

סֵפֶר שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים

Hakdama Introduction

We are so fortunate to move to yet another special area in our Jewish Life cycle of organic time. For just as the Northern Hemisphere becomes its most physically dark, we Jews each become beacons of light, dignifying the dark with 8 nights of light, nights in praise of *Nissim*/miracles. For the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Hassidic movement, Hanukah was his "favorite" holiday -- for Hanukah is the holiday of light, a light that fills the soul and warms the heart.

We praise the miracles when we light, we praise the miracles in the addition to the after-blessing for bread and the Amidah, we praise the miracles by the recitation of the full Hallel each day. We therefore are taking a "short course" in miracles just in fulfilling our halakhic daily requirements for Hanukah.

It appears to me with the help of Heaven, that a more expanded *Course in Miracles* is required. Two years ago in *Sefer Yair Panav Elecha veYechunekha*, we daily meditated on one of the 13 Attributes of Mercy and derived personal meaning from them. Last year, in *Sefer BeHallel uveHodot* we again concentrated on the first blessing of the candle lighting ceremony, this time contemplating the Sefirot from Binah to Malkut, one each day. This year in *Sefer She'asah Nissim*, as will be explained, we turn our attention to the 2nd blessing, now focusing on the previous energies in reverse order, from Malkut to Binah, reflecting on the miracles in our life related to the Sefirot.

Our Sages established these eight days to express praise and thanks to Gd's great Name [from *Al HaNassim* addition], so it behooves us to make it personal, to look within and to express praise and thanks to Gd for the miracles in our life. To this extent, we with the help of adapted writings from various Internet sources, will explore the nature of miracle as they appear in our 24/7 on this amazing earth plain.

Some may wish to bypass these readings, and to go to the section on [Mystical Miracle Musings](#) towards the end of this document.

What is the Jewish standpoint on miracles?

How important or unimportant is miraculous phenomena to the Jewish believer? Perhaps we should rephrase the question in the opposite manner: "*What is the Jewish standpoint on nature?*" or "*How important or unimportant is natural phenomena to the Jewish believer?*"

Gd manages every aspect of creation at every given moment. There are no rules He must follow. There are no forces He must contend with. All is in His hands

Nonetheless, He chose to create a system called "nature." An arrangement of fixed rules. An order of causes and effects. Why did he create nature? In order to conceal His identity and hide His footprints. He wanted a world in which things would appear as if they run on their own, and thus, force Man to discover G-d on his own. In fact, the very word for nature in Hebrew, "*tevah*," also translates as "sunk." Nature is G-d's way of submerging His presence under a sea of scientific laws and patterns. And Man is a deep-sea diver given the task of finding G-d's hand which lurks behind the veil of nature.

And so, life is very similar to a game of "Hide and Go Seek." But every now and then, G-d emerges from His hiding place and breaks through the self-imposed shackles of nature. The sea is split. A scientific rule is broken. Mother Nature is proven wrong. Perhaps, a child is cured from an incurable disease. Or our nation is saved from a seemingly hopeless situation. And it is through these supernatural events that we realize that nature too is merely a creation of G-d.

Check out this important video: http://www.chabad.org/multimedia/kabbala_toons/default_cdo/aid/829231/jewish/Nothing-Like-Nun.htm

A story on miracles:

Here is a story related by Yanki Tauber concerning the Lubavitcher Rebbe: A group of high-school students once came to see the Rebbe. The students had each prepared a question, which they posed to the Rebbe in the course of the audience.

Toward the end of the meeting, after the Rebbe had answered their queries on various issues, one student asked:

"I have heard it said that the Rebbe has the power to work miracles. Is this true? Do you perform supernatural feats?"

The Rebbe replied: "The ability to work miracles is not confined to a select group of individuals, but is within reach of each and every one of us. We each possess a soul that is a spark of G-dliness. So we each have the power to transcend the limitations imposed upon us by our physical natures, no matter how formidable they may seem.

"To demonstrate this to you," said the Rebbe, "I will now perform a miracle." Smiling at the startled young faces around his desk, the Rebbe continued: "Each and every individual in this room will now resolve to improve himself in one specific area. You will each choose an improvement that you recognize as necessary but until now have perceived as being beyond your power to achieve. Nevertheless, you will succeed, proving to yourselves that the soul indeed has the power to overcome the natural 'reality' ..."

The Rebbe's Teachings on Miracles

The Rebbe once taught concerning Miracles:

In the Era of the Redemption, even the miracles which are encloded in the natural order will be revealed. That is, mankind will be able to perceive these miracles.

In addition, this will indicate a higher level of the miracles themselves. At present, the natural order conceals the miracles because the natural order represents the very opposite of the miraculous [even when a miracle is encloded with it]. This is because a miracle represents a deviation from the natural order, a change from its ordinary functioning. Therefore [in the present era, the uniqueness of] the miracles which transcend the natural order is more apparent.

In the Era of the Redemption, the natural order will be elevated...

In the Era of the Redemption, however, the miracles which are encloded within the natural order will also be revealed, as it is said, "I will show you wonders". The reason for this difference is that in the Era of the Redemption, the natural order will be elevated, and it will also be a suitable medium for the revelation of the infinite dimensions of the light of the *Ein Sof* which will be encloded within

it. Therefore, the miracles which are encloded in nature will also be overtly revealed.

Thus the new dimension implied by the prophecy "I will show you wonders" - that the wonders will be perceived - will be reflected in the wonders themselves. At present, the miracles encloded in nature are such that even after the revelation of the infinite dimensions of the light of the *Ein Sof* through the miracle, the existence of the natural order remains unaffected. In addition, its thrust is directly opposite to the revelation of infinite light (except that the revelation of the infinite light controls it and compels its course to follow the dictates of G-d's will).

In the Era of the Redemption, by contrast, the miracles that are encloded within the natural order will possess both advantages: 1) the revelation of light of the *Ein Sof* will be expressed within the natural order; and 2) there will be no entity whose existence runs contrary to the revelation of [G-d's] infinity, for even nature will be a medium [for the expression of] the infinite dimension of light of the *Ein Sof*

[adapted from *Sefer HaMa'amarim Melukat IV*, p 125; excerpted from "Anticipating the Redemption" Vol. II (S.I.E., 1997), pp 113-114][adapted by R. Eliyahu Touger)

Miraculous Nature and the Nature of Miracles (Sichas Vayakel 5736, seif 1)

There is no difference between nature and a miracle. Nature is simply a miracle that happens again and again. A miracle is simply something that we have never experienced. More importantly, a miracle is something that we think is impossible, because of our lack of understanding of reality. For man to fly was once a miracle; today aviation is as mundane as walking. Disease was once a hidden mystery; today medicine discovers miraculous breakthroughs daily. As man continues to understand reality, this knowledge will unock ever growing possibilities. Until, one day, the most impossible will be commonplace. At the core of the world is an infinite Divine reality. When man learns to access this Divine essence, everything will be possible.

"The statement of the Sages (Talmud Berakhot 34b) 'There will be no difference between the current age and the Messianic era except freedom from oppressive governments,' refers only to those who will not yet learned the secrets of Torah (Zohar, Raya Mehemna III: 125a)

Why Don't Miracles Happen Anymore?

This is an important question as we daily recite concerning the miracle of Hanukah *Bayamim Hahaim Bazeman HazeH*/in those days at this time. R. Zalman Posner writes:

Miracles--the word itself is hazy. Just what is a miracle? A world-shocking event such as the parting of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus? Or the constant human act of breathing? Neither of these two phenomena can truly be explained, but one of them is a familiar, ongoing occurrence while the other is an exotic, one-time happening. Let's talk about these two types of miracles and see whether miracles have really ceased.

The greatest miracle of all is described in the opening words of the Book of Genesis: *"In the beginning, G-d created.."* Suddenly "nothing" was transformed into "something". We are all familiar with the transformation of matter into energy or of energy into matter, but each of

these changes involved a previously existing "something". Where "nothing" exists, there can be no change. Creating ex nihilo – literally "out of nothing" – is beyond man's capabilities. This is a hurdle of acceptance that must be confronted at the outset. G-d, and G-d alone can create. The miracle of creation is the miracle of the first order, beyond duplication by man. The more familiar miracles described elsewhere in the Torah – the parting of the Red Sea, the manna in the wilderness, the Menorah that burned in the Sanctuary for eight days (the miracle of Chanukah), and so forth – these are all miracles of the second order. They did not entail creation ex nihilo, but merely change. Water, which is liquid, suddenly behaved like a solid; this, in brief is what happened when the Red Sea was parted to enable Israel to pass through it on dry land. A quantity of oil which normally can burn for only one day burned for eight full days because its rate of combustion had been slowed to one-eighth the ordinary rate. This, in brief, is the story of Chanukah. As the Talmud puts it, "He Who ordered oil to burn, and it burns, will order vinegar to burn and it, too, will burn".

But there is yet a third order of miracles – the miracles that are with us every day of our lives. The Sages teach us to "praise Him for every breath we draw". We are to give thanks to G-d for our every heartbeat, for the smooth performance of all our vital functions, and indeed for all the day-by-day workings of nature. "But", I hear someone protest, "that's only nature!" Correct. But the ordinary, the "natural," the everyday and commonplace happenings in nature and in our bodies are no less the work of G-d's hand than the parting of the Red Sea and, for that matter, the act of Creation itself. Thus we see that miracles are indeed still taking place and, in fact, are happening all the time.

This, by the way, is the explanation of the miracle of Purim, the deliverance of the Jewish people from Haman's wicked scheming: a succession of events which are not in themselves "supernatural" a series of what appears to be mere "coincidences" but which come about at a time when they can do, and do, the most good.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe once compared the Torah perspective and the non-Torah (we might call it scientific) perspective succinctly: the Torah view seeks the supernatural in the natural; science seeks the natural in the supernatural.

The function of the scientist is to find reasons for all the phenomena of nature, and then to apply his findings to all the natural events he subsequently encounters. He sets out from the premise that there is a reason for everything; he has faith in cause and effect. In an apparently healthy man suddenly falls sick and dies, the scientist cannot simply attribute it to the inscrutable will of G-d. His job is to find the cause of that illness, perhaps to cure others stricken with a similar disease, or perhaps to prevent the disease from striking others. Let it be emphasized that all this, in itself, is perfectly consonant with Torah doctrine.

What are the physical causes of thunder and lightning, of rainbows, floods, earthquakes, eclipses and famines – indeed, of anything in the universe? An occurrence that seems to defy explanation simply presents that much more of a challenge. "At the present stage in our knowledge we cannot adequately explain this phenomenon," the scientist will note. But the fact remains that, as a scientist, he must find a "natural" explanation for whatever happens in the world in which we live.

Torah imparts a different perspective. From the vantage point of Torah, everything is "supernatural" – including nature. Nature itself is a miracle, created by the hand of G-d; without His charge, "Let there be..." it would have remained nothingness. Do your lungs work properly? If so, give thanks to G-d for that. The natural functions of your body have concealed within them the hand of G-d; without Him they would not continue. That tree and that sunset are not just a beautiful tree and a glorious sunset; they are the manifestation of G-d Himself through His creations.

These two perspectives, science and Torah are, of course, not mutually exclusive. The physician who is a Torah Jew will use all his professional skill to treat his patient, and remain sufficiently humble to recite some Tehillim (Psalms) as well. Or, we might express the same thought in reverse; the Torah Jew who is a physician will offer prayers for his patient, but at the same time employ all his medical skills to treat him. Two different perspectives may both be valid. A physicist might see a sunset as a refraction of light rays, while a painter might view the same scene as a cascade of colors. Rabbi Chaim Brisker (a nineteenth century great Torah luminary), observed a sunset on Yom Kippur and described it as the atoning power of the Day of Forgiveness slowly sinking below the horizon – an unusual perspective but a perfectly valid one.

Miracles, certainly the miracles of nature, are with us, all the time. But , repeating the original question, why don't "supernatural" miracles, the miracles of the second order, happen any more today?

Let us try to answer that question without entering into the various views on the purpose of the Biblical miracles. Take as our case in point the parting of the Red Sea. We are told (Exodus 14:31) that Israel "beheld the hand of G-d" at the Red Sea. The Children of Israel recognized the miracle for what it was. Those generations of the Biblical era, to which it was given to witness miracles, had the capability of accepting them as such, and of being impressed.

Then, these ancients implemented their recognition of the "hand of G-d" by living in accordance with the "word of G-d", because they had experienced Him directly and personally. The generations of antiquity lived in a pre-scientific age. G-d wanted to show them that there was a Power greater than wealth and the chariots of Pharaoh, greater than the waves of the sea, and they were prepared to learn the lesson which the miracle had been intended to teach.

But people have changed since then.

If we were to gather at the banks of the Mississippi river today and I were to promise that at dawn the next morning, I would strike the river with a staff and the waters would part and then, the next morning, I would indeed strike that river a mighty blow and the waters would really part, what would you say?

That G-d sent me? That it was a miracle? Or would you suggest that it was a trick which I performed with the aid of a ton of Jell-O under the levee or some other sleight of hand? Or, if we were to meet tomorrow at that mountain in the Sinai desert and to hear a voice thundering forth from a cloud, would we declare that this must be the voice of G-d, or would we suspect the presence of a hidden loudspeaker or some other gadget?

The question we should ask is not whether miracles do or do not happen today, and why, but what effect miracles have upon us. Miracles show man that G-d is master over nature, over all the world. Miracles are a form of communication, but communication needs two partners. To be sure, G-d can perform miracles, but how would we react to them? Perhaps, when we are ready for miracles, when we are able to recognize a miracle when we see one, it will be given us to witness miracles.

But then, is it really true that the kind of miracles that are described in the Bible never occur today? I am not a military strategist, but how about the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel's crossing of the Suez Canal during the Yom Kippur war and the Entebbe rescue? And, more recently, the Gulf War scuds, the fall of Communism and the massive Jewish emigration from the former Soviet Union? I have read many explanations of these events, but frankly, I find it easier to perceive them as miracles which reveal the hand of G-d in the history of man rather than to accept the "rational" explanations

Learning From Miracles: A Mystic View

The Shelah writes: (www.kabbalahonline.org)

Akavya ben Mahalalel said: Reflect upon three things and you will not come to sin. Know from where you came and where you are going and before whom you are destined to give account and reckoning. From where have you come?--from a putrid drop. Where are you going?--to the place of dust, worm, and maggot. Before whom are you destined to give account and reckoning?--before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be he. (*Avot* 3:1)

Rabbi Akavya enumerates three thoughts which are apt to help a person avoid committing a transgression. Since we can all count to three, and the thoughts are mentioned separately, why did Rabbi Akavya have to tell us that there were *three* considerations? *Midrash Shmuel* suggests that Rabbi Akavya wanted to stress that these three considerations are effective only if one thinks of all of them at the same time. Hence he stressed the number three.

The yardsticks applied to the soul are in accordance with its superior origin....

The author of this Midrash proceeds to show that whereas the first of the considerations listed by Rabbi Akavya referred to the body, the second referred to the soul. This explains why he did not use the word for "nothing" when describing the way we are headed as he had described the place we originate from; instead, he refers only to a direction. The soul enters the body "naked", and its task is to leave it after having become a personality, i.e. after having acquired suitable "clothing".

These subjects are discussed in the chapter about the soul in *Pardes Rimonim*.

When it has to give an accounting, the soul has to demonstrate its accomplishments while in a body before the attribute of Justice because the yardsticks applied to the soul are in accordance with its superior origin. The body has to give an accounting before the King of kings, the King who judges all the terrestrial kings, as pointed out in the Talmud, in Tractate *Avoda Zara*. Such considerations also enable us to explain the *Mishna* in *Avot* 5:8:

Ten miracles were performed for our fathers in the Temple:

- no woman miscarried from the odor of the flesh of the offerings;
- the flesh of the offerings never turned putrid;
- no fly was ever seen in the place of slaughter;
- the high priest never suffered a pollution on the Day of Atonement;
- rain never quenched the fire of the wood arranged on the altar;
- no wind prevailed over the pillar of smoke;
- never was a defect found in the omer or in the two loaves or in the showbread;
- though the worshipers stood pressed together, they could freely prostrate themselves;
- never did serpent or scorpion do harm in Jerusalem;
- and no man said to his fellow, "There is no room for me to lodge in Jerusalem."

Why did the author of this *Mishna* not say "G-d performed these miracles etc.," instead of phrasing it passively, merely as something experienced by the

people? When the same phraseology is used in connection with the miracles performed in Egypt as listed in the preceding *Mishna*, this could be explained as a by-product of the plagues, i.e. Israel being saved from the afflictions suffered by the Egyptians. It is worthwhile to read the comment of *Midrash Shmuel* on this *Mishna* which he attributes to a Rabbi Moshe Almosnino [a prominent scholar in Salonika and Constantinople during most of the 16th century. Ed.]. Sacrificial meat...is not subject to decay and worms....

