



SMALL GIFTS OF LIGHT

Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

Ah, Chanukah! What a wondrous occasion. In the middle of the darkest point of winter, when days are shortest and nights ever more freezing, we are given the chance to create some light and draw away from life's shadows. By celebrating that small jug of oil found in the debris of the Beis Hamikdash, we have created a lifeline for every soul that is thrown into the darkness of life's trials.

Life is never as one plans; things have a way of taking detours just when you believe you have finally found some answers. There are times when we doubt ourselves, and even worse, question our connection with Hashem. This is what living is about: being challenged and growing with each new confrontation. Yet, we are human, and we sometimes feel as we may lose ourselves in the midst of the storm.

Great tzaddikim survived on their total focus on Hashem. However, we are so small, and sometimes the difficulties seem beyond our abilities. Just then Hashem sends us a spiritual glimmer of light, and whispers into our souls that He is there with us.

For many there seems to be a growing gloom around; things were meant to be so much better, yet our hopes seem to be betrayed. Our communities have seen so much growth, and yet, we are faced with new difficulties that serve to drive us apart. Events in Eretz Yisroel wreak with worldwide antisemitism. Gulus drives its Hester ponim to new depths and many feel broken.

Everyone knows the famous question of why we celebrate Chanukah for eight days when in fact the miracle was seven days. The small jug held oil for the first day. Entire seforim have shared many answers to this query.

The Pri Chodosh tells us that finding that jug itself was a

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miracle! He explains that given the situation according to halochah, they very well could have used plain oil. However, there was a miracle and somehow, they found one small jug of oil that had remained pure. Despite the trauma they all were experiencing, Hashem wanted them to know that He would never forsake them, and that His purity could always be found.

Hashem was teaching us something for all generations by giving us that one jug. What was it? That no matter how dark our times, despite the cold, the turmoil, the questions, Hashem in His love for us, sends us small gifts of light.

No matter how we struggle, and even though we don't understand why we are where we are, Hashem is showing us and intimating to His children, "Listen my children, some things you can't understand, maybe in one hundred and twenty years all can be explained, but till then, I send you My glimmer of light that disperses the darkness with its small steady illumination."

The Rebbe, Reb Liebela Eiger Ztl once explained how when the Torah tells us about Yosef putting small amounts of coins in the baggage of his brothers, he was sending them a message worthy of all future generations. Yaakov didn't need any money, neither did his children, so why did Yosef hide money in their bags? He was giving them Chanukah Gelt! What does this mean? When those sons of Yaakov faced what to them was a tormentor, they must have wondered what this was all about. Why was this Viceroy giving them such a hard time? Where was Hashem, why wasn't He standing up for them? So, they received their money back, a gift, to show that Hashem never forgets us. He is there within our difficulties, sending us glimmering hope, little moments of light, signifying that He has never let us go. That small sack of money showed that Hashem was really there with them and was sharing in their travails.

The worst thing for a Yied is to chas vesholom fall into a state of despondency, where he thinks that all is lost, that Hashem doesn't want him any longer. Hashem is telling us that no matter what, I am holding your hand and will never let go. In the darkest moment of our experience, Hashem plants a miracle: small glimmering lights that give us renewed optimism.

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