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תשפ"ה RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS VAEISHEV – CHANUKAH

THE SALE OF YOSEF AND CHANUKAH

When Reuvein suggested to throw Yosef into the pit the *passuk* describes this act as ויצילהו מידם that Reuvein saved Yosef from their hands since initially their intention was to murder him. This seems to contradict the *Chazal* (Shabbos 22) on the *passuk* והבור ריק אין בו מים the pit was empty from any water but it contained snakes and scorpions inside. If so how can the Torah write that Reuvein saved Yosef from his imminent death by suggesting to throw him in a pit of deadly creatures?

Another question concerning a statement of *Chazal* is on a *passuk* (Shir Hashirim 7,14) ועל פתחינו מגדים, that this *passuk* is referring to Reuvein who saved Yosef, and by our doors there are delicacies which refers to the mitzvah of נר חנוכה which is placed outside near the opening (door) of one's house. What is the connection between the episode of Reuvein's rescuing of Yosef from his brothers who intended to murder him and the mitzvah of נר חנוכה?

Let us first deal with a *contradiction* in *Chazal* concerning miracles that happen to people. On one hand *Chazal* say Shabbos 53b that when Abaye was told by someone that a miracle happened to him, he replied בראשית לו סדרי שנשתנו אדם זה כמה מגונה אדם how despicable is this person that he bothered Hashem to alter the order of creation for him. *Chazal* also say (Shabbos 32) that if Hashem made a miracle for him as a consequence he will lose his merits. This is proven from *Yaakov Avinu's* statement וקטנתי מכל החסדים I became smaller (less in merits) because of Your benevolent acts on my behalf.

Yet on the other hand we see Rabbe Chanina Ben Dosa (Taanis 24b,25) asking for a miracle that the vinegar he possessed should be granted the characteristic of oil and should burn. In another instance he was walking and it began to rain so he asked Hashem to stop the rain. When he came home he requested that the rain should start again since the people need the rain for their fields. Why wasn't he despicable for asking Hashem to change nature? Secondly, why wasn't he worried that because he bothered Hashem he will lose his merits?

The answer to these questions is that Hashem's reaction to your causing Him to alter nature, depends on how deep your *emunah* consciousness runs. If one believes that Hashem created the world of nature and constantly sustains it, then to make a change in nature is considered a bother to Hashem. However, if one truly believes that nature does not exist but rather Hashem creates the universe every second יש מאין from nothingness to somethingness, then to ask for nothingness to take a different form in the creative process from second to second, is not a bother nor an alteration from nature.

Rav Hutner ztl made an important observation in the exacting words of Rabbe Chanina's response concerning that his request would cause a bother to Hashem. מי שאמר לשמן וידלוק the one who said that oil should burn will say to vinegar that it too has now the reality to burn. Why did Rabbe Chanina mention "He who said can also say"? Let him merely remark Hashem who created oil to burn can change vinegar to burn as well. The

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answer is that Rabbe Chanina was connected into **מאמרות** עשרה which originally brought the world from nothingness to somethingness. Nature with its laws don't exist. What we see as nature is only the second to second "saying" of Hashem bringing יש from אין.

Let us return to the episode of throwing Yosef into the pit full of poisonous reptiles. Reuvein did not want to participate in the murder of Yosef. His plan was to throw him into the pit where under nature's laws Yosef will die by being bitten from the snakes. However, Reuvein knew very well that Yosef was a *tzadik* and that Hashem will perform a miracle in order to save him from death. He can then go to the brothers and reason with them that since the miracle happened there is no more need to kill him. Whether their intention to kill him stemmed from Yaakov's favoritism to Yosef due to his spiritual superiority over them, or because of their jealousy, it doesn't apply anymore. If Hashem makes a miracle for Yosef in order to save his life, the repercussion is that his merits and *maalos* become removed and he loses his superiority leadership status.