The reason the ten miracles are described in the manner they are is that they teach us ten lessons. Man has free choice. Five of the miracles listed represent man's right hand, the other five represent his left hand. The right hand symbolizes the three types of awareness demanded by Rabbi Akavya concerning one's soul - plus the need to rectify any sins one has already committed, which makes four. The fifth is the awareness of before whom one has to give an accounting. Once one has to give an accounting before G-d, it is too late to engage in remedial action, i.e. *Tikunim*.

There are also five types of awareness that apply to the body, i.e. the "left hand". In view of all this, our *Mishna* in Chapter 5 commences with the negative aspects of such miracles, whereas it concludes with miracles which demonstrate positive accomplishments by the people who experienced them. The fact that a pregnant woman did not experience a miscarriage due to the stench of the meat on the altar corresponds to the statement of Rabbi Akavya that we must be aware of the putrid drop of semen our body originates from. This subject is mentioned in *Yuma* 82 where we are told about a pregnant woman who experienced a terrible urge to eat on the Day of Atonement and whose predicament was presented to Rabbi Yehudah Hanassi. The latter instructed that one should whisper to this woman that the date was the Day of Atonement. When this advice was followed the woman's hunger pains subsided. Concerning this incident they applied the verse: "I have known you before you were even formed in the womb" (Jeremiah 1:5); the baby that this woman gave birth to was the famous scholar Rabbi Yochanan. The Talmud next reports about another similar case involving Rabbi Chanina and a pregnant lady. The same procedure was followed, but it did not assuage the lady's terrible urge to eat. The bystanders applied to that lady the verse: "The wicked are defiant from birth" (Psalm 58:4); the child born from that pregnancy was a certain person named Shabtai, who hoarded produce during years of drought and sold it at exorbitant prices.

We draw a parallel from the experience of pregnant ladies who passed the Temple and who did not abort an embryo due to the unpleasant smell of the sacrificial meat to women who did not feel revolted by the smell (or awareness) of their own flesh and blood. According to Rabbi Akavya the mere thought of it should have been revolting.

The second kind of awareness demanded by Rabbi Akavya, consciousness of one's destination, a place of worms and decay, similarly holds no terror when one speaks of meat such as the sacrificial meat which has been sanctified on the altar. Such meat is not subject to decay and worms. The Talmud describes several instances of rabbis whose body had not decayed for many years after their burial. One such instance was that of Rabbi Eleazar who was blessed by a Jewish adulterer about to be executed that his flesh should not become worm-eaten nor decay. (*Baba Metzia* 83)

The presence of flies then symbolizes an excessive concern with the physical. . . . The absence of flies in the slaughterhouse cited as one of the ten miracles which occurred in the Holy Temple symbolizes an absence of bodily desires. The body is less likely to decay when one controls it. Rabbi Akavya therefore demanded an awareness of the fact that there would be a price to pay for indulging one's body in order to frighten us into controlling such urges.

The Talmud, Tractate *Berachot* 10, states that the Shunamite woman who used to provide lodging for the prophet Elisha recognized that he was a holy man because flies never bothered him or his food. The presence of flies then symbolizes an excessive concern with the physical. The people who ignored Moses' instructions not to try and leave over part of the manna which fell on the first day (Ex. 16:19) learned their lesson because their leftovers became worm-eaten and stank. We read in Malachi 2:3: "I will strew dung upon your faces, the dung of your festival sacrifices, and you shall be carried out to its heap"; the presence of flies and their ilk round the sacrificial meat is a clear sign of a curse. We have stated that our own table should serve as our private altar, i.e. as the visible symbol that we should strive for holiness.

When one lives on such a basis, the pollutant transmitted as a residue of Eve's sin is purified each and every day. . . .

The fact that during the hundreds of years the Temple stood the High Priest never suffered from an involuntary emission of seminal fluid on the Day of Atonement is a clear indication that the putrid drop of semen (mentioned by Rabbi Akavya) from which human life originates has been rehabilitated. The origin of seminal fluid is in the brain, and pure thoughts influence the purity of the seed. When man starts out correctly, pure, undefiled, every day of his life can be like a Day of Atonement and in his purity he may be comparable to the angels. This is what Rabbi Eliezer had in mind when he told his students to repent one day before their death, i.e. on a daily basis. (Tractate *Shabbat* 153) When one lives on such a basis, the pollutant transmitted as a residue of Eve's sin is purified each and every day.

The inability of the rains to extinguish the woodpile of the altar alludes to the eternity of the judgment in the future. Let me first explain something about the nature of the rain and what it symbolizes to the extent that I understand the matter.

The souls have to demonstrate their ability to maintain an affinity with the Divine while assigned to this world. . . .

The Hebrew word for rain is "*geshem*", which is also an expression denoting the spiritual influence exerted from the higher regions, denoting that the purpose of the spiritual input has been achieved. This process applies to the various worlds, such as the worlds of *Beriya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya*, respectively, until in our physical world the drops of moisture that fall from the sky are also called "*geshem*". This is actually a name "borrowed" from a word which had a broader meaning to begin with.

Keeping this in mind, we understand that when the Torah lists a number of blessings in store for us as a result of observing G-d's various statutes, etc. (Lev. 26:4), the first such blessing mentioned is that of rain, "*geshem*". In view of the fact that rain is only one of the instruments enabling a crop to materialize, we would have expected the Torah to first mention bountiful crops as a

consequence of Torah observance. The fact that the Torah chooses to mention rain first is an indication that there is much more to it than we thought. Regarding the miracle of the woodpile on the altar not being extinguished by rain, the corresponding fire in the Heavenly Regions is a mystical dimension involving the souls of the righteous which the archangel Michael sacrifices on that altar. We have explained that the word "*geshem*" in its original meaning expresses the outpouring of spiritual largesse to regions in the various worlds, such spiritual largesse eventually to be perceived in this physical world as rain. The ability to absorb such spiritual largesse without being overwhelmed by it is tested, so to speak, by the souls in those regions. The souls have to demonstrate their ability to maintain an affinity with the Divine while assigned to this world. The souls who pass this test have demonstrated love for their spiritual origin. Once they have done this theirs is the kind of love of which Solomon has said that the most powerful waters cannot extinguish such love (Songs 8:7), i.e. the fire symbolizing such love.

Thus we have discussed the five miracles that pertain to the body.

The Miracle of Hanukah

Tikun 13 of the Tikunei Zohar discusses the 10 different types of melodies that King David used in composing his book of Psalms. Each of these thematic melodies reflects one of the ten *sefirot* in *malchut*. The eighth *sefira* is *hod* (often translated as "thanksgiving"), and the miracle of Chanuka is also connected to eight because a one-day supply of pure oil for the Temple menorah lit after the defeat of the Greeks lasted eight days. In the discourse below Rebbe Shimon exposes some of the secrets underlying these connections.

The eighth [rectification of the *sefirot* of *malchut*] is "thanksgiving" [in Hebrew, "*hodaya*"]. Through this *sefira* [*hod*] King David would praise G-d with the words "Praise [in Hebrew, "*hodu*"] be G-d". This praise is certainly connected to the *sefira* of *hod*.

King David was from the tribe of Judah and ruled that tribe first as king. The name "Judah" is derived from the Hebrew word for "praise" - "*odeh*", as Leah said when naming her fourth son: "Now I will praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah" ([Gen. 29:35](#)) Clearly the book of Psalms is full of praises of G-d, and this shows David's worth as King of the Jews - called "*Yehudim*" (after "Judah") - "Those Who Praise G-d".

The words "*laminatzeach*" and "*hodu*" hint at the *sefirot* of *netzach* and *hod*. *Netzach* and *hod* raise up *malchut* by revealing wonders and miracles that elevate the awareness of how the Divine works in reality...

The word "*lamnatzeach*" is translated as "To the chief musician" e.g. Psalms 4:1. A translation suggested by Avraham Sutton in his work "The Psalms of King David" is "The Master of Creation who grants victory with His melodies". The idea is that the word "*lenatzeach*" means "to be victorious" or "to overcome". In connecting to the *sefirot* of *netzach* and *hod*, King David and all who recite Psalms with this intent arouse a response from those *sefirot* in *Zeir Anpin*.

These *sefirot* are the source of miracles.

The Hebrew word "*ness*", meaning "miracle", also means "to raise up". The legs in the body represent the *sefirot* of *netzach* and *hod*. Just as the legs elevate the torso, so do *netzach* and *hod* raise up *malchut* by revealing wonders and miracles that elevate the awareness of how the Divine works in reality. The

festivals of Purim and Chanuka represent these two *sefirot* in time. Put another way, there is no sense of thanksgiving greater than that felt after a miracle and no victory more complete than a miraculous one.

These *sefirot* were praised by Moses with the word "Az" [meaning "then"] in the verse: Then [in Hebrew, "Az"] sang Moses and the people of Israel this song to the Lord. (Ex. 15:1)

The song sung by all Israel when they saw the Egyptian army drown in the Red Sea started with the word "az" spelled *alef-zayin*. The numerical value of this word is $1 + 7 = 8$, and it is therefore connected with the eighth *sefira* of *hod*. This is because of the *hod* that was given to Moses. It is the understanding of the miracle that gives such power to the feeling of thanksgiving...

Hod is the eighth *sefira* (counting from *keter*), and *bina* consciousness flows as far as *hod* on the left side of the Tree of Life. *Hod* is therefore also called "honor", a word also used to describe *bina*. Thus Moses is told to "Put some of your honor upon him (Aaron)." (Numbers 27:20) It is the understanding of the miracle that gives such power to the feeling of thanksgiving that it arouses.

Then [in Hebrew, "Az"] you shall call, and G-d [Havayah] will answer. (Isaiah 58:9)

When you call from the *sefira* of *hod*, the eighth *sefira*, then *Havayah*, the *sefira* of *tiferet* will answer. Here the prophet is explaining that the *sefira* of *tiferet* collects and distributes the divine abundance to *hod*.

Circumcision is on the eighth day, and this is because after *hod* comes circumcision, which is in the *sefira* of *yesod*, called "*tzadik*"; in it [*yesod*] the *yud* of the circumcision is revealed [i.e. the crown of the circumcision], which is the tenth of the *sefirot*.

And it is in relation to *hod* that there are eight days of Chanuka after 24 days [of the month of Kislev]. These 24 days are equivalent to the 24 letters in the verse [said after the first verse of the *Shema*] "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever". Immediately thereafter: "And behold in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off." (Gen. 8:11) Olive

oil...illuminates only after it has been crushed and refined...

The eight oil lights lit over Chanuka correspond to the *sefirot* of *chochma*, *bina*, *daat*, *chesed*, *gevura*, *tiferet*, *netzach* and finally on the eighth day, *hod*. The ultimate completion of the lamp lighting ceremony is on the eighth day representing the unification of the *sefirot* in *hod*. The 24 days before Chanuka represent the harsh rule of the Greeks that intensified during the period of the rebellion. This suffering was born by the Jews in order to sanctify the name of G-d "below" in this world and thus corresponds to the 24 letters of the phrase blessing His kingdom - even in the midst of the hardest struggle for survival. Immediately after the victory, the dove, which is the symbol of peace, shows an olive branch in her mouth.

The oil used in the lamp was olive oil and as is known, olive oil signifies the *sefira* of *chochma*. It illuminates only after it has been crushed and refined. This "wisdom" is lit on the first day and is then drawn each day through the *sefirot* until it reaches *hod*, the *sefira* of (now) fully conscious thanksgiving.

***Chaf-Hei* [the numerical value of 25] dwells on Israel on the 25th of Kislev.**

The letters *caf* and *hei* correspond to the 25th day of Kislev, which is the first day of Chanuka. The word "*kah*" is spelled by the letters *caf* and *hei*, and it signifies the *Shechina* and the unification of three holy names with the name

Havayah: Eh-yeh Havayah, Elo-him Havayah and Ado-nai Havayah. These three names have 25 letters.

These are "*Shema Yisrael*".

"*Shema Yisrael...*" - "Hear O Israel, G-d our Lord is one G-d." (Deut. 6:4) has a total of 25 letters. This verse attests to the unity of G-d and is recited as part of the daily prayers, both morning and evening. These three names relate to G-d as manifest in the worlds of *Beriya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya*.

And this is Chanuka - the two words "*chanu*" and "*kah*".

"*Chanu*" means a resting place - as in the Modern Hebrew "*chanaya*" meaning car park. "*Kah*" ("25") reflects the unity of G-d in the 25 letters of the *Shema*. Thus the name of the holiday can thus be understood as meaning the dwelling place of the unification of G-d. *Hod* represents the final extent of the judgments in the *sefira* of *bina*, the clearest distillation of *bina* consciousness. After *hod* comes the collective *sefirot* of *yesod* and *malchut*. It is no coincidence that "the Great Lamp" Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai passed away on the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer, which corresponds to the *sefira* of *hod* within *hod*. Also of interest is the concept that the number eight is above *nature*, which is represented by the number seven. It is therefore associated with an awareness of the miraculous. The number eight on its side is the same as the symbol for infinity that is also above nature. In addition, the Hebrew word for the number eight is "*shemona*", and it has the word "*shemen*", meaning "oil" as its root. Thus we see a connection between "miracles", "eight" and "oil".

פרסומי ניסא

PUBLICIZING THE MIRACLE OF CHANUKAH

The law of "publicizing the miracle" (*pirsumei nisa*) is unique to Chanukah. To be sure, the concept of *pirsumei nisa* appears elsewhere. For example, the Talmud relates that the principle of *pirsumei nisa* also applies to reading the Book of Esther on Purim and to drinking four cups of wine on Passover.

However, as the modern scholar, R. Yonah Metzger notes, only with respect to Chanukah is *pirsumei nisa* a *sine qua non* for the proper performance of the mitzvah. That Talmud cites two situations in which a person lights Chanukah candles and yet, does not fulfill their obligation precisely because of a lack of *pirsumei nisa*. One who lights candles more than twenty *amot* above the ground does not fulfill the obligation. (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 22a.) Rashi (France, 1040-1105) explains that the reason for this is that the eyes cannot rest upon something that is too high off the ground and, thus, there is no *pirsumei nisa*.

The Talmud rules (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21a) that the proper time to light candles ranges from sunset until people no longer walk in the marketplace. This statement implies that once the marketplace empties out for the evening there is no purpose in lighting Chanukah candles; without pedestrian passers, the very purpose for lighting the candles is nullified. Hence, lighting the Chanukah candles has as its sole purpose to spread publicly the miracle of Chanukah.

During the days of the Talmud people would light Chanukah candles outside their homes and so there really was a public remembrance of the miracle. Yet, the Talmud itself recognizes that this ritual could at times be dangerous. Writes the Talmud (Shabbat, 24b): "In a time of danger, one puts [a candle] on the table, and that is sufficient." This statement raises some questions. Does it imply that one fulfills the obligation in a time of danger simply by lighting a candle inside the house or does it mean that in a time of danger one is exempt from fulfilling the obligation to light Chanukah candles?

Different cultures addressed this question in a way that reflects their own unique environment. In northern Europe during the medieval period, when it grew dangerous to publicly display the Jewish faith, people started lighting the Chanukah candles inside their own homes. Consequently, the great French scholar, R. Isaac of Dampierre (13thc.), writes that the concept of *pirsumei nisa* shifted away from reaching the public at large and now focused on enlightening the members of the household. This development caused a reexamination of the Talmud's central teaching. No longer was the time for lighting Chanukah candles contingent upon people being in the marketplace. In the medieval era the most significant criteria was that people in the house witness the lit candles. Thus, the concept of *pirsumei nisa* evolved from a public display into a family based educational model.

In contrast, in medieval Egypt, where the Jews were freer to practice their religion in public, Maimonides' (1138-1205) ruling contrasts with that of R. Isaac of Dampierre. Maimonides strictly follows the formulation of the Talmud that one may light candles only until the marketplace empties out for the evening. Thus, according to Maimonides, if one delays lighting until very late in the evening, then one can no longer light Chanukah candles that night. Maimonides does not accept the fact that *pirsumei nisa* can apply to the members of the household—*pirsumei nisa* only applies with respect to the general public.

Later authorities allow for the more expansive understanding of R. Isaac of Dampierre. In the sixteenth century, R. Joseph Caro and R. Moses Isserles both rule (Orah Hayyim, 672: 2) that ideally one should light candles during the time period that ranges from sunset until the closing of the marketplace. However, both also allow one to fulfill the obligation by lighting later on in the evening in front of members of the household. Subsequent commentators, like R. Avraham Gombiner, note that if everyone in a house is asleep one does not fulfill the obligation to light Chanukah candles. Similarly, the Mishnah Berurah suggests that one should awaken the sleeping members of the household in order to fulfill the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles.

This brief discussion gives us a richer understanding of *pirsumei nisa*. How is it possible that this concept which in the texts of the Talmud applies only to the general public morphs in later authorities into a concept that applies predominantly to members of one's private household? Aside from the historical reason that it was not always physically safe to light candles outside the home there is an educational message as well. The rabbis are stating that everything we do in the public sphere also has as its goal the education of the

personal family. As much as we are proclaiming the miracle of Chanukah to the world, another purpose of this proclamation is to emphasize the greatness of this miracle to our own family members. Thus, *Pirsumei nisa* is both a public and private declaration. And, perhaps more importantly, the history of the concept of *pirsumei nisa* demonstrates that all public displays of our religion should have as a primary focus the education of our own family.

