

DOVE TALES



ספר וישלח את היונה

R A B B I O R I S T R U M

ספר

וישלה את היונה

DOVE TALES

*A Thrilling Explorative Journey
Connecting the Dove to the Yom Tov
of Chanukah and Our Lives*

Rabbi Ori Strum

Ezra and Yummy Strum

In honor of our dear brother, the author.
May you continue to spread your beautiful light.

L'ilui Nishmas
HaRav Yehoshua Ben Rav Menachem Mendel
HaLevi ZT"L
and Breindel Miriam Bas Menachem Meir A"H



Mordechai and Chaya Reches

In Memory of Zaidy Avraham Landesman, Avraham Ben Aryeh, for his dedication to learning Torah from which we had the zechus to learn from and for all the Torah wisdom he shared with us. May his neshama have an Aliyah.

In honor of Rabbi Ori Strum, on the incredible achievement of publishing your second sefer. May it bring continued growth in Torah and Nachas from all who learn it.



Tali and Michelle Strum

Dedicated as a Zechus for a Refuah Shlaima for
our dear father, Rav Yaakov ben Breina Yenta.



Jeffery and Renee Reches

Dedicated to our amazing son Ori. You should
continue to spread the light of Torah and inspire
Klal Yisroel for many years to come.

With Love,

Mommy and Daddy Reches



Your Divrei Torah – Torah Sparks – are original,
meaningful, and enlightening. Torah Sparks are
the first material we read every Friday night. You
are exceptionally bright, wise, and intelligent.

May Hashem bless you and your beautiful family
with good health and may you continue to be
Marbitz Torah and illuminate your wisdom to
Klal Yisrael.

We are thrilled about your second book being
published.

With love always, **Bobbie and Zaidy Koll**



Susan (Bubbie) Landesman

In memory of Avraham ben Aryeh, a loving
husband, zaide, and Eved Hashem.

Rafi and Rivka Strum

As a zechus for our children may Hashem help them always see His light.

And to my incredible brother, may Hashem grant you lots of Koach to continue spreading torah sparks in your awesome and unique ways.



Ahron Leib and Reena Wealcatch

In honor of Ori AKA Menachem Meir, may you continue bringing light unto the world.



Hillel and Keren Traub

In honor of the birth of our new nephew Gavriel born to Yael and Akiva Strum



Mark and Elana Feld

In honor of our nephew
Rabbi Ori and Arielle Strum



Yossi and Tova Lurman

In honor of the whole Mishpacha



In honor of our very chashuv cousin Ori Strum

Aryeh and Aviva Feld
Aviel, Tani and Emmy



Menachem and Tzipora Feld

In honor of R' Ori Strum

”אם תשכבון בין שפתים; כנפי יונה נחפה בכסף,

ואברותיה בירקרק חרוץ” (תהלים סח:יד)

“Though you lie among the sheep folds you shall
shine like the wings of a dove covered with silver,
and her pinions with shimmering gold”

In memory of our dear mother Leah Rivka bas
Mordechai Wegodsky ע”ה who soared through
life like a gentle dove spreading love, peace,
and kindness wherever she flew. Just as a dove’s
wings are compared to the shelter and protection
of the *shechina* and the Torah, so too, her care and
compassion enveloped our family, providing a safe
haven from life’s storms. Her spirit continues to
soar in our hearts, inspiring her family and loved
ones to spread our own wings and fly with the
same grace that she embodied. May she continue
to be a *mailitz yoshar* for our family and all of

Klal Yisroel

Phillip and Dayna Klitzner and family



Yehudah and Sara Roll

In honor of our dear friends
Rabbi and Mrs. Ori Strum!



Eliyahu and Chaya Wiener

In memory of

אפרים בן דוד
פרידל בת יחיאל
יעקב עזריאל בן יצחק יששכר
זאב בן חיים דוב



Shmueli and Chaya Silver

As zechus for klal Yisroel



Zevy Galkin

In honor of Rabbi Ori Strum!



Binyamin and Zehava Gerstenfeld

L'zecher nishmas Tzvi Ben Shlomo



Mendy and Esther Oelbaum

In honor of R' Ori Strum!



הסכמות

Each year when the beautiful Yom Tov of Chanukah comes around, we think of some new learning or reading we can avail ourselves of to understand it a little better. There is always something new to be learned, absorbed, and experienced each time we celebrate Chanukah.

Rabbi Ori Strum opens our minds and hearts to the profound connection between Chanukah and the Yonah, sent out of the teivah by Noach at the end of the great flood. Without giving away too much, I can say that I am quite sure that whoever reads this deep yet very readable book will experience Chanukah in a new way and that more "Torah Sparks" will be integrated into their life. May Hashem continue to grant inspiration to Rabbi Strum to help illuminate our generation with his creative and original insights and ideas.

"B'nei vina, yemei shemonah, kavu shir u'renanim" - May our new understanding of these eight days lift us to song and praise of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Bivracha v'shalom,
Rabbi Menachem Goldberger
Kehillas Tiferes Yisroel of Baltimore

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MICHTAV BRACHA

Kislev 5785

Rabbi Ori Strum, a passionate Ben Torah from Baltimore who has already written a beautiful book on spiritual growth, continues to inspire with a wonderful and surprisingly-comprehensive book on the inner meaning and spiritual lessons of Chanukah. He takes us on a panoramic journey all the way from the dove that brought back the olive leaf after the devastation of the mabul to Yaakov crossing the River Yabok in order to retrieve the small jars, to the galus and destruction of the First Temple, the rebuilding of the Second Temple, the decrees of Antiochus, the reemergence of the Oral Law, the sufferings and persecutions, the challenges of assimilation that we faced then and face now, and shows us how throughout the centuries the lights of Chanukah continue to be beacons of hope and faith that dispel the darkness and show us the way to Hashem. He draws on many sources – Gemara, Midrash, Zohar, Kabbala, Chassidus – and weaves them into a spellbinding tapestry that is both a feast for the mind and inspiration for the heart. This is a sefer that can be enjoyed by readers at all levels from the seasoned talmid chacham to even a young child, and R' Ori's enthusiasm clearly suggests that this was a true labor of love; love for the subject and love for the reader.

May the mechaber continue to see bracha and hatzlacha in his avodas hakodesh.

With Much Blessing,

Yitzchak A. Breitowitz

Rav, Kehillas Ohr Somayach

Jerusalem, Israel

מרכז התורה (ע"ר)
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Dove Tales written by our dedicated and talented talmid Rabbi Ori Strum is a fascinating work explaining in multi-layered depth the connection between Chanuka and the dove whose return signified to Noach the beginning of a new era for mankind. In his unique and inimitable style, Rabbi Strum weaves a most intricate masterpiece which will undoubtedly fascinate and educate all teachers and students of Torah. I whole heartedly recommend this work and give my beracha to Rabbi Strum to continue to use his great literary talents, wit and humor in the service of the Hashem ushering in the light of the Geula quickly in our days.

With Torah Blessings,

Mordechai Rottman

Rosh HaYeshiva

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

My Favorite Time of Year

Everyone is entitled to their favorite day (or period of days) on the calendar. For some, it might be their birthday or anniversary. And yet for others, it might be a certain holiday.

If someone were to walk up to me and ask, “*What’s your favorite time of year?*” I would not even have to think twice about it. My immediate response would be, “*Chanukah!*” As of the writing of this *sefer*, the holiday of Chanukah – a period of 8 beautiful days – is the Yom Tov that speaks to my *neshama* the most.

Do not get me wrong, Pesach is amazing. There is nothing like eating Matzah for seven days straight. And what can be better than the Seder night? I immensely enjoy reliving the miraculous events of leaving Egypt, and tapping into that sense of physical and spiritual freedom.

Shavuot too, is such an incredible time to embrace the Torah, our guidebook for how to live, and work on our “marriage” relationship with Hashem.



And I must say, although it gets a bit cold when Sukkos rolls around, there is a real sense of warmth as we leave our comfortable homes and step into the “hug” of Hashem.

But, after the entire Yom Tov season is behind us, and after the High Holidays are well in the rear-view mirror, there exists a special spark, a holy magical touch, a holiday – lasting 8 days – called Chanukah. These are my favorite days of the Jewish calendar.

In the dark of winter, when the days are shorter and the temperature cools, each family huddles together and lights a Menorah, igniting not just the physical candelabra, but igniting our souls in the process as well. הנרות הללו אנחנו מדליקין – *We kindle these lights*. Of course, the candles are being kindled, but these words remind us that אנחנו מדליקין, *we too* are being kindled, ignited, and lit up. הם קדש הללו הנרות – *These lights are sacred*. Chanukah reminds us that *we too* are sacred, holy, and blessed. Chanukah reminds us of who we are as a people. That we are a nation that not only survives, but thrives even amidst a backdrop of darkness and exile. That we are the ambassadors of Hashem and a “light” unto the nations, providing a sense of truth and moral clarity to the entire world.

The *sefer* that you are holding right now, is a byproduct of the love and passion that Hashem has given me for the Yom Tov of Chanukah. It is also a byproduct of the tremendous time that my wife, Arielle, allowed for me to work on this. Thank you! Additionally, this *sefer* is a byproduct of the generosity of each sponsor that contributed to making the printing possible. Thank



you! And, dear reader, do not forget about you. Thank you so much for picking this *sefer* up. I genuinely respect you and hope and pray that you enjoy and gain from it.

So, what exactly is this *sefer* about?

Good question. In short, it is about the absolutely fascinating connection between the dove – yes, like the bird – and the Yom Tov of Chanukah. We will see that the linkages between the dove from the Noach story and the Yom Tov of Chanukah are numerous, real, and incredibly inspiring and meaningful. We will reveal how the various aspects of the יונה (dove) are somehow and somehow an antidote to the numerous decrees of the יונים (Greeks) against the Jewish people. Along the way, we will unearth the startling connection between the dove and the Jewish people.

The title, “*Dove Tales*,” is a play on the word “*dovetail*” which besides for meaning “*something resembling a dove’s tail*,” is a transitive verb used to describe something “*fitting skillfully together to form a whole*.” In this *sefer*, we will *Be’ezras Hashem* reveal a confluence of ideas relating to the dove and Chanukah, creating a newfound appreciation for this unique bird, the Yom Tov of Chanukah, and the Jewish people.

I also gave the *sefer* a Hebrew title, וישלח את היונה. These words, וישלח את היונה, found in the Torah in Chapter 8, Passuk 8 of Parshas Noach, are the Torah’s first ever description of the dove, and additionally, marks the very first time Noach sent the



dove from the Teivah in the pursuit of finding dry land after the Flood.¹

Read the last sentence again. No seriously, read it again.

How incredible is it that the very first time the word **יונה** appears in the Torah, of all places, is in the 8th Passuk of the 8th Perek of the Torah! The number **8**, which represents “above nature,” is the number that is most often associated with Chanukah, which is the holiday of the miraculous lights which lasted **8** days!²

In Hebrew, the way to say the number 8 is **שמונה**, which, of course, when you rearrange the letters, spells **נשמה**, a *soul*. The soul is the *part of G-dliness within us*, as the Baal HaTanya famously calls it, it is our **חלק אלוק ממעל ממש**.³ This is the heavenly part of us that is in the realm of 8, **למעלה מן הטבע** – *above nature*. It is also not a coincidence that the same Hebrew letters that make up “8” and “soul” – **שמונה** and **נשמה** – can also be rearranged to spell: **השמן** – *the oil*, a reference to the unique property of oil to a) always rise above other liquids, and b) to fuel the most spiritually physical entity, a flame!

-
1. Take notice that each time the Torah uses the word **יונה** in the story of Noach, it is referred to as **היונה** – *THE dove*, with a ה”א הידיעה, a definite article.
 2. And, of course, it is not a coincidence that it is found in Parshas Noach: The word **נח** forms the first two letters of the word **חנוכה**!
 3. See **תניא (חלק ראשון ליקוטי אמרים ב:א: ונפש השנית בישראל היא חלק אלוק ממעל ממש** – *The second soul of a Jew is a part of G-dliness above, as it is written, “He breathed into his nostrils a soul of life.”*



There are a few stunning aspects of a flame. When you touch the flame to an unlit candle, it does not diminish its own size even though the flame is shared. In addition, when you touch the flame to an already lit candle, both flames merge and grow in their size.

If you think about it, the flame represents spirituality and holiness, *ruchniyus* and *kedusha*. It represents our soul, our נשמה. The soul is actually referred to as a יונה, a dove, as the Zohar Chadash – on the words וישלח את היונה – says that נשמתא, the soul, איקרי יונה, is called a dove!⁴

The Yom Tov of Chanukah is a special time to connect to our inner dove, our inner flame; it is an auspicious time to connect to our soul. When we light each of the 8 candles, fueling them with the oil, our souls feel at peace and right at home.

In *Dove Tales*, we will explore the deeper connection between the dove and the Yom Tov of Chanukah. Along the way, we will learn about the Jewish people and the holiness that resides within each one of us. We will see tremendous depth, nuance, and tremendous meaning.

4. Zohar Chadash (Noach): דלא תיפוק, דלא תליקא, דלא תליקא, דלא תליקא, דלא תליקא, דלא תליקא, דלא תליקא, דלא תליקא – Rabbi Judah said, Come and see, there is not a single night when the soul does not depart from the body of a person, which is called a dove. As it is written, (Genesis 8:8) “And he sent out the dove”.



I invite you to join me as we learn this topic together, and in so doing, we – like the flame – will not diminish in size; on the contrary, we will grow together and become so much bigger.

Together, let us fly and soar along with the epic dove – connecting to our inner dove, our soul – and let us *daven* to Hashem that we too should fulfill our mission, and return with the olive leaf – עלה זית – perched in our mouths, just like the dove from the Noach story.

