

Wonders of War – Chanukah

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles

Summary by Channie Koplowitz Stein

The Rambam tells us that lighting Chanukah candles is such a beloved *mitzvah* that we should endeavor to publicize the *mitzvah* and through it the miracle of Chanukah. What is so unique about this miracle? Further, our thanks extend not only for the supernatural victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks but for the very war itself; we are grateful that we were presented with a battle rather than with a resolution without the confrontation. After all, both the *Al Hanissim* and the *Haneros Hallalu* prayers talk of the miracles, the victories, and the wars without even mentioning the miraculous jug of oil.

The Gemara asks, “why do we celebrate Chanukah for eight days when the victory was one day.” The response is that Hashem caused the oil to burn for eight days to inform us that He wants us to celebrate the Chanukah victory for eight days. In essence, the miracle of the oil is subsumed under the general military victory.

Once we focus on the war, we are ready to receive the messages inherent within them. How could thirteen men take upon themselves to fight an entire empire? When one is willing to make great sacrifices for the true light of *Torah* values, one can achieve great things, for Hashem fights those battles with us.

Darkness, on the other hand, exists in many forms. The greatest dark tragedy, as Rabbi Pincus points out, is the chasm between man's perception of himself as powerless and his actual potential. There is a dark world around us. Our challenge as Jews is to light the candles and show the way through our

proud observance of *Torah* and *mitzvot*. It may be, at times, an uphill battle, but we must never underestimate ourselves. If we are willing to face the challenge, to surrender ourselves to His leadership, we can accomplish more than we can imagine ourselves capable of. The Maccabees devoted themselves wholeheartedly first to the battle and then to finding one small jug of pure oil when they could have settled for using any available oil. They thereby merited Hashem's helping them achieve inconceivable success. So, too, can each of us achieve spiritual heights beyond logic if we but will it enough. It is our choice to pick up the torch of *Torah*, lit by the Chanukah candles, and run with it to light up both our inner souls and the world around us.

The battles truly rage both on our personal stages and on the world stage. In both arenas, there are times when we can recognize Hashem's guiding hand in our lives, times when we see the light of His countenance shining upon us, and times when His face is hidden from us. In those dark times, He is nevertheless watching through the cracks in the wall, keeping us continually in His sight.

It is easy to ignore God's presence during the good times. It is easy to think that our talents have made us successful. But it is specifically during these highs that we must recognize that all our beneficence comes from Hashem. As *Halekach VeHalibuv* points out, it is during the good times that we must build our relationship with Hashem. Then we will have the faith to believe that even during what we perceive as hard times, He is with us. We will understand that Hashem has presented us with a

challenge, a personal battle through which we can grow. For it is only in darkness that one can see the glow of the candle and reach for the light.

Man cannot survive in total light, nor in a life of total ease. Too much sun will burn us. Only with the protection of sunscreen are we “safe.” In a similar vein, only through screens and dark clouds are we safe in God's presence. If we burn so easily merely in the sun, how much more would we surely burn up in the full brightness of His light? Even on Mount Sinai, at the moment of the greatest revelation of God's spirit on earth, His presence was revealed to us only through clouds and darkness. Darkness and shadows, then, serve a purpose. Only in the dark can one recognize a light. Just as Hashem was with us in the dark days of our Egyptian servitude, so was He with us during the brightest moment in human history, when He revealed Himself to us through the clouds and darkness He put on His mountain.

Hashem is always with us. He has saved us from physical annihilation throughout the ages. But the purpose was always to bring us closer to Him spiritually. It was only in the darkest times of spiritual destruction that the Maccabees saw the necessity of waging war, of putting their physical lives on the line to preserve the purity of the Jewish soul. When they discovered the light within themselves, Hashem helped them bring that light back to *Bnei Yisroel* to continue enlightening the world. They found the flame within themselves, and Hashem responded by uncovering for them the hidden pure jug of oil which would burn and reflect the purity of their souls.

Moving Muktza Items, Part 10: Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson

Clothing that was sufficiently wet to be unwearable at *bein hashemoshot* (twilight) remains *muktza* all *Shabbat*. However, if you expect that it will become sufficiently dry by itself on *Shabbat*, then it would be permitted. There is a major disagreement between the *Tannaim* whether broken vessels are *mutza*. The Gemara records a disagreement between Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Yehuda. The *halacha* is like Rabbi Shimon. If the broken vessel is essentially useable as before, for example if the rim of the cup breaks but is still usable or a cutting board splits in half and the remaining piece is still usable, we assume it is permitted. If the pieces are totally unusable, the shards are *muktza* and cannot be handled. One may however sweep them up, *tiltul min hatzad l'zorech hamuttar*. Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Shimon argue about a vessel which breaks and is no longer usable for the original purpose but usable for a different purpose. The *halacha* is like Rabbi

Shimon that it's not considered to be *muktza*.