Mystical Miracle Musings

The RaShaSh Siddur for Hanukah contains illuminating *kavanot/intentions* for the prayers.

In the *She'asah Nisim* blessing, the 2nd one we say daily, the RaShaSh holds that the vowels for the word Ado-nay change for each day of Hanukah.

The vowels indicate an elevation starting from **Malkut** on the first Night to **Yesod to Hod to Netzah to Tiferet to Gevurah to Hesed to Binah** on the eighth Night.

The Names with the vowels are as follows:

יְהוָה with the vowels of **צְבָאוֹת** Tzebaot for **Malkut** on Night 1

יְהוֹוָהוּ with the vowels of Shuruk for **Yesod** on Night 2

יְהוֹהֶה with the vowels of Kubbutz for **Hod** on Night 3

יְהוֹהֵה with the vowels of Hirik for **Netzah** on Night 4

יְהוֹהֵה with the vowels of Holom for **Tiferet** on Night 5

יְהוֹהֵהֶה with the vowels of Sh'va for **Gevurah** on Night 6

יְהוֹהֵהֶהוּ with the vowels of Segol for **Hesed** on Night 7

יְהוֹהֵהֶהוּהוּ with the vowels of Tzere for **Binah** on Night 8

It appears to me with the help of Heaven, that just the mere contemplation of these vowels related to the Sefirot is insufficient.

That for one to take this Jewish Course in Miracles seriously requires one to reflect on personal miracles as related to the specific Sefirah on the particular night.

For example, on the first Night, one contemplates Miracles related to **Malkut**, on Night 2 Miracles related to **Yesod**, on Night 3, Miracles related to **Hod**, etc,

until the Night 8, when one contemplates the Miracles associated with **Binah**. These contemplations, it is strongly hoped, will bring forth the kind of transcendence and self-elevation intended by the Sages for this holiday when we *praise and give thanks to Gd's great Name*.

Each night of this Jewish Course in Miracles, in a separate daily mailing, we will reflect on Miracles related to Sefirot, and as the Nights ascend in holiness, so will we [According to Beit Hillel on Shabbat 21b, we subscribe to the principle that "we ascend in holiness and do not descend," and thus we light one candle on the first night, two on the second, and so on until eight see below at *].

Basic Meditation on **שְׁעֵשָׂה** She'asah:

From the Ben Ish Hai who gives over in a simple version the intention on the word *She'asah*:

"May it arise before you, as if I had intended in the drawing of the light of the Supernal Holy Faces

(of Arik Anpin) which are the two names **אל אל** which are filled

(**אלף למד אלף למד**) which total the letters **שׁע** Shin Ayin (370), and

hints to the letters **שׁע** Shin Ayin of the words **שְׁעֵשָׂה** She'asah Nissim.

And let these letters sweeten

the Name **אֱלֹהִים** Elohim which has the filling

(**אלף למד הי יוד ממ**)

(gematria 300) which totals with the 5 letters of the simple spelling of **אֱלֹהִים** Elohim, 305, and hint to

the letters Shin and Heh **שׁה** of the words **שְׁעֵשָׂה** She'asah Nissim.

Advanced Meditation on **שְׁעֵשָׂה** She'asah:

This is from the RaShaSh, ideally done from a Siddur, but OK to do from this translation

Meditate on the word Hanukah, that it hints to the 2 Names **אל אל** in parsing the word Hanukah into *Hannah Ku* (Kaf Vav)

Hannah **חנה** in Hebrew is gematria (63) Shem Sag **הי וואו הי**

the filling letters of Sag are **יא׳י** which total **אל**, from above.

Ku (Kaf Vav) **כו** is gematria 26, that of **יהוה** to which we add one for each letter of

אל plus one for the kollel and we get אל mentioned above.

Now intend the 2 names El spelled out full

אלף למד אלף למד which total 370 ש"ע, for the lights of the face of Arik Anpin.

Also through this intend to sweeten the Name Elokim of Yodin and the 5 letters of the source.

אלף למד הי יוד מם
+ אלהים

totals 305, or ש"ה

We now have **שַׁעְשָׁה** *She'asah*. (370 & 305)

Nisim נסים :

Intend that the Nisim are the Netzah, Hod, and Yesod. Netzah is Shem Mah, Hod is Shem Adnut, and both together total 110 or Nes/miracle.

The Yesod includes the 50 Gates of Understanding which total the word י"ם YaM (Yod Mem)

Netzah = הא ואו הא יוד which is gematria 45

Hod = אדני which is gematria 65,

together 45 plus 65 = 110, or Nun Samekh, Nes.

Yesod includes the 50 Gates of Binah, and the letters Yod and Mem י"ם of Nisim

La'avotainu: (to Abba and Imma)

Bayaimim HaHaim: (which nest in)

Bazman (Zeir Anpin)

Hazeh: (Malkut)

Concluding Thoughts

These Eight Nights are the conclusion of the voyage we began back in Elul, when we focused on teshuvah through Yom HaKippurim. We then served Gd through joy in Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret/Simhah Torah. Then we entered "secular time", and through Heshvan and most of Kislev, served Gd in our 24/6 doing our regular things, and Shabbat having an elevation.

Hanukah is the time to be able to repair those parts that still need fixing, balance, repair, healing, in short: *Tikkun*.

It is stated in *sefarim* (see *Ta'amei Haminhagim* p. 363) that *Hanukah* is the "*gemar hahatimah*" - the completion of the process (which started in *Tishrei*) by which the Jews are sealed and inscribed for the new year.

An allusion to this is found in the *pasuk* "*Bezot yechupar avon Yaakov*" - "*Through this shall Yaakov's iniquity be atoned*" (*Yeshayah 27:9*). The word "*bezot*" is a reference to **Zot Chanukah**, and the prophet is saying that until "*zot*" *Hanukah* the sins of the Jewish people are forgiven.

Another hint is from the discussion the brothers had with their father Yaakov about returning to Egypt to purchase food. They said "*Ki lulei hitmamanu ki atah shavnu zeh pa'amayim*" - "For had we not delayed, by now we could have returned twice" (*Bereishit 43:10*). The word "*lulei*" can be arranged to spell "*Elul*", which is the month designated for *Teshuvah*. The message was "*Ki lulei hitmanu* - if we delayed doing *Teshuvah* in the month of *Elul*, *ki atah shavnu zeh pa'amayim* - we still have two more chances to do *Teshuvah* - the month of *Tishrei* and *Hanukah* .

Eight days and Eight daily mailigs, Eight Sefirot, Eight contemplations of the miracles in our life.

Crazy 8's! http://www.kabbalaonline.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/379321/jewish/Who-Knows-Eight.htm

Instead of *Vidui*/confession, *Hoda'ah*/acknowledgement.

May it be Your Will, Hashem, that our joyous thanks and praise offered on these days complete for the good all that needs to be completed.

Amen.

Rahmiel Hayyim Drizin
Kislev 5771

FIRST NIGHT (WEDNESDAY) MALKUT

Tonight is the first Night of Hanukah.

According to the RaShaSh, it relates to the Sefirah of **Malkhut/Sovereignty**.

On **Malkhut**, Rabbi Simon Jacobson writes:

Malkhut is nobility, sovereignty and leadership. Sovereignty is a state of being rather than an activity. Nobility is a passive expression of human dignity that has nothing of its own except that which it receives from the other six emotions. True leadership is the art of selflessness; it is only a reflection of a Higher will. On the other hand, **Malkhut** manifests and actualizes the character and majesty of the human spirit. It is the very fiber of what makes us human. **Malkhut** is a sense of belonging. Knowing that you matter and that you make a difference. That you have the ability to be a proficient leader in your own right. It gives you independence and confidence. A feeling of certainty and authority. When a mother lovingly cradles her child in her arms and the child's eyes meet the mother's affectionate eyes, the child receives the message: "I am wanted and needed in this world. I have a comfortable place where I will always be loved. I have nothing to fear. I feel like royalty in my heart." This is **Malkhut**, kingship.

Before we light the Hanukah candles and say the blessings, we reflect on the following *Nissim*/Miracles that relate to our sense of **nobility**.

The **Miracle of Receiving**: air, water, food, clothing, shelter. We may mistakenly think that we are the source of our satisfied needs, but we know truly in our heart of hearts, that there is only one Source of Blessing, Hashem, who opens up His hand and satisfies the needs of all living creatures. Today put your personal needs aside, renew, let go of the life you have planned, so as to accept the one that is waiting for you. [R. Yaakov Haber]

--realize your importance and significance in the Divine order of creation. You are a messenger of Gd. Through you Gd provides for the needs of the world.

--acknowledge that your talents and abilities come from Gd, and resolve to use them to better the world, *LeTakayn Olam beMalkut Shadday*.

--Give Gd the credit, say "*Barukh Hashem*" many times today.

-- Rabbi Peretz Auerbach connects **Malkhut** to Humility: "Humility is greater than them all." True humility means to recognize one's specialties and to know that they are gifts from Gd. It is difficult to strike a balance between this, being lowly, and not falling into ego. Therefore much prayer is necessary in order to reach true humility

Today one should ask that Gd eradicate all pride from the heart. Then should count blessings and enumerate good points, good deeds, and unique abilities before Gd. Request to really feel that they are gifts from Him

The **Miracle of Autonomy**. We are all subjects to Gd, but we also each have the opportunity to be a hero, like the Maccabees who initiated our holiday. Today give up something in your life for something bigger than yourself.

The **Miracle of Community**. Jews are called *Kinneset Yisrael*, which also is a code name for the **Malkhut**. As such, take a moment to appreciate your spouse or companion or friend as Gd-given. Accept them as they are, and don't try to change them.

If someone has been influenced by you, make them also an admirer of Gd rather than an admirer of yourself.

The **Miracle of You**: Be self-contained, and don't want something that is not yours. [The 10th commandment **לא תקמדם...רעך** relates to **Malkhut**, the 10th Sefirah]. Shed all feelings of jealousy that you have, and realize that Gd has given you all the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical tools that you need.

When we say the second blessing [see attached intentions], *She'asah Nissim*, we intend the Name

יהוה Hashem with the vowels of **צְבָאוֹת** Tzebaot a.

For this first night, we should reflect on the teaching of our colleague R. Yitzchak Schwartz on the various aspects of **Malkhut** below, and relate them to the Miracles in our life.

Malchut/receiving

**When we receive selflessly with our entire being,
with the intent of channeling it all onwards,
then we will constantly be filled to the brim with Allness,
and more important than this,
we will constantly give birth to brave new worlds
and brave new ways of being in the world**

A. MALCHUT/RECEIVING FUNDAMENTALS

The Holy Zohar defines the Sefira Malchut as follows; “ ...Malchut has nothing of her own, except what she receives from that which is above her...”.....Malchut is all about selfless receiving.....making oneself into a empty vessel anxious to be filled and anxious to pass it on to others.....Malchut is the female paradigm---she attracts the seed of life that will impregnate her with the giver's essence----she will then nurture that life essence to the point of birth and beyond---to the point of maturity.....

The corresponding qualities found in the consciousness of the Malchut person; -----they view their life and their world as a profoundly abundant reality---an endless collection of opportunities---each one to be passionately savored and embraced and acquiredThough they see that life is full of possibilities and opportunities, they resonate with that one special opportunity, to the exclusion of all of the others....they focus on one opportunity, one man, one seed.....they embrace this seed of life and nurture it with tender loving care and compassion----they nurture it until this seed blossoms and is born----until it becomes a fully independent being in it's own right.....All of this is accomplished by their selflessly and lovingly and endlessly valuing what they receive---whether it be a mate, a child, a seminal idea, a project or anything else that is given over to their tender loving care.....

A. MALCHUT/RECEIVING -----IT'S KABBALISTIC MULTI-DIMENSIONAL EXPRESSION

Malchut is the last Sefira.....It therefore integrates the features and powers of all of the Sefirahs that precede it.....As a result of it's receiving of the entirety of the Sefirotic Unit, it gives birth to an entire new unit of Sefirahs, and it becomes the incipient initiator or the KETER of that new body of Sefirahsthe word 'Malchut' means Kingdom....a true King, Queen or leader is one who selflessly receives all of their power and wisdom from ABOVE, and then benevolently channel what they receive into the governing of their Kingdom....The paradigm-Biblical-'Malchut' figure is King David----everything about him, from his complete fathoming of G-dliness ['...yours, Hashem, is the Greatness and the Gvurah and the Tifferet {and all the rest of the Sefirotic graspings of G-dliness}.....'{a verse recited by David from Chronicles and from the daily morning service}]---to his role as the eternal paradigm King of Israel---in his life and in Messianic times {King Mashiach the son of David---the King David who is alive forever}----all these are very beautiful descriptions and illustrations of the essential definition of the Sefirah Malchut----The Sefirah of selfless and complete receiving in order to channel it onwards.....this same definition serves as the essential description of the numerous 'Kinuyim'/'Descriptive terms' that are used to describe Malchut and the role that it plays in our lives.....Here are a few examples [see if you can identify this definition in these terms...];

- a. The feminine paradigm
- b. Regality
- c. Prayer
- d. The Holy Temple
- e. The Shechina [Divine Presence]
- f. The Matriarchs
- g. The Oral Torah
- h. Shabbat
- i. Community
- j. Emuna\Faith
- k. The Land
- l. Ruach HaKodesh /The Holy Prophetic Spirit
- m. The Moon
- n. Closure
- o. Review /Inventory
- p. Name [of someone or something]

A. MALCHUT/RECEIVING MEDITATIONS

1. TOTAL RECEIVING

Be totally open to receive....receive the voices from inside yourself....receive the information from outside of yourself....receive the messages that come to you with every interpersonal encounter.....receive the people that you encounter, not only as you perceive them, rather put yourself in their place and see things the way that they see things.....be receptive to the birth process that you are going through---your active role in the birth process, as well as your passive role in birthing---by watching Hashem make it all happen....

2. RECEIVING YOUR INNER VOICE

Receive the voice inside....the Divine voice that is constantly speaking to you....learn to distinguish this voice from all the other voices---the ones that are counterfeit and misleading and shallow and confusing ---the inner noise and static that is always vying for your attention....notice how this voice speaks softly, sometimes imperceptibly soft, but with a crystal clear message---the message that you know deep down in your heart and Soul---the message that is constantly directing you to choose that which is healthy and whole and Holy and empowering and good and loving.....begin to practice receiving your inner voice by attempting to answer a few questions and doubts and challenges that you are faced with, and try to determine which inner voice inside of you gives the true answer....continue in this manner until you begin to recognize your inner voice with more and more clarity

3. RECEIVING FROM PEOPLE [and the rest of the world outside of yourself]

Receive from people and the world in a complete and selfless manner....see how all things that you encounter are actually messages from Hashem---through these people to you---[even when they're not directly talking to you]....notice how the questions and problems that you are coping with, are answered up by the people that are people-ing your life.....receive people not in the way that YOU see them, rather in the way that they see themselves.....put yourself in their place and see the world through their eyes....this way you can truly understand them.....this way you can truly see what they need and thereby help and heal them....this way , you can see that they have what you lack and need , and they can heal you

4. GIVING BIRTH TO WHAT YOU RECEIVE

Receive and be open to the Birth Process that you are going through, or that you are helping to facilitate.....bridge your active role in the birth process with your passive role....see how, despite all of YOUR efforts to bring the birth to it's fruition and actualization, actually it's really all being orchestrated by THE ONE ABOVE in His own way and in His own time.....see how that which you are giving birth to in life, directly corresponds to what you receive and how you receive it....notice that the more that you see the birth process coming to it's actualization, the more you see it's beauty and it's wonder and how this birth process is perpetuating other related birth processes---some insignificant and others, very profound....

SECOND NIGHT (THURSDAY) YESOD

Tonight is the 2nd Night of Hanukah, related to **Yesod**.

Rabbi Simon Jacobsen writes that **Yesod** connotes bonding. Bonding means connecting; not only feeling for another, but being attached to him. Not just a token commitment, but total devotion. It creates a channel between giver and receiver. Bonding is eternal. It develops an everlasting union that lives on forever through the perpetual fruit it bears.

Bonding is the foundation of life. The emotional spine of the human psyche. Every person needs bonding to flourish and grow. The bonding between mother and child; between

husband and wife; between brothers and sisters; between close friends. Bonding is affirmation; it gives one the sense of belonging; that "I matter", "I am significant and important". It establishes trust - trust in yourself and trust in others. It instills confidence. Without bonding and nurturing we cannot realize and be ourselves.

Before we light the Hanukah candles and say the blessings, we reflect on the following *Nissim*/Miracles that relate to our sense of **bonding**.

The Miracle of **Devekut**/attachment

לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, לְלַכֵּת בְּכָל-דְּרָכָיו--וּלְדַבְּקָה-בּוֹ-
to cleave unto Him,

-this is the miracle of bonding oneself to Gd, to do His halakhah. We all strive to feel Gd's presence internally. Those few and fleeting times where we are "full of Gd" and "empty of self" are so cherished.

