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Agudas Yisroel of America

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פרשה: מקץ הפטרה: במדבר כח-ט, זמב-זמז הפטרה: רבי ושמחי (זכריה ביד-ד:ז) ליל ו' דחנוכה

דף יומי: חולין ו"א ותן טל ומטה לברכה על הנסים הלל שלם אתה יצרת (מוסף לשבת ראש חודש) א' דראש חודש טבת

א ליכטיג און פרייליכן חנוכה!

Torah Thoughts

... וקבעו שמונת ימי חנוכה אלו...

... and they established these eight days of Chanukah ...

The Chanukah would be lacking if it were to pass by without discussing the well-known question (אורח חיים, בית יוסף) and hearing some of the answers posed by our חכמים.

What is this famous question of the בית יוסף? The untainted jug contained enough oil to burn for one night, the casual observer might conclude that nothing miraculous happened on the first night that the כהנים kindled the מנורה. Since the miraculous nature of the burning was only on the following seven days, Chanukah should be observed for only seven days. If that is the case, why is Chanukah celebrated for eight days?

According to the שאלות דרב אחאי גאון, the one jug of oil actually contained less than a one-day supply. If so, then even the full first night of burning was indeed miraculous.

The holds that we add an extra day because of an unusual event. The purity of the hidden jug was verified by the fact that it was closed with the unbroken seal of the גדול. But it was never the practice — before or since — for jugs of oil to be sealed by the גדול or anyone else for that matter. Instead, a responsible was put in charge of the manufacture of the oil and its safekeeping. The very fact that the גדול had inspired an earlier גדול to seal a jug of

oil so that it should be available when needed by the חשמונאים was in itself a miracle.

According to הרב דוד פיינשטיין שליט"א, a festival that revolves around oil's ability to burn, as the time to teach the fundamental truth that even so called natural events take place only because the חכמים want them to. When seen from the perspective of the חכמים' will, the burning of oil is no less miraculous than would be the burning of water. In order to hammer home this truth, חז"ל decreed Chanukah be observed for eight days. The first day's lighting is to remind us that even the normal burning of oil is only in obedience to the חכמים' wish.

נצי"ל, Soloveitchik, suggested another explanation. There was no logical reason for the חשמונאים to think they would find any pure oil. After returning to the המקדש, they found its purity and sacred materials in shambles. Their desire to begin the מצוה of lighting the מנורה immediately was so strong that they initiated what seemed like a hopeless search for pure oil — and they succeeded! To commemorate this נס, we add another day of Chanukah — כ"ה קסלו.

This powerful desire to battle against all odds for the sake of a מצוה represents the miracle of Jewish survival.

Adapted from: Chanukah (with kind permission from ArtScroll)



Yahrtzeits of our Gedolim

ג' טבת
5662 — 5740
1902 — 1979

R' Chaim Leib Halevi Shmulevitz נצי"ל was born in Stutchin, Poland, to the ר' ראש ישיבה, ראש אגודת, and ר' רפאל אלתר, ראש ישיבה. When he was 16, both his parents died within a few months, leaving him to care for his 3 younger siblings. He became very close to R' Shimon Shkop נצי"ל who asked him to be a מגיד in Grodno. In 1925, he went to learn in מיר, where he married חנה נשיבת מיר ר' חיים. During WWII, he led ר' חיים in Shanghai for 5 years along with R' Chatzkel Levenstein נצי"ל. After the war, he immigrated to America before moving to קרית יואל, where he was for 32 years. His מדות and תורה גדולות can be appreciated by learning his classic work, שיחות מוסר.

Gedolim Glimpses

נצי"ל R' Chaim Leib Halevi Shmulevitz was bedridden with his final illness, a visiting רב asked him to daven for the רפואה. After the רב left, the חולה asked his son to dress him and take him to the בית. His son protested, but ר' חיים insisted. The ר' was carried to a car and driven directly to the plaza. Barely able to stand, ר' חיים tearfully beseeched ד' to help the חולה. He was carried back to his bed, a satisfied man. He was still able to help a תלמיד in need!



