havaya (6x26=156). Added together, thirteen Havayas equal של"ח (338); the implication is that thirteen times Havaya were necessary to arouse the “thirteen midos harachamim” — in order to negate the klipot of Lavan HaArami and the wicked Eisav. Understand. This is the insinuation of the passuk (Tehillim 77, 16): **“You redeemed Your people, the sons of Yaakov and Yosef with Your powerful arm, Selah.” The geulah is constant without stop, because (R.H. 17b): “A covenant had been made regarding the ‘thirteen midos,’ that they never return unanswered.”**

Thus, we find an explicit reference stating that the names יעקב, which total thirteen times Havaya, correspond to the “thirteen midos harachamim.” These midos are revealed on Chanukah and reduce to ashes the forces of Lavan HaArami and the wicked Eisav. With this in mind, we can appreciate the words of the Midrash presented by Rashi at the beginning of our parsha (B.R. 84, 5): **“כיון שראה אבינו יעקב עשו ואלופיו נתיירא, אמר: לו הקב"ה מאלו אתה מתיירא, גץ אחד משלך וגץ אחד משל בנך, ואתם שורפים אותם כולם, הדא הוא דכתיב והיה בית יעקב אש ובית יוסף להבה”** when **Yaakov Avinu saw Eisav and his chiefs, he became afraid. HKB”H said to him, “You are afraid of these; one spark of yours and one spark of your son’s, and you will consume them all with fire,”** as it is written: **“The house of Yaakov shall be fire, and the house of Yosef a flame.”** The Yitav Lev (Vayeishev) explains the Midrash:

“ונראה לי לבאר דברי חכמים, כי ידוע יעקב מספרו שבע הוי"ת, יוסף מספרו ששה הוי"ת, ובהתאחד שניהם עולים י"ג מדות רחמים, שהם י"ג הוי"ת בגימטריא של"ח, והנה שניהם נכללין זה בזה וזה בזה, אז יעקב עולה אח"ד ויוסף עולה אח"ד... וזהו שאמרו גץ אח"ד יוצא משלך וגץ אח"ד משל בנך כו', ומזה אח"ד ומזה אח"ד, ובהתאסף שניהם עולים מספר הוי"ה, ובכח גץ אחד של יעקב וגץ אחד של יוסף הוא שורפם, כדכתיב והיה בית יעקב אש ובית יוסף להבה.”

It appears that we can explain the meaning of our sages as follows. It is known that Yaakov equals seven times Havaya and Yosef equals six times Havaya. Together they

add up to the “thirteen midos harachamim” — which correspond to thirteen times Havaya; the numerical value of א"ח is thirteen. The two are intertwined and include one another. Thus, Yaakov equals א"ח and Yosef equals א"ח... This is what they meant when they said: “One (א"ח) spark given off by you and one (א"ח) spark given off by your son, etc.” From this one א"ח and from this one א"ח; joined together they equal Havaya (13+13=26). With the impact of one spark of Yaakov’s and one spark of Yosef’s, he burns them to ashes — as it is written: **“The house of Yaakov shall be fire, and the house of Yosef a flame.”**

The Fire of the House of Yaakov and the Flame of the House of Yosef Allude to the Fire and Flame of Chanukah

Incredibly, we can now add a reference from the Imrei Noam (Vayeishev), regarding the passuk: **והיה בית יעקב אש ובית יוסף להבה--the house of Yaakov shall be fire, and the house of Yosef a flame.** He sees this as an allusion to the fire and flame produced by the Chanukah candles — which burn and consume all of the “chitzonim” — external, negative forces. This is accomplished by means of the revelation of the “thirteen midos harachamim” on Chanukah, which correspond to thirteen times Havaya, the sum of the names Yaakov and Yosef-י"ג. יעקב יוסף. Here is an excerpt of what he writes:

“גם בדברי רש"י ז"ל (תחילת פרשת וישב) בהא שמביא הכתוב והיה בית יעקב אש ובית יוסף להבה ובית עשו לקש, שמרומז על אש שלהבת נר חנוכה המבערת כל החיצונים, ולא נשאר שריד לבית עשו... [וזהו] אלה תולדות יעקב יוסף... כי יעקב יוסף הוא י"ג פעמים הוי"ה נגד י"ג מכילין דרחמי שמכוונים בשעת הדלקה.”

The fire and flame of the Chanukah candle consume all of the “chitzonim” — leaving no remnant of the house of Eisav... This is the implication of the passuk: **“These are the generations of Yaakov, Yosef”... Because יעקב יוסף equal thirteen times Havaya, corresponding to the “thirteen midos harachamim,”** which we have in mind when we light the candles.

