

Foundations of Truth

On

Chanukah: Kiddush Hashem

Torah Thoughts From

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Torah nuggets harvested from Rav Weinberg's thought-provoking classes given at Yeshivas Ner Yisroel and Aish HaTorah, Jerusalem, that uniquely reveal essential foundations of Torah and Jewish thought. While these essays include some edits for readability, they largely preserve the Rosh HaYeshiva's unique style and original messages.

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Purim & Chanukah

In the past, we've explained how Chazal identify Chanukah as a *nes* (miracle) that's *Lo Nitain L'hikaseiv* ("not given to be written"). The *gemara* (*Yoma 29a*) says: Purim is *Sof Kol Hanissim*, the last of the miracles. To which the *gemara* asks: But what about the *nes* of Chanukah? Rather Purim is *Sof Kol Hanissim She Nitain L'hikaseiv*, the last of the miracles that was given to be written, while Chanukah is a *nes* that isn't *Nitain L'hikaseiv*; it's not to be written down.

This *gemara* doesn't mean to say that Purim is written in *Torah She B'ksav* (written Torah) while Chanukah isn't written in *Tanach*. Rather, *Chazal* are saying that there's an intrinsic difference between these types of miracles. In it's essence, a *nes* that is *Nitain L'hikaseiv* is very different than a *nes* that's not *Nitain L'hikaseiv*.

What's the *chiluk*, what's the difference between the two?

A *nes* that's *Nitain L'hikaseiv*, a *Torah She B'ksav* type miracle, is *kulo mi'lema'alah*, totally from Above. It's the *Ribono Shel Olam* influencing and giving. If it's the *Ribono Shel Olam* giving, then of course it will be complete, a *nes shalem*. Nobody dies and the salvation is complete.

A *nes* that is *Lo Nitain L'hikaseiv* is a miracle in which the *klal*, the people as a whole have to participate. *Klal Yisrael* have to bring it about through their actions and *Hashem's hashgachah* (guidance) makes their efforts successful. As a result, *Klal Yisrael* has to wage war, in which many are killed, *Rachmana litzlan, b'avonoseinu harabim* (Heaven forbid). The *nes* is not complete, it also doesn't result in a complete salvation; it's many, many years later before there can be a real Jewish king again.

It's a *nes* that's *Lo Nitain L'hikaseiv*; one that derives its source from a *beis din shel matah* (lower court, of this world), so to speak. It's *Klal Yisrael's* undertaking, their initiative, and *Kaviyochol* makes their efforts successful. This is the difference between the two - two entirely different miracles.

Living As Jews

We also explained that it's no coincidence that the *nes* of Chanukah had to be the *nes* of *Torah She Ba'al Peh* (the Oral Torah). We've discussed how each *Yom Tov* provides us with a particular *midah* (aspect) that allows us to live and function as Jews. The fact that a certain rabbinic *Yom Tovim* exists, means that a situation arose, in which *Klal Yisrael* lacked a particular *ko'ach* (trait) in its *neshamah*, a *ko'ach* in its *ma'hus* (essence), that will enable it to maintain itself as an *Am Yisrael* under the new situation that arose.

On Purim, *Klal Yisrael* had to adjust to a new existence: one of *hester panim*, Hashem's presence being hidden. The natural state of *Klal Yisrael* is to exist only *b'gilui panim*, with Hashem's presence revealed and in the open. *Klal Yisrael's* normal and healthy existence is *b'kurvah*, to be close with the *Ribono Shel Olam, kaviyochol*; like in *Bayis Rishon* (first Temple).

In the *Bayis Sheini* (second Temple), they had to adjust to this new situation of illness. A situation which they were not naturally equipped to exist and maintain themselves as an *Am nivchar* (a chosen nation), an *Am Hashem*, an *Am Ha'Torah* - in a state of *hester panim*.

As a result, they needed a new *ko'ach*. *Nishmas Yisrael* had to develop a new *metzi'us*, a existence, which would allow them to maintain themselves *b'kurvah*, in closeness with Hashem, even in a state of *hester panim* - and that's Purim.

