

QUESTION When we are looking at the ner Chanukah (the flame on the Menorah) what should we be thinking? What kind of “light” are we receiving from it?

ANSWER The Bnei Yissocher says that the ner Chanukah is [an aspect of] the ohr haGanuz, the original light from the first day of Creation which Hashem hid away for the tzaddikim in the future. Therefore, Chanukah is really the “light of the future”, which was hidden away for the future. That was the depth of why the jug of oil sealed by the Kohen Gadol was hidden away - and when it was found, it was a fulfillment of the verse, “The light of the righteous brings joy.” The miracle of Chanukah came about through the Chashmonaim (Hasmoneans, or Macabees) who were few against many when they fought the Yevanim (Greeks) and there was no natural way for them to win, yet they were willing to give their lives for this and they showed mesirus nefesh, which really meant that they give up their personal ratzon (will), because nefesh is identified as the ratzon and by giving up their own ratzon (in order to fight for the ratzon Hashem) they were essentially giving up their nefesh, and it was this mesirus nefesh which made them win and bring about the entire miracle. The “light” revealed on Chanukah is therefore the power of giving up our own ratzon, and when we are divested from our ratzon, the will of the Creator takes over our will [enabling us to give up our will to do Hashem’s will]. That was the miracle of the jug of oil. Normally, constriction brings sadness while expansion brings joy, yet from this tiny, sealed, constricted jug of oil there was a joyous miracle which came about. The joy was really the depth of the miracle.

As a hint to all of this, the word Chashmonai חשמונאי can be rearranged into the words *ayin yismach* אֵין יִשְׂמַח which means “through ayin, we can be happy”, meaning that joy comes from accessing ayin, which is reached through bittul (surrendering) of our ratzon (our personal will) in order to do Hashem’s will.

QUESTION What is the connection between ayin and the “light of the future”?

ANSWER Our world is a world of shelo lishmah, a world in which people naturally do things for self-gain, where people do mitzvos for the sake of reward and getting the Next World, etc. Man was originally created to serve Hashem lishmah, completely for Hashem’s sake and with no self-serving motives, but ever since we Adam and Chavah from the Eitz HaDaas mankind fell from the level of lishmah to the level of shelo lishmah. But of the Next World it is said, “For My Sake, for My sake, I will do it”, meaning that in the Next World all motivations are focused on Hashem and not on oneself. When a person does a mitzvah shelo lishmah, he is rewarded for it on this world, the place of shelo lishmah - and when he does a mitzvah lishmah, he is rewarded on the next world, the place of lishmah.

QUESTION Though the tzaddikim experience ayin in the Next World, we also

know that in the Next World the tzaddikim are enjoying the radiance of the Shechinah, so isn’t this experience of enjoyment an experience of the “I”, the self?

ANSWER The enjoyment of the tzaddikim there is from the state of bittul of being nullified to Hashem.

QUESTION But the enjoyment shows that it’s still being experienced through the “I”, the self.

ANSWER There is ani (the self) and there is ayin (the divested self), and there is also a higher level above ayin, which is called “above the movement from ani to ayin”. For more on this see the last section of Michtav M’Eliyahu, volume 1 about the concepts of hava-yah and hasagah (essence and comprehending), and there the concept is explained more clearly.

QUESTION If there is indeed this simchah on Chanukah (which is reached through ayin, or bittul) then why is it that terms of simchah are associated only with Purim but we do not terms of simchah associated with Chanukah?

ANSWER On Chanukah the joy is [hidden] because there is a light of the future which is radiating even now and which we can feel a spark of. Purim was when we were saved from destruction by Achashveirosh and Haman, we were saved from death to life, but we are still slaves of Achashveriosh so we weren’t redeemed completely then, but we were completely saved from death and that is the celebration of Purim. But Chanukah is coming from the light of the future, and now we just have a spark of that light which will come, and therefore the joy we have on Chanukah is only a spark of the light of the future but not the light of the future.

QUESTION Should a woman think of all of this as well when looking at the Shabbos candles?

ANSWER Shabbos is a degree of the serenity (menuchah) of the Next World. The Shabbos of now is a semblance of the next world, it is partial taste of that serenity. Chanukah though is a spark of the light of the future, it is a partial light. Shabbos is about the serenity of the next world, and Shabbos is a semblance of the next world so it is a semblance of that serenity of the next world, while Chanukah is a semblance of the light of the future and therefore we have a spark, a partial degree of that light of the future. That is why Shabbos candles, which are for the purpose of shalom bayis, takes financial precedence over buying the lights for the Menorah, because Shabbos is about shalom, peace, perfection, shleimus, the next world. So the Shabbos candles is a semblance of perfection of the next world. Thus, both Shabbos and Chanukah are two different aspects of the same concept – the Next World.



BILVAVI
excerpt from the shiur delivered in Lakewood recently
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