

Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 191

Miketz | The Hidden Light - Education of Youth



MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha
of **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l**

From the weekly lessons of his son
Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita

פרשת מקץ | אנגלית

...PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL...

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Parshat Miketz

Between Shabbat and Chanukah

Excitement and joy gripped the Cohen family. Their father was about to enter his seventieth year and would celebrate his birthday during Chanukah; the entire family prepared for the event with zeal and energy.¹

Uzi, one of the family members, was also preparing for the occasion, and was tasked with preparing a Torah thought for the birthday celebration.

When the day of the party arrived, Uzi paced around, his forehead lined with wrinkles. "I'm not yet prepared to speak; I still need to prepare some more

Torah thoughts in the little time I have left."

His hand reached for the bookshelf and pulled out 'Imrei Noam', a collection of talks by Rabbi Yoram Abargel, and he began to study:²

Our sages established the days of Chanukah for praise and thanksgiving to G-d. Even though they are rabbinic in origin, in a certain aspect they are even higher and more exalted than Shabbat. While Shabbat illuminates those who observe its sanctity, the days of Chanukah shine and influence every Jew, even the most distant and estranged.

Wellsprings of Wisdom

1. The Ben Ish Chai rules (First Year, Parshat Re'eh - Halacha 9):

"When one reaches sixty or seventy years old, it is proper to wear a new garment or take a new fruit, and recite the blessing of 'Shehecheyanu,' having

intention to recite this blessing over one's many years. Some also have the custom of making a feast when they reach the age of seventy."

2. Imrei Noam, Festivals - Chanukah, Essay 3.

Let's delve deeper:

The Talmud states,³ that the time of evening of the lighting of the Chanukah candles is "until the feet of the Tarmodians cease," meaning until the Tarmodians are no longer found in the marketplace, some time after the onset of nighttime.

Rashi explains that the Tarmodians were a nation whose livelihood was to gather sticks and tinderwood and sell them in the market for the kindling of fires in their homes. They would linger in the market until people went home after dark to light their fireplaces, and if they found that they needed more tinder, they would return and purchase from them.

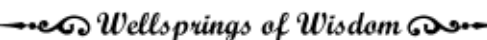
The time for lighting Chanukah candles thus extends until even these last people - the Tarmodians - leave the market, and there is no one left before whom to publicize the miracle.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, of saintly memory, offers a deeper

insight and explanation to this expression of the sages:⁴

The term "Tarmod" (תרמוד), when rearranged, spells the word rebellion (מורדת). Our sages allude to the fact that the powerful light that emanates from the Chanukah candles has the capacity to illuminate even the hearts of those most distant from G-d's ways - those who rebel against G-d and intentionally defy His will - and to inspire them with thoughts of repentance, to the extent that the rebels of the public domain will cease the misdeeds and return in complete repentance.

Therefore, we light the Chanukah candles at the entrance of the home or in a window facing the public domain. The essence of Chanukah is to bring the light of holiness even to those most distant, those immersed in impurity and negativity, which are symbolized by the "public domain" due to their remoteness and great distance from the realm



3. Shabbat 21b.

4. Otzrot HaMoadim' (Chanukah - page 124).

of holiness, which is called the "private domain," being that it belongs to the One and Only G-d.

This is why it is important to light menorahs in central locations in every city around the world - to bring all of Jewry worldwide, without exception, close to the sacred light of Chanukah.

Shabbat in contrast, influences primarily those who observe it, as Rabbi Nachum of Chernobyl writes:⁵

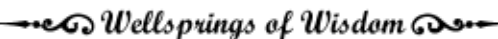
"G-d, in His abundant mercy, gave us Shabbat so that we draw closer to Him. As our sages declare: 'one who observes Shabbat properly, even if he worships idols like in the generation of Enosh, is forgiven, as it is written: 'He who keeps the Shabbat from profaning it' (Isaiah 56:2) - read not 'from profaning it' (מחללו) but rather 'is forgiven for it' (מחול לו)."

However, it is difficult for a person to enter into the holiness

of Shabbat because it is exceedingly high and exalted - it is the very name of G-d. How can one approach such a lofty sphere? Therefore on Chanukah, G-d, so to speak, lowers Himself and draws the person close."⁶

In other words, the sanctity of Shabbat is elevated to a degree that not every Jew can attain. Its holy light doesn't penetrate the heart of someone distant from holiness and inspire them to draw closer to G-d because it doesn't descend to low places where such a person would be.

The uniqueness of Chanukah's sanctity is that it descends to the lowest places and can illuminate even the most distant individuals. The light of Chanukah can positively affect and enlighten their hearts, since it reaches down to the deepest depths, providing the opportunity for even the most distant to draw near to G-d.



5. 'Me'or Einayim' (Parshat Miketz, Discourse for Chanukah).

6. And this is the language of the Mishnah (Shabbat 2:5): "One who is concerned about the lamp, concerned about the oil, or concerned about the wick is liable."

Therefore, the days of Chanukah are regular weekdays and work is permitted, unlike Shabbat and festivals when work is forbidden. This alludes to the fact that the sanctity of Chanukah is so great that it reaches even those deeply immersed in mundane matters.

Similarly we find the ruling in the Shulchan Aruch⁷ that one must place the Chanukah candles on the left side of the entrance at a height below ten handbreadths. The left side symbolizes the side opposed to holiness, and our sages taught⁸ that the Divine Presence never descends below ten handbreadths.

Thus, the left side and the height below ten handbreadths represent a significant distance from holiness, which we strive to illuminate with the Chanukah candles; even to those who have fallen into the darkest and most distant places.

