

Explanation of an Obscure Passage in the Tikunei Zohar

The Twenty-fourth of Kislev Corresponds to the Twenty-four letters of "ברוך שם" the Twenty-fifth of Kislev Corresponds to the Twenty-five Letters of "שמע ישראל"

In honor of Shabbas Chanukah, which approaches auspiciously, it is fitting that we examine a fascinating passage in the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 13, 29a):

"תמוניא יומי דחנוכה, לארבעה ועשרין יומין, דאינון ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד, ומיד דעלה זית טרף בפיה, שריא כ"ה על ישראל בכ"ה בכסלו, ואלין אינון כ"ה אתוון דיחודא, דאינון שמע ישראל וגומר, ודא איהו חנוכ"ה חנו"כ"ה".

The eight days of Chanukah are celebrated after the first twenty-four days of Kislev. Those twenty-four days correspond to the twenty-four letters of the declaration of unity: "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד". Immediately thereafter, it plucked an olive leaf with its mouth, as it is written concerning the dove when it returned to Noach's ark (Bereishis 8, 11): "ותבוא אליו היונה לעת—ערב והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה"**the dove came back to him in the evening; and behold, it had plucked an olive leaf with its mouth.** This passuk alludes to the miracle of Chanukah, which involved olive oil. Thereafter, the twenty-five letters of the declaration of unity rested upon Yisrael on the twenty-fifth of Kislev: "שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד". The name Chanukah, which can be broken down to form the two word חנו"כ"ה, indicates this fact. They were able to relax due to the twenty-five letters of the declaration of unity: "שמע ישראל".

In his own inimitable way, the great Rabbi Tzaddok hakohen, zy" a, explains in Pri Tzaddik (Chanukah), that during the first twenty-four days of the month of Kislev, the Chashmonaim defeated the Greeks in battle. This represented the lesser declaration of unity: "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד". As a result, at the conclusion of the battle, they were able to relax on the twenty-fifth of Kislev, representing the superior declaration of unity: "שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד".

Notwithstanding, it is incumbent upon us to explain, in a manner that is relevant to every living being, the general connection between these two declarations—"שמע ישראל" and "ברוך שם"—and the miracle of Chanukah. More specifically, what is the connection between the first twenty-four days of Kislev with the twenty-four letters of "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד"? And what is the connection between the twenty-fifth of Kislev, the day on which the eight days of Chanukah begin, and the twenty-five letters of: "שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד"?

Yaakov Avinu Made Preparations for the Miracle of Chanukah

We shall begin to shed some light on the general connection between the two declarations of unity and the miracle of Chanukah based on a precious and illuminating introduction from our holy Rabbis. They teach us a tremendous chiddush regarding Yaakov Avinu. On the night that he remained alone in order to retrieve some small jars, he actually made preparations for the miracle of Chanukah. It states in parshas Vayishlach (Bereishis 32, 25): "ויותר יעקב לבדו ויאבק איש עמו עד עלות השחר, וירא: and Yaakov remained alone and a man wrestled with him until dawn; upon realizing that he could not overcome him, he struck a blow to the ball of Yaakov's thighbone and it became dislocated as they wrestled."

Based on the Gemara (Chullin 91a), Rashi explains that Yaakov remained alone because: "He had forgotten some small jars and went back for them." Other commentaries are puzzled by this explanation. What would possess Yaakov to risk his life for the sake of small jars? As the Gemara (ibid.) explains,

the thirty-six (ל"ז) Chanukah candles shone upon him along with the sun above, in keeping with the notion of: "Seraphim were standing above, at His service."

We find this incredible chiddush presented by the Shela hakadosh, as well (Vayeishev, Mikeitz, Vayigash 12). He writes: "והנה כתיב (שם כה) ותקע כף ירך יעקב, וזה בא ליעקב על שנשאר יחידי, כי שכח פכים קטנים והלך אחריהם, ובודאי יש דברים גדולים רמוזים בפכים קטנים, Yaakov incurred the injury to his thighbone, because he elected to remain alone. He forgot small jars and went to retrieve them. Without a doubt, those small jars allude to great things. Then you will also comprehend the secret of the flask of oil related to Chanukah.