-we also bond with our fellow. Today we must not only confront our humanity and our relationships, we must sanctify them.

-the Miracle of **Communication**

-we humans are blessed to be able to communicate information by speech, by touch, by sight, by action. We differ from the animal world in our ability to give over a narrative, to record that narrative on papyrus [perhaps the root of paper?], on stone tablets, on a foggy window, in the sand, on a computer screen, etc. How wonderful it is to imbue our world with Holy speech!

-the Miracle of **Sanctification**

-**Yesod** is the interface where Gd interacts with creation (R. Yaacov Haber). The actual physical and tangible aspects of the world--man, trees, hills and valleys--can be imbued with Gdliness through **Yesod**. Holiness is not separate from this world; rather, it permeates it. And in Yesod there is the fulfillment of the spiritual goal of imbuing the physical world with holiness. Tonight and for the rest of the day, we must not step aside from society and view it as a distraction to our holiness.

-

-the miracle of **Sexuality**.

- when the Sages tried to get rid of our yetzer ha'ra, the inclination to evil, all births in the world stopped. The miracle of Sexuality and our sexual feeling is to promote the tikkun and continuance of the world. In recognizing this miracle, we need to do what we can to raise holy sparks, and to act as holy people.

-in Berakhot 5a, Rabbi Levi Bar Hama says that a person should always arouse his Yetzer Tov to fight his Yetzer ha'Ra -- "*Rigzu v'Al Techeta'u*" (*tremble and don't sin*) (*Tehillim 3*) If he does not overpower his Yetzer ha'Ra, he should learn Torah -- "*Imru bi'Levavchem*"/say to your heart". If he still does not overpower it, he should recite Shema -- "*Al Mishkavchem*" (*on your bed*). If he still does not overpower it, he should think about the day of death -- "*v'Domu Sela*" (*and be quiet*). On this day, we will be mindful of our urges, and seek the holy source from which they emanate.

- Rabbi Perets Auerbach notes that the main *yetzer hara* is for promiscuity. It is the main impurity. Who is a *tzadik*? One who guards the *brit*. The drastic descent of the generations has caused that many have greatly fallen in this area. It may seem almost impossible to repair the tremendous amount of damage done. Someone said a parable that brings out how important it is to try and do the seemingly little that we are still capable of doing. There once was a very wealthy man who came to a town and offered big loans for long periods of time. Many borrowed from him. Over the period of the loan, each person went through financial difficulties that left them penniless and unable to pay back. When the time came to pay, no one showed up to even acknowledge that they had taken any loan. The lender became very upset. One person who borrowed from him felt bad and ashamedly came to at least give a few dollars and apologize for not being able to pay the rest. He thought that the lender would yell at him. Instead, the man received him with great joy and thanked him for at least paying something and acknowledging that he should pay the rest.

In our times, the small bit that we are capable of doing is very precious to God. Therefore, one should be very strong to push himself to do at least that. Today acknowledge your obligation to pay back to God all of the vast wealth of sparks that you took from the side of *kedushah* and gave to the other place. Even though this small payment may seem to be like nothing compared to what is owed, it is counted like a lot and can evoke Divine favor.

--the miracle of *Connection*:

Rabbi Perets Auerbach writes that everything in the world requires connections in order to work. Avoiding the wrong links is the first part of guarding and fixing the covenant. Once the right links are found, help is still necessary to actualize those links and plug them in. Both finding the right links and actually attaching them are *Yesod*-oriented issues. Prayer about *Yesod* pleads for aid to be saved from being drawn after the wrong bonds, to merit to find the right ones, and to hook them up. This involves attaining some basic level of separation from materialism, desires, and physicality - to sanctify, elevate, and ascend to be ascetic. Rabbi Shmuel Shapiro is reported as saying that one needs to scream with complete *mesirat nefesh* [outpouring of the soul] in order to merit to true *tikun habrit*.

When we say the blessing *She'asah Nissim*, we meditate on the attached intentions, and focus

on the Name יידיהויה related to *Yesod* when we say Adonai .

Today we contemplate the following connections brought down from our colleague R. Yitzchok Schwartz.

Yesod/allness

A. ALLNESS FUNDAMENTALS

1. YESOD/THE MALE ORGAN

The male reproductive organ functions as a reproducer with great pleasure and vitality when active and total abstinence when not.....It enlists and represents the entire DNA of the body in it's primal communicatory act...

The corresponding qualities are found in the consciousness of a Yesod person.... When they [often referred to as a Tzadik/Tzadket] discerningly choose to engage in a propitious, healthy and holy relationship or activity [as opposed to a spiritually harmful one, which they choose to abstain from], they do it with an expression of total vitality and pleasure and self expression---so much so, that they inspire the same in the recipient of their full-communications [and the fruits of their communication are reproductive and blessed---that is to say, that the goodness that they create is perpetuated by any one coming into contact with them—even indirectly]

2. YESOD/THE SEFIROTIC PROCESS

The Yesod is the harmonious and fully expressed communicator of all the Sefirot [thus it is the only Sefira that corresponds to reproduction]...

The way that this is expressed in the consciousness of the Yesod person, is Allness... Whatever they think, feel, speak or do is an expression of allness.... They constantly seek to engage more of life, more fully lived and expressed, more unified, more impactful, more abundant, more experienced..... They therefore make all decisions in life, based on allness---to the extent that what they choose will empower their allness, to that extent they are prepared to jump in [and so too, the opposite]

B. ALLNESS LIVING

Review your day ...what were the activities/experiences that you had?.... Measure the ALLNESS level of your daily activities... How fully expressed and alive and pleasurable were they? Try to experience how the more that they were activities expressing your ALLNESS, the more inspired you were—in all ways....

Project your upcoming day..... How can you change your day completely, by injecting ALLNESS? See the anticipated activities /experiences of your day without ALLNESS, then see them with it..... Here are some illustrations of how to inspire your day with ALLNESS;

1. Reframe an upcoming interaction with someone as being an opportunity to bond with that person in a totally unique and creative and meaningful way [that will elicits from them their bonding ALLNESS in return]
2. Reframe an upcoming errand that you need to run as being an opportunity to accomplish your goal with as much expression of your inner powers as you can enlist---your power of creativity and feeling and love and innovation and sensitivity...etc...etc...etc...
3. Reframe an upcoming spiritual experience [prayer, study, meditation...etc...] as being an opportunity to express yourself in a way that you never have before, nor will you ever be able to again.... see that your experience will resonate for Eternity.... see that your experience will have the power to effect, not only yourself and those around you, but the entire world.... see that

your experience will be one that will perpetuate similar experiences in your life in what will be an upward spiral of spiritual power and bliss

THIRD NIGHT (SHABBAT/FRIDAY) HOD

Rabbi Simon Jacobsen writes that **Hod** has an aspect of humility – and the resulting yielding – should not be confused with weakness and lack of self-esteem. Hod or humility is modesty - it is acknowledgment (from the root of the Hebrew word "*hoda'ah*"). It is saying "thank you" to G-d. It is clearly recognizing your qualities and strengths and acknowledging that they are not your own; they were given to you by G-d for a higher purpose than just satisfying your own needs. Humility is modesty; it is recognizing how small you are which allows you to realize how large you can become. And that makes humility so formidable.

A full cup cannot be filled. When you're filled with yourself and your needs, "I and nothing else", there is no room for more. When you "empty" yourself before something greater than yourself, your capacity to receive increases beyond your previously perceived limits. Humility is the key to transcendence; to reach beyond yourself. Only true humility gives you the power of total objectivity. Humility is sensitivity; it is healthy shame out of recognition that you can be better than you are and that you can expect more of yourself. Although humility is silent it is not a void. It is a dynamic expression of life that includes all seven qualities of love, discipline, compassion, endurance, humility, bonding and sovereignty.

Before we bless, we contemplate the miracles associated with **Hod**:

The miracle of **Simplicity**:

Rabbi Perets Auerbach writes that "*The tzadik goes in his simplicity - happy are his children after*" (Pr.20:7). "*And I in tumi [my simplicity] You supported me - and You set me steadfast before You forever*" (Ps.41:13). *Tam* is the same letter as *mait*, turned around. "*And Ya'akov was a simple person, dwelling in tents*" (Gen.25:27). "*Ya'akov our father did not die.*" The quality of Ya'akov is Torah. It is the tree of life. One who is attached to it lives eternally. The quality Rabbi Nachman most stressed is **simplicity**. After all of his lofty graspings of divinity he was adamant to emphasize that the main thing is to be simple, straight, and Gd-fearing. This is the way to true perfection. He loved the simple services of simple people. He said that it even someone who is not learned can be a *tzadik*. **Simplicity** is being absolutely truthful, straight, and upright. Usually, the only thing to be said about Gd is what He is not. Yet we find that, as if it were, the *seforim* describe Gd in the positive as being 'simple with absolute simpleness'. It is so the highest thing that can be said of Gd. Before creation, His simple, equatorial, pure light filled all of existence. "*I am Gd - I have not changed*" (Mal.3:6). Even after creation - He is still the same. One who has the quality of simplicity emulates God in highest manner. He does not change in expressing his simple essence - no matter what is going on around. He is immune to wanting honor, ego, and empty vanities. He goes straight in the path of connecting with God in whatever he does.

This is the true great depth of "He is in equanimity and He equates". All things, from galaxies to atoms, from particles to universes, from dear friends to even fiendish mother-in-laws - are all equal before His exalted essence. His state of absolute equanimity leaves its trademark on the finite realm by dwarfing everything equally into absolute significance and insignificance before Him. One can relatively emulate his Master and master this attribute also. It is a radical revolution, an octave above,

a new dimension of classic stoics. One dissolves, fades, melts, and is included in the Source of All - that all is equal before Him. Through this one can blend in and be in bliss every second - no matter may seem to be going on in heart/in the stock market, in inner space/in outer space, "within you/without you" - implode/explode...

"To make pleasure of the spirit before the Creator blessed be His name." A central thing is to simply always yearn in everything one does to make '*nachat ruach*' (pleasure) before *Hashem yitbarach*. This itself is what makes before Him the greatest pleasure. So it says by the sacrifices, "a fire offering, a sweet savor to God" (*Lev. 1:9*). As explained, "pleasure that I said (something) and my desire was done". A person should always make himself as a sacrifice before *Hashem*. This is done by manifesting in the heart the simple longing to fulfill God's will. This is the true point of simplicity and it as if makes God very happy. One who has this is mind is as an offering that is accepted in good will above.

The Miracle of **Aesthetic Beauty**

"Beauty is bought by judgment of the eye." How should we react when we see an attractive sight? Should we stare and gawk; should we feast our eyes or avert them? The Talmud says that one who sees beautiful creatures or beautiful trees should acknowledge the Almighty by reciting the following blessing: "Blessed are You, Hashem, our Gd, king of the universe, who has this in His world" (B. *Brakhot* 58b).

What type of beautiful creatures warrant such a benediction? Commentators explain that seeing beautiful animals or beautiful people, whether they are Jews or not, justifies the recitation of the blessing (*Shulhan Aruch* OH 225:10). Furthermore, the blessing can be recited over males or females, though elsewhere the Talmud eschews the idea of one gender feasting its eyes on the other (B. *Avoda Zara* 20a-b; *Mishna Brura* of Rabbi Israel Meir Hakohen of Radin, 19th-20th century, Poland).

Over what aspect of the experience is the blessing recited? Many commentators explain that the benediction is pronounced over the sensory pleasure of beholding beauty. Much as blessings are recited over scent and taste, so too it is appropriate to pronounce a blessing over the sense of sight. Saying a blessing thus reframes the sensory experience in a manner that acknowledges the hand of God (Ravad, 12th century, Provence). Other commentators highlight not the pleasure but the novelty: Even if there is no particular enjoyment in seeing the beautiful object, the fact that you have never seen such an object before justifies acknowledging the Almighty's role in creation (Meiri, 13th century, Provence).

How often can this blessing be recited? If someone lives with a beautiful person, should they recite the blessing daily? Monthly? Yearly? According to one prevalent opinion the blessing can be said only once over a particular item. Once the benediction has been pronounced over a certain beautiful person, for instance, it cannot be recited again - ever - over that same person (*Shulhan Aruch*). Others maintain that the blessing may be recited once every 30 days (Meiri).

Alas, this blessing has largely fallen into disuse, **and is at most recited without the Almighty's name**. Why do we not say this blessing nowadays? One codifier in the early 19th century suggested that in our modern reality we are exposed to a whole gamut of images, and hence we have become desensitized to wonderful scenes, pictures and spectacles that a blessing is no longer warranted (Rabbi Avraham Danzig, 18th-19th centuries, Vilna). If this could be said about the early 19th century, it is all the more true in our day and age when technology has brought untold vistas into our homes.

Another reason offered for the neglect of this blessing is that it was instituted for only the most exquisite sights, a person of extraordinary beauty or an exceptionally beautiful tree (Maimonides, 12th century, Cairo). Since it is so difficult to attest to having seen such a rare sight that warrants this blessing, the blessing is not said (*Mishna Brura*). A third possible explanation highlights the subjectivity of beauty, which makes the parameters of this blessing too blurred. The trend of Halacha - and for that matter, of law generally - is to seek more precise definitions: A benediction whose parameters were undefined when instituted is classified over time, and the conditions for its pronouncement clearly delineated.

The subjectivity of **beauty** evokes another Talmud passage (B. *Ketubot* 16b-17a): Our sages discuss what should be said in the presence of bride as we dance before her. According to Beit Shammai we praise the bride as she is, that is we focus on whatever qualities the bride has, citing her actual beauty and stature without exaggerating or misstating the facts. Beit Hillel suggests a different tack: In all cases we say that she is a beautiful and charming bride, irrespective of her actual appearance. Beit Shammai was surprised by Beit Hillel's suggestion: "If she was lame or blind, do we say about her that she is a beautiful and charming bride? Doesn't the Torah say, '*Distance yourself from falsehood*' (*Exodus* 23:7)?" Beit Hillel responded: "According to your view, if someone made a bad purchase in the market, should one praise the purchase or denigrate it? Naturally you would praise it in his eyes!" What type of answer is this? Beit Shammai would surely respond to Beit Hillel by saying: "Indeed! Don't tell a lie. Evaluate the purchase on its real merits." Beit Hillel, I would suggest, is not advocating lying; this school of thought is merely a proponent of a different concept of truth.

Beit Shammai speaks on behalf of an objectifiable truth, facts that are not subject to opinion or personal tastes. In that vein we praise the bride, using societal norms as parameters for assessing her qualities.

Beit Hillel promotes a subjective truth: the **beauty** of the bride is in the eyes of the groom. Similarly, the value of the purchase should not be measured by absolute values but through the subjective eyes of the purchaser.

At times we are drawn by external **beauty**. While this may be a natural reaction it is folly to only follow such externalities. Real beauty is something far deeper, but it is not buried so far beneath the skin that a grand mining expedition must be organized to excavate it.

Today we try to reveal the godliness within people, we expose their beauty. *Beauty is in the eye of the beholder* - the one who beholds the inner worth of the other. It is this beauty today that we seek, and it is this beauty for which today we bless the Almighty.

-the Miracle of **Implementation**

Miraculously, we can take an idea and bring it to fruition. If we think about moving our hand, it moves. Getting out of bed and walking, and we do it.

Hod is the partner to **Netzah**, whose miracles will be internalized tomorrow. **Hod** brings **Netzah** into balance by harnessing its potential. So on this day, we can, according to R. Yaacov Haber:

-stop procrastinating

- write down your goals for the secular new year, concentrating on the details as well as the big picture, and committing your dreams to paper.
- make a step-by-step plan on how to get closer to your goals.
- take just one step toward actualizing your goals. Just Do It!

When we say the blessing today, we intend the Shem Havaya **יהוה** with the vowel kubbutz related to **Hod**

The following meditations of R. Yitzchak Schwartz should be considered during the following day concerning your connection to **Hod**.