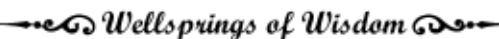
The Chassidic masters in a similar vein, explain the teaching of our sages (Shabbat 21b), "Wicks

and oils which we must not use on Shabbat, we may use on Chanukah."

A Jew is likened to a candle; just as a candle consists of a wick and oil, so too a Jew consists of a body and soul, as the Hebrew word for soul alludes to, 'nefesh' (נֶפֶשׁ), is an acronym for 'ner' (candle), 'petilah' (wick), and 'shemen' (oil).

Our sages above hint that even those individuals ("wicks and oils") that are unsuitable for the light of Shabbat to illuminate them due to their coarseness and lowliness - they can be illuminated on Chanukah, when G-d Himself, so to speak, lowers Himself, ignites the holy light within the person, and assists them - if they only so desire - to return and serve Him with love and joy.

Therefore, according to our sages, even someone who, for any reason, did not utilize the month of Elul, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur to repent, nonetheless has



7. Orach Chaim 671:6-7.

8. Sukkah 5a.

an opportunity to do so during Chanukah. At this time, G-d's light descends even to the lowest places to enlighten and awaken

the Jewish souls, and His hand is outstretched to accept even the most distant and estranged in complete repentance.⁹

The Power of Restraint

Uzi arrived at his father's birthday party and was inspired, and waited impatiently for the opportunity to share the meaningful insights that he had learned. "What immense power these days of Chanukah have, they illuminate every Jew, wherever they are," he thought to himself.

However, the birthday event had too many activities planned, and he was skipped over and wasn't given the opportunity to speak.

"Now I understand," Uzi thought to himself, "the words of Rabbi Chaim Friedlander, in 'Sifte Chaim':"¹⁰

"In one of his essays, the 'Saba' of Kelm recounted an anecdote of inspiration that he hadn't revealed for many years. He had constantly envisioned and imagined his teacher, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, standing before him, observing him and his deeds. For decades, he kept this visualization to himself and didn't tell of it to anyone because he didn't want its intensity to wane."

This principle we learn from the verse: 'Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down' (Proverbs 12:25), and our sages interpreted (Yoma 75a): 'weighs him down'

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

9. In the words of Rabbi Chaim Elazar of Munkatch ('Sha'ar Yissachar', Part II - page 441):

"It has been explained above in the name of the righteous sages. But in truth, in the Talmud, Midrashim, Zohar HaKadosh, and writings of the Ari, we do not find this stated explicitly anywhere.

This matter, of the spiritual opportunities, which extend until Chanukah, was transmitted as a 'secret of the L-rd, with those who fear Him,' from the righteous, by word of mouth."

10. Traits and Service of G-d, Part I, page 269.

(יִשְׁחַנֶּה) - he should share it with others (ישיחנה לאחרים).

Our sages advise that when something troubles a person, he should express it verbally to others, thereby relieving the pressure from himself. Even if the listeners don't resolve his concern, merely voicing his concerns eases the burden, while keeping these feelings bottled up intensifies their impact upon him.

This applies both positively and negatively: When someone has a revelation or an enlightening Torah insight, one that awakens and guides them toward the path of divine service, articulating it can cause its light and impact to fade.

A person who feels the need to raise forth and share outwardly all of their inner experiences, acts superficially. In contrast, someone capable of guarding a secret within themselves for decades, has depth and profundity; they don't feel the need to expose their inner self."

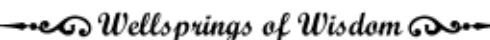
Esav was an example of a superficial person, as Rabbi Moshe Goldstein writes an alternative explanation on the verse:¹¹ "And Yitzchak loved Esav because game was in his mouth" (Genesis 25:28), and Rashi comments: "In his mouth" - Esav would ensnare Yitzchak with his words -

Esav learned Torah and ethics from his father Yitzchak - wonderful teachings that refine the soul and enlighten the body, however, Esav at every opportunity would stand and impart his wisdom.

Listeners would flock to him in admiration: 'Such wonderful words'; 'how fortunate you are'; 'your words are full of taste and wisdom,' yet despite this, he remained the same wicked Esav.

The words of wisdom that he spoke, departed his heart and dulled the personal impact these teachings had on him.

As the verse, 'My soul went out when he spoke' (Song of Songs 5:6) -



Parshat Miketz - The Triad of Lights of Creation

is commonly interpreted to mean that the heart and emotions that are involved in matters are imparted into one's talk of them, and the emotional resonance evaporates.

Consequently, Esav, who lacked any restraint and shared and spoke at every opportunity that he was offered, lost the inspiration of these teachings and the awakening that they espouse and remained a superficial and unchanged person."

Uzi concluded his train of thought and reassured himself, "It turned out for the good that I wasn't invited to share my thoughts. I now have an advantage - by not expressing these words aloud, their profound impact on me remains within me in their full intensity."

"Now, I must delve even deeper to understand why the days of Chanukah have such great power, and have such an extended reach, that is unmatched by any other holiday or festival?"

The Triad of Lights of Creation

Uzi's thoughts continued to wander, and he decided to open a Chumash, and opening to the first page, he read: "In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

His eyes glossed over the commentaries until they settled on the words of the 'Shelah HaKadosh'. After studying his words, Uzi picked up his pen and wrote in summary:

"It was G-d's will to create a world in which three lights would be revealed: the light of the Divine

Presence, the light of Torah, and the light of the mitzvot.