Wait a second, did he just say an olive leaf?! Yes, he did.

But wait a second, doesn't an olive leaf have everything to do with Chanukah?! I am telling you: This. Is. A. Journey. You. Do. Not. Want. To. Miss.

Welcome to *Dove Tales!*





Chapter 2

THE RETURN OF THE DOVE

It was perhaps one of the most unforgettable moments in the history of the world...

For the past 10 months, the world was filled with a vast darkness because of the torrential floodwaters that had caused the planet to be completely submerged under water. Like a giant *mikvah* – a purifying ritual bath – the world experienced the great Flood, as it needed to become purified and cleansed from its immense level of physical toxicity. All the people of the world were entrenched in a life-style of idolatrous, promiscuous, and spiritually degenerative activities. That is, all except for Noach, a righteous and wholesome person. At the age of 480, he was commanded by Hashem to construct a large boat – a Teivah. For 120 years, Noach tirelessly worked on the Teivah's construction, and in the process, reminded the passersby about the impending Flood, lest they amend their ways. The people of the world, though, did not get the message, and eventually, when Noach



was 600 years old,¹ the water gates burst opened and the Flood covered the entire planet.

Finally, after months and months of destructive forces consuming the world, there was a ray of hope and a sign of the brand-new world. This was the moment – the unforgettable moment – when the *יונה*, *dove*, found the *עלה זית*, *olive leaf*, and brought it back to Noah, thus symbolizing that the waters had receded, and the destructive forces of the Flood were now over.

Of all the creatures – man and animal alike – it was the dove, that was the first one to truly experience and benefit from the newly purified and cleansed world.² The Torah tells us: וַתָּבֵא אֵלָיו – הַיּוֹנָה לְעֵת עֶרֶב וְהָיָה עָלֶיהָ זֵית טָרֵף בְּפִיהָ וַיֵּדַע נֹחַ כִּי־קָלוּ הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ – *The dove returned to him in the evening, and behold! an olive leaf it had plucked with its mouth. And Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth.*³

The dramatic scene and imagery of the dove returning with the olive leaf perched in its mouth is uplifting, inspiring, and even

-
1. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that Noah was 600. The Hebrew word שקר – falsehood – has a gematria of 600. The people of the world were consumed in a lifestyle of שקר, and they were given an opportunity to connect to purity and truth. But they did not. When Noah was 600, and the people still had not fixed their ways, the disastrous Flood destroyed the world, purging the world from its שקר!
 2. Of course, we know, the raven was sent out first, however, it failed to complete its mission, and instead, the dove got the opportunity.
 3. Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 11



heartwarming. We can only imagine the immense joy that Noah and his family were probably experiencing, as they saw the bird – high in the sky – getting closer and closer to the Teivah, with a branch of sorts in its mouth.

With this dramatic scene of the dove and the olive leaf perched in its mouth as our backdrop, let us begin to explore the dove story on a deeper level and begin to unearth its fascinating connection to our lives and the Yom Tov of Chanukah.

We should be asking an interesting and fundamental question – a question that, indeed, the Kli Yakar⁴ asks – and that is, “*Why does the Torah inform us about the timing, of when the dove returned? Why do we need to be taught that the dove returned to Noah לעת ערב, in the evening? Who cares if the dove returned in the evening or the morning?*”

The Torah is clearly trying to tell us something. But what? What is the Torah trying to teach us?

When Hashem told Noah about the different components of the Teivah, He commanded Noah to create a צהר (pronounced: Tzo’har) for the Teivah.⁵ One opinion says that the צהר refers to

4. Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim ben Aaron Luntschitz, who lived from 1550 to 1619, was a great rabbi and Torah commentator, best known for his Torah commentary Kli Yakar on the Torah. He served as the Rabbi of Prague from 1604 to 1619. He was a disciple of Rabbi Shlomo Luria (Maharshal), the famous Talmudist and author of Yam Shel Shlomo.

5. See Parshas Noach, Chapter 6, Passuk 16



a special illuminating stone that provided Noah and his family light in the Teivah. Another opinion says that the צהר refers to an actual window.⁶

According to the opinion that the צהר was a special illuminating stone, the stone is what provided light both during the daytime and nighttime on board the Teivah. However, according to the opinion that the צהר was a window, the light from outside would shine through the window to provide light during the day. But what about the evening? How, according to this opinion, did Noah and his family have light during the evening hours?

The Chizkuni therefore explains that the word צהר is מלשון יצהר – from the terminology meaning *oil* – to tell us that Noah would light שמן, *oil*, during the evening! This, says the Kli Yakar, is the reason why the Torah tells us specifically that the dove came with the olive leaf לעת ערב, *in the evening*. **Because that is when Noah needed the oil, to be able to provide light during the evening hours!**

The Kli Yakar then quotes two Midrashim⁷ on the Passuk עיניך מה היונה הביאה⁸ – *your eyes are like doves* – in Shir Hashirim. – *Just as the dove*

6. Ibid. (see Rashi there)

7. ילקוט שמעוני (פרשת תצוה - שעה) and מדרש תנחומא (ה)

8. Chapter 4, Passuk 1



brought light to the world,⁹ so to you [the Jewish people] will bring olive oil and light candles before Me [Hashem].¹⁰

And how did the Midrash know that the dove “brought light to the world?” The Kli Yakar posits that the Midrash learned it from the mere fact that the Torah highlights the timing – לעת ערב – when the dove brought back the olive leaf; certainly, the fact that the dove brought it *in the evening* was in order to provide light in the Teivah.

We can already begin to see the correlation between the story of the dove and the Yom Tov of Chanukah. The dove, by bringing an *olive leaf in the evening* to Noach,¹¹ “brought light to the world.” Chanukah, of course, is the holiday that celebrates the lighting of the candles in the Bais Hamikdash. Chanukah is the holiday of light for the Jewish people; the holiday in which, during the darkness of the exile and winter, “brings light to the world!”

There is still a lingering question, though. Very nice, the dove brought an olive leaf, which provided light to Noach in the Teivah for *that* evening. But Noach and his family remained in the Teivah for several more weeks, until they were finally told they can leave.

9. By bringing the olive leaf to Noach in the evening, which provided light in the Teivah.

10. In other words, the Kohanim will light the Menorah in the Beis HaMikdash.

11. See ספר אמרי נועם, pg. 30. The author quotes from the ספר עמק הנמר that we know from Seforim that the name נח stands for נר חנוכה, and we know from the להדליק נר חנוכה that the gematria of נח היתה נה is the same as חנוכה!



If the supply of Noah's oil went out, which is why he needed the olive leaf from the dove in the first place, then that additional olive leaf provided by the dove would only be enough fuel for one night! What, then, did Noah do for light in the evening for the remainder of time in the Teivah, after the episode with the dove?

In the Sefer Ginas Vradim from Satmar,¹² a shocking answer is given: עד שנגעשה לו נס מעין נס חנוכה והספיק השמן שיצא מהך עלה זית עד – סוף ימי המבול – *a miracle occurred, like the miracle of Chanukah, and the oil that was produced from that one olive leaf, lasted until the end of the Flood!* Thus, Noah was able to produce light on board the Teivah every single night, until they finally departed the Teivah. We see how long before the story of Chanukah took place, there was already a miracle of oil which lasted many days!

And if that is not incredible enough, the Sefer Ginas Vradim points out further that the numerical value (gematria) of עלה¹³ 523 – זית – is the exact same as נס של חנוכה, alluding to the fact that the root of the miracle of Chanukah came from this very olive leaf that the dove brought to Noah!¹⁴

Some go so far to suggest¹⁵ that the oil produced from that זית עלה was so special and powerful, it was passed down for

12. See בשם יחזקאל (קובץ גינת ורדים), pg. 264 (quoting from יחזקאל)

13. עם הכולל (a type of gematria that includes the word as an additional 1)

14. Ibid.

15. See ספר אורי וישעי (סימן יב), ספר נחלת יעקב (מאמר מצות זקנים), pg. 239. See also שם זה הוא שנתגלגל ובה לידי החשמונאים, והוא היה חתום בחותמו של שם בן נח: 219: pg.



generations, and **it was this oil produced by the dove's olive leaf which had the seal of the Kohen Gadol at the time of the Chashmonaim in the Chanukah story!**¹⁶

If you think about it, another fascinating idea emerges, showing yet an additional connection to Chanukah. When is the time for lighting Chanukah candles? That is right, לעת ערב – *in the evening!*

Rabbi Avraham Tzvi Kluger *shlit"l*¹⁷ points out that when the Torah says that the dove returned *in the evening*, it is an allusion to the זמן הדלקה – *the time of lighting* – of the Chanukah candles!¹⁸

Rav Kluger points out¹⁹ that the Yom Tov of Chanukah is mentioned **ONLY ONE TIME** in the Zohar.²⁰ The Tikkunei Zohar says that **the Sefira of הוד (Hod) are the 8 days of Chanukah:**

שהיה כהן גדול, וכדכתיב "והוא כהן לאל עליון". והיה אותיות החותם אשר לו, כשמו: שם, שם מאותיות "שמן" והאות "ן" רומז לשם אביו נח.

16. The Midrash (see מדרש רבה ויקרא לא"י and מדרש רבה שיר השירים א:טו) tells us an opinion (Rabbi Brechia) that the dove retrieved the olive branch from Gan Eden. Accordingly, it would perhaps make sense that the olive leaf had a special – other worldly and miraculous – nature, thus allowing it to last for a long time! Afterall, it came from Gan Eden!
17. Known as the Nezer Yisroel, Rav Kluger is the Rav of Beis Midrash Nezer Yisroel in Ramat Bet Shemesh and one of today's leading teachers of *chassidus*, known for his fusion of Chabad and Breslov principles.
18. See בזוה יובן גם מה שהתורה מדגישה: ספר נר לרגלי (יסודות בעבודת ימי חנוכה) pg. 44: "לעת ערב" שאז הוא ממש הזמן של הדלקת נר חנוכה, לא ביום ולא בלילה שהיונה הגיעה דיקא "לעת ערב" (בבחי' קליפת נגה, עירוב טוב ורע, אור בחושך, יום בלילה) אלא דיקא לעת ערב (בבחי' קליפת נגה, עירוב טוב ורע, אור בחושך, יום בלילה).
19. ספר נר לרגלי (מאמר ז) pg. 41
20. Not in the main body work called Zohar, rather, it is found in the Tikkunei Zohar, in Tikkun 13.



And – ואיהו הוד תמניא יומי חנוכה לארבעה ועשרין יומין דאינון בשכמל"ו
Hod is the 8 days of the Yom Tov of Chanukah, after twenty-four
days of Kislev, which are the 24 letters of: 'Blessed is the Name of the
glory of His Kingdom for ever and ever'.

Immediately, the Tikkunei Zohar then references the story of the dove and the olive leaf in its mouth. He writes: ומיד דעלה זית וטריף בפיה שריא כ"ה על ישראל בכ"ה בכסלו ואלין אינון כ"ה אתוון דיחודא – *And immediately when "it had torn-off an olive leaf in its mouth," the כ"ה resides upon the Jewish people on the 25th of Kislev, and these are the 25 letters of unity, which are "Shema Yisroel..." And this is Chanukah, composed of חנו and כ"ה.*

To understand the deeper meaning of the Tikkunei Zohar, I recommend that you reach out to your local Kabbalist, or a Rav that has an understanding of these deep concepts. I certainly cannot even begin to explain these esoteric ideas, which are well beyond my understanding.²¹ However, what we do see quite clearly from this Zohar is that the secret of Chanukah somehow lies in the story of the dove and the olive leaf!²²

21. In the section "Hakaras HaTov," we will discuss a possible connection between the aspect of Hod, the story of the dove, and the Yom Tov of Chanukah.

22. Another allusion to Chanukah is in the word כף, when the dove was searching for a place (8:9) לכף רגלה. The word כף when rearranged spells פך, an allusion to the פך שמן oil, *jug of oil* (brought in חנוכה, טפר מאמרי חנוכה, pg. 56).



In the explanatory commentary of the Vilna Gaon on the Tikkunei Zohar,²³ he says that the עלה זית, olive leaf, is indeed a reference to שמן דנרות חנוכה – *the oil of the Chanukah candles!*

My friends, I hope you are beginning to see that the connection between the dove and Chanukah is not a cute, out-of-the-box, eccentric, and outlandish idea. I hope you are starting to appreciate the incredible relationship between the two, a relationship that, as we have seen, is mentioned in *kabbalistic*, *chassidish*, and even *litvish* sources!

In the next chapters, we will continue our journey and discover more unbelievable associations between the dove and the Yom Tov of Chanukah!



23. See תקונא תליסר): ומיד דעלה זית כו'. רוצה 13 Tikkun, ספר תקוני זהר to ביאור הגר"א לומר שמן דנרות חנוכה



Chapter 3

DAYS OF HAPPINESS AND THE DOVE

When the Rambam discusses the Halachos of Chanukah,¹ he refers to it as ימי שמחה – *days of happiness*. If the Rambam writes something, we need to appreciate the depth of what he is saying. His words are not meant to be taken lightly. If he writes that Chanukah are days of שמחה, we better find out more about the happiness associated with the Yom Tov of Chanukah.

Enemies and antagonists are interesting characters. Think about it. They fight against us, they hate us, and hurt us. But they can also reveal to us certain positive aspects about ourselves that perhaps we may have overlooked. If an enemy attacks a particular good trait, what does that tell us about that trait? Let us take humility, for example. Say you have an “enemy” that constantly makes fun of you, calls you names, and embarrasses you in public for being so humble. Does that mean that the trait of humility is bad and what to be ashamed of? Of course not. It means that there is something extra special about that trait and you should

1. See משנה תורה (הלכות מגילה וחנוכה), Chapter 3, Halacha 3



double down to continue acting with humility. If it is being attacked, it is certainly for a reason. It is because the “enemy” sees it as different from them, as a threat to their way of living.

