

The Month of Kislev:

Illuminated by the Light of Miracles and Divine Inspiration

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Introduction

In this world we are charged with having to do a lot of effort in order to achieve our goals whether physical or spiritual. Through the veil of the hidden world (עולם/olam) we can easily be misled to believe that our success is dependent on our own strength, the power of the doctor, the medicine, the benefactor, even the blessing of the Rabbi and all kinds of *segulot* (spiritual remedies) etc. We need to remind ourselves constantly that it is Hashem who gives the medicine, *segulot*, blessing etc. the ability to work. We only need to do our *histadlut* (effort) in order to create a vessel to receive Hashem's infinite blessing. The Chanukah miracle, which illuminate the entire month of Kislev, teaches us how effort and miracle go hand in hand. The miracle of the oil burning for eight days didn't happen until the Maccabees had created a vessel by searching and finding a jug of pure oil which they ignited. The eternal nature of miracles, as expressed through the light of Chanukah, ignites the darkness of exile. For this reason miracles are called נִסִּים/*nes* in Hebrew, consisting of the Hebrew letters *nun* and *samech*. According to *Sefer Yetzirah* *nun* is the letter that forms the month of Cheshvan. This letter begins the Hebrew word נֹפֶל/*nofel* – fall. In this month our fall into darkness began through the rebellion against the house of David which caused the splitting of the kingdoms and eventually led to the destruction of the Temple. The Temple is like the plug that turns on our connection with the circuit of the spiritual realm. It is the connecting channel between our world and the Divine. Therefore, with the destruction of the Temple, this channel became blocked causing prophecy to be lost from the world. However Hashem in His great mercy gave us as a Chanukah present in the month of Kislev – the letter *samech* – which also means support. This letter represents the illumination from the hidden light, the light of *Ruach Hakodesh* which continues to shine for us even during the darkness of the “prophecy-less” exile. Read on to understand more about this hidden light and how to tap into it.

Supported during the Darkness of Exile by *Ruach Hakodesh*

You may have noticed that the Chanukah story is not included in the *Tana"ch* (Bible), it is only written in the Oral Torah, because Chanukah is not a prophetic holiday, but rather a holiday illuminated from the light within darkness – the *Ruach Hakodesh* that shines even after prophecy has ceased. It is our light of hope within the darkness of despair, and so was the Oral Torah written after the destruction of the Temple, as it transmits Divine light deep into the darkness of exile.¹

¹ Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 29a.

While the letter *nun* of Cheshvan falls deep into the darkness of exile – as indicated by the long line of the ending *nun*, the letter *samech* which forms the month of Kislev means to support – it supports the falling *nun*. The closed circle of the *samech* indicates how Hashem surrounds and supports us from all sides with His Divine spirit of *Ruach Hakodesh* even in the post-prophetic darkness of exile. Yet, no matter how far we have fallen, Hashem is with us in our darkness, and we never lose the potential to connect with His light through *Ruach Hakodesh*. Usually *Ruach Hakodesh* is defined as the lowest level of prophecy, but I like to extend this concept to include our ability to find and connect with a spark of Hashem’s light within ourselves. When we unravel our *klipot* (husks) and blocks and tune inwards, we can connect with our inherent inner voice that knows, and guides us through life. Some people may call it intuition, its available for all of us – its light surrounds us and fills our beings.

The Connection between Miracles and *Ruach Hakodesh*

אמר רבי יוחנן מפני מה לא נאמר נו"ן באשרי מפני שיש בה מפלתן של שונאי ישראל דכתיב נפלה לא תוסיף קום בתולת ישראל במערבא מתרצי לה הכי נפלה ולא תוסיף לנפול עוד קום בתולת ישראל אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק אפילו הכי חזר דוד וסמכן ברוח הקדש שנאמר סומך ה' לכל הנופלים.