On the first day, the 25th of Elul, the act of Creation began. The light of the Shechinah was then revealed, as it says: 'And G-d said, Let there be light'" (Genesis 1:3), and 'Light' alludes to the revelation of the Divine Presence, as in 'The L-rd shall be a light to me' (Micah 7:8).

On the second day, the angels were created, beginning with the angel Michael, through whom the light of the commandments was

revealed. As it says: 'And G-d said, "Let there be a firmament"' (Genesis 1:6). 'Firmament' symbolizes the light of mitzvah, as in 'And the wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament' (Daniel 12:3).¹²

On the fourth day, the light of Torah was revealed, as it says: 'And G-d said, "Let there be luminaries"' (Genesis 1:14). 'Luminaries' allude to the light of Torah, as in the verse 'For a commandment is akin to a lamp, and the Torah is light' (Proverbs 6:23).

Then, on the final day of creation, the sixth day, G-d created Man, charging him with the mission to illuminate the

entire world with these three divine lights.

It is worth noting two details:

-In the account of Creation, the word 'Let there be' (יהי) appears only three times - in connection with the above three days of creation: 'Let there be light,' 'Let there be a firmament,' 'Let there be luminaries.'

-On the first day of creation, the phrase 'And it was so' (ויהי כן) is not mentioned, unlike all the other days of creation."

We will now skip to the discussion of the rise of the Greek Empire.

The Unholy Rise of Greece

In the year 2448 to Creation, the Jewish people left Egypt, and forty years later, in the year 2488, they entered the Holy

Land: "A land which the L-rd your G-d cares for; the eyes of the L-rd your G-d are always upon it, from the beginning of

... Wellsprings of Wisdom ...

12. In the Talmud (Shabbat 118b), Rav Yosef asked Rav Yosef bar Abba:

"What was your father most meticulous about?" He replied: "In the commandment of tzitzit."

He used the term 'meticulous,' literally 'shine' (זהיר), being that the essence of the mitzvot are a great shining divine light as expressed in the verse, "And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament" (Daniel 12:3).

Parshat Miketz - The Unholy Rise of Greece

the year to the end of the year"
(Deuteronomy 11:12).

For 440 years, the Jewish people lived in the holy Land of Israel, and then, in the year 2928, the construction of the First Temple began.

After 410 years, in 3338, the First Temple was destroyed, and the Jewish people were driven away into a harsh and bitter exile.

They spent seventy years in exile until, in 3408, the Second Temple was rebuilt.

Though the Jewish people were back in their land and the Temple

stood once again, they lacked political independence; Cyrus, king of Persia, ruled over them.

Nonetheless, these were golden years that were filled with sublime light and great spirituality. Finally, after long years of suffering and hardship, they had reached a state of peace and stability.¹³

Thirty-four years passed in tranquility and once again troubles began; In 3442, the Greek Empire began to conquer the world.

The Greek army was formidable, and successfully conquered nation after nation. Everywhere they went,

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

13. At this time the people of Israel dwelt upon their land, and the Second Temple stood erect.

The glory had returned to Jerusalem, and the Torah, which was being forgotten and fading, had already been restored by Ezra the Scribe, who ascended from Babylon.

At this time, the Men of the Great Assembly stood guard and restored the Crown of G-d to its former glory. For Ezra and his entourage who came up from Babylon were great and mighty, and amongst them were sages, prophets, and righteous men on whom the Holy Spirit dwelled, and this

Great Assembly stood for the Jewish people upon their return from exile.

Nehemiah ben Hachaliah, the Jewish governor in Babylon, returned and died there.

Then in the 40th year to the building of the Second Temple, the elderly Ezra the Scribe, of Jerusalem, died, and prophecy ceased from Israel. By then, most of the Men of the Great Assembly had passed away, and the Jewish people were now led by our sages, the authors of the Mishnah ('Toldot Am Olam', Part II

they imposed Greek culture, and the citizens of the conquered lands were compelled to adopt it.

This culture was indeed alluring. The Greeks emphasized physical development, establishing stadiums and gymnasiums for the youth to compete in and strengthen their bodies. They also valued poetry and intellectual exploration.

Under their influence, scientific exploration and discoveries flourished, technological inventions emerged, and various arts developed.

However, these positive influences were overshadowed by negative ones: increased idol worship, loosened moral restraints, heightened obsession with the material body, and widespread licentiousness; under their reign, morality greatly deteriorated.

After 143 years of Greek rule, in the year 3585, Antiochus Epiphanes rose to power. Viewing himself as the guardian of Greek culture, he generously funded the construction of buildings and statues throughout the newly

conquered Greek cities, spreading Greek culture even further.

Then in the year 3616, he summoned his deputies - Nicanor, Bagris, and Polypus - and declared with anger: "In all of my military campaigns, I've never encountered such a stubborn people, who possess such great self-sacrifice.

I demand that you go to the Land of Israel and forcibly impose Greek culture there."

Antiochus Epiphanes rejoiced over every Jew he could ensnare, and the profound spiritual darkness intensified and thickened.

This undesirable culture began to take root among the Jewish people, and its propagators were called "Hellenists."

Antiochus elevated the status of the Hellenists, appointing them to important positions of power: governors, ministers, judges, and officers.

With the spread of Greek "culture," the divine "lights" began to fade, and the impurity and corruption disseminated by this

"culture" obscured the three holy lights - the light of the Divine Presence, the light of the Torah, and the light of the commandments.