When we think about the enemies and antagonists of the Chanukah story, the Greeks, it is important that we focus on the things they were trying to take away from us. If our enemies hated us for certain practices, then clearly those practices are worth practicing! If our enemies fought against specific days on our calendar, then certainly it would be in our best interest to double down and appreciate those days even more. You see, because our enemies and their fight against us, can reveal the greatness and specialness of what it is we have! I am going to write this last sentence again: *our enemies and their fight against us, can reveal the greatness and specialness of what it is we have!*

While there were many decrees issued by the Greeks, the three major decrees were to prohibit the observance of Shabbos, Bris Milah (circumcision), and Kiddush Hachodesh (sanctification of the new month).

Shabbos is our day of rest, a day to contemplate our mission on this world, and to focus on our Creator. By abstaining from creative laborious activities, we can properly think about our lives, connect to our families and communities, and ultimately reignite our loving relationship with Hashem.

Bris Milah is the mark of a Jew. The body – at 8 days old – is adjusted and tweaked, thus representing man’s ability to transcend his natural and physical lusts and instincts, to control



and elevate them. Furthermore, the Bris Milah is a physical sign that a Jew is a servant of His Master, a constant reminder that he must not rebel and go free.²

Kiddush Hachodesh (i.e., Rosh Chodesh), the first commandment given to the Jewish people as a Nation, is a reminder of our role of influencing even the spiritual process of the world. Man's input – through the power of Sanhedrin – influences the Jewish calendar, impacting when the Yomim Tovim will fall out.

The Greeks could not tolerate any of these. *You want to rest because Your Creator rested? There is no Creator, anyways! You want to have time off from work for an entire day to think about life? No way, life is about working and doing as much and as fast as you possibly can! You want to change your physical body? No way, the entire purpose of life is to honor and reward the physical body! You want to impact the calendar? No way, the calendar is set in stone, much like the rising and setting of the sun; it cannot be changed, enhanced, or impacted in any way.*

The Greeks, therefore, made these decrees in the pursuit of Hellenizing the Jewish people and making them see the world as they saw it.

2. See Sefer Chareidim (9:44): של שיעלה האדם כל יום על לבו שהוא עבד חתום למלכו של עולם ולא ימרוד בו ויחזיק עצמו לבן חורין



Remember, though, if the enemies are trying to take something away from us, there must be something that they saw or sensed in us that made them want to do so. They must have felt uneasy and threatened by the lifestyle of the Jewish people.

Think about it. The Greeks were invested big time in a lifestyle of constant physical interaction. They were seeped in the external parts of the world. But were they happy? Did they feel good after each day, week, month, and year? The answer is a resounding no.

The Jewish people, on the other hand, were living with a sense of content and purpose. They seemed to be enjoying themselves. But how could that be? How is that even possible? The Jewish lifestyle – of connection to Hashem through Torah study, Mitzvah observance, and *tefillah* – was shocking to the Greeks because they saw a people that were happy, while they themselves were busy being stuck in a spiraling state of misery.

Our Jewish life made the Greeks feel uneasy; it was the most threatening thing to them. So, what did they decide to do? They decided to create decrees in order to abolish the happiness of the Jewish people.

The Seforim point out that the *Roshei Teivos* (first letters) of the three decrees – שבת, מילה, and חודש – spells שמחה: *happiness*.

The reason why the Greeks attacked the Jewish people with these decrees was to get rid of the שמחה, the happiness, of the Jewish people! How could they occupy themselves with spirituality and be happy, while we are not happy with our pursuit of the physical?! *It is not fair!*



What does all of this tell us? It tells us that *our* lifestyle is a breeding ground for שמחה, genuine happiness. The Greeks reminded us to appreciate Shabbos, Bris Milah, and Rosh Chodesh even more. They reminded us – through hating on us – that what we have is indeed special and unique. They reminded us – through fighting with us – that the Torah and Mitzvos that we have can and should instill within us great joy and happiness.

The days of Chanukah, in the words of the Rambam, are ימי שמחה – *days of happiness*. When we light the Chanukah candles in the evening, and the small light brightens up the darkness of the surrounding area, it reminds us that our simple “light” outshines the vast darkness of the Greeks. Our lifestyle of connecting to Hashem and infusing the physical with spirituality, is the way towards a life of meaning, happiness, and contentment.

The characteristics of the dove, ironically, correspond to each of the three decrees.

The Greeks decreed against Shabbos, the יום מנוחה, *day of rest*. There is a strong connection between Shabbos and the dove. When Noach sent out the dove, its mission was to find מנוחה, *rest*.³ Incredibly, the seventh day – when the dove was sent out – was none other than Shabbos! In fact, Rabbi Yaakov Emden ז”ל,

3. See Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 9: ולא מצאה היונה מנוח – “*But the dove could not find a resting place...*” It seems from Rashi there that if the dove had found a resting place, it would not have returned to Noach. We see that the mission of the dove was to find מנוחה!



known as the Yaavetz,⁴ says that the dove “kept” Shabbos by not plucking off the olive leaf during the day. The Torah tells us⁵ that it returned לעת ערב, *in the evening*, to teach us that the dove “kept” Shabbos and did not pluck off the olive leaf on Shabbos, rather, it waited until Motzai Shabbos!⁶

The Greeks also decreed against Bris Milah, which is the mark of loyalty of the Jew to His Master. The dove is known to be especially loyal to its mate, as the Midrash⁷ teaches: *Just like a dove, once she meets her mate never leaves him for another, so are the Jewish people faithful to Hashem.*

And finally, the Greeks decreed against Rosh Chodesh, to take away the power of Sanhedrin. The word יונה has the numerical value of 71, which is the amount of people who sat on the Great Assembly of Sanhedrin! Even more, the Midrash⁸ compares the dove to Sanhedrin, as it says: עיניך יונים – *your eyes are like doves*. Incredibly, the Midrash⁹ relates another connection between the

4. See ספר שערי אהרן (I saw this quoted in the ספר מגדול עוז (בית מדות עליות הטבע) pg. 516-517)

5. Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 11

6. Rabbi Yaakov Reischer zt”l, author of the ספר עין יעקב on the עין יעקב, writes (סוטה לח: ד”ה מכירין...): שמע מחכם אחד שמקובל שבני יונה מכירין התבואה שנקצרה בשבת ואין אוכלין ממנה – *he heard from a great person that it is known that doves are able to recognize food that was plucked on Shabbos, and they avoid eating it!*

7. See מדרש רבה שיר השירים (ו)

8. See מדרש תנחומא (תצוה ו)

9. See מדרש רבה שיר השירים (א:טו:ב)



dove and Rosh Chodesh: כך, מה יונה זו מחדשת בכל חדש וחדש גרן, – *Just as each month, the dove renews the product of its cote, so too, each month, the Jewish people renew their Torah and good deeds.*

We see that each decree of the Greeks is somehow correlated to a positive aspect of the dove. And if we take this a step further, understanding that the purpose of the three decrees was to get rid of the שמחה of the Jewish people, we will also learn that the dove is directly connected to the notion of שמחה, *happiness*.

When we think about the dove, we are reminded about a bird that brought light to the world. The Sefer Maskil L'Dovid points out, though, that not only did the dove bring light to the world, but through bringing light, it also brought tremendous *happiness* to Noah. In his words: והנה יונה הביאה שמחה בלבו – *the dove brought happiness to the heart of Noah*.¹⁰

We see that the dove is associated with שמחה because it provided happiness to Noah. But what about the dove itself? Do we find that the dove conducts itself with happiness? Does the dove itself experience its own happiness?

Incredibly, I came across a *sefer* called Sefer Imrei Eliyahu, where the author brings a Midrash¹¹ which teaches how the word הנה – *behold!* – is a לשון שמחה – *a terminology for happiness*. The

10. See (מאמר לח) ספר משכיל לדוד, pg. 265

11. Yalkut Shimoni, beginning of Parshas Ki Savo



author says that this could very well be the understanding of the word והנה in the Passuk regarding the dove. When describing the dove returning to Noah with an olive leaf in its mouth, the Torah says: והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה – **and behold**, *an olive leaf was perched in its mouth!* The word והנה – **and behold!** – is a terminology used to describe something in a state of שמחה, *happiness*. In this case, it is describing the **happiness of the dove**, for having been fed by the hand of Hashem!

How incredible is this? We see that not only did the dove provide happiness to Noah, but it even experienced its own level of happiness when bringing the olive leaf. We see that the dove is a happy bird!

We already mentioned earlier in this *sefer* just how connected the olive leaf is with the Yom Tov of Chanukah, as it was through the oil produced by that olive leaf that Noah was able to light candles and produce light, which was essentially the first “Chanukah miracle,” even before Chanukah was even a thought.

It is incredible, then, that we are specifically taught והנה – that the dove experienced *happiness* in the bringing of the olive leaf.

You see, it all makes sense. We, the Jewish people, who are analogous to the dove, are meant to do the same when we bring our olive leaf. When we light the Chanukah candles, we are meant to be reminded of the happy dove. We are meant to feel a sense of pride and happiness at this opportunity to be a provider of light to our homes, families, and the world.



My friends, I think we now understand why the Rambam refers to Chanukah as ימי שמחה, days of happiness. We are meant to think about the decrees of the Greeks which were meant to take away this excitement and happiness from our lives. And we are meant to double down and realize how amazing and special these opportunities truly are. Upon doing so, we – like the dove – will live a passionate Jewish life of meaning, purpose, and genuine happiness.





Chapter 4

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RAVEN AND THE DOVE

On some level, the difference between the journey of the raven and the dove, can shed light on the difference between the worldview of the Greeks and the Jews. As we go through these differences, we will discover a powerful lesson as it relates to the Yom Tov of Chanukah and our lives.

The first bird that Noach sent out of the Teivah was the עורב, *the raven*. According to the Radak, the raven that was sent was a “black raven,” a type of vulture (*corvus cornix*).¹ The Torah tells us: ויצא יצוא ושוב – it refused to go on its mission and just circled the Teivah until the waters eventually dried up off the earth.² The raven did not bring anything back to Noach. In the words of Chazal: לא הלק בשליחותו – *it did not go on its mission*.³

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1. See Radak to Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 7, and see English translation from Rabbi Eliyahu Munk.
 2. See Rashi to Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 7
 3. See Rashi to Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 7. See also Sanhedrin 108b.



Seven days after sending the raven, Noah sent out the *יונה*, the dove. According to the Malbim, the dove that was sent was of the species known as the “messenger pigeon,” and while there are about 70 known species of doves, only this one travels fast and covers long distances.⁴

It too returned with nothing, not because it was afraid of the cold or heat – like the raven⁵ – but because the waters were still covering the earth. After waiting another seven days, Noah sent out the dove yet again, and this time, it returned with the famous *עלה זית*, olive leaf, in its mouth. The dove, a bird that tends to return to its master,⁶ completed its mission and returned to Noah.

About the raven, we are taught that it was the only animal that had relations in the Teivah.⁷ About the raven, we are taught

4. See Malbim's *ספר הכרמל* (look under *תור/יונה*). See also Malbim to Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 8 (English version, pg. 384-385). He states further that: *It is about this bird that Scripture (Psalms 55:7) states: "Oh, that I had wings like a dove, for I would then fly away." And concerning the same bird, the Talmud Yerushalmi said: Which dove is it that flies with one wing and rests with the other?... It was this bird therefore which was suitable for the purpose of determining whether the waters had eased.*

5. See Sanhedrin 108b – *אם פוגע בי שר חמה או שר צנה לא נמצא עולם חסר בריה אחת* – *ספר אזנים לתורה*, pg. 64 (Noach 8:7)

6. Radak points out regarding the dove: *כי יש בה טבע תשובה כלומר לשוב אל קנה* (See *ספר שערי אהרן*, pg. 82)

7. Besides for the dog and Cham, which according to the Gemarah (see Sanhedrin 108b), also had relations in the Teivah.



that it was stingy and cruel, even to its own offspring.⁸ About the raven, we are taught that it feeds off dead animals,⁹ and does not work hard to sustain itself.¹⁰ About the raven, we are taught that it was afraid to leave the Teivah because it was worried that Noah would have relations with its mate.

It is remarkable to think about the similarities between the Greeks and the raven bird. Chazal tell us that the Greeks tried to “darken the eyes” of the Jewish people, as the Midrash relates how the first time the word חושך – *darkness* – appears in the Torah, it is an allusion to the Greeks.¹¹ The raven bird is known to be very black. In fact, Rav Zalman Sorotzkin zt”l,¹² in his *Sefer Oznayim L’Torah*,¹³ says that the reason Noah first chose the raven – of all birds – was because he wanted to see which direction it flew,

8. See Rashi in Eiruvim 22b. The raven is called אכזרי – *cruel one*.

9. See Radak to Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 7: העורב אוכל בשר וימצא נבלות: האדם והבהמה

10. See תם סופר: דדרכו (Parshas Noach, pg. 44), in the name of של העורב הוא לנצל את עבודתם של אחרים ולהשתמש מלעמול למחיתו

11. See מדרש רבה בראשית (2:4): וחשך זה גלות יון שהחשיכה עיניהם של ישראל בגזירותיהן, שהיתה אומרת להם, כתבו על קרן השור שאין לכם חלק באלקי ישראל

12. Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin zt”l, also known as the Lutzker Rav, lived from 1881-1966. He was one of the stellar Jewish personalities in pre-war Poland and post-war Israel. He served as the Rav of Lutsk, Ukraine, headed the Vaad HaYeshivos, and was a close confidant of Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski.

