

# CHAYUS

## *A Shabbos Stimulus*

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta bas Yosef Mordechai ע"ה And Tzvi Daniel ע"ה ben ע"ה David Ainsworth ט"ו  
Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

Erev Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz, 5782 – December 3, 2021  
Chanukah

ערב שבת פרשת מקץ, כ"ט כסלו, ה'תשפ"ב  
חנוכה

כתר שם טוב

PORTIONS OF LIGHT

Keter Shem Tov

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### How To Give

*One who wishes to spend liberally [on charity] should not squander more than one fifth [of his wealth] (Kesubos, 50a).*

The Talmud uses the term *al yivazvez*, “should not squander,” from the noun *bizah*, spoils of war. One who [naturally] does not wish to give, and he must fight with himself to give the charity, achieving this by way of force and despoiling—he has to tear the money away from himself—to him

the Talmud says, “Do not squander more than one fifth.”

As opposed to one who gives it away with joy and pleasure! [Such a delightful manner of dispensing cannot be considered *bizbuz*, and he may indeed dispense more than a fifth.]

### Let There Be Light – Chanukah

*And it was evening and it was morning (Bereishis 1:5).*

The Midrash explains: “*And it was evening*—this refers to the deeds of the wicked. *And it was morning*—this refers to the deeds of the righteous. We do not know which of these G-d desires. The Torah therefore continues, *And G-d saw the light that it was good* (Genesis 1:3), indicating that He desires the deeds of the righteous.”

This teaching is bewildering: Why might we assume that G-d prefers evil deeds over righteous acts?

The answer is that there is *the advantage of light from darkness* (Ecclesiastes 2:13), meaning that the superiority of light is recognizable only in the presence of darkness, which creates a contrast. Similarly, a wise man’s superiority is amplified by the presence of a fool, and a *tzaddik’s* superiority is clarified by the presence of a *wicked person*.

We can now appreciate the Midrash’s statement: “We do not know which of these G-d desires.” Abhorrent actions serve as a throne upon which deeds of righteousness rise, clarifying the beauty and sanctity of leading a righteous life. We might therefore consider positive and wicked deeds as belonging to a single global scheme, and, subsequently, earning equal significance in G-d’s eyes.

The Torah dispels this notion with its emphatic statement that *G-d saw the light that it was good*—“this refers to the deeds of the righteous.” True, the actions of the wicked ultimately serve a purpose, but we must unequivocally distinguish them from positive deeds and reject them as undesirable.

**Focus:** Provide your sacred ends with sacred means.

*For G-d has caused me to be fruitful  
in the land of my affliction* (Mikeitz 41:52)

Once, when Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, the son of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, was a young man, he was visiting with his father-in-law in Yanovitch. There he met with one of his father's chassidim. The chassid noticed that the young 'rebbe's son' was all too aware of his achievements in scholarship and meditative prayer and felt that some cutting down to size was in order.

Said the chassid to Rabbi DovBer: "Considering who you are and how you've lived, what's the big deal? Your father—well, we all know who your father is. You were certainly conceived under the holiest of circumstances, and I'm sure that your father secured a most lofty soul to bring down into the world. Then you were raised in a rebbe's home and great care was taken to mold your character and safeguard you from any negative influences. All your life you've been exposed to scholarship and sanctity and to this very day you're preoccupied only with the study of Torah and the teachings of chassidism. So you've amassed a certain amount of knowledge and you pray with fervor and devotion. Big deal.

"Now, take me for example. My father was a simple man, and we can well imagine what was on his mind when he scraped out some dreg of a soul out the bottom of the barrel. My upbringing? I was raised as a goat and basically left to my own devices. And do you know what I do with my life? Let me tell you how I earn my living. I loan money

to the peasants during the planting season and then, during the winter months, I make my rounds of their villages and farms to collect the debts before they have a chance to squander their entire harvest on vodka. This means setting out several hours before sunrise, well before the permissible time for prayer, equipped with a flask—for without a drink one cannot begin to talk business with a peasant. After drinking to his health, one must share a 'l'chayim' with the woman in the house as well—otherwise she can ruin the whole deal for you. Only then can you sit down to settle part of the account.

"After three or four such stops I make my way home, immerse myself in the mikveh<sup>1</sup> and prepare for prayer. But after such preliminaries, what sort of prayer would you expect...?"

The words of this chassid, who was, in truth, renowned for his refined nature and soulful prayers, made a deep impression on Rabbi DovBer. The young man immediately traveled home to his father and poured out his heart. He bewailed his spiritual state, saying that his service of G-d is worthless, falling so short of what is expected from him.