Slowly, like a serpent's venom infiltrating the body and paralyzing limb after limb, this "culture" began to penetrate the fabric of the Jewish society, causing myriads to abandon the Torah and its commandments.

This period has been described in the Torah over a thousand years earlier:

"As the sun was setting, a deep sleep fell upon Avram; and behold, a dread of deep darkness fell upon him," (Genesis 15:12), 'Darkness' here, refers to the Greek Empire, which darkened the eyes of Israel from all the commandments of the Torah.¹⁴

The mighty Greek army arrived in the land of Israel and began to systematically eliminate the Jews who refused to abandon their covenant to G-d and Torah; they were brutally tortured and killed.

Many Jews fled to deserts, hiding in crevices and caves, continuing to serve the Al-mighty even there.

The Greeks realized that the Temple was the source of the Jews' strength and resolve, and they decided to desecrate it.

The Hasmoneans launched a revolt, achieving victories on all fronts,¹⁵ and on the 25th of Kislev, in the year 3622 - the 213th year to the Second Temple's construction, they entered the Temple, purified it, and lit the menorah.

...*~* Wellsprings of Wisdom *~*...

14. 'Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer' (Chapter 28).

15. One of the principles that G-d established in His world is that the abundance and vitality that descends to the world - is proportional to the deeds of the lower beings. If they walk in G-d's ways, the whole world is blessed, but if not, G-d forbid, the opposite occurs.

Under the Greek Empire, profound darkness prevailed throughout existence, and the lower beings lacked the strength to draw down abundance, and G-d, in His great mercies, illuminated on His own from His own initiative.

In the words of Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov ('Bnei Yissaschar', Kislev-Tevet - 4:49):

Our sages reveal¹⁶ that in the spiritual sense as well, the immense light that shone then purified the

Jewish souls of the generation, and many of the Hellenists returned to G-d in complete repentance.

The Power of the Hasmoneans

Uzi's forehead wrinkled in thought: "If the Greeks darkened the world and concealed all the spiritual lights, how were the Hasmoneans successful in rekindling them?"

In search of an explanation, he continued studying the 'Shelah HaKadosh':

"When the Greek Empire dominated, the lights of the Divine Presence, the Torah, and the commandments - were concealed.

Spiritually, the world reverted to chaos and void, and G-d in His abundant mercy, began to recreate the world anew. This new light of creation empowered the Hasmoneans and enabled them to purify the world around them."

Uzi sighed in relief. "Oh, I am finally beginning to understand this; G-d illuminated the Hasmoneans with the same light that shone in the Creation of the world."

Wellsprings of Wisdom

"The first utterance 'Bereishit' (In the beginning), alludes to the Jewish people rising in G-d's primordial thought - He created all of creation for the Jewish people, who are called 'Reishit' (first).

Although they were not yet in existence to perform the commandments and good deeds, the mere thought of them and what they would later bring forth, sufficed.

Similarly, during the time of distress and wrath under the Greek Empire, the Jewish people could not annul the decree through repentance, good deeds, prayer, and an

outcry as they did in the days of Mordechai and Esther, because the Greeks prevented them from performing commandments and didn't allow them to assemble.

Therefore, there was not sufficient arousal from below for a divine salvation and redemption, and the miracle occurred similar to the act of Creation: the thought of the Jewish people's future commandments and good deeds sufficed, and this thought served as the arousal from below (which are called 'feminine waters' in Kabbalah)."

16. 'Sefat Emet', Chanukah 5642.

He continued reading and after some reflection, noticed that there is a remarkable parallel between the festival of Chanukah and the six days of Creation:¹⁷

1. Just as the first day of Creation was on the 25th of Elul, Chanukah begins on the 25th of Kislev.

2. The first creation was light - "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3); similarly, the mitzvah of Chanukah involves the kindling of candles.

3. As is known (Chagigah 12a), the original light that G-d created was hidden and not used; likewise, "These lights (of Chanukah) are sacred, and we are not permitted to make use of them."

4. When the Hasmoneans prevailed, they attained the three lights for which G-d created the world: The light of the Divine Presence - with the purification of the Temple, which the Greeks had defiled, as well as the light of Torah and the commandments.

Once again, Uzi frowned, his forehead furrowed as he thought of another difficulty.

"Why are these days called 'Chanukah'? Being that they are illuminated by a great light and parallel the creation of the world, would it not be more fitting to call them 'Days of Creation' or 'Days of Light'?"

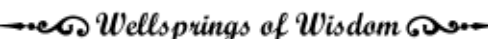
The Essential Light of Chanukah - Education

Uzi reopened 'Imrei Noam' which he had used to prepare for his father's birthday, and read on:

"From the very beginning, G-d decreed that the Jewish people would undergo subjugation under four empires: Babylon, Media, Greece, and Edom.

G-d hinted at this process twice in the Book of Genesis.

The first verse is in the second verse of the Torah: "And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." (Genesis 1:2).



17. See further in the 'Shelah HaKadosh' (ibid.) for more examples and further details.

The Midrash explains: "'Darkness' - refers to the Greek Empire, which darkened the eyes of the Jewish people with their oppressing decrees, saying to them: 'Write on the horn of an ox that you have no part with the G-d of Israel.'"

The second hint is found in the Covenant between the Parts: "And behold, awe and great darkness fell upon him" (Genesis 15:12).

The Midrash interprets here as well:¹⁸ "'Darkness' - refers to the Greek Empire, which darkened the eyes of the Jewish people from all of the commandments of the Torah."