13. See ספר אזנים לתורה pg. 66. He says further: ומצאנו סמוכים לרעיון זה מזה שדרשו: חז”ל על שליחות זו את הפסוק: שלח חשך ויחשיך (תהלים ק”ה), הרי שנח בחר בעורב מפני (שחרותו המופלגת, וכן נאמר: שחורות כעורב (שיר השירים ה’)



and the easiest bird to detect in the sky is the raven bird due to its dark black color!¹⁴

If you think about it, the philosophy of the Greeks and the type of lifestyle in which they promote is¹⁵ one of *ויצא יצוא ושוב* – *constant, perpetual going and returning* – just like the raven. They live a life of seeking comfort after comfort, and pleasure after pleasure, which ultimately lends itself to an overall unhappy life; a life of never really living in the moment, of never really being present and feeling a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

In this lifestyle of perpetual movement *to and fro*, remaining in the “rat race” of society, the viewpoint of the world changes from “amazing, opportunistic, and beautiful” to “threatening, intimidating and aggressive.” If a person is brain-washed with a raven and Greek worldview, then “*the world is threatening*,” “*out to get me*,” and as such, “*I need to find a way to stay on top and survive*.” In this mindset, survival of the fittest becomes of utmost importance and value. In this philosophy, a person chases comfort, pleasure, and does not experience content, as he is always worrying about his fleeting present and unknown future. The more is not merrier; the more is actually scarier!

14. The dark black color of the bird against the backdrop of the light blue sky would make the bird easy to locate and detect.

15. Notice that I am using the present tense to describe the Greeks, since their culture and lifestyle is still very relevant and impacting us today!



The dove is very different than the raven. About the dove, we are taught that it is dependable and loyal to its mate and to its master.¹⁶ About the dove, we are taught that even when it gets tired, it somehow finds a way to muster up the strength to continue flying, albeit with one wing.¹⁷ About the dove, we are taught that it is willing to work hard to accomplish its mission.¹⁸ About the dove, we are taught that it wanted a life of מנוחה, rest and content.¹⁹

The dove was seeking a life of focus, accomplishment, and contentment. The Jewish people are נמשל ליונה – compared to

16. See (ו) השירים: *Just like a dove, once she meets her mate never leaves him for another...just as a dove whose fledglings are taken from her nest still does not abandon her nest...so are the Jewish people faithful to Hashem.*

17. See Tosfos in Shabbos 49a, quoting a Midrash: *Because all other birds, when they are weary, they rest on a stone or on a tree. But a dove, when it flies and grows weary, it folds one of its wings and flies with the other wing.*

18. See for example Bechor Shor/Chizkuni/Daas Zekeinim/Kitzur Baal HaTurim to Parshas Noach 8:11, who highlight the fact that the dove ripped the branch from the tree, and did not merely pluck it from the surface of the water! See also (ו) תורת מהרי"ץ: *ספר ליקוטי אליהו (פניני הפרשה לפרשת נח עמ' 1) על ותבא אליו היונה לעת ערב והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה... – יש לפרש הכוונה, כי שמן הזית בא על ידי טורח. שצריך לכתוש הזיתים בבית הברד שיצא משמנם, אבל הדבש, אינו צריך תיקון וטרחה, אלא רק לרדות הדבש מהכוורת, ומכל מקום אמרה היונה, גם אם פרנסתי תהיה על ידי טורח ועמל כשמן זית, ועל ידי בשר ודם יהיו מתוקים וקלים כדבש, בלי שום טירחה, בכל זאת, עדיף שיהיו מרווים כזית, והעיקר שיהיו מידו של הקדוש ברוך הוא.*

19. Some commentaries point out that from the fact that the dove could not find rest (Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 9) – ולא מצאה היונה מנוח – shows that the goal of the dove is to find rest.



the dove²⁰ – and not the raven. Our job, like the dove, is to find *מנוחה*, *content*, in our life's journey and mission. Our job, like the dove, is to remain loyal and dedicated to the people in our lives and to our spiritual goals and dreams. Our job, like the dove, is to work hard and find a way to fly to lofty places. For that is where *מנוחה*, *content*, exists. Our goal is to be happy with what we have and to live in the moment, realizing that the greatest gift is the ability to be present.²¹

On Chanukah, when we light the holy Menorah, there is a beautiful and important Halacha. That is, when the flame of the *shamash* candle touches the wick, we must hold it slowly and steadily, in place, until the wick lights on its own and catches the flame.²²

20. See Shabbos 49a: משום דאמתיל כנסת ישראל ליונה

21. Yes, pun intended!

22. See for example ילקוט יוסף עמ' שעז: המדליק נרות חנוכה צריך להדליק את רוב היוצא מן הפתילה, עד שתהא השלהבת עולה מאליה, ולא יסלק ידו מההדלקה עד אשר ידליק רוב הפתילה היוצאת.

While this Halacha is brought down across the board for Hilchos Shabbos (see Orach Chaim Siman 264: Seif 8), there seems to be a debate if this applies to Hilchos Chanukah. It definitely is a good practice to follow the opinion who holds that this lighting procedure applies to Chanukah as well.



There is a profound message here. When it comes to lighting the flames of the Menorah, it cannot be done quickly and nonchalantly. It will not work. Instead, we are required to be present, to be in the moment. To hold the flame of the *shamash* to the wick, and just let it be. Let it catch. Let it ignite.





Chapter 5

THE POSITIVE OUTLOOK OF THE DOVE

Avraham Avinu was called *the Ivri* – העברי – since he lived on the “*other side*.” He is referred to as the first Jew to ever live. In a world filled with so much darkness, negativity, and idolatry, Avraham Avinu – despite growing up amidst all of it – was able to see beyond the external façade, and he was able to notice that there was a Creator. He discovered *monotheism* on his own.

In contrast to everybody else who was on one side, he realized that the grass was greener on *the other side*. No, not the physical grass. Physical grass is not usually greener on the other side; it just falsely appears to be like that. Rather, the spiritual grass was greener on the other side. And it was there, regarding the other side, that Avraham Avinu said, “*I am going to plant my life over there!*” He chose a life of holiness, purity, spirituality, and meaning. He chose the spiritually greener pasture on the other side.

Avraham Avinu looked at the world and saw a בירה אחת דולקת *– a palace that was burning.*¹ Many commentaries understand the

1. See Midrash Rabbah Bereishis 39:1



word דולקת with a negative connotation referring to destructive flames. Namely, that the palace – that is, the world – was being consumed by so much idolatry and negativity.

There is, however, another way to understand the word דולקת. It can mean ignited and lit up! Avraham Avinu saw the world of Hashem as a בירה אחת דולקת – a palace that was burning with holiness and aflame with spirituality, positivity, and meaning! Whereas the people of the world saw the world engulfed in flames of impurity, idolatry, and negativity, Avraham Avinu was able to put on lenses of hope and positivity. He saw the world of Hashem in the realm of דולקת, on fire and lit up with holiness and goodness!

Everything – all of physicality – has sparks of holiness, an element of אלקות, *G-dliness*. It is up to us, to be like the first Jew – Avraham Avinu – and find it!

I was thinking about this positive perspective of Avraham Avinu and how he saw the world as spiritually *on fire*, and it occurred to me that perhaps this is one way in which we can understand the incredible actions and outlook of the יונה, *the dove*.

The Torah tells us that when the dove returned from its mission, it had an עלה זית – an olive leaf – in its mouth.² The Midrash³ offers two explanations as to where the dove found the

2. Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 11

3. See מדרש רבה בראשית (לגו):



olive leaf: 1) It was found in the Garden of Eden, beyond the Flood's reach, or 2) It was found in the Land of Eretz Yisroel, which was unaffected by the Flood.

Of all types of produce, it was specifically the olive leaf which the dove found and brought to Noach. The Midrash⁴ picks up on the fact that the dove found an olive leaf, and tells us, "*The dove brought light to the world!*" After all, the connection between an olive leaf and אורה – *light* – is quite apparent, since we know that olive oil is used as fuel to light a flame!

I would like to sit on this concept – that *the dove brought light to the world* – for a moment. Think about it. We can suggest that the dove brought light to the world and specifically found an olive leaf because that is what it was looking for; it was looking for the light on this world. It was looking for a spark of positivity and goodness.

For an entire year, the world was filled with darkness. Most of the world's inhabitants were wiped away. And the world was being given a restart, a refresh, a complete facelift. When the raven, the first bird to be sent out of the Teivah, was set free, it flew around and saw a dark world. It saw pain and suffering. It saw the past of what was. It saw the Floodwaters still seeped into the planet and flew back to the Teivah, seeking comfort and protection.

4. See שמועוני על התורה (שע"ה"ו): והנה עלה זית אמר ליה הקב"ה מה היונה הביאה האורה לעולם



The dove, however, saw the world completely differently. It did not focus on the negative past; rather, it focused on the potential future. Of all things, it found a small olive leaf, something that has the potential to fuel a flame. It found a little bit of “light” amidst a backdrop of so much darkness.

Just as Avraham Avinu perceived the world through an outlook of hope, optimism, and positivity, so too the dove was able to tap into this perspective.⁵ It focused on the present and future, and not on the negative past. It focused on what *is* and what *could be*, instead of on what *was*.

The world is a בירה אחת דולקת – a beautiful palace that is ***on fire with holiness***. When we light the Chanukah candles, we should think about the first Jew, Avraham Avinu, and be reminded of his ability to see the world on fire and lit up with holiness. But perhaps there is something else that we should think about for this inspiration. That is, the dove.

We should think about the dove, the first creation since the Flood to bring a message of hope and optimism to the world. We should think about the dove who found an olive leaf and “*brought light to the world*,” and we should be inspired to do the same in our own lives. Whereas the raven saw a destroyed world, the dove saw a world of possibilities. It was able to focus on the goodness

5. Or stated differently, perhaps Avraham Avinu tapped into this positive perspective of the dove, which lived before Avraham Avinu appeared in the Torah!



and potential that rested in the olive leaf, and upon bringing it back to Noah, it merited bringing so much more than just an olive leaf; it merited bringing *“light to the world!”*

As we close this chapter, I would like to share with you, dear reader, a beautiful anecdote about four candles that is very relevant to this discussion:

Once upon a time there were four candles burning in a room and they started talking to each other. The first candle said, *“Hi, I am Peace. But at the present time, there is chaos and robbery everywhere, and it seems like the world does not want me anymore. I am sorry, I cannot stay here.”* Just like that, Peace extinguished himself and left the world.

The second candle said, *“Hi, I am Trust. Today, the world is filled with lies and deceit, and it seems like the world does not want me anymore. I am sorry, I cannot stay here.”* Just like that, Trust extinguished himself and left the world.

The Third candle said, *“Hi, I am Love. Today, everyone is so busy doing their own thing, no one has time for me anymore. People are even forgetting to love their loved ones. I am sorry, I cannot stay here.”* Just like that, Love extinguished himself and left the world.

A little boy entered the room and upon noticing the three extinguished candles, he exclaimed, *“Candles! Why didn’t you burn until the end? How can you leave like this!?”*

At that moment, the fourth candle chimed in and said, *“Dear child, do not be sad. I am Hope, and guess what? While I am still burning, you can relight the rest of the candles again.”*



The child's eyes lit up and his energy was revitalized. He took the candle of Hope and slowly began to relight the candles of Peace, Trust, and Love.

One of the deepest messages of Chanukah – a message that was taught to us by Avraham Avinu and the dove – is that even though we may live in a dark exile filled with so much chaos, negativity, and impurity, there is STILL HOPE. The candles of Chanukah remind us that there remains a ray of hope and a beacon of light. Our job, our responsibility, and our mission to be a “light” unto the nations, is to live by this example.

If we train ourselves to look for goodness and positivity, then we will certainly find goodness and positivity. The world is, at its core, filled with so much beauty, depth, nuance, meaning, goodness, and positivity. When we light the Chanukah candles, let us be reminded of the world that is, a בירה אחת דולקת, a wonderful place on fire with spiritual meaning and purpose.





Chapter 6

THE SECRET OF HOD AND HAKARAS HATOV OF THE DOVE

In the chapter “*Return of the Dove*” we mentioned that the Tikkunei Zohar 13 is the only place in all of Zohar that discusses the Yom Tov of Chanukah. Let us now revisit this Zohar, and perhaps we can tap into a possible connection between the aspect of הוד (Hod), the dove, and Chanukah.

The Tikkunei Zohar explains that with the Sefira of Hod, which is the 8th of the 10 *Sefiros*,¹ Moshe Rabbeinu sang שירה (song) to Hashem. That is why the Torah says אז ישיר. The numerical value of אז is 8. Because of הוד, Moshe gave שירה.² Then the Tikkunei Zohar says that **this Sefira of הוד are the 8 days of Chanukah!**³

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1. The 10 Sefiros are as follows: חכמה (wisdom), בינה (understanding), דעת (knowledge), חסד (kindness), גבורה (strength), תפארת (beauty), נצח (victory), הוד (splendor), יסוד (foundation), and מלכות (kingship).
 2. This also corresponds to the 8th day of ברית מילה.
 3. Rabbi Chaim Friedlander ז”ל explains that the הנהגה of הוד is intertwined and comes to expression and fruition on Chanukah (as heard by Rabbi Daniel Glatstein shlit”a in a video shiur).



He writes:⁴ ואיהו הוד תמניא יומי דחנוכה לארבעה ועשרין יומין דאינון בשכמל"ו – **And Hod is the 8 days of the Yom Tov of Chanukah, after twenty-four days of Kislev, which are the 24 letters of:** ‘Blessed is the Name of the glory of His Kingdom for ever and ever’.