Yaakov Avinu Prayed for the Miracle of Chanukah

This noble idea also appears in the immaculate teachings of our teacher, the Chasam Sofer (Toras Moshe HaShalem Vayishlach). He explains that Yaakov Avinu used his "ruach hakodesh" to pray for the miracle of Chanukah. He bases his comment on an elucidation of Chazal's brought by Rabeinu Bachaye on the passuk (Bereishis 32, 25): דרשו "ויותר יעקב לכדו, דרשו: רז"ל לכדו קרי ביה, מלמד שחזר על פכין קטנים" they interpret the passuk as a statement that he returned "לכדו"—to retrieve his small jars. In this manner, the Chasam Sofer explains the matter:

"ויש לומר על פי מה שאמרו חז"ל על ויותר יעקב לכדו - שנשאר על פכים קטנים. ואפשר לומר לפי מה דאיתא ברזקא בהלכות פורים (סימן רלה), שיעקב היה רואה עכשיו כל העתידות שיבואו על בניו, ורמז על זה (בראשית לב-יב) ה'צילני נ'א מ'יד ראשי תיבות המן, ותיקן עכשיו הכל להצלחת בניו... וגזירת המן נכלל בגלות מדי, ואחר כך בין מדי לאדום היה יון, ושם זכו ישראל לנס חנוכה, וזה מרומז בויותר יעקב לכדו, שהתבונן מה יש לו עוד לתקן בגזירת יון, וזהו לכדו שיעשה נס לבניו וידליקו גרות חנוכה".

It is possible to suggest based on what the Rokeiach writes in Hilchos Purim that Yaakov foresaw at that time everything that would befall his descendants in the future. He states that this fact is alluded to by the first letters of the words (Bereishis 32, 12): ("spare me from the hand of"), which can be rearranged to spell Haman (Haman). He set in motion at that time all future salvations and successes for his offspring. Haman's decree was part of the galus of Madai. Afterwards, between Madai and Edom was Greece; there Yisrael merited the miracle of Chanukah. This is alluded to by the words "ויותר יעקב לכדו"; he considered

what else he needed to correct with regards to the decree of Greece. This is implied by the elucidation "לכדו"—that he should prepare a miracle on behalf of his children, so that they would light Chanukah candles.

Furthermore, he explains in Toras Moshe HaShalem (Vayeishev) that he remained alone for the sake of small jars to prepare the flask that the Chashmonaim found imprinted with the seal of the Kohen Gadol. This is also mentioned by the great Rabbi of Sanz, zy" a, in Divrei Chaim (Chanukah): "ולזה—מבואר במדרש שיעקב שכח פכים קטנים, היינו הפך של גר חנוכה"—he also associates the small jars with the flask that was used to kindle the Chanukah candles.

We can now shed some light on the general association between the two declarations of unity—"שמע ישראל"—"ברוך שם"—and the miracle of Chanukah. After all, Yaakov Avinu risked his life to return at night for "פכים קטנים"—small jars—to make preparations for the miracle of Chanukah. It was also Yaakov Avinu who established the mitzvah of "krias shema" for us, comprised of the two declarations of unity. This is explained in the Midrash (B.R. 98, 3) in relation to the passuk recording Yaakov's statement to his sons prior to his death (Bereishis 49, 2):

"הקבצו ושמעו בני יעקב. מכאן זכו ישראל לקריאת שמע. בשעה שהיה יעקב אבינו נפטר מן העולם, קרא לשנים עשר בניו, אמר להם שמעו אל ישראל שבשמים אביכם, שמא יש בלבבכם מחלוקת על הקב"ה. אמרו לו שמע ישראל אבינו, כשם שאין בלבך מחלוקת על הקב"ה, כך אין בלבנו מחלוקת, אלא ה' אלקינו ה' אחד. אף הוא פירש בשפתיו ואמר, ברוך שם כבוד מלכות לעולם ועד... הדא הוא שישראל משכימים ומעריבים בכל יום ואומרים, שמע ישראל אבינו ממערת המכפלה, אותו דבר שציותנו עדיין הוא נוהג בנו, ה' אלקינו ה' אחד".