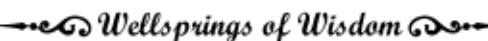
On a deeper level, the Greeks primarily sought to abolish the pure character trait of Yosef the Righteous from the Jewish people - the guarding of the covenant and moral purity.

Therefore, they decreed against circumcising their sons,

hoping to eradicate the sanctity of the Jewish people. They also decreed that any Jewish bride must first cohabit with the local governor, intending to destroy the sanctity of Jewish women.¹⁹

Thus, the Torah uses two expressions in the above two verses: 'darkness' (חשך) and 'great darkness' (חשכה). This corresponds to their vile attempts to darken the holiness of the Jewish men by prohibiting circumcision, and is referred to in the masculine term 'darkness,' and their attempts to darken the holiness of the Jewish women through defilement, is referred to in the feminine term 'great darkness.'²⁰

Uzi held his forehead tightly in his hands. "My question just became stronger. If the essence of Greece is darkness and even greater darkness, why are these days called 'Chanukah'? !



18. Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer, Chapter 28.

19. The 'Ran', Shabbat 10a.

20. Many books present this explanation, and we have provided the earliest source we found.

A brief peruse in 'Kad HaKemach' (Ner Chanukah) provided Uzi with the answer he sought:

"The name of these days is a matter that requires contemplation, it is called 'Chanukah,' derived from the term for dedication - literally education (חינוך) - after the consecration of the Temple."

"If I understand correctly," Uzi pondered, "during these days, an immense and awe-inspiring light

was revealed - a light that subdued and nullified the Greeks' darkness.

Our sages recognized this light and identified it as the light of proper Jewish education, and therefore named these days 'Chanukah,' recognizing this 'light of education'.²¹