Immediately, the Tikkunei Zohar then references the story of the dove and the olive leaf in its mouth. He writes: זית דעלה כ"ה טרף בפיה שריא כ"ה על ישראל בכ"ה בכסלו ואלין אינון כ"ה אתוון דיחודא – *And immediately when “it had torn-off an olive leaf in its mouth,” the כ"ה resides upon the Jewish people on the 25th of Kislev, and these are the 25 letters of unity, which are “Shema Yisroel...” And this is Chanukah, composed of חנו and כ"ה.*

Clearly, there is a connection between Chanukah, the aspect of Hod,⁵ and the dove. In this chapter we will delve into the meaning of Hod, and uncover a fundamental understanding about the Yom Tov of Chanukah. In the process, we will see how the entire episode of the dove fits right in.

The Malbim⁶ explains that there are two types of beauties, הדר (Hadar) and הוד (Hod). *Hadar* is defined as יופי החיצוני, *external*

4. Tikkun 13:29a

5. In this section, we will see how הוד and הודאה (gratitude) are interlinked as well.

6. I heard this Malbim quoted by Rabbi Daniel Glatstein shlita, in a video *shiur*, called: *Chanukah: The Tikkunei Zohar and the Middah of Hod – Realizing There Is No Nature*



beauty. This refers to objectively beautiful things that are revealed and detected by the human eye.⁷ An esrog, for example is called a פרי עץ הדר, due to its shape, symmetry, bumps, and other external beautifying features. Included in the realm of *Hadar* would be outward qualities as well, such as power, wealth, and even age. In short, *Hadar* is an appreciation for a display of external beauty.

A level deeper than *Hadar* is what we call *Hod*. *Hod* is defined as יופי הפנימי, *internal beauty*. This refers to soul qualities; that which is intrinsic to the item.⁸ That which is *Hod* is not necessarily revealed to the outside. Whereas *Hadar* is revealed beauty, *Hod* is concealed beauty. Whereas *Hadar* looks beautiful, *Hod is* beautiful.

I heard Rabbi Daniel Glatstein *shlit"א*⁹ explain these concepts a bit more in detail. Hashem operates the world on two planes. These two dimensions of the world in which we live, are *Hadar* and *Hod*. The *Hadar* of the world is nature; these are the outward external phenomena with which the world operates.¹⁰ The *Hod* of the world is the internal mechanism, the hidden and concealed aspect of what is truly happening. We sometimes get caught up in the façade of the external *Hadar* of the world, and in doing so, we lose focus on what is really happening behind the scenes; namely, that Hashem is running the show.

7. Such as: shape, appearance, texture, and so on.

8. Such as: good *middos* character traits, and so on.

9. Rav of Kehilas Tiferes Mordechai, and head of Machon Maggid Harakiah

10. Such as: the ecosystem, the water-cycle, respiration, digestion, and so on.



The Greeks lived a life of *Hadar*, of outward and external focus. If something was beautiful, strong, and objectively attractive, then that was considered valuable. If something was measurable, detectable, and calculable, then that held weight, validity, and importance. This is why sports and art were idolized. The concept of the Olympics was introduced by none other than the Greeks. Whoever is the best, the fastest, and the strongest stands on a higher ground than everyone else.

This attitude and way of life is completely antithetical to Judaism and how we perceive the world, which is precisely why the Greeks instituted harsh decrees against the Jewish people.

On Chanukah, in the paragraph of *Bimei Matisyahu* (that we recite in *Shemoneh Esrei* and *Bentching*), we mention how the Greeks wanted the Jewish people to forget the Torah – להשכיחם תורתך. However, if we read these words a bit more carefully, we will see that it was not the Torah per se which they were against, rather it was תורתך – **YOUR Torah** – that was the problem. The Greeks valued information, knowledge, and additional texts. However, they could not understand that it was YOUR Torah, belonging to Hashem.

“Who is Hashem?” they thought. *Can you point to Him? Can you prove His existence? Can you detect and measure Him?* According to the Greek worldview, you could not. Because all they were focused on was *Hadar*, external beauty. What you see is what you get, and that is it.



The Jewish people, on the other hand, believe in a completely different worldview. Of course, there is nature and external beauty that exists. Of course, *Hadar* is a real thing. But it is not the full picture. There is something called *Hod*. There is something internal, that is concealed and hidden to the physical eyes. There is an internal beauty that exists on this world, which can only be seen and felt with a proper pair of spiritual glasses.

Beneath the surface layer of טבע, *nature*, there are constant ניסים, *miracles*.¹¹ In the section of הודאה (Gratitude) of *Shemoneh Esrei*, in the paragraph of *Modim*, we say the words: ועל נסִיךְ שבכל יום עמנו ועל נפלאותיך וטובותיך שבכל עת – *for Your miracles that are with us every day; and for Your wonders and favors at all times*. We are reminded each day that really all of nature is miraculous. Even nature is supernatural.

We see this idea in the following Gemarah:

The Gemarah¹² relates a story about Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa. He saw that his daughter looked very sad, just before candle-lighting time on Erev Shabbos. He asked her why she was sad, to which she replied, “*My oil and vinegar bottles were switched, and*

11. See “the famous” Ramban at the end of Parshas Bo. See also Artscroll footnote to *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (Hilchos Tefillin) Volume 1, Pg. 107, Footnote 68: *From the fact that Hashem can perform such great miracles that contradict all-natural law, it is clear that it was Hashem Himself Who created all the natural laws, and that there is no power but Him* (See Ramban to *Shemos* 13:16)

12. Taanis 25a



I accidentally filled the Shabbos candles with vinegar instead of oil, and now it's already time to light!" He said to her, *"Why are you worried? He Who said to the oil that it should burn can say to the vinegar that it should burn!"* And so it happened, the candle burned throughout the entire night and day, until they were even able to use it for Havdalah!

Deep down, everything in this world is *Hod*. There is an internal dimension and beauty that causes the world to exist and function.

It is now clear what the connection is between הוד (internal beauty) and הודאה (gratitude). How much we are מכיר טוב – *appreciate the good* – is directly correlated to what type of glasses we put on. If we are wearing glasses of *Hadar*, we will only see the world from an external point of view. In that worldview, whatever the doctors say, that is what will happen. Whatever money you make, that is you who made and earned that money. And so on.

However, if we are wearing glasses of *Hod*, we will see the world from an internal point of view. In that worldview, we will see that Hashem is the One and Only Who is in charge. We will realize that the Torah and Mitzvos which we listen to and follow, impact the world. We will understand that the davening that we recite makes a difference. The Tehillim that we recite can bring about a *refuah* and *yeshua*. The Tefillin that we don can save another Jew in another country. The Torah that we learn can hold up the world. And so on.

Chanukah is a Yom Tov that is in the realm of להודות ולהלל, *to give thanks and praise*. Chanukah is the Yom Tov that is in



the realm of הוד, *inner beauty*. The Greeks and much of modern culture see the world through a prism of הדר, *external beauty*. This natural outlook is symbolized by the number 7.¹³ However, Chanukah reminds us that we see the world through glasses of “above nature” – למעלה מן הטבע – symbolized by the number 8.

Contained within 8 is 7, not the other way around. Within הוד there is הדר. Hashem created us as spiritual beings with physical bodies. We have a נשמה, our aspect of הוד, and we have a גוף, our aspect of הדר. The job of a Jew is to elevate the physical, by infusing it with meaning, depth, profundity, nuance, and holiness. The job of a Jew is to take that which is הדר, and elevate it with הוד. To take that which is external beauty and infuse it with internal beauty

We are not meant to shun *Hadar*, or abstain from it. We are not meant to withhold from the beautiful world. Instead, we are meant to channel it towards spirituality.

Dovid HaMelech¹⁴ says: הוד והדר לבשת – *You are clothed in הוד and הדר*. We are meant to experience both! The problem of the Greeks was that they only saw and experienced *Hadar*, the outward beauty of this world; there was nothing more, nothing deeper. It was just external; nothing holy.

13. The Maharal famously speaks about the connection between the number 7 and nature. There are 7 colors, 7 notes, 7 seas, and so on.

14. Tehillim 104:1



Did you ever notice that the Hebrew word for Greeks – יוון – is, of all places, found in the Hebrew word for dove, or יונה. The difference is that the word יונה, which is symbolic of the Jewish people, ends with a letter *hei*. The letter *hei* is an allusion to the השכינה, *the dwelling of the Divine Shechinah of Hashem*. If you think about it, then, this idea of channeling the physicality to spirituality, of going from הדר to הוד, is alluded to in the very word for dove, יונה.

It is quite remarkable to point out¹⁵ that the very first time the letters יו-ו even appear in-sequence in the Torah, is in the word יושלח,¹⁶ as it says in the Torah, in Chapter 8, Passuk 8: וישלח את היונה – *and he sent away the dove*. Remember, contained within 8 is 7. Within הוד is הדר. And as we now see, within היונה is יון.¹⁷

Our mission on this world is to embrace the physical world and uplift it! To appreciate the beauty of the natural world, but

15. See (יסודות בעבודת ימי חנוכה) נר לרגלי, pg. 42 – נראה שהפעם הראשון – הוא אצל היונה של נח (ח:ח), ולהנ"ל א"ש שהיונה היא כנסת ישראל הלוחמת בתרבות יון, וכאשר מצאה מעט שמן נגמר המבול. ויש להוסיף שיון רצו לסלק את השראת השכינה מישראל, והשראת השכינה נרמזת באות ה' כמש"כ בספה"ק, ולכן אותיות "יון" הם ממש אותיות "יונה", רק בלא ה' – המרמז להשראת השכינה

16. Which is also the first time the word יונה appears in the Torah!

17. Perhaps, this concept "dovetails" (yes, pun intended) beautifully with the Chazal which teaches that Noach blessed יפת that ישכון באהלי שם, he will dwell in the tents of Shem. We know that יפת is the progenitor of Yavan, and שם is the progenitor of the Jewish people. Homiletically, then, we see an allusion how the job of a Jew is to incorporate the external beauty of Yavan, and channel it to our service of Hashem, by elevating it and infusing it with holiness!



understand that there is a Creator Who created it and is running the show.

We can now understand the connection between the concept of *Hod*, Chanukah, and the episode of the יונה, *the dove*.

The Torah tells us that the Flood came to the world because the people were consumed in promiscuity and idolatry.¹⁸ The Torah also tells us that it came because of חמס – *robbery*.¹⁹ Interestingly, the Gemarah says that ultimately הגזל אלא דינם – *the final judgement for the people to receive the decree of the Flood was due to robbery*. The people at the time would take things from other people, even objects that were of very little value, less than a *peruta*!

What is going on?! Isn't promiscuity and idolatry way worse than stealing small things? Why would the final judgement against the people be because of stealing, instead of the greater sins of promiscuity and idolatry?

Rav Betzalel Rudinsky *shlit"a*,²⁰ in his *Sefer Mishkan Betzalel*, asks this fundamental question, and he provides an unbelievable answer. The world was being destroyed because of a lack of הכרת הטוב – *gratitude* – towards Hashem. Of course, promiscuity and idolatry are terrible sins. But, on some level, the sin of stealing

18. As the Torah states (6:11): ותשחת הארץ לפני האלקים. The Gemarah in Sanhedrin (57a) says that this is a ערוה ועבודה זרה.

19. As the Torah states (6:13): קץ כל בשר בא לפני כי מלאה הארץ חמס מפניהם:

20. Rav of Kahal Ahavas Yitzchok, and Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Ohr Reuven



is even greater because it shows that there is a fundamental and legitimate lacking of the most foundational concept of *Hakaras Hatov*. If people believed that Hashem exists, and that He provides each person with what they need, they would not steal. If people are stealing – even less than a *peruta* – from others, that means there is absolutely no iota of *Hakaras Hatov* left.

The world needed to be rebuilt with the reinstalment of this most important trait of *Hakaras Hatov*. The Gemarah²¹ teaches us אסור לא לאדם שיהנה מן העולם הזה בלא ברכה – *it is forbidden for a person to benefit from this world without making a blessing*. That is, we have an obligation to recognize the good of our Creator and make blessings prior to benefiting from this world.²² Chazal tell us that when the dove returned to Noach with an olive leaf in its mouth, it was saying: יהיו מזונותי מרורין כזית בידו של הקב"ה ולא ודם – *“Let my food be bitter as an olive and provided by the hand of Hashem, and not sweet as honey but provided by the hand of people.”* Incredibly, Rav Rudinsky points out that **it was the dove which was the first creation to benefit from the world after the Flood**, and it was the dove which recognized that everything – even something that seemed bitter – was ultimately from Hashem. The dove, the very first creation to benefit from the

21. Berachos 35a

22. Rav Rudinsky says this is perhaps why the Torah emphasizes הארץ כי מלאה הארץ, the people of the generation of the Flood did not have הכרת הטוב to Hashem on הארץ – *the world* – that He gave them.



world after the Flood, was also the very first creation to exhibit *Hakaras Hatov* after the Flood!

It was perhaps at that moment, when the dove displayed *Hakaras Hatov* towards Hashem by bringing the olive leaf in its mouth and saying יהיו מזונותי, that the world was now ready to be rebuilt, anew.

Putting it all together. We began this chapter with the Tikkunei Zohar – the only Zohar that discusses Chanukah! – who said that the Yom Tov of Chanukah is called *Hod*, and then immediately referenced the the dove story with the olive leaf.

There is clearly a connection between the concept of *Hod* – which is the ability to see the world through the spiritual glasses of internal beauty, to see that there is a Creator running the show – and the dove, which was the very first creation to display *Hakaras Hatov* after the Flood.

In a world of exile and darkness – in a society that is drowning in a great Flood of its own – we are meant to be like the יונה, *the dove*, and see the הוד – *the internal beauty* – that exists in the world. We are meant to always see the hand of Hashem in everything, and find a way to channel the הדר, external beauty, of יון (the Greeks) to the יונה; to find a way to elevate the mundane, and uplift the physical.