"Gather together and listen, O sons of Yaakov." From here Yisrael were privileged to receive the mitzvah of "krias shema." When Yaakov was departing from this world, he called to his twelve sons. He said to them, "The G-d of Yisrael in heaven is your father. Perhaps you have a personal quarrel with HKB"H?" They replied in unison, "Hear O Yisrael, our father, just as you have no quarrel with HKB"H, neither do we; Hashem is our one and only G-d!" At that point, Yaakov Avinu proclaimed, "Blessed is the name of His glorious Sovereignty forevermore." . . . Commemorating this event, Jews proclaim, every morning and every night, "Hear O Yisrael, our father, from the Cave of Machpelah, that which you commanded us, we still observe: Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is the only One."

"He crossed the ford of the Yabbok" in Preparation for the Miracle of Chanukah

In this manner, we can rise to the occasion and explain the specific connection between the first twenty-four days of the month of Kislev and the twenty-four letters of the declaration: "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד" and the specific connection between the twenty-fifth day of Kislev—the first of the eight days of Chanukah—and the declaration: "שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד". First, however, let us explain what Yaakov Avinu did prior to returning to retrieve the small jars. We read in parshas Vayishlach (Bereishis 32, 23):

"ויקם בלילה הוא ויקח את שתי נשיו ואת שתי שפחותיו ואת אחד עשר ילדיו ויעבר את מעבר יבק, ויקחם ויעבירם את הנחל ויעבר את אשר לו, ויותר יעקב לבדו ויאבק איש עמו עד עלות השחר, וירא כי לא יכול לו ויגע בכף ירכו ותקע כף ירך יעקב בהבקו עמו".

He got up that night and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Yabbok. And he took them, and brought them across the stream, and he brought across that which was his. And Yaakov was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When he perceived that he could not overcome him, he struck the ball of his thighbone; and the ball of Yaakov's thighbone became dislocated as he wrestled with him.

As we have learned, he placed his life in jeopardy in order to make preparations for the miracle of Chanukah. Let us endeavor to explain the relevance and connection between everything Yaakov did on that historic night and the miracle of Chanukah: **"He crossed the ford of the Yabbok. And he took them, and brought them across the stream, and he brought across that which was his."**

It appears that we can explain the matter based on the fact that there were two essential miracles on Chanukah. First, there was the Chashmonaim's miraculous victory over the Greeks; the weak and few defeated the strong and many. We commemorate this miraculous feat in our expression of gratitude "Ahl HaNissim" (Birkas Modim and Birkas HaMazon): **"מסרת גיבורים ביד חלשים, ורבים ביד מעטים, וטמאים ביד טהורים, ורשעים ביד צדיקים, וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך—You delivered the mighty 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**

righteous, and the insolent sinners into the hands of those who diligently study Your Torah. Afterwards, there was a second miracle involving the flask of pure oil, which kindled the menorah for an entire eight days. Now, the Gemara (Shabbas 21b) explains that the eight days of Chanukah were established in commemoration of the miracle of the candles. Why wasn't the festival of Chanukah established in commemoration of the miraculous military victory?

In Ner Mitzvah, the Maharal of Prague explains that in truth the main miracle of Chanukah was the victory on the battlefield. The holy, priestly Chashmonaim engaged in a "milchemet mitzvah." Despite the fact that they were weaker and fewer in number, they combatted the evil Greek regime that imposed itself upon Yisrael, endeavoring to make them forget Hashem's Torah. If not for the military victory over the Greeks, who issued decrees preventing Yisrael from fulfilling key mitzvot, the miracle of the candles would have served no purpose.

However, a person could mistakenly explain the Chashmonaim's military victory based on natural, non-miraculous factors. For, occasionally, weaker, smaller forces fighting with incredible determination are apt to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds. Therefore, HKB"Y performed a supernatural miracle—the miracle of the candles—so that it would be evident to all that the victory on the battlefield was also a miracle; it was merely cloaked within the guise of nature.