If a button falls off on *Shabbat*, if it is a unique, rare button and the owner intends to re-attach it to the garment, it's considered to be nullified to the garment and is not *muktza*. However, an ordinary button which will not necessarily be put back on the garment is considered to have independent status and would be *muktza*. The usable part of broken eyeglasses would be permitted while the unusable part would be *muktza* as it doesn't have an independent status of a vessel.

Something that was not existent at the onset of *Shabbat* is considered *muktza* because of the issur of *molad*. An egg that was born or hatched on *Shabbat* or *Yom tov* is *muktza*. Some *poskim* rule that rainwater is *muktza*. Other *poskim* disagree and rule that rainwater that fell on *Shabbat* may be used as the water in the clouds was already there before *Shabbat* and that is the accepted ruling. The

halacha is more stringent with snow. In general, snow has no real purpose and therefore if it fell on *Shabbat* many *poskim* assume that it is *muktza* while some permit moving it. One may not use milk that was milked on *Shabbat* because of the issur of *molad*. Many *poskim* prohibit making ice cubes on *Shabbat* as it too falls under *molad*.

If a person is in a *reshut harabbim* (public area) on *Shabbat* and then realizes that he's mistakenly carrying a large amount of money, he may rely on some leniencies that *chazal* instituted to avoid the prohibition of carrying. One may put it on an animal and let the animal carry it in or ask a non-Jew to bring it in for him. Something that may cause danger to the public, may be moved even with one's hands. This includes broken glass or lethal chemicals. If it would only cause damage to an individual, then one would need to find a less problematic way to move it.

Shir Shel Yom-Yom Sheini: Part I

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

The song of the second day is *Psalm 48* which was sung by the children of Korach. "Great is Hashem and much praised in the city of Hashem mount of His holiness." Why is Hashem praised via *Yerushalayim*, more than other places? "A beautiful city, the joy of all the nations, at the northern side of the great king's city, that is where he's praised." Rashi explains that the northern side is where the altar was situated and because there was a possibility to bring sacrifices in *Yerushalayim*, that is why Hashem is praised there more than in other places. Sin creates a distance between us and Hashem which in turn creates sadness and difficulties. The fact that we can do *teshua* through the sacrifices and erase the consequences of sin, makes *Yerushalayim*, "*ebbetz m'sos kol ha'aretz - a place of great joy.*"

The *psalm* goes on to discuss a situation of kings coming together. They saw something that caused them bewilderment. They were afraid and trembled like a woman giving birth when a *ruach kadim*, a storm, overtook them. When the *yam suf* split there was a *ruach kadim* then too. Hashem uses this measure

to punish nations.

Ships from *Tarshish*, a part of *Edom*, came to fight *Yerushalayim*. The Malbim explains that while they were approaching *Yerushalayim*, Hashem brought a storm that destroyed the ships along with many cities and nations. Yet *Yerushalayim* remained untouched. Then the Jewish nation saw the greatness of Hashem, His justice, and the special protection He extended to them. David Hamelech calls upon us to recognize this, to tell it to future generations, and to thank Hashem and praise Him. Rashi says this *psalm* refers to the future war of Gog Umagog that will happen in the time of *Mashiach*. It describes the joy and gratitude we will express when we will see the events foretold by the prophets unfold. This *psalm* corresponds to *Yitzchak* whose attribute was *gevurah* (strength). Winning a war requires strength. What unique aspect of *kavod Hashem* (Divine glory) does the second day reveal? The Torah tells us that after Hashem created the building blocks of creation, the whole world was filled with water and the spirit of Hashem hovered above the water. On the second day, Hashem separated

the water into two bodies of water so that one body of water remained on earth and one body of water was suspended above. This created two entities that were very different from each other symbolizing many other entities that contradict each other. This includes, physicality and spirituality, day and night, hot and cold, good and evil. It's a challenge to internalize that they all come from the same source, that everything that exists in this world is an expression of *kavod Hashem*.

Picture a tree upside down. The trunk and roots are above and the branches and leaves are further down. The further away from the roots, the more spread out they are, and the more details you can see. Although it's all coming from one tree, it's not so easy to see it. On this world, we might see the trees but not the roots. We might not be able to see that it's all one. Good and evil, difficulties and blessings, all come from one source, Hashem who is entirely good. Diversity and contradictions makes it challenging to see it. Overcoming this challenge is the potential of the second day.