Chapter 7

THE BLUZHEVER REBBE AND THE DOVE

Mose people, when they hear the name Rav Tzvi Elimelech Spira,¹ they think of the leading Chassidic Rebbe from Poland who lived from 1783-1841, the founder of the Dinov Dynasty, more commonly known by his classic sefer called, Bnei Yissaschar.² In this chapter, I am going to share with you a fascinating idea³ from his grandson, also named Rav Tzvi Elimelech Spira, who lived from 1841-1924, author of the Sefer Tzvi L'Tzadik, and the first Bluzhever Rebbe.

The Bluzhever Rebbe asks the following: The Gemarah in Shabbos asks, מאי חנוכה – *What is Chanukah?* If you put on your thinking cap for a moment, though, you should ask, “Wait a minute. The Gemarah was written well after the story of Chanukah took place. The Jewish people had been observing this מצוה דרבנן

1. Or Shapira/Shapiro

2. He was also the nephew of Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk and disciple of the Chozeh of Lublin.

3. See ספר שופרא דחנוכה (חדשי כסלו טבת - מאמר ד' צבי לצדיק) pg. 95. See also ספר שופרא דחנוכה (אדמור"י בית באלזיוב) pg. 99.



(*Rabbinic commandment*) of Chanukah since the זמן בית המקדש (*the Temple times*), well before the חורבן (*destruction*). Is it possible that the compilers of the Gemarah did not know what Chanukah was? Of course they did. So, what is the Gemarah even asking? Why is the Gemarah asking “מאי חנוכה?”

Before he answers this question, the Rebbe asks an additional two questions. The Torah⁴ says: ותבא אליו היונה לעת ערב והנה עלה ערף בפייה וידע נח כי קלו המים מעל הארץ – *The dove came back to him in the evening – and behold! an olive leaf it had plucked with its mouth. And Noah knew that the waters had subsided from upon the earth!* Why does the Torah inform us of the timing for when the dove returned, לעת ערב, *in the evening*? And why does the Torah seemingly use unnecessary and extra words – וידע נח כי קלו המים – telling us that the water subsided? How else, if not that the water had subsided, would the dove be carrying a leaf?

The Bluzhever Rebbe brings from his grandfather, the Bnei Yissaschar,⁵ a fascinating aspect regarding the miracle of Chanukah. The miracle of Chanukah was **without** דלתתא; there was no *awakening from below*.⁶ Usually, to experience a miracle and

4. Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 11

5. ספר בני יששכר (מאמר כסלו מאמר ד' אות כד).

6. In Chassidus, there is a concept of דלתתא and דלעילא.

אתערותא דלעילא means *an awakening from below*, which refers to a spiritual awakening from the person. He awakens his heart to the service of Hashem, overcomes his materialism and tries to elevate himself and reach closeness to Hashem. אתערותא דלעילא means *an awakening from above*, which refers to



salvation, there must be some type of dynamic spiritual activity from the Jewish people down below on earth. However, the Greeks at the time of the Chanukah story, managed – with their many decrees – to stop us from being able to spark this activity.⁷ We could not learn Torah, perform Mitzvos, do Teshuva, nor gather to daven and fast to be able to merit a miraculous salvation.⁸ Yet, says the Bnei Yissaschar, salvation came for the Jewish people as a מתנה,⁹ a *gift* from Above, without them having to do anything presently. The miracle of Chanukah was כעין מעשה בראשית – *like the events of Creation*. How so? When Hashem created the world, it was בשביל ישראל – *for the sake of the Jewish people* – even though

the purification that falls on a person from Above, without him himself being ready and worthy of it.

7. Elsewhere, the בני יששכר connects the miracle of Chanukah, which was in the realm of אתערותא דלעילא, to the notion of the Dreidel. You see, on Purim, we use a *grogger* which is held from the bottom, thus symbolizing the Jewish people's involvement in the salvation, through the אתערותא דלתתא (fasting, davening, etc.). On Chanukah, however, we spin a *dreidel*, which is held from the top, thus symbolizing the that the salvation came solely from Hashem, אתערותא דלעילא!
8. In contrast to the story of Mordechai and Esther where the Jewish people managed to group together, to fast and daven, which merited a great salvation. By the story of Purim, the Jewish people were able to perform dynamic spiritual activities, thus sparking an אתערותא דלתתא, an awakening from below.
9. This, בני יששכר, is why the Jewish leader's name at the time of the Chanukah story was מתתיהו, which comes from the word מתת, the root of מתנה, a gift. The miracle of Chanukah was a מתנה from Hashem. He points out further, that the name בן יוחנן is an allusion to the fact that this מתנה from Hashem was a מתנת חנם.



the Jewish people did not exist yet. The Jewish people did not perform any Mitzvos yet, since they were obviously not around at the time of Creation. **However, the good deeds and Mitzvos that the Jewish people were going to perform אחר כך – later on, in the future – was powerful and special enough that Hashem decided to create the world in the present!**

The Bluzhever Rebbe writes that he subsequently found in the holy words of the Zohar Chadash,¹⁰ a clear proof to this teaching of his grandfather, the Bnei Yissaschar, namely, that the Jewish people were saved because of what they would do at a future date. The Zohar Chadash states that the first sending away of the dove from the Teivah is an allusion to גלות בבל, the Babylonian Exile. And when the dove returned to the Teivah (after not finding rest outside), that is an allusion to the redemption from the Babylonian Exile.. The second sending away of the dove from the Teivah is an allusion to גלות יון, the Greek Exile. And when the dove returned to the Teivah (with an olive leaf in its mouth), that is an allusion to the redemption from the Greek Exile.. The Zohar Chadash, on the words וְהָיָה עֹלָה זֵית טָרֵף בְּפִיהָ then says something remarkable: לֹאֲנִי שֶׁהַעִיר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא רוּחַ הַכֹּהֲנִים, שֶׁהָיוּ מְדַלֵּקִין גְּרוֹת לֹאֲנִי שֶׁהָיָה רוּחַ הַכֹּהֲנִים, אֲזִי אֲבָדָה פְּלִיטַת יְהוּדָה מִן הָעוֹלָם – *If Hashem would not have aroused the spirit of the Kohanim to light the candles with*

¹⁰. נח מ' ע"א. The ספר זוהר חדש is a collection of manuscripts that were found containing material pertaining to the Zohar but not included in printed editions of the work.



olive oil, then the Jewish community would have been lost from the world! The mere fact that the Kohanim – *later on* – would perform the Mitzvah of lighting the candles, that is what allowed for the miraculous salvation from the Greeks.

We see how the salvation from the Greeks during the Chanukah story was because of the Mitzvos that the Jewish people would do¹¹ at a later date. This parallels the Creation of the world, when Hashem created the world בשביל ישראל, because of the Mitzvos that the Jewish people would do¹² at a later date.

It is not a coincidence, says the Bluzhever Rebbe, that the *Sofei Teivos* (end letters) of עלה זית טרף בפיה have the gematria of 490, which is the numerical value of פך שמן, *a jug of oil*, thus showing us an incredible allusion to the jug of oil that the Chashmonaim would find years later by the Chanukah story!

Now that we understand the deeper connection between Creation and Chanukah,¹³ we are ready to take out our calculators. The Bluzhever Rebbe uncovers a mindboggling connection between Creation and Chanukah.

Rosh Hashanah, when the people of the world get judged by Hashem, is the 1st of Tishrei. This is when Adam – the first person

11. The Mitzvah of lighting the candles in the Bais Hamikdash

12. The Mitzvos that they would accept and perform when they would come into being, many years after Creation.

13. Both miraculous episodes taking place because of what the Jewish people would do in the future!



– was created and subsequently sinned. Since Man was created on the 6th day of Creation, that means Creation began 6 days prior, on the 25th of Elul.¹⁴

The Torah tells us that from Rosh Chodesh Av, the ראשי ההרים, *the tops of the mountains*, started becoming visible for the first time since the start of the Flood. The עורב, *raven*, was sent out 40 days later, on the 10th of Elul. The יונה, *dove*, was sent out for the first time 7 days later, on the 17th of Elul, and returned the same day. Noach then waited another 7 days, and again sent out the dove; this was on the 24th of Elul.

Pause for a moment. If you will recall, one of the questions asked above is why the Torah specifically needed to tell us the timing of when the dove returned – לעת ערב, *in the evening* – on its second trip? Now it becomes abundantly clear. לעת ערב means that the dove returned *in the evening, after the 24th*. **Meaning, the dove returned to the Teivah with the olive leaf in its mouth on the 25th of Elul, which just so happens to be the anniversary of the Creation of the world.**

14. There are only 29 days of Elul



Shockingly, if you count the number of days from the 25th of Elul¹⁵ to the 25th of Kislev, it is a total of **89** days, which is the exact gematria of **חנוכה**!¹⁶

The Bluzhever Rebbe explains that when the Gemarah in Shabbos wonders מאי חנוכה – *What is Chanukah?* – it is really wondering about the name of the Yom Tov? Why do we call it **חנוכה**, instead of חנוך? Why is there an additional letter – *hei* – at the end?

It all makes sense now. The Yom Tov is specifically called Chanukah – חנוכה – because the numerical value of חנוכה is 89, which signifies the exact number of days from the return of the dove with the olive leaf in its mouth (25th of Elul), to the 25th of Kislev!

There is one more question we did not answer. The Torah¹⁷ says: ותבא אליו היונה לעת ערב והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה וידע נח כי קלו המים – *The dove came back to him in the evening – and behold! an olive leaf it had plucked with its mouth. And Noach knew that the waters had subsided from upon the earth!* Why does the Torah seemingly use unnecessary and extra words – וידע נח כי קלו המים

15. Which, as we now know, is the first day of Creation and the day when the dove returned to the Teivah with the olive leaf in its mouth.

16. Last 5 days of Elul + 30 days of Tishrei + 29 days of Cheshvan + 25 days of Kislev = 89 days!

17. Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 11



מעל הארץ – telling us that the water subsided? Of course, the water subsided, because how else would the dove have gotten a leaf!?

When Noach entered the Teivah, he brought seven animals from each pure species, so that he would be able to offer *korbanos* when he would eventually leave the Teivah. The Midrash teaches us that in the זכות (merit) of these *korbanos* that Noach was going to bring – *later* on, in the future – after leaving the Teivah, he was saved.

The Bluzhever Rebbe explains that as soon as Noach began to feel the waters calming down, he did not know in what merit this was happening. That is, until the dove returned to him on the 25th of Elul – לעת ערב – with an olive leaf perched in its mouth – עלה זית.

Noach, at that moment, realized something. He understood that the dove was showing him an allusion to two different time periods in history – Creation and Chanukah – when the Jewish people were positively judged based on what they were going to do *later on, in the future!* At that moment, וידע נח – *Noach knew* – כי קלו המים מעל הארץ – **WHY**¹⁸ *the waters were calming and subsiding*. It was because he tapped into that same future merit. Since he brought extra pure animals to offer as *korbanos* after the Flood, even though he did not yet offer them, still – the future merit of

18. i.e., because of what...



the good he was going to perform later on – stood for him as a merit to be saved in the present!

My friends, we often get so caught up in the past and even the present. And rightfully so. The past represents all our life experiences, all the things we did, the things we wish we could have done better, and so on. And the present represents the current moment of our lives, our active state of being. But, one of the powerful lessons that we can glean from the Bluzhever Rebbe's perspective on Chanukah is the power of tapping in to the future. Hashem created the world in the merit of what the Jewish people were going to do *later on, in the future*. Noach was saved because of what he was going to do *later on, in the future*. And the Jewish people were saved in the Chanukah story because of what the Kohanim were going to do *later on, in the future*.

Do not underestimate the power of what can be done *later on, in the future*.

We are taught something from the Kav HaYashar¹⁹ that can literally change our perspective on the simple Chanukah candles that we light each night. The Kav HaYashar writes that if we would

19. The ספר קב הישר was authored by Rav Tzvi Hirsch Kaidonover זת"ל, who lived from 1648-1712, and is considered one of the most popular works of *mussar* literature of the last 300 years.



have *Ruach Hakodesh*, we would perceive **the future** when we light the Chanukah candles; we would actually get *nevuah* (prophecy).²⁰

Chanukah is מלשון חינוך – *education*. Education is about connecting to the present for the sake of a better future, as it says in Mishlei:²¹ חנך לנער על פי דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה – *Educate a lad according to his path, so that even when he gets older, he will not deviate from it.*

On Chanukah, when we light the candles, we too can look into the future. We can look into the future, and see a world of unity and peace. We can look into the future and see the Third Bais Hamikdash in its full glory and majesty. We can look into the future and see a world devoid of exile, hardship, and suffering. We can look into the future and see ourselves as having more time for learning, more time for understanding davening, more time for our spouses and children. We can look into the future and see ourselves connecting to Hashem in a deeply profound and genuine way. This Chanukah, let us tap into the power of the future, and allow the greatness of the future to positively impact our present lives.



20. See קב הישר (96): וכל הנר הדלוק לדבר מצוה – יש בו קדשה נפלאה גדולה אין שיעור. ואילו היינו זוכים להשגות רוח הקודש, היינו מברכים ומבינים ומשיגים על ידי מצות הדלקת...הנרות של מצוה העתידות, דהנר של מצוה מתנבא כמו נביא

21. See Mishlei, Chapter 22, Passuk 6



Chapter 8

THE DOVE OF HUMILITY

Let us continue with the wonderful tales of the dove, and see what else we can learn from this incredible bird. At what point in the story of the Flood did Noach decide to send out the birds from the Teivah?