HOD/EMPOWERING

**WHEN YOU EXAMINE CLOSELY
TO SEE HOW EMPOWERED OR DISEMPOWERED
YOU AND OTHERS ARE IN EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE,
AND HOW MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE IT MAKES,
THEN YOU REALIZE THAT EMPOWERING
YOURSELF AND OTHERS
IS PERHAPS ONE OF THE MOST PRIMAL
OF ALL HUMAN DRIVES**

A. HOD\EMPOWERING----some general points of orientation

1.VIS A VIS NETZACH

Hod is on the left side of the Sefirotic setup----opposite the Sefira Netzach ... These 2 are like 2 sides of a coin....The Netzach dynamic of dominant competitive conquering and overcoming of all obstacles that stand in it's way....therefore , Netzach is in need of support---a support systemThis need spurs Hod into responding by becoming Netzach's chief enabler or empowerer....In terms of relationships, this means that the Hod partner is awakened to be of service to their partner, since their prime goal is to enable their partner to become empowered and succeed

2. VIS A VIS SOME POPULAR HOD DESCRIPTIVE TERMS

- A. 'DEVOTION'-----One who is motivated to empower, can be counted on to be very devoted constantly**
- B. 'ADORATION'-----A true empower-er is driven to do so, because they adore the one that they empower**
- C. 'SUBMISSION'-----As opposed to Netzach's conquering domination, the Hod empower-er constantly has their sights on submitting themselves to Netzach's empowering needs**
- D. 'GLORY'-----An empowerer sees to it that the other person Shines---that the empowerment that has been lost becomes found ----until it manifests as true glory**

E. 'RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP'-----When an empowerer steps into a relationship, they naturally elicit the other person's response---a response that inspires them to elicit a response in turn

F. 'THE GID HANASHE' [sciatic nerve]-----Eisav's Angel, though He lost the 'wrestling match' with Yaakov, nevertheless managed to leave Yaakov [the Jewish people] partly damaged....the damage was to the sciatic nerve in the left leg --the part of the body that corresponds to Hod/ empowerment....the damage that resulted was a lack of spiritual empowerment--the inability to stand up on one's own feet , literally and financially , when it comes to matters of the spirit, such as Torah support

G. 'AARON THE HIGH PRIEST'-----Aaron possessed the trait of enabling and empowering those who were lacking, including those who were disempowered by broken relationships

B. A HOD\EMPOWERING MEDITATION

AWARENESS OF DISEMPOWERMENT-----bring to mind an experience or situation in your life....ask yourself how empowered or powerless you are....on a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the experience....extend this to another experience and another until you begin to develop a sense of the level of empowerment that you are holding by presently in most all situations that you find yourself

RE-EMPOWERING OURSELVES----- begin to re-empower yourself by re-focusing on all the powerless experiences of your life....find something in or around the experience that you feel to be positive and that has redeeming value for you [including the realization that ultimately this experience is G-d sent and ultimately for your best] --focus on this to the exclusion of all the other negative aspects of the experience....if you still feel disempowered, then give it over to Hashem, expressing your need for Hashem to take over control [until ultimately you will be re-empowered]....do this [and any other type of re-empowering tool that comes to you] for another challenge in your life , and another and another, until you feel that you are beginning to experience a shift in your life....

RE-EMPOWERING OTHERS----- begin to shift the focus of attention in your re-empowerings from yourself to others, repeating all that you've done in the previous steps for yourself, and to do it instead for others...

RE-EMPOWERING THE PAST AND FUTURE----- begin to extend your empowerings to your past, by simply saying thank you for all of the empowerings that you have been given and that you have been allowed to give to others by the ONE ABOVE....keep repeating the thank yous and let the memories come to mind, one by one....see how often that your and others powerlessness was replaced by empowerment, and be thankful for that, and for how often you and others you have helped, have been bestowed with empowerment in your life.....with this awareness, project a future of empowerment ---a level of empowerment that is beyond any level that you have ever experienced

May we merit to empower others and ourselves,

FOURTH NIGHT (MOTZAI-SHABBAT/SATURDAY) NETZAH

Rabbi Simon Jacobsen explains that **Netzah** means endurance, fortitude and ambition and is a combination of determination and tenacity. It is a balance of patience, persistence and guts. Endurance is also being reliable and accountable, which establishes security and commitment. Without endurance, any good endeavor or intention has no chance of success. Endurance means to be alive, to be driven by what counts. It is the readiness to fight for what you believe, to go all the way. This, of course, requires that endurance be closely examined to ensure that it is used in a healthy and productive manner.

Before we bless, we contemplate the miracles of **Netzah**:

-The Miracle that **All Comes from Gd.**

-**Netzah** implies trust and faith, as writes R. Perets Auerbach, the view that Gd always wins. Knowing this brings to real trust in Him. Nothing can take away from a person what is coming to him. If something seems to be lacking, this is from God, and there are reasons for it.

-The Miracle of **Prophecy**

-from the Shabbat song "Kel Mistater", we chant " *From right and left is the nourishment of the prophets. Netzah and Hod are drawn from them.*

Yesterday we learned that while **Netzah** represents the vision and the dream, that **Hod** represents the practical implementation, King David, a prophet visualized the Temple, and his son King Solomon built it. Today, cherish your visions and your dreams as they are the children of your soul, the blueprints of your ultimate achievements (R. Yaacov Haber quoting Napoleon Hill)

-The Miracle of **Endurance**

-we humans possess amazing endurance: Iron Man Triathalons, fasting from Shabbat to Shabbat, all night learning, etc. Not "no pain, no gain," rather, "early to bed , early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise" (Ben Franklin) Endurance is an important part of Victory, also a meaning for **Netzah**. There is no better word to describe the triumph over the challenges of bringing a concept to fruition. For today, show your endurance by concrete-sequentializing your day, sketching what you did from the time you woke up until sleep. Now, locate those parts of the day which seem to slip by unproductive. Meditate on how to use these time parcels more productively (R. Haber).

Intend Havaya with Hirik ירהק related to **Netzah** when you say the blessing tonight.

Today contemplate the following meditation from our colleague/Yitzchak Schwartz:

NETZACH/ OVERCOMING

NETZACH-----

The Sefira Netzach corresponds to the right leg---the stronger leg....The legs take us to where we want to go....Another function of the legs is to stand us up strong and steady so that we don't fall.....Nezach is the

first of the lowest group of Sefirot [Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malchut]...This group corresponds to the lowest of the 4 Kabbalistic Worlds –the World of Asiyah/Doing---the World that's farthest away from pure G-dliness, and as a result, is the place of the most darkness, uncertainty and obstacles....This is the world that demands our greatest independence and efforts---the only way to get things done in The World of Doing.....Here is where we need the power of Netzach/Overcoming the most..... Regarding the universal Sefirotic process, we are presently at a phase where we have already conceived and internalized of a G-dly inspired vision and have already begun to actualize this vision and express it to others in a balanced, harmonious way---now we must take it to a new level—from the theoretical to the actual, and that's where the Netzach power of overcoming steps in.....

A SHORT MEDITATIVE EXERCISE;

Picture one of the visions that you have that you would like to actualize....Picture what it would take to make this vision a reality....Think back to other visions that you have actualized in the past....What did it take to make it happen? Based on your past experience, project what type of Netzach/Overcoming know how it would take to actualize your present vision

NETZACH-----tapping it's essence

Until the messianic era will shift the consciousness of the world to be one of perfection, we live in a world of 'Tikun'....This means that everything is lacking and needs fixing , healing, completing and perfecting.... The more that we are present with this reality and step up to the full time challenge of overcoming, the more we live in Netzach

The more that we live in Netzach, the more that we are inspired to take on the challenge of overcoming everything at all times.....More than this, if you really look closely at your life, you'll find that you are ALREADY a master Netzach\Overcomer person....you probably just haven't yet brought this to your conscious attention [until now].....

ANOTHER MEDITATIVE EXERCISE;

Picture [in your mind's eye] a day in your life...notice how many different challenges that there are that you need to overcome....Notice how many unique and innovative solutions that you come up with....Now extend this day to a week and then to a month and then to a year and then to a lifetime until now.....Afterwards, extend your Netzach Overcoming tool coping power to the present and to the future....Project the expected obstacles and the tools and strategies [and state of mind] that you will need in order to overcome , and picture how, with Hashem's constant help, you will carry them out.....make a list of your tools...make a list of the top 10 tools....keep adding to the list until you ultimately have a tool chest....then transform this tool's chest to become your own personal diagnostic chart for coping with any and every situation

NETZACH-----a few other applications

1. **Dominance-----overcoming another person's will or control and/or influence, by imposing my own**

EXERCISE-----Bring to mind a relationship that you have where either you are presently dominating the relationship, or, to the contrary, someone is dominating

you....identify what aspects of the relationship need to be overcome in order to effect a harmonious balance---a balance between dominance and submission---a balance that would allow both you and the other person [people] to be fully self expressed....Create the ideal relationship ,with Hashem's help and the other person's as well, as best as you can

2. **Competitiveness**----*overcoming* the obstacles and challenges of another person or of various circumstances that would prevent you from reaching your goal

EXERCISE-----Identify your goal....Identify the opposition forces---those people or circumstances that stand in your way....Generate the excitement and adrenalin and innovative tools that you needWith a healthy sense of competition, make it happen

3. **Seeing Hashem's Providential Mastery**----*overcoming* the illusive perspective that the governing of the world is haphazard---and seeing instead, that the world is governed in the most magnificent way....all is run by Hashem , the conductor of this grand symphony [the **MENATZEACH/Conductor**---the root of which is **Netzach**], and we too are musicians in the symphony [and actors in the play]

EXERCISE-----Begin to see life in the world as being a grand symphony---though it may not be clear at the present time, nevertheless, view every detail that you see as playing a significant role [including all of your own encounters as well]

4. **Eternity** ----*overcoming* the standard perspective of time as being finite, and seeing instead, that all that you encounter and engage in also has an element of eternity [the word **Netzach** means eternity]

EXERCISE-----Open up your eyes to see and experience Eternity now....Do this by projecting in your mind, that when any and every act, word, feeling or thought that you engage in, will continue to reverberate forever....the more that you get used to doing this, the more that you will elevate and sanctify all that you do

Transcending all limits ----*overcoming* the assumption that you are a person who has limited capabilities and capacities, and open yourself up to the magnificent possibility of overcoming as many barriers as possible and transcending as many limits as possible and living in an above-nature extraordinary way

EXERCISE-----Identify an area of your life that you feel are limiting your capacities and capabilities.....now look closer....if you were to project extending and expanding your limits ---if you were to ask Hashem to help make it happen for you---if you were to enlist all of your powers and all of your friends powers and all of your innovative tools, wouldn't you feel like you could go beyond your present limits?! Now , just do it---do it in this one area of your life and another and another and see how many of the present walls of your life come tumbling down.....

FIFTH NIGHT (SUNDAY) TIFERET

Rabbi Simon Jacobson writes that **Tiferet** blends and harmonizes the free outpouring love of **Chesed** with the discipline of **Gevurah**. **Tiferet** possesses this power by introducing a third

dimension - the dimension of truth, which is neither love nor discipline and therefore can integrate the two. Truth is accessed through selflessness: rising above your ego and your predispositions, enabling you to realize truth. Truth gives you a clear and objective picture of yours and others' needs. This quality gives *Tiferet* its name, which means beauty: it blends the differing colors of love and discipline, and this harmony makes it beautiful.

Before blessings, we contemplate the Miracles of *Tiferet* in our lives:

The Miracle of *Truth*

-Rabbi Perets Auerbah notes that "The seal of the Holy One blessed be He is *truth*." Truth seals Divinity in the soul. One who is careful to always say the truth can merit to travel to the supernal realms. "Acquire truth and don't sell it" (*Hagigah*). Today try to acquire for yourself the special connection it provides to above.

The path of truth too involves the quality of *boshet* - shame. On the bad side, this *midah*/attribute comes from pride. On the good side, it comes from recognition of the truth that very single second every single thing that a person has is directly from Gd. This includes life, being, and existence itself. *Tiferet* is called the '*middle rod that spans from end to end*'. It stands in the middle of the *sefirot* and unites the highest and lowest levels. In the self it refers to the recognition of Gd's greatness on the high end, coupled with the recognition of man's lowliness, on the low end. One must request not only to merit to feel the light of these concepts, but to fuse them in the psyche in a balanced way in which they are complimentary, mutually beneficial, and one. *Truth* is never skewed to the right, nor to the left, but balanced.

The Miracle of *Balance*

The Miracle of Balance is that there is a balance point to all. When we are off-balance, we feel vertigo, an awful sensation of falling due to loss of center. *Tiferet* as the middle bar is that place of equipose, that harmonious nexus between opposing forces. The Baal Shem Tov took King David's principle: שְׂוִיתִי אֶת־יְהוָה לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד "I *place Hashem before me always*" to read שְׂוִיתִי *Shiviti as Hishtavut*: I balance myself before Gd always

[*Shiviti* is an expression of *hishtavut* (equanimity): 1 no matter what happens, whether people praise or shame you, and so, too, with anything else, it is all the same to you. This applies likewise to any food: it is all the same to you whether you eat delicacies or other things. For [with this perspective] the *yetzer hara* is entirely removed from you. *Tzavat HaRibash 2*]

. The miracle of balance is that nature and spirit want to find that point of equanimity. How can we let nature and spirit take its course for us? In our eating, drinking, sleeping, exercising, learning, praying, working, relationships, etc? Look at nature and notice balance and equilibrium in nature and in Gd's creation.

The Miracle of *Harmony*

"A person should always draw people closer with his right hand and push them aside with his left" (Sotah 47). According to Kabbalah, the right hand represents *Hesed/lovingkindness*, while the left is *Gevurah/severity*. As the right side is usually more dexterous, practically speaking one's *Hesed* should be a bit stronger than one's *Gevurah*. (R. Yaacov Haber) Draw people closer today with your

right or stronger hand! Train yourself to see the strengths of your companions even while pushing against their shortcomings! Sing a song and harmonize with someone who sings in a different key. Recognize that your friend or neighbor might not necessarily be the hypocrite you think they are; they are just not perfect.

The Miracle of *Symmetrical Beauty*

-We discussed beauty with *Hod*, which really concerns aesthetics.

Tiferet is the *symmetrical* beauty, for among all cultures, a beautiful face is one that has a certain symmetry between right and left, top and bottom.

In an attempt to answer this question, the philosophers of the day devoted a great deal of time to this conundrum. Plato wrote of so-called "golden proportions," in which, amongst other things, the width of an ideal face would be two-thirds its length, while a nose would be no longer than the distance between the eyes. Plato's golden proportions, however, haven't quite held up to the rigors of modern psychological and biological research -- though there is credence in the ancient Greeks' attempts to determine a fundamental symmetry that humans find attractive. Today, this symmetry has been scientifically proven to be inherently attractive to the human eye. It has been defined not with proportions, but rather with similarity between the left and right sides of the face. Thus, the Greeks were only partially correct. By applying the stringent conditions of the scientific method, researchers now believe symmetry is the answer the Greeks were looking for.

Babies spend more time staring at pictures of symmetric individuals than they do at photos of asymmetric ones. Moreover, when several faces are averaged to create a composite -- thus covering up the asymmetries that any one individual may have -- a panel of judges deemed the composite more attractive than the individual pictures. Victor Johnston of New Mexico State University, for example, utilizes a program called FacePrints, which shows viewers facial images of variable attractiveness. The viewers then rate the pictures on a beauty scale from one to nine. In what is akin to digital Darwinism, the pictures with the best ratings are merged together, while the less attractive photos are weeded out. Each trial ends when a viewer deems the composite a 10. All the perfect 10s are super-symmetric.

Rachel was shapely and beautiful to look at. And Jacob loved Rachel. . . (Genesis 29:17-18)

This was because Jacob had the attribute of *Tiferet*. Whenever he saw something attractive, he would say: "If this beauty so becomes a physical thing, how much higher would it be if it was dedicated to praising and glorifying G-d. *Sefer Baal Shem Tov, Ohr Torah, Vayetze*

"If one sees a member of the opposite sex suddenly (without warning), contemplate from where does this *beauty* come from? For if this body were to die, that beauty would certainly not be there anymore. The *beauty* comes against one's will from the Divine power that imbues all people. Hashem has given that person her *beauty*. Thus the source of the *beauty* is the Divine power. Why should I pursue after that when I can bond with the source, the essence of all *beauty*. Keep this attitude when you look upon all things in the physical world....everything has its spiritual source. *Lekh Lekha 14*

The Miracle of the *Mirror*

The Baal Shem Tov taught that when a person is faced with a situation that compels him to judge others, he should be aware that this person is a mirror image of himself and his opinion of the other person is, in fact, a judgment on himself. The following story illustrates the Baal Shem Tov's idea.

Nathan the Prophet came to King David, and told him a story about a wealthy man who owned many sheep and cattle. One day, the rich cattle dealer stole the beloved lamb of a poor man who had raised it from birth. When King David heard these words he cried out, "The man who has done this deserves to die..." At that point, the prophet told King David that the story was merely a parable describing one of the king's actions. By accusing the rich man, the king was actually pointing a finger at himself.

With this in mind, a totally new perspective opens to us. When confronted with a behavior or character trait that impacts us, we can understand that there's a message. Rather than leaping to pass judgment on that person – either positively or negatively – a moment of introspection can lead to remarkable results. Our spouses (or in-laws, neighbors, kids... those who know how to push our buttons) are our mirrors, and also our greatest teachers. Like the cattle dealer to King David, they reveal something about us. When a person charges others as defective, he's often got the same defect. As someone once said: when pointing a finger at someone, you're actually pointing *two* fingers at yourself. On the surface, this idea may seem ludicrous at best. But human beings are biased. It's painful for us to see our own shortcomings, so we bury them deep inside our consciousness, determined to forget them. That is why our normal human flaws are more easily visible in those who mirror us than in ourselves. When we shift focus from the other person to ourselves, we discover similar traits inside us.

