

על הנסים לחנוכה הרב בערל וויסברד

I would like to begin by thanking everybody: all the *talmidim*, all the *bogrei haYeshiva*, all the friends of the Yeshiva, for participating in this past week's banquet, the Yeshiva Dinner. It was a tremendous success on many fronts. Number one, it brought a tremendous amount of *nachas* and *simcha* to all— to the *hanhala*, to the *rebbeim*, to the *yungerleit*, and to the *talmidim*. When we see *doros*, 50-60 years of people who came to the yeshiva, come together, it is a *simcha* to reconnect and to look back see all that has transpired in the yeshiva over the past decades. We also thank all those who were *mishtateif* in the financial aspect, taking out ads, being *makir tov* all those who they were *makir tov* to, to our honorees and anyone else. I believe this was a *gevaldigge Kiddush Hashem*, and the Ribono Shel Olam *zohl helfen* that we all continue to be *mesame'ach* each other and help support Torah and bring tremendous *zechusim* to Klal Yisroel.

As Sunday night begins another Chanuka, and we shall be *zoche* to light our Menorahs once again, let us think about the *hoda'a* we express to HaKadosh Boruch Hu in *Al Hanissim*:

”על הנסים ועל הפורקן ועל הגבורות ועל התשועות ועל המלחמות שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה”

Most of this list is easily understood, but the *gevuros* is not so clear.

”בימי מתתיהו בן יוחנן כהן גדול חשמונאי ובניו”

This seems to simply give us the time reference for when the events took place, and that is certainly true.

”כשעמדה מלכות יון הרשעה על ישראל להשכיחם תורתך ולהעבירם מחוקי רצונך”

I would have thought that it would have been possible to write “שעמדה” without the “כ” prefix. First tell us that they rose against us, and then tell us what they wanted to do. Why is the word “כשעמדה”?

”ואתה ברחמיך הרבים עמדת להם בעת צרתם, רבת את ריבם דנת את דינם נקמת את נקמתם. מסרת גבורים ביד חלשים ורבים ביד מעטים וטמאים ביד טהורים ורשעים ביד צדיקים וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך”

Why does it say that Hashem stood by them “בעת צרתם”? It would seem that all these things occurred after “עת צרתם”, after HaKadosh Boruch put an end to צרתם? As well, the “רחמיך הרבים” was also after “עת צרתם”?

”ולך עשית שם גדול וקדוש בעולמך, ולעמך ישראל עשית תשועה גדולה ופרקן כהיום הזה”

The greatest thing in the world is to make *Kiddush Shem Shomayim*. Why are we thanking the Ribono Shel Olam for doing this Himself? We are certainly happy for it, but why are we giving *hoda'a* for something He has done for Himself? We give thanks to the Ribono Shel Olam when He does something for us, like when we *bentch gomel*.

”ואחר כן באו בניך לדביר בתיך ופינו את היכלך וטהרו את מקדשך והדליקו נרות בחצרות קדשך וקבעו שמונת ימי חנוכה אלו להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול”

Why are we thanking HaKadosh Boruch Hu for what we did?

In order to answer these questions and understand what we are saying, let us rethink the entire *tefila*. Sometimes, when we want to define a *tekufa* we choose something which stood out as an identifying marker. When we it was the *tekufa* of Matisyahu ben Yochanan Kohen Gadol, it could be as we said before, merely a reference of time. Alternatively, maybe we are identifying them specifically as people who stood out. They did things that most people did not do. The *nisyonos* were enormous, many people became *misyavanim*, others were killed. We are talking about a *tekufa* where Klal Yisroel was compromised and not that way that we normally want to be—*davuk baHashem* and serving Him faithfully.

The Ribono Shel Olam wishes to be *meitiv* to us constantly. Even when we are not doing all as we should, He is still *meitiv*. The only thing which gets in the way of that is if we are no longer a *kli kibul* to warrant His *hatava*. We can only receive the amount of *hatava* which we deserve. Maybe that is why we say "כְּשֶׁעַמְדָה", because it is when we reached the point of no longer deserving that these events took place. The Gemara discusses that *yisurin* come to keep us on the straight and narrow. When we constantly receive more and more *hatava* from the Ribono Shel Olam, even when we aren't doing good, what will keep us from falling completely away? *Yisurin*. *Yisurin* bring us back to HaKadosh Boruch Hu. It is not the *pshat* that *yisurin* are because the *Eibeshter* is not looking are way so we suffer. On the contrary, He causes us to suffer in order to return us to do good. He is looking at us, and "ברחמך הרבים" causes it to happen. He doesn't want to bring *yisurin*, but there is no other option for us.

It could be that we are thanking Hashem for giving us the *yisurin* to return to our *dveykus* in Him. And not only did He provide that with *rachamim*, but He also did our job of bringing *Kiddush Shem Shomayim* to the world. Really, we are supposed to do that without anything else. But this *tekufa* necessitated the Ribono Shel Olam to bring that about Himself. Therefore, we thank HaKadosh Boruch Hu for doing our job.

Maybe this is also why we thank Hashem for our own accomplishment of what we were supposed to do. It was because the Ribono Shel Olam put us in such a *matziv* that we returned to doing the proper *avoda*, that we reached an even higher level of *dveykus* which led us to do even that which He did not tell us to do. The Ribono Shel Olam never told us to make Chanuka into a *keviyus* of eight days as a *Yom Tov deRabbonon*. Through the heightened *dveykus* we achieved through this *tekufa* and *milchama*, we concluded what He wanted us to do in response to His *yeshuos*. It wasn't to make an *isur melacha*, rather "להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול".

This is very much in line with what the Rosh Yeshiva *zt"l*, HaRav Weinberg, used to say. There was once a *yungerman* in Yeshiva who made a *seudas hoda'a* after recovering from a very serious illness. The Rosh Yeshiva got up and said that it's a wonderful thing that we are able to make a *seudas hoda'a*, but there is another wonderful thing. That is that the *bal simcha* is not asking another question. He could ask that it's beautiful the Ribono Shel Olam made him get better, but who made him ick in the first place? [The Ribono Shel Olam.] Don't make me sick and don't make me better. The *teretz* is that when we thank HaKadosh Boruch Hu for a *refuah*, we are also thanking Him for everything. We have *bitachon* that everything He does is for our good and He knows what He is doing at all times. The *choli* was good just as the *refuah* was. A person needed the *choli* for his own good, and when he didn't need it anymore the Ribono Shel Olam made it go away. We give *hoda'a* to the Ribono Shel Olam for His constant *hashgacha protis*, for both the *tzaros* and the *yeshuos*, the *choli* and the *refuah*.

The Ribono Shel Olam should *bentch* us all that we should be *zoche*, this Chanuka, to feel the *hoda'a* and appreciate the *hashgacha* of the Ribono Shel Olam, and that every single step that happens to us, pleasant and unpleasant, we can say *hallel* to HaKadosh Boruch Hu with a full heart. *Ah freilichen Chanuka*.