Rashi tells us that Noach decided to send out the birds to scout the world for dry land from the moment the tops of the mountains became visible.¹ When the dove was sent out for the first time, it was already 47 days after the tops of the mountains became visible, which means it should have been able to find rest for its feet somewhere on the mountaintops. Why, then, does the Torah tell us that the dove could not find a resting place? The Ramban² provides an answer and says that it is not the practice of birds to rest on high mountaintops – on the ground there – where there are no trees. Therefore, the dove did not find a resting place that suited it.

1. Rashi to Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 6: משנראו ראשי ההרים

2. See התורה רמב"ן על התורה to Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 9



Rav Elyakam³ says even more succinctly regarding the dove: דרכה להיות בעמקים ולא בהרים – *its nature is to be in the valley and not the mountains!*

As “dove” people, there is a tremendous lesson that we can learn from the dove, a bird that has this unique characteristic of dwelling in the valley as opposed to the mountain.

You see, a mountain is nice and wonderful. It is tall, grandiose, and picturesque. But you know what happens when you make it to the top of the mountain? You are finished. It is time to hang up your jersey. Time for a vacation. The imagery of a mountain has a connotation of, “*I made it*” and “*I’m done!*”⁴

A valley, on the other hand, has a completely different imagery. It represents humility; “*I’m on my way, but not quite there yet.*” It tells a story that is being written, not one that has already been told. A valley has a connotation of potential energy. A valley suggests movement along a path, an undertaking of a journey and mission.

The difference between the Greeks and the Jews is the difference between the mountain and the valley. The Greeks live with an egocentric mindset of personal prowess. Standing tall and proud like a mountain, the Greeks race to the top and once

3. See *ספר שערי אהרן* to Parshas Noach, Chapter 8

4. Extra emphasis on the “I” from “I made it” and the “I” from “I’m done.”



they get there, come to a full stop. Time to retire. Time to hang up the jersey. Time to golf.

But this lifestyle is so under-par!

The Jews, like the dove, dwell in the valley. They stand at the foot of the mountain, and look up towards a life of great spiritual growth, potential, and *המלאכה מרובה* – *an abundance of work to be done*.⁵ They understand that life is not over when you accomplish something. Life is not over when you strike a big deal. Life is not over when you make a *siyum*. Life is not over when you get married or have a child.

Each step and stage of life and each accomplishment is of course a big deal and should be celebrated. But these experiences are just the beginning. The end of one stage lays the foundation for the next. And so on.

When we think of Moshe Rabbeinu, we think of the greatest prophet and Jewish leader to ever live. We think of a man that took the Jewish people out of Egypt, split the sea, received the Torah by Har Sinai,⁶ and saved Klal Yisroel from annihilation. He achieved so much, indeed.

5. See Pirkei Avos 2:15: קצר והמלאכה מרובה

6. Of course, Hashem is the One that actually performed these miracles; however, Moshe Rabbeinu was the human messenger to carry out these miraculous events on His behalf.



Yet, at the end of his life, Moshe Rabbeinu tells Hashem, “*You have only begun to show Your servant Your greatness...*”⁷ Incredibly, after a tremendously accomplishing life, Moshe Rabbeinu still viewed himself as “servant” and as having only begun to see the greatness of Hashem.

How was Moshe Rabbeinu able to be on such a high level and accomplish so much, yet still view himself as a “servant” that has not seen it all? The answer, of course, is that Moshe Rabbeinu was a man of incredible humility, as the Torah says:⁸ והאיש משה ענו מאד מכל האדם – *the man, Moshe, was exceedingly humble, more so than all other people!*

The notion of humility – to be like the valley – enables a person to see Hashem, always. Humility keeps a person in-check, level-headed, and spiritually healthy. It was Moshe Rabbeinu’s unique trait of humility which allowed him – even at the end of a long accomplishing life – to still feel that he was not quite there yet. To still feel that he was only beginning to see the greatness of Hashem. To still feel like he was a “servant” of Hashem.

The holy Bas Ayin⁹ writes that the Hebrew word for Chanukah, חנוכה, is מלשון חנוך והתחלה – meaning *inauguration* and *beginning*,

7. Parshas Devarim, Chapter 3, Passuk 24

8. Parshas Shelach, Chapter 12, Passuk 3

9. Rav Avraham Dov Ber Auerbach of Avritch, who lived from 1765-1840, was a prominent Chassidic leader and rabbinic authority in the early 19th century. His Sefer, called ספר בת עין, has become extremely popular in the last couple of



which teaches us that a person should always view his service of Hashem as inaugural and just beginning! The Rebbe explains that this is why, when it comes to the Halacha of lighting Chanukah candles, they are supposed to be placed within (under) 10 *tefachim*. The number 10 represents קדושה, *holiness*, as we know: אין דבר שבקדושה פחות מעשרה – *There are no matters of holiness under 10.*¹⁰ When we light Chanukah candles, they are specifically placed *under 10 tefachim*, symbolizing that we are not quite there yet at our destination, and showing that we are merely just starting our service; we have a lot more to do and accomplish! But incredibly, when we tap into the trait of humility and view ourselves as “under 10,” something absolutely amazing happens: Hashem comes down to us¹¹ and rests His שכונה – Divine Presence – by the Chanukah candles; He comes to the humble ones who are “under 10.”

The Bas Ayin writes further that this is also why the Yom Tov of Chanukah is on the 25th of Kislev – which, in Hebrew is

years. I personally learn the Sefer and consider the Bas Ayin to be one of my Rebbeim! See (דרוש לחנוכה מפרשת וישב) ספר בת עין, pg. 130 (Oz Vehadar Edition)

10. See Berachos 21b

11. The Gemarah in in Sukkah 5b teaches that the Shechina never goes below ten tefachim. However, on Chanukah, we place the Menorah under 10 tefachim, and still, Hashem comes to us. In fact, this idea is commonly attributed to the great Chassidic master, Rav Menachem Nachum, the Meor Einayim, who writes in his *sefer* that on Chanukah, Hashems goes down below 10 *tefachim* to lift us up and bring us up to Him!



כ"ה כסלו. The word כסלו (116) shares the same numerical value as the word נמוך, which means: *lowly and humble*.¹² In addition, the notion that Chanukah takes place on the 25th – כ"ה – also has an association with humility, since the word דכא (low and humble)¹³ shares the same numerical value of 25! The Gemarah says that Hashem dwells down *below*, with those who are humble: אני את דכא – *I, Hashem, descend and am found together with the person who is low and humble*.¹⁴

The Bas Ayin says that the symbolism of a רגל, a *foot/leg*, connotes haughtiness.¹⁵ This is why the time for lighting Chanukah candles is specifically עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק – *until the traffic in the marketplace ceases*.¹⁶ The deeper meaning of this concept is that the word רגל, which connotes haughtiness, is meant to be in the realm of תכלה, stopped/abolished/nullified.

12. Interestingly, if I can humbly add that the numerical value of יונים (Greeks) – the enemies of the Chanukah story – is also 116. Perhaps because our lighting of the Menorah and tapping into this trait of humility is meant to counteract and cancel out the influence of the haughty Greeks!

13. See Isaiah, Chapter 57, Passuk 15: כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה וְנִשְׂא שָׁכֶן עַד וְקֹדֶשׁ שָׁמוּ מְרוֹם: In short, the Navi teaches us that Hashem, Who dwells on High, also dwells down below with the humble person!

14. See Gemarah Sotah 5

15. As it says in Tehillim, Chapter 36, Passuk 12: אַל-יַתְּבֹאֲנִי רֶגֶל גָּאוֹה – *let not the FOOT of the HAUGHTY tread on me*.

16. See Shabbos 21b



The Greeks represent haughtiness. They were like a big mountain, standing tall, proud, yet complacent. The Jewish people, however, represent humility; proud, yet still yearning. We mentioned above the Gemarah which teaches: *אני את דכא*, that Hashem is found together with the humble person. The Gemarah immediately teaches: *ומסתבבא כמאן דאמר אני את דכא, שהרי הקדוש ברוך הוא – this opinion who says אני את דכא is very logical, for we know that when Hashem gave the Torah, he abandoned all the great mountains and hills, and instead rested His Shechina on the low and humble Har Sinai.* We see that Hashem specifically did not give the Torah to the Jewish people atop a big and tall mountain. He abandoned the haughty mountains; the Torah way of life requires the abandonment of the tall mountains, for the way to true greatness and holiness is by means of humility.

On Chanukah, when we light the candles *below 10 tefachim*, let us think about the dove that dwells – not in the great mountains and hills, but – in the valley, in the place of humility. Let us be reminded that when we act with this trait of humility, Hashem comes down to us. When we act with humility, our service of Hashem is always inaugural, fresh, and exciting. When we act with humility, there is always more to do, accomplish, and achieve.

While the dove was still on its mission, it could not find rest for the sole of its feet – *לא מצאה היונה מנוח לכף רגלה*.¹⁷ On some

17. Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 9



level, we too are meant to be like this dove – the valley dweller – that finds a way to keep going and flying, unable to find rest in our service of Hashem. We are meant to stay humble, see Hashem in the picture, and understand – like Moshe Rabbeinu – that we have only begun our great journey of ascension. The best has yet to come.





Chapter 9

THE DOVE ON THE ROOF

The Radak¹ says a remarkable thing regarding the difference between the raven and the dove which Noach sent from the Teivah. The raven, upon returning without completing its mission, went back to its nest, leaving from time to time to see if the situation outside enabled it to survive. The dove, however, upon returning without yet having completed its mission, did not chose to re-enter the Teivah like the raven had done. Instead, the Radak writes regarding the dove: **שנחה על גבי התבה כי לא רצתה לכנוס לפי** – *it remained perched on the roof of the Teivah...*

It was unhappy at not having brought back some kind of message to Noach, so it remained on top of the Teivah, ready to take flight once again. This is why the Torah must tell us that Noach *stretched out his hand and brought it back into the Teivah.*²

1. Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 7

2. Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passuk 9



I remember seeing the tracking information on a recent Target order, which said: *"In transit: Arriving Yesterday."*

Now obviously this makes no sense. Something that already arrived yesterday is no longer in transit. This was clearly some type of glitch in Target's system. But it occurred to me that perhaps they are on "target" in terms of a message in which we, the Jewish people, believe in. That is, the importance of always being "in transit", even when you already "arrived yesterday." A Jew is always on the move, growing and reaching greater heights in his service of Hashem. Even when we arrive at a destination, we believe it is merely a stepping stone for further growth and development. Even when a Jew arrives, he is still meant to be "in transit."

The Rebbe of Rymanov³ explains a beautiful idea based on the Passuk in the Torah: אלה תולדות יעקב יוסף – *These are the children of Yaakov: Yosef*.⁴ When it comes to a person's service of Hashem, a person should never become satisfied and complacent with what he already achieved. A person should not stay put, במקום אחד, *in one place*. Rather, a Jew is supposed to constantly strive and yearn for more and more, to reach loftier, holier, and greater heights on the סולם היהדות – *the ladder of yiddishkeit*. A Jew is meant to live in the realm of מוסיף והולך – *adding more*, doing more. This idea is alluded to in the words אלה תולדות יעקב יוסף. How so? The Torah

3. I saw this in the ספר מעינה של תורה של Parshas Vayeshev

4. Parshas Vayeshev, Chapter 37, Passuk 2



is educating us that the תולדות, *the offspring* – i.e., the מעשים טובים (good deeds) – of a Jew is supposed to be in the realm of יוסף – which means *to increase*. We are meant to strive to live a life of constant growth and spiritual attainment, a life of מוסיף והולך.

If you think about it, when it comes to the lighting of the Chanukah candles, we follow the practice of Bais Hillel that we start with one, and each night, increase the number of candles to reflect the specific night of Chanukah. This is the opinion that holds the lighting is in the realm of מוסיף והולך – *gradually increasing*.⁵ The *pnimiyus* of this practice is that we are meant to accustom ourselves to a gradual increasing of holiness in our lives. Lighting one candle is great and beautiful, but comes the second night, we move onwards and upwards and light a second candle. We do not remain in one place, at one candle.

The concept of being מוסיף והולך – gradually increasing – is one of the most vital aspects of our entire lives as *yidden*.

The Yom Tov of Chanukah teaches us this lesson of אלה תולדות יעקב יוסף. A Jew is supposed to constantly produce things, to create things, to become more, to be more. We are not supposed to remain in one place.

As we learned from the Radak, one of the exemplary traits of the dove was that it perched itself on the roof of the Teivah, ready to take flight and accomplish more.

5. See Shabbos 21b



When Yaakov Avinu went back and forth across the river to bring over his possessions, Rashi tells us that *he made himself into a bridge*, עשה עצמו כגשר.⁶ Rabbi Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal זט"ל points out an unbelievable message, namely, that Yaakov Avinu had one foot in *Chutz La'aretz* (diaspora) and one foot in *Eretz Yisroel*. Hence, he actually made *himself* into a bridge. He never got too comfortable in *galus*. He always had one metaphorical foot in front of him, situated in *Eretz Yisroel*, in the land of holiness.

Using this stunning imagery of Yaakov Avinu positioning himself as a bridge, we see that Yaakov Avinu, always had his two feet apart from each other. He lived in the realm of מוסף והולך, constantly seeking to grow and walk in the ways of Hashem. He was always looking for more in his service of Hashem. Two feet in one place connotes stagnancy and dormancy. Yaakov Avinu never had two feet in one place; rather, he always had one foot in front of him, constantly walking and moving along to greater heights in his service of Hashem. In fact, he was the one who dreamed of the first סולם, *ladder*, thus providing us with the imagery of Heavenly angels walking up and down the ladder. They did not remain fixed to one rung. They were constantly moving up and down.