Upgrading Our Closeness

Chanukah must also provide this. They met a new situation where the current make-up of *Am Yisrael* did not possess those *middos*, those abilities, which would allow it to maintain itself properly as an *Am Hashem* within this new challenge. *Klal Yisrael* had to develop this new *ko'ach* in its *neshamah*, in order to be able to face a new world, with a different type of *nisayon* (test) that would challenge its very existence.

That *nisayon* is the challenge of *Yavan* (Greece). *Yavan* is philosophy. *Yavan* is science. *Yavan* is art. *Yavan* is humanism. *Yavan* is that the central way of being, which values and gives meaning to existence as the human being himself. That's *Yavan*.

To maintain oneself *keneged* (in opposition to) *Yavan*, which is the *makor hakefirah* (source of rejection), the setting up of man as being the center of the world, the total denial of a *Borei* (creator) and a *Mashgiach* (a guide) who guides His world, takes something. In this new *galus* (exile) of *Yavan*, *Klal Yisrael* needs a new *ko'ach*. This new *ko'ach* is only in terms of *Torah She Ba'al Peh*.

Renewal

In truth, it's a *hischadshus* (renewal) in the whole approach of *Torah She Ba'al Peh*; in what *Torah She Ba'al Peh* does. Until then, *Torah She Ba'al Peh* is a *mesorah* (transmission) but here begins a whole renewal of the *dinei beis din shel matah*, the way we down in this world approach *Torah She Ba'al Peh*. How we actively create *chiddushim*, new applications in *Torah She Ba'al Peh*; leaving a question of whether there is *rov* (more) *mesorah* or *rov chiddushim*.

We once showed how at that the very center, the pivot around which the *nes* of Chanukah derives is a discussion of how to properly learn *hilchos kiddush Hashem*, the laws of sanctifying Hashem. The Torah, based on *halacha l'Moshe m'Sinai*, has a known *din* that *b'sha'as hashmad*, during times of persecution, the *halacha* is that *yehareg v'al ya'avor* (to let oneself be killed) for any *mitzvah*.

The *halacha* in the Torah is that when there is a *gezeirah* (decree), that the *malchus* (ruler) wants to tear away a particular *mitzvah* or Torah in general, one has to be *moser nefesh*, allow himself to be killed and not be *over* (transgress) any *aveirah* (sin). Where ordinarily it's only three *aveiros* (idolatry, forbidden relations, and murder) which we have to let ourselves die for, but *b'sha'as hashmad* the *halacha* is that a person must allow himself to be killed, even with torture, to not *chas v'shalom*, transgress any *aveirah* in the Torah.

During the events of Chanukah, in keeping this *halacha*, *Klal Yisrael* would not fight battles on Shabbos. They knew the *halacha* of *piku'ach nefashos*, that normally one may save himself from death by being *over* any *aveirah*. They knew the *din* that fighting wars is normally

docheh (pushes off) Shabbos. Nobody was ignorant of that *din*, but this was a *sha'as hashmad*, with decrees against them – so then the *din* became *yehareg v'al ya'avov* for Shabbos too.

Rather than be *mechallel* (desecrate) Shabbos, they tried to hide from *Yavan's* armies, but the *Yevanim* would find them sooner or later and kill them out. Until... Matisyahu came and *darshened* (expounded) for them the *halacha* of *v'chai ba'hem, v'lo she'yamus ba'hem*. “To live through the *mitzvos*, and not to die because of them”; that we fight on Shabbos too.

Chas v'shalom, that they didn't know the *din* of *v'chai ba'hem* until this *zman* of Chanukah, with *Matisyahu*. Of course they knew this *halacha* from the times of Moshe. But what happened was this:

They were learning the *halachos* and were trying to understand “what is the *halacha* during a *sha'as hashmad*?” During a *sha'as hashmad*, is the *din* (1) that the very *mitzvah* is *mechayev* (obligates) *mesiras nefesh*? Or (2) is it that *b'sha'as hashmad* the resistance, the not giving-in to the *malchus resha'ah* (evil kingdom) is *mechayev mesiras nefesh*?