Before we elaborate further, let us take a brief journey to discover the composition of the human being.

~~~~~*Wellsprings of Wisdom*~~~~~

**21.** Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov, author of 'Bnei Yissaschar', was the great nephew of the holy Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, the 'Noam Elimelech'.

When his mother was expecting his birth, she traveled to her uncle, the holy Rabbi Elimelech, to ask what name she should give to the child she would bear.

Rabbi Elimelech replied to her: "You will give birth to a boy, and you shall name him 'Elimelech'."

The woman heard this and became distressed, being that the custom among Ashkenazim is not to name a newborn after someone who is still alive, and thought that her holy uncle would pass away, and was therefore instructing her to name her son after him.

The Rabbi said to her: "If so, you shall name him 'Tzvi Elimelech'."

After she gave birth and named him as the Rabbi had instructed, Rabbi Elimelech remarked: "Had you named him 'Elimelech', he would have been similar to me entirely; now he will be half like me."

The child grew, advancing steadily in Torah and fear of G-d, until he became renowned as a genius, a righteous and holy man, and thousands followed his guidance.

He authored many books, the most esteemed among them is the 'Bnei Yissaschar' on the topic of the festivals and holidays.

Once, Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech traveled to his holy teacher, "the Seer of Lublin," and while on the way, suddenly felt compelled to contemplate his soul's spiritual origins - to which tribe of Israel he belonged to.

He began to ponder: "Why is it that when the holiday of Chanukah arrives, I feel

## The Animal Soul vs. the Divine Soul

When we observe a person, all that meets the eye is their physical body; without deeper knowledge, we might think this is the entirety of a person - their physical form.

However, when we attain wisdom and our understanding is refined, we realize that the body is merely a shell, an external layer, beyond which an intense and vibrant inner world exists.

To explain this in more detail we examine the words of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the holy Arizal:<sup>22</sup>

"Know that every Jew possesses two souls - a soul from the side

of holiness and a soul from the side of impurity and unholiness.

The soul from the side of holiness is called the "Divine Soul," and its role is to draw a person toward all spiritual matters: prayer, commandments, acts of kindness, Torah study, and good deeds, while the second soul, the "animal soul," pulls a person toward physicality and materialism."

A Jew's divine service requires that they operate on two simultaneous planes. In addition to illuminating the Divine Soul, one must refine and purify their animal soul.

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### *Wellsprings of Wisdom*

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within myself an added aura of holiness and a wonderful spiritual sweetness?

I cannot be a descendant of the Hasmonean lineage, for I am not a Kohen. From where does this wonderful feeling come to me on Chanukah each year?"

He decided that he would ask his holy teacher the seer about this when he would be in Lublin, and he, in his holy spirit, who sees from one end of the world to the other, would surely provide a satisfying explanation.

When he arrived at the house of "the Seer,"

before he had a chance to ask him anything, the Seer turned and said to him: "Know that your soul's spiritual origin is from the tribe of Yissaschar, and the reason you feel an added aura of holiness on Chanukah is because you were, in a previous reincarnation, a member of the high court of the Hasmoneans."

For this reason, Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech named his book of Torah teachings, 'Bnei Yissaschar'. ('Sippurei Hatzadikim' - Chanukah, page 13).

22. 'Etz Chaim', Gate 50, Chapter 2.

The divine service on the first plane - "illuminating the Divine Soul," is straightforward and doesn't require extraordinary effort. One must study Torah with enthusiasm and devotion, pray and recite blessings with concentration and intention, and perform the commandments thoroughly and meticulously.

However, the second task of "refining and purifying the animal soul," can be quite challenging and demanding. To refine the animal soul, a person must 'converse' with it and explain to it that its cravings and enthusiasm for worldly matters are foolish and senseless. One must persuade the animal soul

that true goodness lies in cleaving to G-d, and if it truly loves and desires goodness, they must draw near to the Source of Life.

This task is difficult because the animal soul doesn't comprehend spiritual language. You can't communicate with it using spiritual terms or rulings from Halacha or quotes from the Talmud; to reach it, you must speak with it in worldly terms that it understands.

This requires special skill and great talent, and we find that the greatest and most select righteous individuals took pride in mastering this quality.<sup>23</sup>

Now, let us return to the discussion of the Greeks.

*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

**23.** As Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rechnitz writes ('Pirchei HaKeren', Sivan-Tammuz 5767 - page 61):

"The righteous who ascend to lofty spiritual levels, nullifying their entire being before the Holy One, blessed be He, sanctify and purify their bodies, transforming their materiality into pure spiritual form.

When they speak, they enlighten the hearts of the listeners with the sanctity of their pure and holy words, cleansing and purifying their hearts.

In this way, they breathe a new life into them, granting their souls the strength to fulfill G-d's will entirely, according to the teachings of the righteous.

Since they are entirely nullified to G-d, standing in a state of 'divestment from physicality,' their words are not their own but rather the words of the living G-d; the Divine Presence speaks through their throats.

Every word that leaves their mouths is directed from Heaven to the listeners, and certainly, has the power to effect

## Rescue to the Divine Soul

As mentioned above, the Greeks were unlike the nations that preceded them. While earlier generations were driven merely by desires and bad traits, the Greeks managed to "clothe" their impurity in the garb of intellect.

They used the wisdom of philosophy to legitimize their behavior, and with their rhetorical skills, and profundity of thought, penetrated the hearts and muted any opposing thoughts.

The Greeks succeeded in finding a common language with the animal soul, and they explained and convinced the animal soul that if it wants to enjoy life, it must forget about the Divine presence and fully indulge in the pleasures of this world.

Thus our sages declare that in the beginning of creation, as well as in Avraham's vision, "Darkness" - refers to the Greek Empire, who darkened the eyes of the Jewish people from all the commandments in the Torah."

At that time, the animal soul, which received support for its desires and justification from the Greek intellect, felt that everything was permitted to it.

A faint cry could barely be heard - the voice of the Divine Soul crying out for help.

G-d saw that the people of Israel lacked the strength to overcome the darkness; they couldn't find the means and the language with which to communicate with their

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### *~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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great changes in a person's heart and transform it for the better.

To quote from the 'Me'or Einayim' (Likutim):  
 'But the righteous individual, who is separated from physicality and desires, and speaks with clear and pure vitality emanating from the Creator, blessed be He, will implant these words within the

listener's heart, connecting him to the Creator, blessed be His Name.