Mirror images reflect both positive and negative aspects. When an acquaintance meets you with a wide smile, you can't help but smile back; a nice compliment elicits a kind word in return. And let someone express their admiration for you and you'll find that you've actually admired that person all along. When you're witness to another person's tears, does it touch a chord in you? Does it evoke your own tears and pain? Scientific research indicates that there are mirror neurons that get activated when we hear of another person's pain, so we actually feel the pain to a certain degree. Similarly, when you're hurt by your husband's manner of speaking, does it perhaps reflect the way you talk to him? Does his crazy schedule drive you nuts because sticking to a routine schedule is hard for you? Or perhaps the opposite is true – do you feel frustrated by the rigidity of your schedule and therefore harbor jealousy for his freedom? It can be challenging to decipher the reflection we see in our "mirrors," but when we realize that they offer us a whole world of information, the process of acceptance and change can begin. Then, as we learn to adjust ourselves accordingly, our mirrors will change. Suddenly, those things that bothered us in the other person will no longer take on the same importance. And as we learn to accept and appreciate ourselves, we learn to value and cherish our loved ones as well. (adapted from www.chabad.org)

Tiferet is the Sun, **Malkut** is the Moon, one reflects the other. On today, focus on the mirroring, and judge for the best.

When saying the blessing, intend that the Havaya יהוה has the vowel Holam which relates to **Tiferet**.

Tonight and tomorrow focus on the contemplations of our teacher and colleague R. Yitzchak Schwartz below:

TIFFERET/BRIDGE-ING

**TIFFERET IS THE BRIDGE-ING OR RESOLUTION
OF CONTRASTING ELEMENTS
INTO A NEW HARMONIOUS WHOLE**

WHEN WE EXERCISE TIFFERET, WE BRIDGE;

1. OUR YESES AND OUR NOS
2. CERTAIN TYPES OF PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT TYPES
3. CERTAIN PARTS OF OUR PERSONALITIES WITH OTHER PARTS
4. OUR WEAKNESSES WITH OUR STRENGTHS
5. WHAT WE FEEL WITH WHAT WE EXPRESS
6. WHAT WE ARE MEANT TO DO IN LIFE WITH WHAT WE ACTUALLY DO
7. THE PARTS WITH THE GREATER WHOLE

Let's explore how to bridge each one of these;

BRIDGE-ING;

1.YOUR YESES AND YOUR NOS

When you feel like saying yes, but you know you should say no....when you feel like you're attracted , but you know that you better reject that feeling...when you feel like expanding, but you're scared to go beyond your normal limitations.....when you feel like you'd like to give, but a voice inside says you'd better take...when you feel like understand one side of the picture, but you also know that the other side is correct too-----

become a master of people bridging by first of all recognizing the differences just as they are---no need to change them ---just accept them---next---put yourself in their places---see the world as they see it [put on their life spectacles]---do this even if you are bridging many people at once [a charismatic teacher or performer can do this simultaneously with many people at the same time]...finally to really be able to bridge properly-- communicate to both or all sides [or sometimes just to yourself] what the other side needs and desires and negotiate a win win or a bliss bliss deal that satisfies everyone

3. CERTAIN PARTS OF YOUR PERSONALITIES WITH OTHER PARTS

Tifferet corresponds to the trunk of the body/soul, bridging the right side with the left and the upper part with the lower-----so get yourself together....bridge your emotions with your actions by acting in a fully emotionally expressed way....bridge your conservative side with your liberal side by lifting yourself above both of them, tap into your Daat/Knowing and choose just how much to lean more towards one side than the other....bridge your perceptive power [Daat] to your communicative power [Yesod] by being charismatic [Tifferet] and relating to everyone exactly in the way that opens them up the most.....bridge your theoretical and hypothetical assumptions about life to the realm of practical application by constantly trying out the best tools for expressing your theories.....bridge your heart to your mouth by speaking your heart to Hashem and to those who would be most likely to listen

4. YOUR WEAKNESSES WITH YOUR STRENGTHS

Tifferet/Bridge-ing also represents the power of healing...the healing takes place when that which is blocking our natural flow is somehow neutralized or re-integrated-----
 -----identify a weakness that you have, then identify it's sister trait---it's corresponding strong trait.....bridge them by meshing them together into one to neutralize the weakness and thereby create a new entity—an entity of harmony and healing and alignment.... for example;
 Bridge a weak part to a strong part
 Bridge a small part to a large part
 Bridge a shy part to an outgoing part
 Bridge a low self-esteem part to a self-confident part
 Bridge a sick part to a healthy part
 Bridge a failure part to a successful part....etc...etc...

5. WHAT YOU FEEL WITH WHAT YOU EXPRESS

An authentic person is a person with charm...a person who's attraction is the fact that they are truly representing themselves to others, and others can feel comfortable to do the same with them and comfortable to not have to worry about properly reacting to hidden agendas-----identify the discrepancy between what you normally say and what the truth is....reveal to yourself why you are afraid or hesitant to tell it like it is....perhaps it's because the other person would think less of you...perhaps it's because you would insult them....now reveal to yourself the feeling that you get inside when you don't tell it like it is....reveal to yourself how you would feel if you could tell it like it is....now, in a quiet state of mindfulness, run through a scenario of you telling it like it is---what would it be like and feel like and what would be the repercussions [if any] and what would be the benefits....now, resolve to speak authentically, and to the extent that you need to tone it down and be cautious—do that as well....practice authenticity in other communications in this way....

6. WHAT YOU ARE MEANT TO DO IN LIFE WITH WHAT YOU ACTUALLY DO

Ratzon living is living the life that you truly want to live because it's truly the life you are meant to be living...this is a very worthwhile way to live, but it is very illusive to actually do it....the missing ingredient is Tifferet---the ability to bridge---to bridge your normal day to day way of living to an ideal way of living—to a way of living that you truly want and are meant to live-----project an ideal you, a you that is truly an expression of who you want to be , of what you were meant to be, of what you were meant to do to become that ideal person.....step into this ideal future, and see it in all of it's details....focus on how you got from your present state of being to this ideal state...what did you do to get there?....now toss up to Hashem your projected ideal vision of yourself, and let it go....let Hashem make it happen for you in His own way and in His own time...rest assured that slowly but surely, your vision will manifest...rest assured that whatever you need to do to assist Hashem in the process, Hashem will prompt you in the many ways that Hashem prompts people...

7. THE PARTS WITH THE GREATER WHOLE

Not only does Tifferet/Bridge-ing connect different parts that exist now, but it also relates to what bridging what exists now to what can potentially exist in the future---with Tifferet, we can bridge the good sides of ourselves to be even better---we can bridge the partial way that we see things to a greater and more whole way...we can bridge a simple way of engaging life to a Divinely infused way...we can bridge the me-centered way we engage life to a microcosmic way, where what is inside of us is actually parallel to what is in the entire Universe, and we have the power to activate these parallel parts-----
 -----identify a problem that you may have, a dilemma, a challenge....in your normal way of thinking, what would you do to solve the problem....now look at the problem in the context of a much greater , much more whole , much more expansive orientation.....notice how the problem, when viewed in a much wider context [of space and time] seems smaller....notice how the problem , when placed in a wider context sometimes doesn't seem like a problem at all, but rather like a necessary step in the unfolding of a growth or perfection process that you need to go through presently....

SIXTH NIGHT (MONDAY) GEVURAH

Before we light, we contemplate the following:

Gevurah: Justice, Discipline, Restraint, Awe

R. Simon Jacobson writes that if love (**Hesed**) is the bedrock of human expression, discipline (**Gevurah**) is the channel through which we express love. It gives our life and love direction and focus. **Gevurah** - discipline and measure - concentrates and directs our efforts, our love in the proper directions.

-the miracle of **Boundaries**

Gevurah is the Sefirah that Gd used to contain, shape, and mold the world He created through Hesed. The world kept on expanding until Gd had to say "*Da*"/enough. (Haqiqah 12a). This **Gevurah**, these boundaries were miraculous: boundaries for the sea so that we would not drown in our homes, boundaries for wildlife so our eco-system can survive, boundaries of climate condition so we don't burn or freeze. **Gevurah's** boundaries are those of natural law, and essential part of our lives in the process of creation (R. Yaacov Haber). These boundaries are there to protect us, not to limit us.

The Piacetzner Rebbe said that "as we look back at our lives, we have more gratitude for those things that did not work out than for those that did."(*Tzav V'rizuz*) We recognize the miracle of our physical **boundaries** both in body and environment, and of wise limitation in our personal life. Today we should meditate on :

- locate areas that are simply out of control and devise a strategy to act instead of re-act;
- keep track of your finances and figure out how to allocate 10% for charity;
- make a list of everything you eat, and reflect on the nutritional value of these meals;
- if there is a controlling person, plan a strategy to free yourself, and say "Enough"

-the Miracle of **Sight**

Gevurah is related to the aspect of **yirah/awe**. R. Perets Auerbach notes that The whole world was made for **yirah**. It is a deep inner connection that brings to transcendence. The recognition of God's greatness and that everything comes from Him brings awe. Opposite the expansive motion of love, the direction of fear and awe is contraction. "Smallness nullifies before greatness." The self tends to nullify before something bigger. Nullification to God in **yirah** results in carefulness to do His will. It is not nervousness - it is concern. True **yirah** is an expanded state of consciousness that goes with *erech apayim* [calmness]...

The emotion that is appropriate to feel on Yom Kippur is called *yirah* in Hebrew. This word is commonly translated as "fear," which is imprecise, in the same way that fear is an imprecise description of the emotions of a shopping spree or roller coaster. *Yirah* really means some combination of thrill, awe, and fear.

The root of *yirah* is related to the Hebrew word *ra'ah* which means to see or apprehend. To have *yirah* means to see and apprehend the reality of the situation. This is related to how the emotion of fear marshals the senses.

We would be better off if we had *yirah* and appreciated the immense potential that life has to offer. We need to see with our inner vision just how blessed we are, and to be in awe of all that is before us, always.

When we say Ado-noy, we contemplate Havaya יהוה with the vowels Sheva related to **Gevurah**:

Sometime during the night and day, we reflect on the **Gevurah** teachings of R. Yitzchok, below.

GEVURAH—the empowerment of SAYING NO

*****NO CAN BE EMPOWERING**

Although saying no, by definition, would seem to be dis-empowering , when you look closer at the impact caused by saying a good, well placed 'NO', you'll find it to be very empowering.....and that's the way it should be---we are after all dealing with the expression of one of the Holy Sefirot, and when it is expressed properly and harmoniously, it [like all other Sefirotic expressions] possesses the means to empower and elevate and sanctify our lives....

Let's explore what type of 'No Sayings'in our own past have been empowering--and we will derive from these, the lessons required to empower our lives now and in the future

*****GEVURAH IS SAYING NO**

Let's take a step backwards....lets' examine a list of descriptive terms that describe the Sefira GEVURAH [drawn from a variety of sources]....our goal is to see how SAYING NO is [at least one] theme that is central to all these terms;

- 1. restraint**
- 2. discipline**
- 3. judgement**

4. justice [DIN}
5. boundaries
6. fear [of losing something good]
7. rejection
8. strength
9. rebuke
10. constrict [conceal]

When we examine these terms, we can see that the functional feature at work---the inner voice common to all the terms is SAYING NO.....whether we restrain, we fear, we are repulse or repulse others, we exercise restraint or we display strength---we activate the inner directive of SAYING NO

*****EMPOWERED NO SAYING FROM THE PAST**

Let's now take a look at a possible list of empowered no sayings that we may have experienced in the past [it's actually a list that I came up with upon examining my own most empowering no sayings]....let's try to discover from the list the factors or tools that empowered us, so that we can derive these tools or meditations for facillitating future empowered no sayings;

1. refusing to say yes if there's a strong INNER NO
2. refusing to say yes when it contradicts my inner lower self
3. saying no to worry
4. saying no being in need of finding favor in the eyes of others
5. saying no to commitments that do not represent my total self expression
6. saying no to in authenticity
7. saying no to lack of total utilization of my resources
8. saying no to a situation where I find myself being used, abused, controlled, intruded upon, taken advantage of or enslaved by others
9. saying no to wasting time
10. saying no to surviving rather than thriving
11. saying no to settling for less than the best for my beloved ones
12. saying no to senselessly just doing what everyone else is doing
13. saying no to being overwhelmed and overextended
14. saying no to danger
15. saying no to risky , doubtful commitments
16. saying no to non-holistic partial conclusions

SAYING NO EMPOWERMENTS

RE-EMPOWERMENTS

- A. Recall past empowerments [see the list above to guide you to discover your own most empowered no sayings] and experience the empowerment that you gained
- B. Examine which 2 or 3 factors empowered you the most in your past empowerments [like the feeling of liberation or transcending...etc...]
- C. Now identify the possible dis-empowerments that you expect or anticipate to cope with in the future [similar to your past dis-empowerments that you needed to overcome most likely]

D. Now re-empower yourself by drawing on your best past 2 or 3 empowering feelings [B above] to say No to your present and anticipated future disempowerments

CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE TRANSFORMING

A. Identify the challenge[s] of your life that are intolerable

B. Experience the full emotional impact of this intolerable experience....work yourself up to the point where you simply cannot stand it anymore---where anything would be preferable

C. SAY NO in one of 2 ways:

1. Allow a whole new way of coping or way of being enter your mind and go with it
2. Create or Co-create or project a brand new way of coping or a brand new set of circumstances....

SEVENTH NIGHT (TUESDAY) HESED

Chesed (or **Hesed**, Heb. חסד) is the Hebrew word for "lovingkindness." It is one of the primary classes of Mitzvot and is considered a Mitzvah unto itself as well. **Hesed** is also one of the primary attributes and names of Gd in Judaism. As an attribute, it is the seventh attribute of the 13 Attributes used to call on Gd for help ("**Rav Hesed**"), The word חסד ("**hesed**") is also cognate with Hasidism, the Jewish mystical movement started in the 18th century. The Bahir states: "What is the fourth (utterance): The fourth is the righteousness of Gd, His mercies and kindness with the entire world. This is the right hand of Gd." **Hesed** manifests Gd's absolute, unlimited benevolence and kindness .

In *Tomer Devorah*, the Ramak noted the following are actions undertaken in imitation of the qualities of **Hesed**:

(1) love G-d so completely that one will never forsake His service for any reason; (2) provide a child with all the necessities of his sustenance; (3) circumcise a child, (4) visiting and healing the sick; (5) giving charity to the poor; (6) offering hospitality to strangers; (7) attending to the dead; (8) bringing a bride to the chuppah marriage ceremony; and (9) making peace between a man and his fellow .

R. Perets Auerbach cites "*The world was built (for) **chesed** [lovingkindness]" (Ps.89:3). "And the chesed of YHVH fills the world" (ibid 33). Everything was made for love. It is the internal energy inside of all qualities. Pray to be able to do everything from love, and that it should always express, conquer, and win. Gdliness constricts out of love to be in all the *mitzvot* to give us a way of relating to Him. AHVH-*ahavah* equals EChD-*echad*. View doing *mitzvot* as a means of expressing love to God and uniting with Him. "*Love your friend as yourself*" (Lev.19:18). This refers allegorically to the *Shechinah*. If you love someone, you love what they love. Part of loving God is loving those that He loves - people. Ask God to open the channel of love in the soul in order to be able to love Whom He loves...*

Hesed, according to R. Yaacov Haber, knows no boundaries and has no logic. Its love is unconditional.

We recognize the miracles of **Hesed**.

The Miracle of **Unconditional Love**

Is there anything as beautiful as a mother feeding her infant? Our creation both in soul and body began as a total bestowal of abundance, kindness and good, without calculation, and without boundaries. According to traditional kabbalah, **Hesed** is considered a male, and is all about the giver and not the receiver. It does not configure itself according to the needs, worthiness, or merit of the cause or recipient. When Gd began Creation with **Hesed**, עולם, קסד יבנה He just put it out there. He gave, and gave, and gave, like a mother feeding her infant.

Hesed does not have cause, nor a reason, nor is an investment. It is the ability to detach from ourselves and from our belongings. One of the highest forms of charity to when one gives and does not know to whom one is giving. *Rambam, Mishneh torah, Hilkhoh Matanot Aniyim*, Chapter 10:7-14 (listing the 8 levels)

--today do something for an anonymous recipient: pick up litter, leave change in a *pushkent*/charity box, etc.

The Miracle of the **Right side**

-**Hesed** is associated with the right side of the body, **Gevurah** with the left.

This aligns with the saying: "**the right hand brings close** and **the left hand pushes away**."

In Jewish ritual practice, the right side is always given more importance than the left. We shake hands with the right, we do certain Mitzvot with the right, and we even put on our right shoe before our left. According to Kabbalah, even lefties should wear their arm Tefillin on their "spiritually" weaker left arm.

But, as R. Yaacov Haber notes, if the right is so important, then why is our heart--the most important part of our body--on our left side?

The answer: our heart is not merely for ourselves, rather it is for the person standing opposite us. When facing that person, our heart is on his or her right side.

Today, align your heart to another person's right side. Shower love to him or her in a full and giving manner. Recognize that you are putting into action that of both the supernal and earthly mode.