Rabbi Yochanan said, why does *Ashrei*² not have [a sentence that starts with] *nun*? Because [*nun*] begins the word *nofel* which means] downfall... Rabbi Nachman son of Yitzchak said, even so, David returned and supported it with *Ruach Hakodesh* as it states “Hashem supports all those who fall.”³

The words “even so” don’t make sense, likewise saying that David supported it with *Ruach Hakodesh*, don’t we know that all the words of *tehillim* are written in *Ruach Hakodesh*? We can now answer these questions by explaining that through the miracle of Chanukah Hashem supports those fallen into exile symbolized by the letter *nun* of Cheshvan with the letter *samech* imbuing us with *Ruach Hakodesh* – reflected by the Chanukah lights, which we ignite specifically during the darkness of night. For this reason a miracle is called נֶסֶ/nes – in this word the letter *samech* of Kislev supports the falling of the letter *nun* of Cheshvan. What is the connection between *Ruach Hakodesh* and miracles? Both are the imprints of Hashem’s eternal light throughout all times. The miracles that we experience in our lives make us feel surrounded by the light of Hashem’s providence – represented by the circle shape of the *samech*. Likewise *Ruach Hakodesh* is tapping into Hashem’s light filling us from within, represented by the space that fills the *samech*. Both are connected like a hand in a glove. Therefore, the miracle of Chanukah could not be written through prophecy, but only through *Ruach Hakodesh* in the Oral Torah. For the entire gift of the illumination of the light of Chanukah in the month of Kislev formed through the letter *samech* was for the time when we no longer have prophecy, to bless Israel with the gift of *Ruach Hakodesh*

² *Tehillim* 145 written acrostically from *alef* to *taf*, and is part of our daily prayer.

³ *Tehillim* 145:14; *Babylonian Talmud, Berachot* 4b.

until the return of prophecy. Rav Shlomo Carlebach teaches that Chanukah is the holiday that even if all the vessels of the holy Temple are defiled, the holiest miracles are happening to us every second – miracles from another world, from the world of deepest holiness where defilement doesn't reach.

Chanukah – Education for the Future Redemption

Chanukah is the education and practice for the future Final Redemption. Therefore, Chanukah from the word חינוך/*Chinuch* means education.⁴ When we light the candles of the *Chanukah* we are commemorating and connecting with the lights of the menorah in the Temple. In this way Chanukah gives of a glimpse of the light of the Temple, and prepares us for the time when this light will return to us in its full glory. Therefore, the Chanukah miracle took place after the passing of the last prophets Chagai, Zecharia and Malachi.⁵ Even after the end of prophecy, Hashem did miracles for us through the oil of Chanukah – illuminated from *Ohr Haganuz* (the hidden light) with which Adam could see from one end of the world until the other.⁶ What an awesome good present from Hashem to all the generations during the lowliness of our longwinded exile. From the illumination of Chanukah we receive the illumination of *Ruach Hakodesh* within all this darkness until the righteous sprout of David will sprout forth, and dedicate the third Temple in the month of Cheshvan.

Chanukah – the Vessel for Prophetic Soul Connections

The tribe of the month of Kislev is Binyamin. He is the bridge that ties the sons of Rachel with the sons of Leah, therefore the Temple is in Binyamin's portion, and Binyamin is the tribe of the month which supports and enables the rebuilding of the final Temple. נשמה/*neshama* – soul consists of the letters of מנשה/*Menashe* – the tribe of the month of Cheshvan, and גוף/*guf* (body) is in the *gematria* (numerical value) of חנוכה/*Chanukah*.⁷ *Ruach Hakodesh* is like the garment of the kingdom of Heaven, which is called "the holy body," therefore Chanukah is in the *gematria* of body – the vessel for the light of the *neshama*. This light will shine to its fullest at the dedication of the Temple, G-dwilling in the month of Cheshvan when prophecy will return as it states:

ספר יואל פרק ג:א וְהָיָה אַחֲרַי כֵּן אֲשַׁפּוּךְ אֶת רוּחִי עַל כָּל בֶּשֶׂר וְנִבְאוּ בְנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹתֵיכֶם וְזָקְנֵיכֶם חֲלֵמוֹת יַחְלְמוּן בַּחֲזוֹנֵיכֶם חֲזִינֹת יִרְאוּ:

*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.*⁸

⁴ Rav Tziv Elimelech of Dubno, *B'nei Yissascher*, Kislev, article 2, part 8.
⁵ *Babylonian Talmud*, Yoma 9b.
⁶ *Jerusalem Talmud*, Berachot 60b; *Babylonian Talmud*, Chagiga 12a.
⁷ Both the Hebrew word for body and for Chanukah share the numerical value of 89.
⁸ *Yoel* 3:1, *B'nei Yissascher*, Cheshvan, article 1.