The Purpose of All Miracles Is to Recognize the Miracles Occurring within the Realm of Nature

Let us add a little spice to the Maharal's explanation. At the end of parshas Bo (Shemos 13, 16), the Ramban teaches us a fundamental principle. All of the miracles performed by HKB"Y on our behalf during the exodus from Mitzrayim, which were beyond the realm of nature, were intended to inculcate in us the awareness that incredible miracles are performed on our behalf on a daily basis concealed within the realm of nature. Here are the powerful words of the Maharal:

"ומן הניסים הגדולים המפורסמים, אדם מודה בניסים הנסתרים שהם יסוד התורה כולה, שאין לאדם חלק בתורת משה רבינו, עד שנאמין בכל דברינו ומקרינו, שכולם ניסים 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".

Due to the phenomenal, obvious miracles, a person recognizes the concealed miracles, which are the foundation of the entire Torah. A person has no portion in the Torah of Moshe Rabeinu until he believes that everything we do and experience, everything is a miracle; they are not due to nature or natural causes, whether they benefit the general public or an individual. If a person abides by the mitzvot, Hashem will ensure his success and reward. If, however, he violates them, Hashem will ensure his punishment. Everything is decreed from above, as I've already explained.

This enlightens us as to why HKB"H orchestrated two miracles on Chanukah. The first miracle, the Chashmonaim's military victory, transpired within the realm of nature. The second miracle, involving the oil and the candles, transpired beyond the realm of nature; it proved that even the victory on the battlefield was a miracle. This coincides beautifully with the words of the Ramban—that the purpose of all the supernatural miracles is to teach us to recognize the miracles that occur regularly within the realm of nature, which are the foundation of the entire Torah.

Based on this notion, the holy Admor, Rabbi Yissachar Dov of Belz, zy"a, explains the significance of that which the Avudraham writes (Seder Tefilos for Chanukah). He explains that our blessed sages instituted that "Ahl HaNissim" be recited within the berachah of gratitude, in keeping with the passuk (Tehillim 60, 6): "נתתה ליראיך נס להתנוסס מפני קושט סלה"—**You provided those who fear You with a banner (miracle) to be displayed for the sake of truth. Selah.** We can explain that the reason they instituted the formula in the plural form—"Ahl HaNissim" (the miracles)—was to commemorate the two distinct miracles—the military battle and the kindling of the candles—the seemingly natural and the supernatural.

Both miracles were necessary; the miracle of the candles revealed that the military victory was indeed a miracle. This is the message of the passuk: **"You provided those who fear You with a miracle"**—referring to the victory on the battlefield. Then the passuk explains how it was revealed that the military feat was a miracle merely disguised as a natural phenomenon: "להתנוסס"—by means of the second miracle involving the kindling of the candles of the menorah, which was clearly supernatural. This concludes his remarks.

Miracles Emanate from the Name הוי"ה while Natural Phenomena Emanate from the Name אלהים

Our holy sefarim teach us that the divine management of creation based on the laws of nature emanates from the name אלהים—which possesses a numerical value equivalent to הטבע, the realm of nature. On the other hand, the divine management of creation based on supernatural phenomena emanates from the name הוי"ה—encompassing all forms of reality. The source for this concept is found in the Ramak's Pardes Rimonim. Thus, it turns out that on Chanukah, HKB"H performed on our behalf two miracles, employing both of these divine names. The military victory disguised as a natural phenomenon emanated from the name Elokim; whereas the miracle of the candles, a supernatural phenomenon, emanated from the name Havaya.

We can now explain very nicely Yaakov Avinu's actions on that historic night, performed as preparations for the miracle of Chanukah: **"He crossed the ford of the Yabbok. And he took them, and brought them across the stream, and he brought across that which was his."** In Likutei Torah (Vayishlach), the Arizal provides us with an illuminating allusion regarding this passuk. The word יב"ק is numerically equivalent to the sum of the two names הוי"ה and אלהים (26+86=112). This alludes to the fact that in preparing for the miracle of Chanukah, Yaakov Avinu had in mind to combine these two names.

