

## Hidden Heroines of Chanuka

### Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

The Talmud Bavli discusses the laws of who is obligated to light *Chanuka* candles. The conclusion is that women are obligated just as men and a man may appoint a woman to be his proxy to fulfill the *mitzvah* for him.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi explains that women are obligated in the *mitzva* of *Chanuka* candles because they too were part of the miracles. The Mishna Berura further points out that the daughter of Yochanan Kohen Gadol killed the general Helifornos and thereby saved the Jewish people. This refers to the story of Yehudit.

There is a book called Judith which is part of the *seforim chitzonim* and was never included in the Tanach simply because it's clearly false. The story told there refers to the general as Nevuchadnezzar and it claims to have taken place in Babylonia. It was written in Aramaic and later on translated to Greek and Latin and added to the Cannon by the Catholic Church. Some say the story was written under the eyes of the Seulicids and therefore the details were changed. Yet the *Mishna Berura* cites the story and it is later on cited in Pesachim where there's a whole sugya that discusses righteous women specifically the women in Egypt.

Throughout history, our survival has depended on heroic women and *Chazal* say that in the merit of righteous women we will ultimately be redeemed. The Rashbam says that it was by virtue of the women that the Jews in Egypt were saved. The men didn't want to have children and it was the women who continued to stand strong in their faith. Similarly, in the Persian exile, Queen Esther sacrificed her entire life and identity to bring

salvation to the Jewish nation. Yet again, during the Greek exile, Yehudit bravely saved her people. Although there is no reliable written record of the story, there is an oral tradition. There are *piyyutim* sung about it among the Sefardic Jews which continued through the Middle Ages and in some communities continues till today.

Eicha Rabba tells the story of Chana and her seven sons. She is sometimes anonymous and sometimes given a name. The story appears both in the Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi. Sometimes she is called *Miriam bat Nachtam* and sometimes no name is given at all. Some say the name Chana comes from the book of Shmuel where Chana describes the "*Eim habanim semeicha* - The woman who had no children and ultimately will have seven. The story of Chana and her seven sons is found throughout the writings of the Middle Ages and in later Midrashim from the period of the Gaonim through the era of the Crusades. This ancient story inspired Jews to martyrdom and therefore became a tale that became part of our liturgy and tradition.

Eicha Rabbah depicts the suffering of the Jews not only in the days of Nevuchadnezzar and Titus but the period in between which includes the era of the Chashmonaim. According to Chashmonaim I, *Miriam bat Nachtam* and her children were taken captive by Antiochus Ephiphanes and taken to his court in Antiocha. All seven sons refused to bow down to the idols and were killed. According to one of the *Midrashim*, the youngest son was less than 3 years old and his mother who taught him is credited with his extraordinary self-sacrifice.

The king told him, "Do you see your brother's corpses? I'll throw my ring on the floor and you pick it up so it looks as if you bowed down to the idol and this way I'll be able to save face."

The child answered, "What a pitiful thing you are, afraid of people that are no better than you. I stand in awe before the King of kings." He too was taken out and killed. His mother, Chana, fell from a roof and died. A voice came out from heaven, "The mother and her children will rejoice in the Next World."

The story is retold in Midrash Rabbah, Talmud Bavli Gittin, and with variations in Maccabean Bet and Dalel.

The Ramban makes a comment in *Parshat Vayechi* in connection to the blessing of Yaakov to Yehuda, "*Lo yosur shevet m'Yehuda*," that the tribe of Yehuda has the only legitimate claim to the throne. Anyone from another tribe that tried to reign over Israel, went against Yaakov's will and testament. This was why the Chashmonaim were punished. They were devout servants of Hashem and if not for them the Torah and *mitzvot* would have long been forgotten, but nevertheless they fell into the hands of the enemy and were killed. The Gemara tells us that it was because they took the kingship away from Yehuda. Even worse, we see that a few generations later they became Hellenized and joined the *Tzedokim* who denied the Oral Law.

The last heir of the Chashmonaim dynasty was Miriam who married Herod. She and her remaining family members were murdered. The Romans then took over *Eretz Yisrael* which later led to the destruction of the second *Beit Hamikdash*.

## Benefitting from Chillul Shabbat

### Part IV

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson

If a child pulled the plug out of a crockpot on Shabbat, one may not ask a non-Jew to turn it on again. This is because one may not benefit from *melacha* done by a gentile for a Jew on Shabbat.

The Shulchan Aruch quotes the Magen Avraham that we find a distinction between the *mevashel* (the one who cooked the food on *Shabbat*) and others. *Halacha* rules more stringently for the *mevashel*. If he violated *Shabbat* intentionally, he may never benefit

from his *melacha* while others may do so on *Motzai Shabbat*. The question then arises, if someone cooks on *Shabbat* specifically for you, do you now have the status of the *mevashel*? The Magen Avraham says yes and therefore you would never be able to benefit

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from the food if it was cooked intentionally. The Mishna Berura disagrees and says you would be permitted to eat the food on *motzai Shabbat*.

The Kesav Sofer comments that regarding an occasional *melacha* that isn't done regularly, we follow the Mishna Berura's view. However if it's done repeatedly, such as a restaurateur who keeps his shop open on *Shabbat* and regularly cooks for his customers, intentionally violating *Shabbat*, then we follow the Magen Avraham and the food may never be eaten even by others. A person who frequents such a shop on *Shabbat* is facilitating the transgression and that should never be done.