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🕯️ This week's Pirchei Weekly is dedicated 🕯️

לע"נ ר' ישראל בן אברהם ז"ל
לע"נ ה' ישעיהו דוב ע"ה בן יצחק צבי נ"י

In honor of the Engagement of Yehudah Zev Eckstein to Chaya Meira Cohen

Focus on Middos

Dear Talmid,

R' Chaim Shmulevitz זצ"ל had an elderly relative who lived in a nursing home. The man was a תלמיד חכם, and R' Chaim was very particular to visit him from time to time and talk with him in learning. Between visits, R' Chaim would send him letters.

On one occasion, he asked a member of his household to mail a letter to this man. To his surprise, the person saw that R' Chaim had written "Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz" on the back of the envelope. He knew that R' Chaim was very careful not to refer to himself by any title, and certainly would not write the title "Rabbi" on an envelope. He could not resist asking R' Chaim why he had deviated from his normal behavior.

R' Chaim explained, "This man is an older תלמיד חכם and, in a nursing home, he probably does not receive the attention and respect that is due to him. Who knows! Perhaps if somebody sees that he is receiving a letter from a rabbi, he will be treated differently."

On another occasion, a תלמיד חכם moved to ירושלים where he was not well known. R' Chaim made sure to attend all of his שמיעה shmuessen. Although R' Chaim's hearing impairment was very severe and he could not hear what the מנגיד שיעור was saying, he would sit through his shmuessen from beginning to end. It seemed to the מנגיד שיעור as if he understood every word.

Once, a member of the תלמיד חכם's family came to escort R' Chaim to the shmuess, but R' Chaim smiled and shook his head. "There is no need. I heard he recently received an important position in the city. He does not need me to attend his shmuessen anymore."

My תלמיד, R' Chaim's great love for תורה was so entwined with his חסד and understanding of others' feelings that he happily traded his most precious commodities of time and 'modesty' in order to help a תלמיד חכם feel better or become successful.

יהי זכרו ברוך!

בגידות, Your רבי

Adapted from: Rav Chaim Shmulevitz (with kind permission CJS)

Sage Sayings

R' Yisroel Salanter זצ"ל, the father of the מוסר movement, would often explain to his תלמידים, "One can have perfect מדות without מוסר, but one cannot change מדות without מוסר!" R' Chaim Shmulevitz זצ"ל would take this idea a step further and say, "מוסר שרייט גוואלד! — Learning מוסר shouts, 'Gevald! Change!'" Without learning מוסר, one may never even realize the need to change!

Source: Rav Chaim Shmulevitz (with kind permission from CJS)

Understanding Davening

...וקבעו שמונת ימי חנכה אלו להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול.

...and they established these eight days of חנכה to express thanks and praise to Your great Name.

The מצוה (בהעלתך ה) מדרש רבה explains of lighting the מנוחה with a סומא, blind man, and a חכם travelled together. As they entered the house the חכם requested that the סומא light a candle. The סומא wondered, "You guided me along the way, why now are you asking for my help?" The חכם explained, "I asked you to do so, so that you could feel good because you paid me back." So too, די says to ישראל: Pay Me back for guiding you 40 years in the מדבר by בהעלתך את הנרות, We have the privilege [are raised above all nations] by lighting up די's world. Thanking די is our greatest privilege!

This Week in History

In 140 BCE, the מקבים defeated the vastly more numerous, powerful armies of the Syrian-Greek king Antiochus IV, who had tried to forcefully uproot the beliefs and practices of Yiddishkeit from ישראל. The victorious Jews repaired, cleansed and rededicated the בית המקדש in ירושלים to the service of די. All the pure oil had been defiled by the pagan invaders; and when the Jews sought to light the מנוחה (candelabra), they found only one small cruse of ritually pure olive oil. They lit the מנוחה with the one-day supply, which miraculously, burned for eight days, until new, pure oil could be obtained.