The next time the chassid from Yanovitch came to Rabbi Schneur Zalman, the Rebbe said to him: "I am most grateful to you—you have made a chassid out of my Berel."

1. Ritual bath.

## The Many Miracles of G-d

### The Prayer:

The beginning of the passage *Haneiros Halalu*, recited after the kindling of the Menorah, states: “We kindle these lights to commemorate the saving acts, miracles, and wonders which You performed for our forefathers...”

The conclusion of the paragraph, however, states: “in order to offer thanks... for Your miracles, wonders, and salvations.”

Why is the order reversed at the end of the passage?

### The Preface to the Explanation:

“Saving acts” are necessary when there is a battle which can plausibly be won by either side. In this case, G-d can intervene with “saving acts” and decide the battle on behalf of the righteous.

“Miracles” are clear Divine interventions that subvert natural expectations.

And “wonders” are occurrences that are compatible with the natural world, yet, at the same time, evoke “wonder” and seem miraculous.

### The Explanation:

In the opening of the passage, when speaking about what occurred to our “forefathers,” we mention G-d’s interventions in order of their occurrence. First, there was a skirmish in Modi’in in which the Maccabees were victorious. Yet, there was not a large Greek military presence in Modi’in, so the success there was a “saving act,” not an outright miracle. Then, Antiochus sent a large, imposing force which the Maccabees defeated. This victory of the “many in the hands of the few” was a “miracle,” a supernatural defeat. Once the Beis Hamikdash

was in their control, the Maccabees found the single, untainted jar of oil. This could be explained as good luck, but was so implausible and timely that it was clearly a “wondrous” act of G-d.

At the conclusion of the passage, we reflect on, and express gratitude for, G-d’s actions. First, we notice and thank G-d for the obvious, supernatural “miracles.” Then, we appreciate that even those occurrences which seemed unusually fortuitous, “wonders,” and even developments which were perfectly congruent with the laws of nature, “saving acts,” were also Divine interventions on behalf of the Jewish people.

### A Deeper View:

Alternatively, at the conclusion of the passage we list G-d’s interventions in ascending order of their expression of G-d’s essence. Chasidus explains that a miracle garbed in nature expresses a deeper Divine truth than a miracle that defies the laws of nature. In a supernatural miracle, nature is incompatible with G-d’s will and so G-d must override the natural world. A miracle that unfolds within the confines of nature, however, reveals that G-d’s will can be manifest within the strictures of nature itself.

Thus, first we acknowledge G-d’s “miracles,” where He is openly revealed, then we move to a deeper expression of G-d, “wonders,” where He is seen within a natural setting yet still obviously present. And we conclude with the deepest expression of G-d’s essence, “saving acts,” where G-d’s intervention dressed within perfectly natural occurrences expresses His unity with creation even in its natural state.

### When Darkness Comes To Light

The Midrash associates *mikeitz* with *keitz sam la-choshech*, “He set an end to darkness,” and explains that darkness is drawn into the world through the activities of the *yetzer hara*. Once the *yetzer hara* will meet its end, so will the spiritual darkness cease from existence. The Kabbalah teaches that there are three forms of darkness in the *sefirah* of *kesser*. This refers to sublime, hidden realms of G-dliness that are considered darkness only because they are entirely beyond revelation.

The verse, “He set an end to darkness,” re-

fers to a time at which darkness will cease. But it can also be understood as a time at which darkness will cease to be hidden, when the levels of *kesser* that are presently too sublime to be revealed as light, will indeed be revealed in this world. It is precisely our efforts to suppress our negative darkness, our *yetzer hara*, and to transform it into light, that will cause the supernal darkness of *kesser* to be revealed as intense light in the era of redemption.

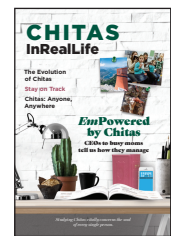
Ohr HaTorah

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת

### SHABBOS CHITAS / RAMBAM GUIDE

BOOK	SECTION
Chumash – Rashi*	Mikeitz, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapters 145 – 150
Tanya*	Likutei Amarim Chapter 4. עמ' ח - פרק ד. ועוד יש... עד עמ' ח - מצות התורה.
Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos*	Positive Mitzvah #190
Rambam – One Chapter*	Sefer Avoda, – Hilchos Pesulei HaMukdashin, Chapter 10
Rambam – Three Chapters**	Sefer Avoda, – Hilchos Pesulei HaMukdashin, Chapter 17 – 19

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