In Israel, there are *mehadrin* and non-*mehadrin* milk products. The non-*mehadrin* products come from dairies that milk their

cows in a prohibited way on *Shabbat*. In such a case, one can argue based on the *Kesav Sofer*, that the customers who buy the milk are facilitating the transgression and one would never be allowed to benefit from such *melacha*. The *poskim* similarly discuss the question regarding the first busses that leave the depot in Jerusalem before *Shabbat* ends. The *Minchas Yitzchak* rules that it would be prohibited to ride on these busses as it is benefitting from *chilul Shabbat*. The *Oz Nidberu* and *Titz Eliezer* rule leniently although they write that it's preferable to be stringent. Their ruling is based on the reasoning that the benefit one gets is only a byproduct and not directly from the *melacha*.

*Shemiras Shabbat K'hilchasa* discusses the scenario of listening to a news reporter reporting live from Israel when it is still *erev*

*Shabbat* in America but already *Shabbat* in Israel. One could argue that one is benefitting from *chilul Shabbat* which would be prohibited. There are three *issurim d'rabanan* where *Chazal* ruled stringently. They are: *shehiya*, *chazara*, and *hatmana*. The Gemara tells us, if a person forgot the law of *shehiya* or meant to put on a *blech* but forgot and then cooked raw food on *Shabbat*, then even if it was done unintentionally and certainly if it was done intentionally, the food may not be eaten on *Shabbat*. Similarly, if there's a case of *chazara b'issur*, one may not benefit from the food on *Shabbat*. In the case of *shehiya*, if the food was fully cooked before *Shabbat*, and then put on the fire, the halacha is like Rabbi Chananya and one would be allowed to eat the food. If *chazara* was done in a prohibited way and the food is now hot, one would not be allowed to benefit from the food until it cools down.

## Chanuka: Acknowledging and Acclaiming

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles  
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

The Gemara recounts the origins of the Chanukah Festival. The menorah that the Maccabees lit with just enough oil for one day lasted for eight days. The following year the Sanhedrin established these eight days as a permanent festival of *Hallel/praise* and *hoda'ah/thanksgiving*. Rashi explains that "praise" refers to reciting the *Hallel* prayer all eight days of Chanukah, and thanksgiving refers to inserting the *Al Hanissim* prayer in our *Amidah* and in *Birkat Hamazon*. What do *hallel* and *hoda'ah* really mean and how do they differ from each other?

*Metikut Hamoadim* explains that while *Hallel* is an exuberant acclamation of wonder and gratitude for all the surprising salvations Hashem performed for us, *hoda'ah* is a quiet introspective gratitude, an acknowledgment of all the good Hashem has done for us. Chanukah incorporates both these aspects. The lighting of the candles at night exalts God's name and inspires profound gratitude while the *Hallel* prayers and *Al Hanissim* by day exclaim his wonders. Chanukah is unique in that its only characteristic is spirituality, writes Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l. We recognize the

great good Hashem does for us in every aspect of our lives, we will be inspired to perform the *mitzvot* with greater joy. Rabbi Strickoff quoting the Sochatchver Rebbe z"l suggests an amazing reason for *hallel* and *hoda'ah* being the essence of the Chanukah celebration. After the flood, Noach planted a vineyard, got drunk on wine, and exposed himself in his tent. Ham saw his father's nakedness and went out to gleefully reveal this to his brothers. They took a garment, entered the tent backwards so as not to see their father's shame and covered him. Therefore, Shem and Yafet were rewarded with extra sanctity of the eyes and mouth.

Ben Melech explains that just reciting these additional prayers at their appropriate times is not completely fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *hallel* and *hoda'ah* in its fullest extent. The entirety of each day of Chanukah is meant to be replete with expressions of gratitude throughout the day. Citing the Rambam, the Ben Melech explains that lighting the candles is a precious *mitzvah* whose very purpose is to continue to praise Hashem. In addition, a festive meal on Chanukah is only considered a *mitzvah* if it incorporates words of praise and gratitude.

Authentic gratitude is not a lip service "thank you," but emanates from a deep desire to give back. It is an acknowledgment derived from introspection that we've received more than we deserve, and we therefore rededicate ourselves to Hashem. *Hallel* too must burst forth with passion that moves us. Therefore it is reserved for special days, so it will not lose its ability to uplift us. When we realize the

great good Hashem does for us in every aspect of our lives, we will be inspired to perform the *mitzvot* with greater joy. Rabbi Strickoff quoting the Sochatchver Rebbe z"l suggests an amazing reason for *hallel* and *hoda'ah* being the essence of the Chanukah celebration. After the flood, Noach planted a vineyard, got drunk on wine, and exposed himself in his tent. Ham saw his father's nakedness and went out to gleefully reveal this to his brothers. They took a garment, entered the tent backwards so as not to see their father's shame and covered him. Therefore, Shem and Yafet were rewarded with extra sanctity of the eyes and mouth.

However, during the Greek Empire, the Greeks profaned their eyes by exalting the sight of the human body. They then lost the sanctity of their eyes and mouth which was transferred to *Bnei Yisroel*. When *Bnei Yisroel*, millenia later, were victorious over the Greeks, the essence of the holiday that commemorates this victory would be celebrated with the eyes that see the light of the candles and the mouth that sings God's praises.