Also on this day (1,100 years earlier) משה and ישראל completed construction of the משכן, the portable sanctuary that accompanied them during their 40 years in the מדבר. However, the משכן was not dedicated for another three months. תנ"ל tell us that the day of 25th כסלו was then "compensated" 12 centuries later — when the miracle of חנכה occurred and the בית המקדש was rededicated.

In commemoration, תנ"ל instituted the 8-day festival of חנכה, on which lights are kindled nightly by Jews around the world to recall and publicize the miracle of the oil, and its message that continues to illuminate our lives today.



LEARNING FROM OUR LEADERS

בס"ד
PIRCHEI AGUDAS YISROEL OF AMERICA

THE CHOFETZ CHAIM LIVED ALMOST ALL HIS LIFE IN POVERTY. DURING THE WEEK HE WOULD MOVE INTO THE LOCAL BEIS MEDRASH AND WRITE HIS SEFORIM.

REBBI, THIS SUPPER WAS SENT FROM THE REBBITZEN.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, BARUCH.

AT NIGHT, THE CHOFETZ CHAIM WOULD SLEEP ON A SHUL BENCH WITH A SMALL CUSHION AND BLANKET.

ONE DAY...

REBBI, I NEED TZEDAKAH TO FEED MY FAMILY.

THIS KOPEK IS ALL THE MONEY I OWN AT THIS MOMENT.

HERE, HATZLOCHA TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

A FEW WEEKS LATER...

REBBI, MAYBE YOU CAN ASSIST ME?

I DON'T HAVE MONEY...AH! I KNOW WHAT I'LL DO...

A FEW DAYS BEFORE BEDIKAS CHOMETZ:

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHERE REBBE'S SMALL CUSHION MIGHT BE? THE REBBITZEN WANTS TO CLEAN IT FOR HIM BEFORE PESACH.

I DON'T KNOW.

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I HAVE NOT SEEN THAT CUSHION IN A WHILE...

EXCUSE ME, THE CUSHION YOU'RE SITTING ON... IT LOOKS FAMILIAR...

YES. I ASKED THE CHOFETZ CHAIM FOR TZEDAKAH HE DID NOT HAVE ANY MONEY, SO HE GAVE ME THIS CUSHION TO SELL OR USE.

ר' אריה זאב WAS BORN IN ZHETEL, POLAND, TO ר' ישראֵל מאיר הכהן כהן זצ"ל. AFTER HIS FATHER WAS נפטר WHEN HE WAS 10 YEARS OLD, HIS MOTHER MOVED WITH HIM TO VILNA TO FURTHER HIS תורה LEARNING. AT THE AGE OF 17, THE חפץ חיים MARRIED HIS STEPFATHER'S DAUGHTER, רבינת EPSTEIN, AND SETTLED IN RADIN. THE חפץ חיים SUBSISTED ON A SMALL GROCERY STORE WHICH HIS WIFE MANAGED AND HE DID THE "BOOKKEEPING". IN 1869, HE OPENED THE RADIN ישיבה. HIS NAME IS BASED ON HIS FIRST WORK, ספר חפץ חיים, WHICH WAS THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE ספר WRITTEN SOLELY ON THE LAWS OF הלכה. HE LATER WROTE 24 OTHER ספרים, INCLUDING HIS MAGNUM OPUS, THE משנה ברורה, WHICH HE SPENT 25 YEARS WRITING. AS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF ישראֵל, THE חפץ חיים WAS VERY INVOLVED IN JEWISH AFFAIRS AND ALL OF HIS ספרים WERE WRITTEN IN ORDER TO HELP IMPROVE ישראֵל כלל.

For any inquiries or comments please feel free to call 347-838-0869 • Illustrated by: Yishaya Suval www.leilshishi.com

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