Further on, the Imrei Noam (ibid.) introduces a tremendous chiddush. When the passuk in our parsha states (37, 3): **וישראל אהב את יוסף מכל בניו כי בן זקונים הוא לו ועשה לו כתונת פסים** — **now Yisrael loved Yosef more than all his sons, since he was a child of his old age; and he made him a fine woolen tunic** — it is alluding to the fact that Yaakov Avinu transmitted to Yosef the secret of the thirty-six Chanukah candles. Here are his sacred words:

“כ”י ב”ן זקני”ם הו”א גימטריא מנור”ה, ותיבת ל”ו הם ל”ו נרות, ותיבות ועש”ה ל”ו גימטריא זי”ת. נמצא נרמז בכאן שמן זית שמדליקין במנורה בימי חנוכה ל”ו נרות. וזו שמביא רש”י ז”ל והיה בית יעקב אש וכו’ ובית עשו לקש, כי תיבות עש”ו לק”ש עולה שמ”ן זי”ת... והוא אור של חנוכה... אשר בזה מכניעין כח עשו וכל כת דיליה.”

The numerical equivalent of the words “כ”י ב”ן זקני”ם הו”א” equals (301); the word “ל”ו alludes to the 36 candles; the words “ל”ו ועש”ה (417) equal זי”ת (olive). Thus, we have an allusion here to the “shemen zayit” (olive oil) used to kindle the 36 candles during the days of Chanukah. This is inherent in Rashi’s comment where he cites the passuk: “והיה בית יעקב אש וכו’ ובית עשו לקש”. The words “עש”ו לק”ש equal שמ”ן זי”ת... This is the Chanukah light... which serves to subdue the force of Eisav and his entire entourage.

We can substantiate the notion that Yaakov grasped the secret of Chanukah from that which is written (Bereishis 32, 25): “ויותר יעקב לבדו” — and Yaakov remained alone. Rashi explains that he had forgotten small jars and went back to retrieve them. The Megaleh Amukos (Vayishlach) writes that he went back to retrieve: “על פך שמן של חנוכה” — the jar of oil related to the Chanukah miracle. Similarly, in his sefer on Vaeschanan (66), he writes: “שאז נתקן מדת הוד ירך יעקב בפק של” — at that time, the attribute of “hod,” the thigh of Yaakov, was rectified by means of the jar of oil; this is the secret meaning of Yaakov’s small jars.

Now, we are aware of Rashi’s comment: “כי בן זקונים הוא לו, כל” — that the Torah’s description of Yosef as “the child of his old age,” implies that Yaakov taught Yosef everything that he learned from Shem and Eiver. That being the case, he certainly conveyed to him the mitzvah of Chanukah, as well. As the Imrei Noam pointed out, this is specifically alluded to by the term “ל”ו in the phrase: “כי בן זקונים הוא לו” — alluding to the fact that Yaakov shared with Yosef the significance of the 36 Chanukah candles. It is also worth adding what the Tzemach Tzaddik writes (Vayeishev): “כי יעקב יוס”ף עם הכולל” — that the sum of the names “יעקב” plus one equals “נ”ר חנוכה” (339).

Now, we can appreciate the amazing set of circumstances at play on that night. It was specifically “Zos Chanukah,” when the lighting of the Chanukah candles is completed, with the

“thirteen midos harachamim” in mind. The image of Yaakov appeared to Yosef in the very same window that he had lit the “חלו” (the first letters of which spell “חלו”), to unite “יעקב” with “יוסף”. Together, they are equal to thirteen times Havaya, corresponding to the “thirteen midos harachamim” which are revealed in toto on “Zos Chanukah.” As a result, all the forces of tumah were subdued, so that they could not prevail over Yosef and cause him to sin. This is conveyed by the passuk: “The house of Yaakov shall be fire, and the house of Yosef a flame” — alluding to the fire and flame of the Chanukah candles.

It turns out, therefore, that we have two reasons explaining why Yaakov’s visage appeared to Yosef in the very same window, facing the place of the Mikdash, that Yosef lit his eight candles on the eighth night of Chanukah. Firstly, because the eighth day corresponds to the mitzvah of milah performed on the eighth day, which possesses the power to weaken the influence of the yetzer and to imbue a person with kedushah. Secondly, on that day, the revelation of the “thirteen midos harachamim” is completed, which negate the power of the yetzer.

It seems clear that these two reasons are intimately related. For, we have learned in the Gemara (Nedarim 31b): “גדולה מילה” — שנברתו עליה שלש עשרה בריתות. Let us explain. In the parsha describing the mitzvah of milah given to Avraham, the word “ברית” is mentioned thirteen times. The Sefat Emet (Lech Lecha) explains that significance of this phenomenon; the “thirteen midos harachamim” are revealed by means of the mitzvah of milah. Thus, we can suggest that the revelation of the “thirteen midos harachamim” is completed on the eighth day of Chanukah, because that day corresponds to the eight days of milah — which facilitate the revelation of the “thirteen midos harachamim.”

Accordingly, the two reasons given for the appearance of Yaakov’s image to Yosef on the eighth day of Chanukah go together hand in hand — “kaftor va’ferach.” For, on the eighth day of Chanukah, corresponding to the eight days of milah — which is associated with thirteen covenants — the “thirteen midos harachamim are revealed. Both factors together enabled Yosef to incinerate and reduce the power of the yetzer hara to ashes, so that he could sanctify himself with the kedushah of the “Bris.”

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