They thought that it was the *mitzvah* itself that obligates one to give up one's life and; therefore, couldn't fight battles on Shabbos because they had to die and not be *mechallel* Shabbos – so as not to violate the *mitzvah* of Shabbos.

Looking From a Different Angle

But Matisyahu *darshened* for them that the *chiyuv* of *mesiras nefesh* is instead, not to submit to the enemy's decrees. As a result, if you're fighting a war, you're not submitting – you're resisting. Since there is no *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Hashem* that would say to give up your life, the *din* of *v'chai ba'hem* applies to the *mitzvah* of Shabbos and so there's no *halacha* of *yehareg v'al ya'avov* on *Shabbos*.

The *mitzvah* of *Shabbos* itself has a *v'chai ba'hem*, an obligation to live and not die – and so Shabbos would be *nidchah m'pnei piku'ach nefesh* (pushed off to save lives). Since he showed them that the *din* is to resist and not give into the *gezeiras shmad*, they began fighting on Shabbos too. From that point on in the battles, *Hashem's hashgacha* (guidance) brought forth a *nitzachon* of *rabim b'yad me'atim*, a victory of where the many were given into the hands of the few.

The victory in war came from Matisyahu *darshening* this *halacha*. This resurgence in *halacha*, was a *chiddush* in the realm of *Torah She Ba'al Peh*.

The *din* of *v'chai ba'hem, v'lo she'yamus ba'hem* is a *halacha l'Moshe mi'Sinai*. It's a *mesorah*, a transmission, whose source is *l'el* (from above), from *Shamyim* (Heaven). But the *chakirah* (distinction) of how to apply the *din*, that's a *hischadshus* (renewal) in *Torah She Ba'al Peh*.

How *Klal Yisrael* are *mechadesh* with a *sevarah*, create new applications using their minds and the rules of the Torah. How *beis din shel matah* (the seat of the Jewish court down in this world) is *kovei'a* (establishes) with its *sevarah* (mind) and its *derashos* (expounding), how the *din* should be applied.

From all this, we see that the *nes* derives, begins, and revolves around how *Chazal darshin* and are *mechadesh* within *Torah She Ba'al Peh*. From an explanation and how to learn what the *din* of *kiddush Hashem* entails and what it requires; from the *Torah She Ba'al Peh*.

Torah She B'ksav & Ba'al Peh

B'emes, in truth, this is what *Yavan* came to uproot. *Yavan* doesn't care about *Torah She B'ksav* (Written Torah); he doesn't care about *mitzvos*. The main thing *Yavan* cares about is that there shouldn't be a *Torah She Ba'al Peh* (Oral Torah). They can live with the *Torah She B'ksav*, but *Torah She Ba'al Peh* is that which resists their culture and outlook; that is what they were fighting against.

They never decreed that any other nation had to change its religion; they were actually very tolerant of religions. Points of view and values, that's what they couldn't stand - that *Yisrael* should have a different set of values and outlooks. That's why they came to uproot the *Torah She Ba'al Peh* and the *nes* was specifically through the *Torah She Ba'al Peh*.

It comes out, that *Klal Yisrael* needed a new *ko'ach*. A *ko'ach* with which to be able to face the incredible *nisayon*, which is the same *nisayon* that we face today. The *nisayon* of a whole culture that's opposed to the entire essence of Torah and *emes* (truth). Whether it's the science that "refutes" religion; or whether it's the values - liberalism, humanism. The culture, in terms of their writing and their music and everything goes with it.

It's an establishment whose essence is opposed to a submission to the *Ribono Shel Olam*, to a *ko'ach elyon* (force On High). Opposed to that which is *l'ma'alah*, that which is above the human being, to whom a person has to submit. In reality, the area where man will find his biggest *ko'ach* of *hischadshus*, the biggest expression of power, creativity, and the authority of the human mind, is in the *Torah She Ba'al Peh*.

Pinnacle of Life

There is no greater expression of power, authority, and creativity, than what we can accomplish with the Torah. When we're *mechadesh* a *sevarah* of *emes* in Torah, we're creating the existence of the Torah itself, an absolute. Something which is total and complete *emes*, a thing that creates *olamos* (worlds). There's nothing in existence and in the deepest of imagination, that can compare to this unbelievable *ko'ach* that *Yisrael* has - to form and build Torah itself! The source of all truth, absoluteness, *nitzchiyus* (eternity) -we bring that about!