I heard from my father ztl that Rav Aliyahu Lopian ztl explained with a new interpretation the words we say in *Birkas Hamazon* ורחמים וחיים ושלוה וכל טוב ומכל טוב לעולם אל יחסרנו. We are always asking from Hashem to give us so many things we don't realize that some of these presents may border on miracles. If so we are in danger of losing merits *chas veshalom* and would rather choose not to have these benefits and lose merits to acquire a greater *Olam Habah*. Rav Elya explained that this quasi condition is also included in the ending words of ורחמים וחיים ושלוה וכל טוב ומכל טוב לעולם אל יחסרנו. One can put a comma after the לעולם and the sentence would then read "and from the goodness of *Olam Haba*, please don't remove from us.

Little did his brothers know that Yosef was holding on the *madraiga* of *emunah* of ברוך שאמר והיה העולם that nature is a constant recreation of יש מאין and therefore Yosef's merits were still totally intact. This is alluded to in the full name of Yosef which is יהוסף הצדיק the extra letter ה and the title of צדיק were gifted to him after successfully passing the seductive ordeal with the wife of Potifar. "יהוסף הצדיק עה"כ *gematria* "יש אין" something from nothing is *gematria*.

Furthermore, this *madraigah* of Yosef is also hinted in his title of being בן זקונים which Rashi brings the Targum בר חכים. On a deeper level בר חכים means an individual who is connect to *Sefiras Chachmah*. The *Mekubalim* write that מאמר בראשית is referring to חכמה as the Targum Yerushalmi translates. The *passuk* says מאין תמצא that wisdom emanates from אין nothingness. Therefore the word בראשית symbolizes יש מאין. This hints that Yosef was holding מאמר בראשית as his viewpoint and lens through which he saw nature as a non reality. Instead, it was merely something being constantly created from nothingness. It could very well be that the word טבע is from the root "to drown" סוף בים טבעו. Someone who drowns, he becomes submerged under water and disappears. טבע is constantly disappearing becoming non existant and then suddenly reappearing once again as it is being recreated from second to second.

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This idea of Yosef's lofty *madraigah* is supported by the extra clothing that his father made for him as the *passuk* says ויעש לו כתנת פסים. The *gematriah* of לו כתנת (including 6 letters and kollel) is בראשית. Yaakov realized that Yosef's *madraigah* of "emunah elyonah" is belief in יש מאין creation בראשית

Now let us talk about Chanukah, the Chashmoaim and the Menorah which played a major role on this *Yom Tov*. The building of the Menorah stands out from all the other holy vessels in the *Mishkan*. *Moshe Rabbeinu* had difficulty in making it even after Hashem showed him a heavenly menorah from fire so he would know how to fashion it. At the end Moshe put the gold in the furnace and Hashem Himself made it completely. What was the severe difficult challenge in making the menorah more than any other vessel?

The Bnai Yissaschor Chanukah *mamar* 4 brings in the name of the Baal Shem that the *Mishkan* was built with the letters by which the world was created. This was all achieved through the *Ten Mamaros* mentioned in מעשה בראשית. The *gemarah* says that even though only nine *mamaros* are mentioned the first *mamar* was בראשית without the explicit word ויאמר. The reason why it omits the word ויאמר because the first *mamar* in creation symbolizes the step from "nothing to something" which is incomprehensible to the human mind. The Menorah corresponds to the *mamar* of בראשית and therefore *Moshe Rabbeinu* could not understand how to construct.

Chazal also say that בראשית which translates as the purpose of the world, was Yisrael who are called ראשית and whose mission is to fulfill Hashem's mitzvos. Even though they were not doing mitzvos at the time of creation, Hashem nevertheless looked into the future and created a world because He saw they will fulfill mitzvos. During the *galus* of Chanukah the *Yidden* were prohibited to do mitzvos and to learn Torah. They were also forbidden to gather together and to *daven* with a public fast day. There was no other option how to annul the decrees of the Greeks. Hashem had mercy on them and like the *mamar* of בראשית looked in the future that when the *geulah* will come *Yisrael* will return to fulfill the Torah. The miracle of defeating the Greek Army came about because of בראשית which is symbolized by the Menorah. That is why we find that right after their victory they first lit the Menorah, for its theme made them victorious over their enemies עכת"ד.