When we say the praise for miracles, we meditate on Shem Havaya יהוה with the vowel Segol representing Hesed,

Hesed/Saying Yes

OUR SAGES [OLD AND NEW] TEACH THAT THE WORLD IS ESSENTIALLY COMPOSED OF CHESED...WHEN WE CONNECT TO CHESED, WE CONNECT TO A LIMITLESS FLOW OF ABUNDANCE....AFTER A LONG COMPARATIVE SEARCH , I'VE COME UP WITH A VERY CONCISE DEFINITION OF THE CHESED EXPERIENCE;

SAYING YES

LET'S EXPLORE HOW TO MAXIMIZE OUR SEFIROTIC TRAIT OF CHESED---IE...OUR ABILITY TO

SAY YES

AND THEREBY ACCESS SOME OF THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS THAT OUR SAGES SPOKE OF _____:

- 1. ACTUALIZE OUR CALLING**
- 2. OPEN UP OUR EMOTIONAL POWERS**
- 3. SHARE OUR LOVE WITH HASHEM AND THE WORLD AND OURSELVES**
- 4. BECOME A MASTER GIVER**
- 5. CONNECT WITH MANY OTHER PEOPLE THAN WE KNOW NOW**
- 6. OPEN UP MANY NEW DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY AND ABUNDANCE**
- 7. IMPROVE OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR SPOUSE [PRESENT ONE OR FUTURE ONE]**
- 8. FULFILL NUMEROUS INTERPERSONAL MITZVOT**
- 9. MAXIMIZE OUR ATTRACTIVENESS TO OTHERS AND THEIRS TO US**
- 10.HELP BUILD A WORLD OF CHESED**
- 11.EMULATE G-D'S TRAIT OF GIVING AND BENEVOLENCE**
- 12.SWEETEN AND MINIMIZE HARSH DECREES AND HARSH JUDGEMENTALISM**
- 13.EXPAND CONSTRICTED CONSCIOUSNESS**
- 14.EMULATE THE WAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS AND MATRIARCHS**
- 15.PERPETUATE 'YES' SAYING IN THE WORLD [WITH ALL OF THESE POWERFUL IMPACTS]**
- 16.LEAD ALIFE FULL OF INSPIRATION**
- 17.LIVE THE LIFE YOU LOVE AND LOVE THE LIFE YOU LIVE**
- 18.EMPOWER YOURSELF TO CARRY OUT ANYTHING THAT YOU INTEND**
- 19.EMPOWER OTHERS TO ACTUALIZE THEIR INTENDED GOALS**
- 20.BECOME A BEACON OF LOVE, LIGHT, GOODNESS AND POSITIVITY**

So how do we say yes in life?....how can we say yes, when an inner voice keeps saying NO! The following meditation hopefully will provide a way;

SAYING YES MEDITATION

1.SAFE YES SAYING

Identify the 'NO' voice that fills your mind when you want to say YES....Ask yourself why the NO is there---What is it's purpose? How is it coming to help you? Give thanks to Hashem for your inner NO....Acknowledge it's benefit and it's role in helping you out....Now ask yourself how it would be possible to derive this same benefit by saying yes and not saying no [ie...saying Yes in a safe harmless way]...When you are convinced of a safe way of saying YES, say it and follow through, and carry on with another YES--- processing it in the same way[and another and another....etc...]

2. EMPOWERED BY THE LIST

Go through the above list of 20 benefits that you can derive from saying yes....Just say them, and focus on the powerful impact that you can derive from being a yes sayer, or from just saying yes one time.....Now search for one opportunity to say yes in your life that you would not normally say yes to [as opposed to a yes that is internally obstructed by an internal NO, search for a yes that would be ok]....Fire yourself up by the impact of yes saying—and just say YES---Enjoy the power of yes saying---and say yes some more [where you wouldn't normally do so]

3. FUSE WITH HASHEM'S YES

Examine the 'MAYBES' in your life at this time---those decisions or processes that you now are dealing with, that you are presently indecisive about....Consider the possibility that all these maybes are no longer your decisions to make, but rather, you toss them up to Hashem to decide for you...With this new perspective, what do you think Hashem would decide? Answer this question in 1 of 2 ways [or both]:

A.What would Hashem decide now?

B.What will Hashem decide over the next period of time....What does Divine Providence dictatewhich Maybes turn out to be NOS and which ones turn out to be YESes

4.YES -----JUST THE WAY IT IS NOW

Look again at the NOS and MAYBES in your life....Say to yourself [in a sort of mantra way] that these are perfect just the way they are....Allow your mind to reveal to you how what seemed to be not ok , is actually ok....keep this up until you find that many of the MAYBES and NOS are actually YESes

EIGHTH NIGHT (ZOT HANUKAH: WEDNESDAY) BINAH

On this last night of Hanukah, we move from the miracles related to the midot/emotional attributes, and progress to the *mohin*/mentalities, and the left brain cognition called **Binah**.

Binah, or understanding, is the third of the ten sefirot, and the second conscious power of intellect in Creation. According to R. Yitzchok Ginsburgh, **Binah** appears in the configuration of the sefirot at the top of the left axis, and corresponds in the tzelem Elokim to the left hemisphere of the brain.In its fully articulated form, binah possesses two partzufim: the higher of these is referred to as Imma Ila'ah ("the higher mother"), whereas the lower is referred to as Tevunah ("comprehension"). These two partzufim are referred to jointly as Imma ("the mother").

Binah is associated in the soul with the power of conceptual analysis and reasoning, both inductive and deductive. The partzuf of Imma Ila'ah is associated in particular with the power to grasp and comprehend the insights of chochmah, whereas Tevunah represents the power to fully assimilate the resultant ideas into one's consciousness.

The "understanding" of **binah** also implies the ability to examine the degree of truth or falsehood inherent in a particular idea. This is expressed in Job as (12:11 and 34:3): "*the ear examines words*." The ear, the sense of hearing, is associated with **binah**. "*Hear, O Israel...*" (Deuteronomy 6:4) means "*Understand...*" The initial letters of the phrase "the ear examines words" spell emet, "truth."

Another feature identified with the property of **binah** is the ability to explain and elucidate concepts both to oneself and others. For this reason it is symbolized in Kabbalah as "the wide river."

The word **binah** derives from the root *bein* which means "between." The power of binah is to distinguish and differentiate between ideas. **Binah** itself is the second "brain," between chochmah and da'at.

The union of chochmah and **binah** ("the higher union," in Kabbalah), the "father" and the "mother" (the right and left hemispheres of the brain) is continual, and is referred to in the Zohar as "two companions that never separate." This union is necessary for the continual recreation of the world (beginning with the birth of the seven attributes of the heart, corresponding to the seven days of Creation, from the womb of "mother," **Binah**).

The spiritual state identified in Chassidut as corresponding to the sefirah of **Binah** is that of simchah (joy), and this is the first miracle we will acknowledge:

The Miracle of Joy

R. Perets Auerbach gives over that "**Binah** is the heart - and by it the heart has insight." "*And a good heart is always partying*" (Pr.15:15). "*A rejoicing heart makes good the face*" (Pr.15:13). Happiness is in the heart, the seat of **Binah**. **Binah** is the source of joy. Often a person thinks that if things would be different they would be happy. True happiness has absolutely nothing to do with what is going on. It involves tapping the limitless source of joy inside. It is activated by plugging in to God.

"I'm so glad, I'm so glad – I'm glad, I'm glad, I'm glad!"

The Arizal. attained his lofty levels through being extremely joyous when doing *mitzvot*. "*It is a great mitzvah to always be happy*," Rebbe Nachman would say. Through gladness the *kliptot* are dispelled. "*Power and bliss are in His place*" (Chr.16:27) - before the Holy One blessed be He there is only joy. One who is jovial enters into the Divine space. Through this, the *Shekhinah* rests by him. It is especially important to be joyous at the time of *tefilah*.

-today, ask to merit not to be affected by the world's happenings that try and break a person. To be saved from sadness. To be rescued from depression. Request the gift of continuous happiness, joy, and bliss.

עבדו את-יהוה בשמחה --serve Gd with joy!

-the Miracle of Building

Binah is called 'promulgations of the river'. It includes functions of free association, innovation, and being able to see the underlying connection between diverse concepts. It grants the overall outlook of seeing different things in life as one. '*Levainah*' - the building brick comes from **Binah** and builds mental structures from related topics. Ask for expansion in these areas.

Binah is similar to "boneh" or build. Our **Binah** takes the raw material of thought and works to develop and build upon that material. **Binah** according to R. Yaacov Haber does not refer to the information that we have accumulated, but rather to what we do with the knowledge, wisdom, and ideas that we already have. **Binah** is the womb where raw understanding is developed and processed.

-today, visualize what you would like to become for the rest of this year until next Rosh Hashana. Picture in colorful detail the best possible you, having enhanced your strengths and integrated your challenges. Build the best you you can be!

-the Miracle of *Insight*

Another central *binah* quality to ask for is insight. It involves being able being able to read between the lines to grasp what is not openly stated. "Give to you wise and understanding and knowledgeable people for your tribes, and I will place them at your heads...and I took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men..." (Deut.1:13, 15). 'Understanding' (people) he did not find, says Rashi:

Rashi says of *Binah*

נבונים: מבינים דבר מתוך דבר. זו היא ששאל אריוס את רבי יוסי, מה בין חכמים לנבונים. חכם דומה לשולחני עשיר, כשמביאין לו מעות לראות כשמביאין לו דינרין לראות רואה, וכשאינ מביאין לו יושב ותוהא. נבון דומה לשולחני תגר, כשמביאין לו מעות לראות רואה, וכשאינ מביאין לו מחזר ומביא משלו

understanding [men]: [I.e., men] who understand [and derive] one thing from another. This is what Arius asked Rabbi Yose: "What is the difference between wise men and understanding men?" [Rabbi Yose said] "A wise man is like a rich money changer: When people bring him dinars to examine, he examines them. When they do not bring [money] to him, he sits doing nothing. An understanding man, however, is like a merchant money changer: When they bring him money to examine, he examines it, and when they do not bring it to him, he goes out and brings his own [money-i.e., he does not wait for people to come to him-he goes to them] (Sifrei)

And understanding people he did not find

men wise and well-known: But understanding men I could not find אנשים חכמים וידועים: אבל נבונים לא מצאתי. זו אחת משבע מדות (Ned. 20b.). This is one of the seven qualities which Jethro described to Mosheh (Exod.18:21), but Mosheh found only three [of them]-righteous, wise, and well-known [men]. (Sifrei). שאמר יתרו למשה ולא מצא אלא שלש, אנשים צדיקים, חכמים וידו

.The sixth sense of intuition must be received from above. It is drawn through *tefilah*.

All these *Binah*-oriented abilities are one. Perceiving the underlying unity of diverse concepts brings joy. The joy opens a channel of inspiration, intuition, and innovation.

-today pray for greater **self-understanding**, as well as **understanding** of the world around you

The Miracle of *Teshuvah/Return*

Rambam writes

Teshuvah is a principle indispensable to religion, indispensable to the existence of individuals believing in the Torah. For it is impossible for man not to sin and err - either by erroneously adopting an opinion or moral quality which in truth is not commendable, or else by being overcome by passion and anger. If man were to believe that this fracture can never be remedied, he would persist in his error and perhaps even add to his disobedience. "The belief in teshuvah, however, leads him to improvement, to come to a state that is better, nearer to perfection, than that which obtained before

he sinned. That is why the Torah prescribes many actions that are meant to establish this correct and very useful principle of teshuvah" (Moreh Nevuchim, III:36).

R. Immanuel Schochet writes that teshuvah is essentially in the heart, in the mind. It is related to the faculty of **binah**, understanding.

There cannot be teshuvah without a consciousness of reality: understanding what is required. Recognition of one's status. Introspection. Searing soul-searching. Honest self-evaluation that opens the eyes of the mind and causes a profound sense of embarrassment: How could I have acted so foolishly? How could I have been so blind and dumb in the face of the Al-mighty, the Omnipresent "Who in His goodness renews each day, continuously, the work of Creation?" How could I forsake the Ultimate, the Absolute, for some transient illusion? As the prophet laments: *"My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of Living Waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that hold no water!"*

Wisdom, **understanding**, knowledge, are prerequisites for teshuvah. It takes knowledge to separate right from wrong. Only the wise know to distinguish between holy and profane, between pure and impure. Thus teshuvah is identical with **Binah**.

The *ba'al teshuvah* becomes aware that sin is a partition between G-d and man. Sin disturbs the balance of the universe, sundering its unity. "He who transgresses the precepts of the Torah causes a defect, as it were, above; a defect below; a defect in himself; a defect to all worlds."

The word teshuvah can be read as *tashuv-hey* - returning, restoring the *hey*. For when man sins he causes the letter hey to be removed from the Divine Name. The Divine Name, the manifestation of G-dliness, is no longer whole. The hey has been severed, leaving the other three letters to spell *hoy*, the Biblical exclamation for woe.

"Woe to them that call evil good, and good evil... woe to them that they are wise in their own eyes..." (Yeshayah 5:20).

In turn, "he who does teshuvah causes the hey to be restored... and the redemption depends on this." Teshuvah restores the *hey*, re-completes the Holy Name, re-establishes unity, frees the soul. "Teshuvah corrects everything - it rectifies above, rectifies below, rectifies the penitent, rectifies the whole universe."

The highest level of Teshuvah is the return of the Upper Hey ה of Gd's Holy Name

-Tonight is *Zot Hanukah*, where we can complete the Teshuva work of Elul, Rosh Hashanah, Yom HaKippur, and Hoshana Rabbah: JUST DO IT!

R. Hershy Worch notes that the Gift of Teshuva is the power to change and undo the past, which seems impossible according to the laws of nature, but it is one of the gifts that our mother Leah brought to the world: to alter the voice of heaven in retrospect, to heal the past so that the healing happened before the sickness. Of Leah we read in Bava Batra 123a:

Leah listened to people talking about Esav at the crossroad, she heard them say, Rivka has 2 sons while Lavan has 2 daughters. The older is destined for the older, the younger for the younger. She would sit by the crossroad asking of Esav, "What sort of man is he?"

By crying and begging that she not fall into the lot of the wicked, into Esav's lot, she ensured that this awful decree was overruled and torn to bits. We are that the miracle of Teshuah can change the past, transforming even premeditated sins into merits and credits. The gift of penitance was brought down by Leah, Supernal Mother, the Sefirah **of Binah**, the wellspring of Repentance, as it is written, "*And his heart will understand and repent*" (Yeshayah 6:10)

When you say the She'asah Nissim prayer, intend the Shem Havaya **יהוה** with the nekudah *Tzere* for **Binah**.

Tonight and through the rest of the 8th day, contemplate the teachings of our colleague and teacher R. Yitzchok Schwartz on the Miracle of **Binah**.