But this requires that we be *kafuf l'Hashem*, totally subservient to Him. In order to be a *mechadesh* in His Torah, there has to be a total acceptance, a total *hisbatlus* (nullification of oneself) to the *yesodos* (foundations) of His Torah, to the *middos* and axioms of His Torah. Through this total *hisbatlus* to the *da'as ha'Torah* and what it stands for, can come forth this *ko'ach* that *Klal Yisrael* possess of being *mechadesh* the Torah itself. Bringing into existence that which is absolute and eternal, that which is *kulo emes* (total truth).

From *hisbatlus lo*, being completely submissive to the authority and existence of Hashem, comes forth the most extreme, the most glorious, the most powerful *ko'ach* of an *adam* (man). The greatest and deepest expression of an *adam*, in his essence - as an *adam*. Through his mind and intellect, he can create this Torah and eternal reality, which comes only out of a total negation of oneself to *da'as Elyon* (knowledge On High).

In this, *Klal Yisrael* stands in opposition to *Yavan*. *Yavan* cries: "No *hisbatlus*! We are the source of authority. Man determines his own destiny!" But in truth, it's just the opposite. Specifically, by realizing the opposite, through a *hisbatlus* to *Hashem* is where a man can become a true person. But for *Yavan*, it's specifically where they think that the source of a person resides is

where they become *batel* and lost.

This is the *ko'ach* that we derive from Chanukah, that we can use to maintain ourselves in an era of *apikorsus* (heresy), of values that are totally opposed to the existence of a *Ribono Shel Olam*, of a *Mashgiach* and a *Manhig*.

Kiddush Hashem

How was this *ko'ach* established within *Klal Yisrael*? Through *hilchos kiddush Hashem*, in the *halachos* of *mesiras nefesh*. It wasn't just through *mesiras nefesh*, because we already had that in us from the *Akeidah*. *Avraham Avinu* already established a *ko'ach* of *mesiras nefesh* in the very make-up of *nishmas Yisrael*.

So what then was the special dimension of *mesiras nefesh* on Chanukah? It's the *mesiras nefesh* of an *Am*, of a nation. Not *yechidim* (individuals), but an *Am*. *Klal Yisrael* in its *metzi'us* (essence) is *moser nefesh*. It's the *Am* that resists and won't permit an inquisition or an expulsion to rob them of their essence as an *Am nivchar l'Hashem*, a chosen nation, servants of *Hashem*.

This is what you need. From then on, *Klal Yisrael* only exists with this *ko'ach* of being an *Am*. How will they remain steadfast, in opposition to all the powers that are going to be brought against them? With what? Only with the national *ko'ach* of *mesiras nefesh*.

This is a *peleh*, truly amazing. We're talking about *hilchos dei'os*, what *hashkafos* (outlooks) we should have, *emunah* (trust), and recognizing how *Hashem* is guiding the world, *Hoda'ah* and *Hallel* on Chanukah. And at the same time, you're also stressing *mesiras nefesh* for His *mitzvos* and in the way we act? If we're looking for a *ko'ach* to straighten our minds, you would think the stress of what we should do would be in our minds, our thoughts, in *emunah*. Why do we emphasize a *ko'ach* to hold onto *mitzvos*, *minhagim*, and *halachos*; to not to give in? What does one have to do with the other?

Bringing Kiddusha Into Real Life

The answer is that it's in our practical *hanhagos*. In the *zehirus* (care) of a *mitzvah*, in the *taharah* (purity) of our eyes and ears. The way we use our hands, our feet and mouth. That is how we come to think, to believe and understand. *Yavan* doesn't have to force us to think falsely. They just have to absorb us into their ways of doing things. Into their ways of listening and hearing, in their talking, reading, and watching. When they do that, they know where our *dei'os* (thoughts) and *hashkafos* (outlooks) are going to go.

Yavan knows: "you don't need to discuss it with them, just get them to do it".

