

Recognize The Miracle

The Gemora (Shabbos 21b) records a famous dispute between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel concerning how many Chanukah candles to light each night. Beis Hillel light as we do, one candle the first night, adding one each successive night until reaching eight on the final night. Beis Shammai light eight the first night, diminishing one each night until left with one the last night. Rav Eliyahu Dessler zt"l explains the reason behind the dispute. The two sides have different opinions about whether a person's performance of the mitzvos of Chanukah is superficial or more deeply rooted. When one looks at the holiday superficially, he is most excited in the beginning. Then as the eight days of Chanukah continue, his excitement diminishes as he becomes accustomed to the holiday. That is the view of Beis Shammai. Beis Hillel, on the other hand, relates to a deeper performance of the mitzvos. One who serves Hashem with all of his heart and soul is constantly striving to get closer to Him. Each day of the holiday, he probes for a new insight, a deeper understanding, and a better appreciation of the miracles. This person finds his happiness increasing daily as he grows in his *Avodas Hashem* (service to Hashem). He begins with one candle the first day, and adds one each day, symbolizing his increasing happiness with each passing day of Chanukah.

Kinderlach . . .
We light the Chanukah menorah according to the view of Beis Hillel, increasing the number of candles each day. This shows that our happiness increases each day. How can we increase our happiness? By following Rav Dessler's interpretation of Beis Hillel. Learn something new about Chanukah each day. Share it with Abba and Imma at candle lighting time. Each day you will have a new insight and a new appreciation of the miracles of Chanukah. What could be happier than that?

Against All Odds

Last week's parsha ended with an entire chapter (43 verses!) listing the descendants of Eisav. Parshas Vayeishev subsequently begins by describing one descendant of Yaakov, namely Yosef. Rashi writes that Yaakov saw the whole list of Eisav's family members, (who were all his enemies, dedicated to destroy him), and wondered how he could conquer all of them. Rashi answers with a parable. A flax dealer came to the market with his camels laden with

flax. A blacksmith wondered, "How will this huge volume of flax be able to enter into the shop?" One bright person came along and said, "Don't worry, one spark from your hammer can burn up all of the flax." One tiny spark can reduce a huge volume of flax to nothing. Similarly, one man, Yosef HaTzaddik, can defeat all of Eisav's armies.

This is also one of the messages of Chanukah. The special prayers for Chanukah state that Hashem delivered the many into the hands of the few. The Greeks tried to prevent the Jews from keeping mitzvos. Judah HaMaccabe and those Jews loyal to Hashem and the Torah fought against the mighty Greek Empire. They were tremendously outnumbered. This did not deter their *emunah* (faith) and *bitachon* (trust) in Hashem. They knew that they had to keep the mitzvos, no matter what the odds. They were victorious. They did what Hashem wanted; therefore, He gave them the *siyata dishmaya* (heavenly assistance) to succeed.

Kinderlach . . .
Size and might mean nothing when it comes to Hashem's Torah and mitzvos. Just as Hashem gave Yosef the siyata dishmaya to overcome forces much greater than him, so too He will give us siyata dishmaya to overcome big challenges. How am I ever going to get all of this homework done? How will I ever make shalom with that neighbor? Everyone is going to the park and I cannot go; how can I ever face them all? I will be so embarrassed. Don't worry kinderlach. Hashem helped Yosef Hatzaddik overcome his challenges. He helped the Chashmonayim defeat their enemies. When you do what He wants, He will help you too.

Trust One Who Trusts

"Mr. Landlord, your apartment looks very nice. It is just what we need: spacious, clean, and a good location. The rent is also reasonable. I think we will take it. Let's draw up a lease."

The landlord pulled a contract out of his jacket pocket.

"Here you are, sir. Just sign on the dotted line."

The tenant took a minute to read the terms of agreement.

"This contract says that I must bring two guarantors, each of whom earn a minimum salary of \$2000 per month, along with their salary stubs for the last three months, an open bank

check for security, and six-month's rent up front."

"That is correct sir."

The man thought for a moment, cleared his throat and began to speak.

"Mr. Landlord, you are old enough to remember a time when all of this was not necessary. A signature on a contract meant that the tenant gave his word to uphold the agreement and that was enough."

The landlord's eyes met those of the tenant's. His heart fell. His face softened and he almost seemed to cry.

"What has happened to our world?"

"The warden did not check anything that he (Yosef) was in charge of, because Hashem was with him" (Bereshis 39:23). The Targum Yonason Ben Uzziel translates this verse a little differently. "The warden did not need to guard Yosef, as he did all of the other prisoners, because he did not find any sin in his hand, because Hashem was with him." Rav Zalman Sorotzkin zt"l finds this fact astounding. Yosef was condemned to death. He could have escaped because he was not guarded. Yet, he did not flee because he trusted in Hashem! Not only that, the warden recognized this, and he did not guard Yosef. The warden knew that he would not run away because he trusted in Hashem.

Kinderlach . . .
Who is a trustworthy person? One who trusts in Hashem. He will never steal, because he trusts that Hashem gives him everything that he needs. Why steal something that he does not need? He will never lie because he knows that the truth is from Hashem, and there is no reason to hide or distort it. It is a true pleasure to find someone that you can trust. His word is as good as gold, and your possessions are safe in his hands. Be a trustworthy person, and bring comfort into people's lives. Trust in Hashem and others will trust you.

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