After the Bnei Yissaschor's explanation how Chanukah relates to the Menorah and the *mamar* of *Bereishis* we can extend this thought and say that Chanukah facilitates a *Yid* to attain the *madraigah* of Yosef which is the *mamar* of *Bereishis* the realization and consciousness that Hashem recreates the world over and over again every second and that in truth nature does not exist. The *Chashmonaim* a group of 13 individuals Kohanim also reached that level of *emunah* and fought against the entire Greek army and defeated them. Who in their right mind would go to war with these overwhelming odds stacked against them. Only individuals who believe wholeheartedly that nature does not exist but is created every second anew. The *Ribbono Shel Olam* who created numbers can say that this second of creation I give the number 13 the power equal to 300,000 warriors.

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We can now understand the relationship of Chanukah to Yosef. The Megaleh Amukos writes that **אנטיוכוס** and **מלך יון** both are *gematriah* **יוסף**. They were against his *madraigah* of **בראשית** of creation renewal every second. The miracle of the **פך שמן** also demonstrated that from one flask of oil there can emerge 8. As we say in **מעוז צור** the phrase **בני בינה ימי שמונה** the Chidushei Harim says the correct version should be **בני בינה שמונה ימים**. He answers it conveys that Chanukah is **days of eight** which symbolizes beyond nature. Chanukah is the realization that there is no nature but rather Hashem's constant intervention of creation anew every second.

Now we can understand the second Medrash. Reuvein saved Yosef from death by placing him in the pit full of snakes. What the brothers did not know was that Yosef was on the *madraigah* of **בראשית** and he did not lose his merits at all. This connects with the theme of Chanukah when the Greeks were antagonistic to such a belief of creation. They worshiped nature as a deity. Am Yisrael defeated the Greek Army with the koach of **בראשית** on their consciousness and deep embedded in their hearts.

The parallel between Yosef and Chanukah continues. Chazal say **כל השמנים** that the Greeks intentionally and methodically defiled all the oils but somehow mysteriously missed one from which the eight days of Chanukah came about. How did they miss one? The answer is that Chanukah was the revelation of *emunah* in **בראשית** *somethingness* from nothingness. Wisdom is symbolized by oil which gives light. **חכמה מאין תמצא** it borders nothingness and therefore takes on the form of **אין** that it cannot be found even after a thorough search. However Yisrael who are also called **בראשית** and possess the *emunah* of creation **יש מאין** can be *zoche* to find that jug of oil which was not defiled.

Yosef who symbolizes the menorah was also hidden from his brothers and their serach for him. Even the period of time when he stood in their presence that did not have any understanding that their brother was there the entire time, orchestrating a path of teshuva for them. He too became revealed just as the jug of Chanukah oil. Yosef also was holding in the *emunah* of **בראשית**.

Therefore we light the Menorah on the entrance to our house. The world is Hashem's house as it is stated that Hashem created a universe in order to dwell in the lower world **דירה בתחתונים**. That is why the first letter of the Torah is **בית רבתי** an enlarged letter **בית** - house. The letter **בית** is the acronym of **מעשה בראשית**. This statement only says that Hashem renews creation every day. The **רבתי** that follows the **בית** is even more specific and detailed. **רבתי** with its acronym **תמיד רגע**, that Hashem just doesn't press the refresh button but rather pushes the recreate button every **second**. Just like Hashem's house has an entrance way through which He can enter the world and dwell in it, likewise we have in our personal house an entrance way in which we come in. Hashem's entrance is **בראשית** **ברא** that He creates the world anew every second symbolized by the **בית רבתי**, so too our *emunah* in Hashem's creation on Chanukah, we light the Menorah at the entrance of our

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abode with *בראשית בית רבתי* symbolized by the Menorah and renewed passionate *emunah* to Hashem.

Gut Shabbos *Lictigen* Chanukah,

Rav Brazil