As a result, the *mesiras nefesh* is in our actions. The *ko'ach* of us deciding how we're going to walk and talk. What we're going to listen to and how we're going to dress. What we're going to hold important in our homes. That is what's going to decide what our *emunos* will be, what our *dei'os* will be. What we're going to accept in our minds.

It's the *ko'ach* of standing fast with *mesiras nefesh mamash*, together as a *rabim* (community). That we're not going to be *meshaneh b'chuto shel yud* (make even a minor change) from the ways of the Torah. In its entirety, with all its subtleties and seemingly small details. It's from there that we derive the *ko'ach* to know how to submit to the *ko'ach ha'Torah*. To submit to the *Ribono Shel Olam*, to those who teach us His ways, and to those who learn with us His Torah.

It's from this source that we're able to become complete in *emunah* and in mind. That's why when we talk of a Chanukah of resistance, the *ko'ach* that we have to utilize, is the *ko'ach* of *kiddush Hashem*.

Real Kiddush Hashem

Kiddush Hashem is not to die for Him. *Kiddush Hashem* is not that you should allow yourself to be killed rather than serve *avodah zarah*.

Being killed rather than serve *avodah zarah* does bring about a *kiddush Hashem*. But there are other ways to bring about a *kiddush Hashem*. Another way of bringing about a *kiddush Hashem* is to act in such a way that the nations around you will see “*Avdi atah Yisrael asher bechah espa'er*” – “*Yisrael, you are My servant in whom I will be glorified*” (*Yeshayah 49:3*).

Another way of being *mekadesh Shem Shamayim* is the perfection of *middos* (character traits). *Kiddush Hashem* is an actuality, it's making *Hashem kaviyochol kadosh b'olamo* (holy in His world). A *chillul Hashem* is being *mechallel* (desecrating). One way is bringing Him in, bringing the *metzi'us* of the *Shechinah* into the world. *Chillul Hashem, chas v'shalom*, is being *madcheh*, pushing Him out, driving Him out.

By being *moser nefesh*, we're living a life of *kedusha* and are *mekadesh Hashem*; we bring Him in. *Chillul Hashem* is to live a life, *Rachmana litzlan*, of *tumah*. Submitting is to be *madcheh* Him, *chas v'shalom*.

Mesiras nefesh is a method of *kiddush Hashem*, but *kiddush Hashem* in its essence is to live a life of being *mekadesh*, through learning Torah, keeping *mitzvos*, doing *chasadim* (kindness), and perfecting our *middos*. Caring each for the other and being *marginish* (feeling) the *achdus* of *Yisrael*.

That's being *mekadesh* and the opposite, *Rachmana litzlan*, is being *mechallel*. One shouldn't make the mistake that *kiddush Hashem* is when you're confronted with *nisyanos*. *Kiddush Hashem* is a minute-by-minute reality which we face all the time. We live as *mekadshei Shamayim* (those who sanctify Him) or, *chas v'shalom*, not. We bring in *kedushah* or, *chas v'shalom*, we push it away.

Chanukah is a time of being *mekadesh*, through *hoda'ah*, by recognizing the goodness of *Hashem Yisbarach*. Through *Hallel*, recognizing the *gadlus* of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. But above all, by living it. By deriving and pushing every minute of our time and actions into things that bring about *kedushah* (holiness). Involving our mind with *devarim shebi'kedushah* and consistently being *mekadesh* and toiling in the source of all *kedushah* - the Torah itself.

By upholding the source of *kedushah* in the world: Shabbos. Shabbos is *va'yekadesh* “*and He sanctified...*”. It's how *Klal Yisrael* absorbs and brings into existence *kedushah*. How we're able to maintain and cling to those things that are *kadosh*.

May we use this path to be *mekadesh Shem Shamayim*, and to do so *b'achdus*, together, helping each other so that our world will come to be a true *kiddush Shem Shamayim*. Through the way we act, may we merit to *Hashem* leading us and making us successful in the battles we wage. For any true effort that we undertake fully, we're guaranteed success. This is for individuals but certainly true for effort we make as a *tzibbur* (community). May the *Ribono Shel Olam* make our efforts successful as well as our path for serving Him and learning His Torah.