Similarly, the good character traits possessed by the righteous, being purified and clear, can be instilled by them into the heart of those listening to their words, guiding them to that refined character trait and moral conduct."

**Parshat Miketz - The Phenomenal Power of Chanukah**

animal souls, and he therefore, illuminated on His own initiative, a new spiritual light, which is the "light of education."

As the verse states: "For I have bent Judah for Me as a bow, I have filled Ephraim, and I raised up your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece, and made you like the sword of a mighty man" (Zechariah 9:13). Rashi explains: "'And I raised up your sons, Zion' - against the army of Antiochus."

In this verse, this war is referred to as a "bow," as it is written: "For I have bent Judah for Me as a bow," because just as with a bow, the more one draws it near, the farther the arrow flies - so too was with the war against the Greeks, both physically and spiritually the Hasmoneans drew great strength to counter the evil influences of Greece.

Physically, they drew great strength to wage dangerous battles and were victorious.

Spiritually as well, they reached the spiritual root of the Greeks' power, intellect and wisdom, and there as well they waged war until they achieved victory.

The Jewish people reached the root of the Greeks - the sophisticated "language" of the animal soul - and subdued them. G-d granted them access to the divine "language" that is able to successfully communicate with the animal soul - a language through which even the animal soul is able to comprehend the Divine.

When this power was revealed from Above, the righteous leaders of that generation had the ability to influence and overpower the Hellenists, and they returned to G-d in complete repentance.

This spiritual illumination was the main light that shone these days, and therefore these days are called "Chanukah" - indicating the "Light of Education".

**The Phenomenal Power of Chanukah**

Indeed, every year when the holiday of Chanukah arrives, the

same illumination reawakens, and through its power, a person

ascends to the point where he can find a language and rapport with his animal soul.

In the words of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov:<sup>24</sup>

"By fulfilling the commandment of lighting the Chanukah candle, a person can reach such a level of truth, that words that will shine from his mouth will bring distant people closer and make penitents; they will judge people favorably and will stray from slander and gossip, which cause divisions between a person and his fellow, and between a man and his wife. And this is the

simple intention of the lighting of the Chanukah candles."

Therefore, the light that shines on Chanukah, in a certain sense, is higher than Shabbat. While the Shabbat illuminates the Divine Soul (and through its light, the animal soul is nullified), the days of Chanukah have the power to purify and refine the animal soul itself (thereby including the animal soul in the service of G-d).

Since this power is revealed on Chanukah, the "door" to education ('chinuch') is on this holiday, wide open.

## **Education - Awakening A Desire**

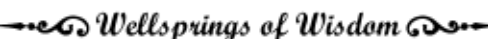
In today's common language, the term "education" includes everything done in relation to children - expressing affection and also criticizing, imparting knowledge and also preaching morals, imposing punishment and giving rewards, enforcing discipline and providing encouragement - all are included under the concept called education.

However, the truth is not so.

Education does not merely mean giving orders, instructions, and commands.

Education does not mean habituating and training a student in certain actions.

Education does not mean transmitting information to the child and filling his head with



24. As explained by Rabbi Eliezer Shlomo Shick, of blessed memory.

data about the world and all it contains.

Education is not about commands, training, or simply knowledge.

Education does not mean influencing the child's current behavior through punishments, discipline, or rewards. These are merely a means of immediate influence in the present but do not affect the future. In the future - when the student stands on his own - he will no longer fear punishment, will not be subject to discipline, and will not expect a reward. He will then have no

reason to continue the behavior that was imposed on him or extracted from him.

True education is something entirely different - education is awakening a desire within the student; that is, the educator must plant within the student the desire and enthusiasm to serve G-d and to walk the straight path.

Awakening a desire within a student is achieved through proper explanation and personal example. Gentle words, patience,<sup>25</sup> and truthful speech, will consistently cause the listener to soften and connect.

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*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

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25. We share the following story on the subject of patience:

It was on a Friday, eve of Shabbat Chanukah 5750 (1989).

Rabbi Yehuda Tzadkah, of blessed memory, prepared the candles and lit them with a blessing at the entrance of his house outside, as was his custom every day of Chanukah, and proceeded toward the 'Shaul Tzadkah' synagogue to welcome the Shabbat.

Meanwhile, mischievous children played in the courtyard near his home, and one of them, in his haste, overturned the

menorah. The candles extinguished, and the oil spilled in front of the doorway.

When Rabbi Tzadkah returned from the synagogue after prayers, he immediately noticed that the menorah had been overturned, its oil spilled, and its candles extinguished - but he didn't utter a word. He entered his home quietly, as was his custom, sat at the table, recited the Kiddush and conducted the Shabbat meal in calm and peace, as if nothing had happened.

The father of the mischievous child, upon learning what occurred, brought his son to the Rabbi, to ask for forgiveness.

**A Duty to Utilize the Time.**

We bring the words of Rabbi Yoram Abargel, of saintly memory:<sup>26</sup>

During the days of Chanukah, the light of education shines - it is therefore understood that this time is most conducive to the education of children.

This is hinted at in the very name 'Chanukah' (חנוכה) - which is taken from the root of "education" (חינוך), indicating that the days of Chanukah are especially capable in bringing great success in the education of children.

This is also hinted at in the language of our sages (Shabbat 21b):

"The mitzvah of Chanukah is to light a candle, each man

and his household," meaning the deeper significance of the Chanukah candles is the immense power and divine assistance that is bestowed to each individual, all for the education of his household - that is, his precious children.

Therefore, our sages say (ibid.): "One who is meticulous in igniting the candles will have sons who are Torah scholars."

The Rif (Shabbat 10a) and the Rosh (Chapter 2, Siman 13) explain that this refers to the Chanukah candle - that anyone who is accustomed to beautify and be meticulous in lighting Chanukah candles will merit that his children become Torah scholars.<sup>27</sup>

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*Wellsprings of Wisdom*

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The Rabbi gently stroked the child's head and greeted him warmly. He explained to him the meaning of Chanukah, the significance of the miracle, and why we light the candles. He then offered him sweets and showered him with blessings.

The child, who initially feared the Rabbi's possible displeasure, was surprised by the warmth and love extended to him. From that moment, the soul of that young boy

became deeply connected to Rabbi Yehuda Tzadkah, and deeply influenced by this event, he began to be more mindful of his actions and strived to follow the proper path of Torah ('Malchut Shlomo' by Rabbi Shlomo Tzvi Zafrani, page 158).