Based on our current discussion, this implies that Yaakov made preparations for the two distinct miracles of Chanukah: (1) The military victory disguised as a natural phenomenon, based on הטבע, which equals אלהים, and (2) the miracle of the candles, beyond the realm of nature, emanating from the name הוי"ה. Regarding these two miracles, it says: **"ויעבר"** מועבר יב"ק. Then the passuk explains why he performed this unifying act, alluded to by **"ויקחם ויעבירם את הנחל"**: יב"ק—he took these two names, whose sum equals יב"ק, because he wished to make preparations for Chanukah. This is alluded to by the word נח"ל, which is an acronym for להדליק נר הנוכה. Then the Torah adds: **"ויעבר את אשר לו"**—specifically employing the term לו"י, which equals thirty-six. He made preparations for the eight days of Chanukah, on which we light thirty-six candles.

"שמע ישראל" beyond Nature
"ברוך שם" within Nature

We can now put all of the pieces together and explain how this coincides amazingly with the fact that Yaakov Avinu instituted the two declarations of unity: "שמע ישראל" and "ברוך שם". The Zohar hakadosh (Vaeschanan 264a) asserts that the passuk: "שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד" is the superior declaration; whereas the passuk: "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד" is the lesser declaration. Here are the words of the Zohar: "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד יחודא דלתתא, יחודא עלאה שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד, דא לקביל דא."

We find an explanation for this concept in the sefer Sur MeiRa VaAseh Tov, authored by the divine kabbalist Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Ziditchov, zy"a. In his own words: "ואסביר לך בדרך פשוט"—**I will explain it for you in simple terms.** The significance of the superior declaration of unity is that the lesser unites with the superior. In other words, the son ascends to the father's sanctuary and unites with him there. As a result, as water reflects facial images, the lesser declaration is generated—the superior unites with the lesser. In other words, the father descends to the son's sanctuary and unites there with his son—to provide him with His abundant good.

Let us provide an analogy. With the declaration "שמע ישראל", we the children ascend in our thoughts to sacrifice our lives, in order to unite with HKB"H, our Father in the heavenly realms, detached from all concerns of Olam HaZeh. Therefore, this declaration is referred to as "יחודא עלאה", because we unite with HKB"H above. After we have ascended to the heavens to unite with HKB"H, we draw Him down below to unite with us in Olam HaZeh declaring: "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד". Therefore, this declaration is referred to as "יחודא תתאה"—the lower or lesser declaration of unity. With this declaration we draw "שם כבוד"

"מלכותו"—the superior being in the universe and the source of everything "לעולם ועד"—into the physical, material world.

We can now rejoice at having gained a better understanding of the words of the Tikunei Zohar. The twenty-fourth of Kislev is analogous to the lesser declaration "ברוך שם". Until that day, the Chashmonaim battled the Greeks and ultimately defeated them. As explained, that miraculous victory was disguised within the realm of nature. Thus, that miracle resembled the lesser declaration of "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו"; HKB"H united with Yisrael within the confines of nature.

On the following day, the twenty-fifth of Kislev, HKB"H performed the miracle of the candles on behalf of Yisrael, allowing them to kindle the menorah for eight days with pure oil. This was a supernatural miracle. Thus, this miracle was analogous to the superior declaration of "שמע ישראל", whereby HKB"H united with Yisrael beyond the confines of nature. We received both forms of unification in the merit of Yaakov Avinu, who made the preparations for these two Chanukah miracles. Furthermore, it was he who established the mitzvah of "krias shema" for us, which incorporates both declarations of unity—"שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד".

We can add one more point based on what we learned from the Ramban. He taught us that the purpose of all the supernatural miracles is to instill in us the belief that all that occurs within the realm of nature is also a miracle. Therefore, the passuk "שמע ישראל", the superior declaration beyond the realm of nature, also alludes to the miracles that occur within the guise of nature. This then is the meaning of the passuk: "שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו"—whether a miracle is supernatural, emanating from the name הוי"ה, or whether a miracle occurs within the confines of nature, emanating from the name אלקים, it is essential that we believe: "ה' אחד"—both are forms of supernatural phenomena.



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