BINA [MOTHER-ING] MEDITATIONS

AWAKEN YOUR INNER BINA\MOTHERING DRIVE TO:

- 1. Attract to yourself the Chochma/Wisdom Seed**
- 2. Become impregnated and provide a womb vessil for this seed**
- 3. Nurture the seed to maturity and beyond**

1. ATTRACTING THE CHOCHMA

A. UNION OF CHOCHMA AND BINA

[BINA'S CONSTANT UNION WITH CHOCHMA]

AWAKEN YOUR INNER DRIVE TO SAVE EVERY THING [NOT TO LOSE A DROP]---TO SALVAGE AND MAKE USE OF ALL OF YOUR RESOURCES AND ALL OF YOUR WISDOM AND ALL OF YOUR EXPERIENCES [PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE]

B. E-K-Y-E [DIVINE NAME MEANING 'I WILL BE']

[BINA'S FUTURE ORIENTATION]

AWAKEN YOUR INNER DRIVE TO TURN ALL POTENTIAL WISDOM AND ABUNDANCE INTO NEW BIRTH-PRODUCTS AND NEW PACKAGES AND NEW FORMS OF EXPRESSIONS

C. BERIYAH [THE 2ND HIGHEST SUPERNAL WORLD]

[BINA'S CORRESPONDING WORLD---WHERE THE INTANGIBLE ELICITS THE TANGIBLE {yaish mi_ayin}]

AWAKEN YOUR INNER DRIVE TO TRANSFORM CHOCHMA'S INEFFABLE, ELUSIVE WISDOM INTO SOMETHING TANGIBLE, GRASPABLE AND CONVEYABLE

2. PROVIDING A VESSIL OR WOMB FOR THE CHOCHMA

A. TZURA [FORM OR SHAPE]

[BINA'S PROVIDING FORM , ALSO KNOWN AS TZIYUR/ILLUSTRATION OR TZEREI/
BINA'S VOWEL POINT OR THE FINAL MEM BOX SHAPE]

EXPERIENCE PLACING THE CHOCHMA/WISDOM SEED THAT YOU HAVE CAPTURED
INTO A VESSIL OF SOME TYPE---PERHAPS AN ESSAY OR A BOOKLET OR A SONG OR
A DRAWING OR JUST A SUMMARY LIST

B. SIMCHA [JOY]

[BINA'S INNER EXPERIENCE OF JOY IN WHAT IT POSSESSES]

EXPERIENCE GREAT JOY IN EVERYTHING THAT YOU HAVE, AS WELL AS
EVERYTHING THAT YOU ARE IN THE PROCESS OF RECEIVING....SEE IT ALL AS
BEING WONDERFUL GIFTS FROM 'THE ONE ABOVE' ---AND ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR
GRATEFULNESS

C. HALAIV MAVIN [THE HEART UNDERSTANDS]

[BINA'S UNIQUE PROPENSITY TO UNDERSTAND WITH THE HEART]

EXPERIENCE YOUR HEART.....WHAT DO YOU FEEL INSIDE? DO YOU FULLY
RESONATE WITH THE CHOCHMA [OR ANYTHING ELSE] THAT IS PRESENTED TO
YOU.....IF NOT, HOW CAN YOU? EXPERIENCE THAT YOUR HEART UNDERSTANDS
[WHICH OFTENTIMES MAY NOT BE TRUE OF YOUR MIND]

3.NURTURE THE CHOCHMA/WISDOM SEED TO MATURITY AND BEYOND

A. CHERUT [FREEDOM]

[BINA'S CHARACTERISTIC OF CLOTHING AND PACKAGING THE CHOCHMA 'FOETUS' IN A
WAY THAT PROTECTS IT FROM ANY HARM]

SEE TO IT THAT YOU PROVIDE A SAFE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE
TENDER GROWING SEED/FOETUS [OF CHOCHMA OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU ARE
TENDING TO], THEREBY FREEING UP THE CHOCHMA FROM ANY POSSIBLE DAMAGE

B. L'HAVIN DAVAR MITOCH DAVAR [TO UNDERSTAND ONE THING FROM ANOTHER]

[BINA'S POWER OF EXPANDING CHOCHMA'S EXPRESSION]

SEE TO IT THAT YOU EXPAND THE CHOCHMA OR ABUNDANCE THAT YOU ARE
CARING FOR....DO THIS BY THE POWER OF ASSOCIATION---ASSOCIATING SIMILAR
PIECES OF WISDOM....KEEP EXPANDING WHAT YOU KNOW UNTIL YOU HAVE
CAUSED THE ONE CHOCHMA SEED TO GROW TO BECOME AN OVERFLOWING
TREASURE CHEST OF WISDOM

C. TSHUVA [THE RETURN TO ROOTS AND SELF]

[BINA'S INNER DRIVE TO SYNCHRONIZE THE WISDOM RECEIVED WITH IT'S SUPERNAL
ROOTS]

SEE TO IT THAT THE WISDOM THAT YOU ARE NURTURING, IS ALLIGNED WITH G—D'S WISDOM AS WELL AS YOUR OWN---IF NOT, THAN REALIGN....KEEP SYNCHRONIZING, REFINING AND ALLIGNING THIS WISDOM UNTIL IT IS STABLE ENOUGH TO STAND THE TEST OF TIME IN THIS WORLD AND ON INTO 'THE WORLD TO COME' [another Bina term]

Supplemental Readings

ASCENDING IN HOLINESS

From an article by Rav Meir Shpiegelman in Yeshivat Har Etzion's *Daf Keshet* #114.

We are familiar with the gemara on Shabbat 21b which lays out the manner in which the mitzva of lighting Chanukah candles is to be performed. According to Beit Hillel, we subscribe to the principle that "we ascend in holiness and do not descend," and thus we light one candle on the first night, two on the second, and so on until eight. What the gemara does not explain is why the baseline is one candle and why we add one every night (why not more?). Why should we not light eight candles every night? Even if we say that we are specifically trying to demonstrate this principle of ascending in holiness, we still need to explain why this is so.

When the Chashmonaim entered the Temple after defeated the Syrian-Greeks, they were faced with two possibilities (we are, of course, assuming that they did not know that a miracle would occur, and that they knew that it would be eight days before fresh oil arrived): they could light all of the candles on day one and finish the oil, or they could divide the oil and light one candle each night until more oil came. The second option was contingent on two things: whether the mitzva of lighting the menorah in the Temple could be done with only one light lit, and even if it could, since there was certainly a higher fulfillment to light all of the candles in the menorah, should they light all of them on day one, even though they would not be able to light for the next seven nights?

Our answer begins in the psukim in the Torah that speak about the lights in the Temple and Tabernacle. While there are many, we will focus on four major ones:

1. Shemot 25:37 presents us with the instruction to build a menorah, stating that its purpose will be to provide light.
2. Shemot 27:20-21 presents the commandment to make pure olive oil, for the purpose of having a permanent light (*ner tamid*) lit within the Tabernacle.
3. Vayikra 24:1-4 reiterates the commandment to make pure olive oil, but now adds the fact that it should be used specifically in the menorah (which is not specified in Shemot 27).
4. Bamidbar 8:1-4 presents the commandment to Aharon to light the menorah every day.

Already at first glance, the differences among these verses are apparent. The second verse makes no reference to the menorah at all, but merely states that a *ner tamid* must be somewhere in the Tabernacle. This omission is highlighted by the fact that the third verse is nearly identical to the second, yet it includes the menorah. This verse in Vayikra can perhaps be seen as adding on to the one in Shemot, and thus tells us that the *ner tamid* in the Tabernacle was to be lit on the menorah. The first verse focuses not on the candles, but rather on the menorah itself, and presents the lighting of the candles as an act which flows from the physical menorah, and not from an independent commandment.

Using the verses, we can explain several laws that are connected to the menorah, of which we will elucidate three here:

1. The verse in Bamidbar (#4) details the construction of the menorah. This is done since the lighting of the menorah is seen as a function of the construction of the menorah, and this is the first time that Aharon is commanded to light it (before this point, Aharon was commanded to light the *ner tamid*, but not the entire menorah).
2. There are times when the Torah uses the word "*ner*" (candle) in the singular, and times when it uses the plural "*neirot*." When the Torah speaks about the *ner tamid*, the singular is used, and when it refers to all of the candles in the menorah the plural is used.

3. There was one candle in the menorah which was special, the "western candle." This is peculiar. If there is a commandment to light seven candles, how did one of them become different from the others? Our explanation until now can help us solve this problem. This western candle served as the *ner tamid*, the candle that was always lit. The key feature of the *ner tamid* was that it burned throughout the night, and not just during the daytime (as [Rambam](#) and [Rashba](#) say was the law for the other six candles). Even those who say that all the candles had to burn all night, learn that law from the law of the *ner tamid* and its connection to the menorah.

If we now look more closely at the commandments in the Torah, we will see that each one adds another detail to the law. First we learn that the menorah needs to have candles. Then we learn that in the Temple a candle has to be lit all night. That candle has to be situated on the menorah (and might even have to burn during the day). Finally, the lighting of the candles has to be done by Aharon and his descendants.

The Chashmonaim who entered the Temple found enough oil to last one day (oil for each of the seven candles, and an eighth portion that was needed as a backup for the "western candle" lest it go out during the day [Rashba]). The menorah, like any other vessel in the Temple, only attained its full level of holiness and status as a Temple vessel after having gone through the process of "*chinuch*" – dedication and consecration, a process that was accomplished through the lighting of all seven candles. As such, the Chashmonaim decided to not consecrate the menorah and to only light one candle on the first night. Had they lit all seven right away, they would have been refraining from doing a positive commandment when they would be unable to light on the second night. However, if the menorah remained unconsecrated, that commandment would not yet exist, as the commandment to light all of the candles, as we have seen, is derived from the menorah itself. Thus, if there was a lacking in the menorah, there could not be a commandment to light all seven candles every day. Rather, they lit only the *ner tamid*, which was a commandment which was independent of the status of the menorah and thus had to be lit regardless. The first miracle thus came when that candle stayed lit all day, as was the "normal miracle" in the Temple. This miracle showed that Hashem was accepting the actions of the Chashmonaim and that things were going to return to their normal way in the Temple.

The fact that we add a candle every night is a reflection of a second miracle that occurred. As it is not as important as the initial one, it is not incumbent upon everyone to do. At the end of the first day in the Temple, the oil in the one candle had not gone out. Thus, on the second day the Chashmonaim were able to place oil into the second candle alongside the still-burning first candle. This continued for seven days, and only on the seventh night was the menorah fully consecrated. The eighth night was thus the first night that all of the candles were lit together as they would be on any other day (similar to the eighth day by the consecration of the Tabernacle – see Vayikra 9). The consecration occurred on the seventh night and on the eighth night the newly-consecrated menorah was first put to use. All of the candles were lit that night by way of a miracle (that the oil continued to burn), and thus while the menorah looked normal to the outside observer, its light was entirely the result of a miracle.

This is from my colleague Chanoch ben Yaakov, who also offers amazing spiritual gifts for Chanukah at his website

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Miracle and/or Wonder! What are they?

Welcome to the month of miracles and wonders. That is what the essence of the month of Kislev is all about. That is why the Holiday of Chanuka is in the Month of Kislev. כסלו Kislev is spelled / formed from 2 words in Hebrew. The last 2 letters spell the word "him" and the first two letters spell the word Throne (in an incomplete way – without an Aleph as the last letter). Essentially Kislev is about "His Throne". It also can be read as the Throne of 36, as the last two letters have the gematria of 36.

36 is a code number representing the midrash tradition that there are always 36 Tzadikim Nestar (Concealed Tzadikim – Righteous People) in the world. These wonder workers (Tzadikim) are actually the rulers of the physical world. HaShem has delegated his authority to these Tzadikim. Their decisions are always consistent with the Plan of Creation and so when they determine that a miracle is warranted than HaShem manifests that miracle.

In earlier generations even as recently as 20 years ago, one would go to a Revealed Tzadik and ask for a blessing. Sometime one would ask for something they felt they needed and sometimes one would ask for something they wanted. The Tzadik would give them a Blessing and the Blessing would manifest in their life. Sometimes the Tzadik gave the Blessing they asked for, sometimes he or she gave them the blessing that was best for them. In any event the Blessing manifested. These are called Revealed Miracles. In our generation we have to learn to bring these miracles ourselves, as the Tzadikim have become concealed from us.

The letters that are used to help us achieve miracles (as written Sefer Yetzirah) are the Gimmel which created the planet Jupiter called Tzedek in Hebrew. This is the same word that is translated as Justice as well. The planet Jupiter has the essence of expansion and growth. The other letter is the Samek which created the Astrological sign of Sagittarius sometimes called the Archer or the bow or rainbow. Together the Gematria of Samek and Gimmel is 63. How we achieve miracles with these letters comes from using them in our meditations especially the Ana Bekoach second verse (See the Ana Bekoach teaching on the yeshshem website) during the month of Kislev.

63 is the Gematria of the 10 letters that spell out the Name of HaShem at the level of Binah. Here it is spelled out for you: יוד הי ואו הי הוי Binah is the energy store which is where we go to get the energy to manifest our miracles. This is what the Holiday of Chanuka allows us to do. During the Holiday of Chanuka (which is mentioned in the Torah in a concealed way) the universe puts out a River of Light called Ohr Ganuz (Concealed Light). This is the light that was created on the First Day of Creation and then hidden away for the Tzadikim in the World to come. (This is what the Midrash teaches). Each night when we light a candle we connect to this River of Ohr Ganuz which is Binah energy that is manifesting in the universe. This only happens during these 8 days in the year. Therefore all of the miracles that will happen in your life over the next year is powered by your spiritual actions during the Holiday of Chanuka.

Miracles follow a set of rules called laws in the spiritual worlds. Just as we have natural law in our physical world there is a set of rules in the spiritual world. Miracles must follow those laws. Also the universe is efficient and always uses the least amount of energy possible to achieve its goal. This applies to Miracles as well as our own Law of Entropy. This means that if something can be accomplished in a natural way it will be; if it takes additional energy then we get that energy from Binah and make it happen.

The Holiday of Chanuka is about storing that energy of Miracles and Wonders for your whole year.

The Hebrew word for Miracle is Nes נס. It also is an acronym for the phrase Someach Noflim. Someach Noflim means “Support the Fallen” or maybe even “Support the falling”! The Kabbalist teach that our world is a perfect world of judgment. Another way of saying this is Perfect judgment means a spiritual cause creates the appropriate physical effect.

The root of Nes is נס which means to flee or to run away. From this we understand that a Miracle is running away from the Natural order of things. Or is it? A nes or miracle means to run away from the physical and run to the spiritual order of things. The spiritual order of things is constant miracles relative to what we perceive in the

physical world. This can be very hard to understand.

The natural order of things (nature or natural law) in the physical world should be constant miracles and not natural law. The current order of things was set up by the Sin of Adam and Chava (whatever that metaphor of eating from the Tree of Knowledge Good and Evil represent). To explain this, before the sin of Adam and Chava the location of the physical world was in unity with the spiritual world. After the sin, the physical world is separated from the spiritual world. This leaves the two worlds being run by two sets of natural order: What we call Nature and Natural law in the physical and the laws of miracles (which is what we call it) in the spiritual world.

Constant miracles occur for Tzadikim. This is because they have broken through the illusion of the separation of the physical world and are able to tap into the Binah level of energy at will. This is why Hashem delegates his authority to them. He knows they will do the right thing. Tzadik means righteous. Righteous means to do the right thing. The Right thing is doing what is consistent with the Plan or Thought of Creation.

One way to understand the differences between the Spiritual law and Natural law is to look at the Gematria correspondence between Nature, HaTeva הטבע in Hebrew (Gematria 86), and Elokim אלהים (Gematria 86), the Name of God that represents and manifests judgment. Why does Nature and Elokim (the name of God that relates to judgment) have the same Gematria? To teach that natural law is judgment also known as cause and effect!

This is why the planet Jupiter (Tzedek צדק) controls the month of Kislev. 'Remember, Tzedek means Righteousness, Justice, and Jupiter depending on the context and the vowels. What we call Miracles actually are a running away from judgment which is a word representing cause and effect to a higher level of judgment representing the manifestation of Mercy. I know this last statement is hard to understand but lets try to understand it.

In the Spherot Chesed or Mercy comes before Judgment or Gevurah. Therefore going above judgment brings one to Mercy. Yet above Mercy is Binah which represents the Perfect Judgment of a Mother teaching her child. In this context our physical world is a world of perfect judgment, a world of perfect cause and effect. Therefore when we go above the physical world to the spiritual world to attain Mercy, we are going outside of our natural order of things. Therefore the universe says "Oh, he is going outside of himself so I will allow him to receive a miracle which represents Mercy for him." Yet it is actually on the level of perfect cause and effect. Perfect Justice!

A quick example of this in our world is Clemency granted to a convicted felon by the executive branch of our government, be it President of the Nation, or Governor of a state. In a perfect world clemency would be granted to the felon who has done Tshuva and therefore does not have to sit in prison and receive the effect of his actions that caused so much pain and suffering in our world. Remember the Baalai Tshuvah (The one who has returned to Hashem) stands at a higher level than even a Tzadik. One way to understand this teaching is to recognize that this higher level is still judgment or cause and effect but at the higher level of Tshuvah which is Mercy.

The Hebrew word for Wonder is Peleh spelled פלא. Peleh means miracle and also wonder. This is a similar translation for the word Nes. Usually these 2 words are said together (Nes V'Peleh נס ופלא translated as Miracles and Wonders). Yet we are taught that no two words in Hebrew mean the same thing. When we have two words that imply the same meaning we need to look deeper at what is the true meaning of each. So what is the difference between these 2 words.

The Gematria of Nes is 110. The Gematria of Peleh is 111. 111 is the Gematria of the Letter Aleph when spelled out Aleph Lamed Peh Sofit. The Aleph represents unity as it is the first letter in the Hebrew Aleph Bet and is inclusive of all the letters that follow it. (This is a teaching from the Talmud and Kabbalah). 110 is the Gematria of the word Ali spelled Ayin Lamed Yood. The first two letters of this word Ayin Lamed means on, above, over, towards, or because. The yood at the end of the word can mean “My” or it can represent the 10 Sephirot or even the essence of the Tetragramaton. Therefore, Peleh is a passive or concealed miracle and Nes is an active miracle. This comes from the Gematria of 111 for Peleh which is like the Aleph which has no sound!

We all know what is an active miracle? Examples abound in the Torah with the 10 plagues sent to motivate and destroy Egypt. Motivate them to let the Jews go and destroy the negativity that Egypt represents by its essence of narrowness and confinement. But what is a concealed miracle. A perfect example is when people tell stories about experiences they have had in their life. Perhaps they were almost in a car accident or they walked under something that almost hit them as it fell. The active aspect of these stories is the people are aware of something that ALMOST happens to them that could have hurt them or Has V'Shalom (God Forbid) killed them.

When people say to a Kabbalist, these stories and usually end the story with “What a Miracle”. The Kabbalists tell them, “The stronger miracle would be if the car accident never became part of your awareness or had never happened.” This is a concealed miracle and it happens in your life every day and you do not notice them. You do not realize that Hashem has taken care and protected you, because after all, HaShem is always supporting the fallen (Someck Noflim the initials of Nes נס) with Miracles and Wonders (Nes V'Peleh נס ופלא)!