**26.** 'Imrei Noam', Chanukah - Essay 4.

**27.** Once, when the 'Imrei Chaim' of Vizhnitz lit the Chanukah candles in his



Parshat Miketz - A Duty to Utilize the Time.

This is because the holy days of Chanukah in general, and the Chanukah candles in particular, shine with a great light, and anyone who is meticulous with these candles, brings upon himself this immense light, and by this merit, his children will shine greatly in the holy Torah.

Every parent must fully utilize the special qualities of this holiday and pour out their soul before G-d in prayer, that all of his sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, and all their descendants for all generations, walk in the path of our holy ancestors and matriarchs, illuminating the world with Torah and good deeds.

**Shabbat Shalom!**



*~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~*

home (due to his weakness), the children who were present were removed from the room because the crowding had become unbearable.

During the recitation of the 'L'Shem Yichud', before the kindling of the menorah, the Rabbi subtly asked his attendants, "Where are the children?"

Upon hearing that they had been taken out due to the lack of space, he placed his prayer book back on the table, set the wax candle aside, and declared: "How can I light the Chanukah candles when the children aren't here next to me? After all, Chanukah is primarily about 'Chinuch' (education)! I will not light the candles until they come" ('Otzrotaihem Shel

Tzaddikim', Moadim Part I - page 390).

**Summary and Practical Conclusions**

1. The sanctity of Shabbat is so lofty, high and exalted that it cannot be described.

However, precisely because of its great sanctity, not every Jew merits to attain this holiness. The light of Shabbat does not penetrate the heart of those who are distant from its holiness; the light of Shabbat does not descend to a lowly place where a person may find himself, to enlighten and awaken him and draw him closer to G-d.

The sanctity of the days of Chanukah, on the other hand, descends to the lowest places and can illuminate even the most distant people. The lights of Chanukah have a positive effect even upon such people, because the light of Chanukah descends downward, to the lowest of places, and offers the opportunity even for the most distant to draw near to G-d.

2. The sanctity of the days of Chanukah is so great that our sages say that even someone who,

for some reason, did not utilize the month of Elul, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur to repent - on the festival of Chanukah is granted an opportunity to do so, because then, the light of G-d descends even to the lowest places, and His hand is outstretched to accept in repentance even the most distant and estranged.

3. By fulfilling the commandment of lighting the Chanukah candles, a person can reach a great level of truthfulness, to the point that their words will shine, enabling them to bring distant people closer and make people return in repentance. This also bestows one the ability to judge people favorably and stay clear of slander and gossip, which cause divisions between a person and his fellow, and between a man and his wife.

4. The concept of education is thought to include everything done in relation to children - expressing affection on one hand and rebuking on the other, imparting knowledge and preaching morals, imposing punishment and giving rewards,

enforcing discipline and providing encouragement - all are called under the title of "education".

However, the truth is not so. Education does not mean merely giving orders, instructions, and commands. Education is not just habituating and training the student in certain actions. Education is not about transmitting information to the child and filling his head with data about the world and its fullness. Education is none of that; not commands, not training, and not knowledge.

5. Education does not mean influencing the child's current behavior through punishments, discipline, or rewards. These are merely means that produce an immediate effect in the present but do not affect the future. In the future - when he will be on his own - he will no longer fear punishment, will not be subject to discipline, and will not expect a reward, and will therefore have no reason to continue the behavior that was imposed on him or extracted from him; Education is something entirely different.

6. Education is to cause the birth of a will. That is, the educator must plant within the student the desire and enthusiasm to serve G-d and to walk the straight path. This is done through explanation and most importantly, by personal example. An explanation provided with kind words, patience, and truthful speech causes the listener to soften and connect.

7. On the festival of Chanukah, the light of education shines; consequently, it is a most conducive time to invest in the education of children. This is hinted at in the very name of the festival - 'Chanukah' (חנוכה) - which is taken from the root of "education" (חינוך), which indicate that the days of Chanukah are especially conducive to success in educating children.

Every parent must fully utilize the special qualities of this holiday and pour out their soul before G-d in prayer, that all of his sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, and all their descendants for all generations, walk in the path of

**Parshat Miketz - Summary and Practical Conclusions**

our holy ancestors and matriarchs, illuminating the world with Torah and good deeds.

8. The special quality of the days of Chanukah is such that anyone who is accustomed to beautifying and being meticulous in the lighting of Chanukah candles will merit that his children will become Torah scholars.

This is because on the days of Chanukah in general, and upon the Chanukah candles in particular, a great spiritual light shines, and anyone who is meticulous to properly light the Chanukah candles brings upon himself this immense light, and in this merit, merits children who shine brightly in the Torah.



”A person must rejoice when the time for  
**prayer**

**as the author of the Tanya says that:**

every Jew, wherever he is, receives from G-d at the time of prayer a gift called **"Mochin D'Gadlut,"** meaning that the understanding of everything is expansive before him, as is written

**"Open wide your mouth and I will fill it" ”**



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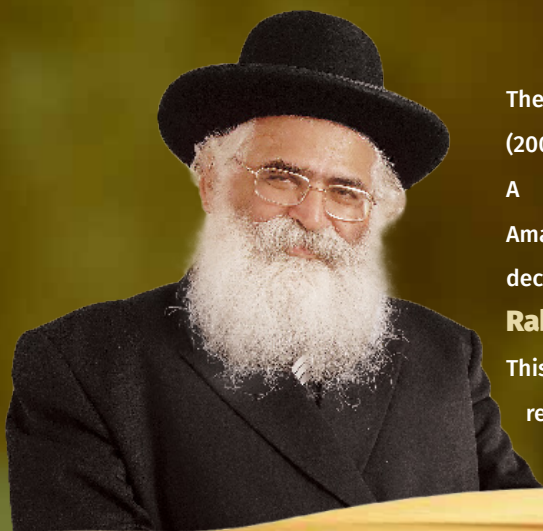
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## Shabbat Times

### Miketz

27<sup>th</sup> of Kislev, 5785



| City        | Candle Lighting | Shabbat Ends | Rabbeinu Tam |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| New York    | 4:17 pm         | 5:22 pm      | 5:48 pm      |
| Miami       | 5:20 pm         | 6:16 pm      | 6:51 pm      |
| Los Angeles | 4:34 pm         | 5:34 pm      | 6:05 pm      |
| Montreal    | 4:00 pm         | 5:08 pm      | 5:30 pm      |
| Toronto     | 4:30 pm         | 5:36 pm      | 6:00 pm      |
| London      | 3:40 pm         | 4:57 pm      | 5:10 pm      |
| Jerusalem   | 4:28 pm         | 5:19 pm      | 5:50 pm      |
| Tel Aviv    | 4:24 pm         | 5:15 pm      | 5:46 pm      |
| Haifa       | 4:21 pm         | 5:16 pm      | 5:46 pm      |
| Be'er Sheva | 4:26 pm         | 5:20 pm      | 5:51 pm      |

#### Pathways to the Heart

*From the Words of*

**HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l**

*We must always remember, whatever happens in this world, is channeled by G-d alone, no other forces can tamper or interfere.*

*The more you rely on G-d the better, and although it may seem that there are many people who help and assist you, it is truly all imaginary.*

*The only One who can assist you is G-d alone, and the more you are connected to Him, and maintain a distance from what he despises, the more He will be near to you and help you in all your affairs.*



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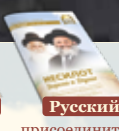
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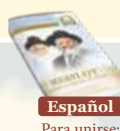
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