A flame is something that jumps. Look at it and you will see what I mean. It is constantly looking to grow and move higher up.

6. See Rashi to Parshas Vayishlach, Chapter 32, Passuk 24

7. See ספר אהרן, Chapter 48 (Third Chapter)



A flame is in the realm of מוסיף והולך. A flame constantly jumps up and tries to become more. In fact, what happens when you touch a flame to another wick? That is right, it produces a new flame. A flame, just like Yaakov, is in the realm of יעקב יוסף. It is always seeking to do more, create more, and become more.

My friends, based on this approach, we can now understand a peculiar teaching from the Ben Yehoyada⁸ on the Gemarah in Shabbos⁹ explaining why the holiday of Chanukah is called Chanukah. The Ben Yehoyada says that one of the reasons why the Yom Tov of Chanukah is called חנוכה, as opposed to חנוך, is because the ה"א (the letter *hei*) at the end of the word turns it from זכר to נקבה, from masculine to feminine. A male cannot become pregnant or give birth. A woman can. Chazal chose the לשון (language) of חנוכה specifically, in the feministic linguistic approach, to teach us that just like a woman – and ONLY a woman – can become pregnant and give birth, so too the Yom Tov of Chanukah מתעברת ויולדת – *is impregnated and gives birth*. Its illumination and enlightenment are born each year.¹⁰

8. Written by famed Sephardic Halachic authority Chacham Yosef Chaim, who lived from 1832-1909, also known as the Ben Ish Chai. He was a highly revered Torah scholar and master of Kabbalah.

9. See Shabbos 21b

10. It is fascinating to point out that the name of the month, Kislev, is referred to in Chaggai (2:10) as “*the ninth month*,” since it is the ninth month when counting from Nisan. This is significant, as we know that pregnancy has a nine-month term!



Based on what we have been saying, this explanation for the name Chanukah makes so much sense. Chanukah teaches us to be **יֹסֵף** אלה תולדות יעקב יוסף. It teaches us to be מוסיף והולך. It teaches us to be a people that gradually increases in holiness. It teaches us to be like that flame which constantly jumps and seeks for more. It teaches us to not stay in one place, but rather, to make ourselves like a bridge, and to constantly climb the *"ladder of yiddishkeit"* and achieve greater and holier levels of spiritual achievement. It teaches us to produce more and *"give birth"* to more spiritual light, each day of our lives!

My favorite two words in the prayer of *Bimei Matisyahu* that we recite over the Yom Tov of Chanukah are the words **ואחר כן** – *afterwards*.

We just finished saying all the amazing things that Hashem did for the Jewish people: *"You in Your great mercy, stood up for them in the time of their distress, You fought their battle, You judged their claim, and You avenged their wrong. You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the malicious into the hands of the diligent students of Your Torah. You made a great and holy Name in Your world for Yourself, and for Your people Israel You worked a great victory and salvation as this very day."*

Amazing, right? Look how much we were able to accomplish with the help of Hashem. Enough, right? Take a break now, maybe? We arrived at our destination. Stop and breath! But no! We



continue: **כֵּן** – *"Afterwards, Your children came to the Holy of Holies of Your House, cleansed your Temple, purified the state of Your Holiness, and kindled lights in the Courtyards of Your Sanctuary..."*

There is such a profound message here. The Jewish people lived in the realm of **אלה תולדות יעקב יוסף**. They lived with the attitude of **והולך מוסיף**. They could have stopped. They could have relaxed. They could have unpacked and settled. But that is not what happened. We are told that they did not stop! There was a **כֵּן**, an *afterwards*.

You accomplished something? Great. Wonderful. Celebrate, but move on. **כֵּן**. **ואחר כֵּן**. There must always be a **כֵּן**, an *afterwards*, a *what is next*.

I was blown away when I started to rearrange the letters of **כֵּן**, as it spells **אור חנך**, perhaps an allusion to the *"Light of Chanukah."* The light of Chanukah teaches us to not live our lives like the rest of the world that buries itself in cathartic negative complacency.

Instead, let us be like the Chanukah lights which constantly increases and perpetually gives birth to more illumination. Let us be like the flame that constantly seeks and jumps for more holiness. And of course, let us be like the dove, which perches itself on the roof of the Teivah, always ready for more!





Chapter 10

THE DOVE'S LESSON OF FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Unless you live in some country such as Syria or the like, you probably live in what is colloquially referred to as, “the free world.”

During the Cold War, from 1945 to 1991, the “Free World” was used as a propaganda term to refer to the Western Bloc and aligned countries. The “free world” refers more broadly to all liberal democracies collectively, as opposed to authoritarian regimes and communist states. Traditionally, the term “free world” has primarily been used to refer to the countries allied and aligned with the United States, the European Union and NATO.

While freedom from totalitarian controlled government is generally viewed as a positive thing, the notion of the “free world” has crept into nearly every aspect of life’s global populace.

Unprecedented technological advancements in our modern world, have cultivated a lifestyle of tremendous freedom. Freedom to travel wherever you want. Freedom to talk to whomever you want. Freedom to say whatever you want. And freedom to be free whenever you want.



The “free world” mindset has gotten so intense and so extreme, that it has created a generation which simply lacks accountability and responsibility. But truth be told, freedom without responsibility creates a world of chaos, sadness, confusion, and discontent.

My parents cannot tell me what to do. I can do whatever I want, whenever I want, wherever I want. I can identify as whatever I am feeling like at the current moment.

Jewish Holocaust survivor, author, and psychologist, Dr. Viktor Frankl wrote:¹ *Freedom, however is not the last word. Freedom is only part of the story and half the truth. Freedom is but the negative aspect of the whole phenomenon whose positive aspect is responsibility. In fact, freedom is in danger of degenerating into mere arbitrariness unless it is leaved in terms of responsibility. **That is why I recommend that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast.***

Freedom can be a wonderful thing. But on its own, it can be destructive. To be experienced properly, freedom needs to be accompanied by responsibility.

The Generation of the Flood held the Statue of Liberty on high. They were the “free world” of that time. But that freedom cost them. Their unchanneled freedom opened the door to a life of idolatry, promiscuity, and theft. They felt free enough to serve whoever and whatever they wanted. They felt free enough

1. *Man's Search for Meaning*



to involve themselves in whatever they wished and desired. And they felt free enough to take other people's things for themselves.

In a world of freedom without responsibility, the world turns into a corrupt state of chaos and darkness. And ironically, something fascinating happens to this type of uncultivated freedom: it turns into slavery.

When freedom is celebrated in an of itself, it ultimately leads to the greatest level of servitude and dependance on those very things which were making the person feel "free."

When the dove returned from its mission, with an olive leaf perched in its mouth, the Gemarah² teaches us that it said: רבונו של עולם, יהיו מזונותי מרורין כזית ומסורין בידך, ואל יהיו מתוקין כדבש ותלוין ביד בשר ודם – *Master of the Universe, let my food be bitter as an olive but given by Your hand, rather than being as sweet as honey but dependent upon flesh and blood.*

Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch zt"l³ explains that the dove was expressing the following truth: ***better is bitter food gained in freedom and independence than sweet food eaten in a position of dependance.***

The dove found a bitter olive, but because it was given "by Hashem," that was a much better option than having to rely on

2. Eiruvin 18b

3. See Rav Hirsch on Chumash, Bereishis (pg. 204)



even sweet tasting food given by Noach, a mortal man of flesh and blood.

Rav Hirsch states further something remarkable about the symbolism of the olive leaf: *For us, the olive branch is not a symbol of peace, but a symbol of independence and freedom, and of the exercise of moderation in the midst of freedom!*

Based on this, perhaps when the dove brought back the olive leaf, it taught the world the very lesson in which they had failed. The world was destroyed because of uncontrolled and untamed freedom. The dove, however, showed the world the true perspective. It taught that freedom can be and should be experienced, but only within the context of responsibility. As Rav Hirsch taught, there must be an “exercise of moderation in the midst of freedom.”

The dove was the first creature since the Flood to express this imperative idea of having the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast supplemented by the existence of the Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast!

Take notice how when the dove references the food provided by Hashem, it says: *מסורין* – *given over*, however, when the dove references the food provided by man, it says: *תלויין* – *dependent*.⁴

4. I saw this *diyuk* pointed out by Rav Yisroel Meir Druck, in the *ספר להבות אש* (פרשת נח), pg. 103-104.



When something is given by Hashem, it is given purely, selflessly, and genuinely. However, when something is given by people, it is not given with the same level of selflessness. Within the framework of man-to-man giving, there is an element of תלוין, dependency. There exists an element of *I-owe-you-because-you-gave-me*.

Even more, when we rely on the physical – whether it is for food, entertainment, happiness, and so on – then something terrifying begins to happen. We become תלוין, *dependent*, upon those things. That which we are seeking to create freedom subsequently enslaves us, making us dependent on those very things.

In this “free world” lifestyle, where people become *dependent* on their physical instincts and possessions, chaos becomes rampant, and depression and discontent becomes the norm.

This was the darkness that destroyed the Generation of the Flood. And this was the same darkness that the Greeks tried to bring upon the Jewish people at the time of the Chanukah story.

But just as the dove was able to rise above the pull of physical dependency and proclaim “*Better is the food given to me by Hashem,*” so too, the Jewish people – who are compared to the dove – are meant to proclaim this truth.⁵

The Yom Tov of Chanukah is a time for us to connect to the lesson that the dove taught us. It is a time to realize that we are

5. See Ben Yehoyada to Eiruvim 18b, who says *mamish* this point: ונראה לי בס"ד כי הדברים אלו של היונה הם נאמרים על ישראל שנמשלו ליונה והנה הם כאלו יוצאים מפייהם של ישראל



much better off in the hands of Hashem than in the hands of anything else in the world. If we really want to feel freedom and independence, we cannot place our trust in the physical world; instead, we must learn to see Hashem and place our trust in Him.

The Menorah is both our Statue of Liberty and Statue of Responsibility. It is a unique icon representing *channeled freedom*, a freedom that is exercised with moderation and anchored in responsibility.

We are taught⁶ that each of the candles of the Menorah in the Bais HaMikdash faced towards the middle candle, and the middle candle faced towards the Shechina.⁷ The imagery of this is telling of our relationship with Hashem. Just as the candles faced towards the center, so too we are meant to face Hashem Who is at the core and center of our lives.

When we follow in His ways, trust Him, and face towards Him, we will be able to experience a true life of freedom; freedom to be true to ourselves, freedom to be a shining light in a dark world, and freedom to connect to the Master of the Universe.



6. See Parshas Bahaloscha, Chapter 8, Passuk 2

7. See Megillah 21b



Chapter 11

THE DOVE'S RESPECT FOR TORAH SHEBAAL PEH

The Yom Tov of Chanukah is associated with תורה שבעל פה – *The Oral Law*, since one of the primary battles of the Greeks against the Jews was to make them “forget” the rabbinic teachings that make up the Oral Torah. The Greeks, of course, also made decrees against practicing the commandments of the תורה שבכתב – *The Written Law*, however, they knew that it would nearly be impossible to make them “forget” the *The Written Law*, something that had been documented so well in literally thousands of Torah scrolls!

The word Kislev – כסלו – is a combination of כס, *concealed*, and 36 ל"ו.¹ What is the *concealed* 36 a reference to? We are taught that there was a special light – called אור הגנוז, *hidden light* – which Adam HaRishon benefited from for the first 36 hours of his life. After his sin, that light went away and was hidden and concealed in the Torah. In particular, the special light was hidden in *The*

1. ספר בני יששכר (מאמרי חדשי כסלו וטבת מאמר א)



Oral Law.² On Chanukah, when we light the 36 candles, we are tapping into the special hidden light that was concealed in *The Oral Law*.

The Midrash³ tells us that the Greeks darkened the eyes of the Jews with their decrees by saying, “Write upon the horn of an ox that you have no portion in the G-d of Israel.”

What did the Greeks mean by this? How did this decree epitomize the Greeks fight against the Jews.

The primary “*portion in the G-d of Israel*” that the Jewish people possess is *The Oral Law*, the special hidden light that was given to them and them alone. *The Written Law* can technically be accessed by all people, as we know, the single most sold book in the world is the Bible!

Rav Gedalia Schorr zt”l⁴ explains the connection between *The Oral Law* and the Yom Tov of Chanukah. The Tur⁵ writes that the words from *Birchas HaTorah*, “אשר נתן לנו תורת אמת” – *Who selected us from all the nations and gave us His Torah* – corresponds to *The Written Law*, and the words “וחיי עולם נטע בתוכנו” – *An eternal life He planted within us* – corresponds to *The Oral Law*. *The Oral Law* was arranged and hidden specifically inside of us: בתוך נפשותיהן של ישראל – *in the souls of the Jewish people*. Our ability to grasp Torah

2. The Oral Law so happens to be comprised of 36 *Mesechtos*!

3. See מדרש רבה (בראשית ב:ד)

4. See ספר אור גדליהו (חנוכה מאמרים א-ג)

5. Orach Chaim Siman 139



is only because it is already a part of our souls, within our essence. Whereas the root of the souls of the Jewish people are pure, not so are the souls of the nations of the world. Their souls come from a place of impurity, which is why they have absolutely no connection to *The Oral Law*, something that was only hidden in the souls of holiness and purity, the souls of the Jews. Because *The Oral Law* is not part of their souls, that means they have absolutely no grasp and connection to it.

Rabbi Schorr explains that in the Mishkan⁶ there were two vessels that represented the Torah: the Aron (Ark) and the Menorah. The Ark was inside the *paroches* (curtain), and the Menorah was outside the *paroches*. The Ark, which contained the *Luchos* which were G-d given, symbolized Hashem's communication to the Jewish people by means of *The Written Law*. The Menorah, which stood outside the *paroches*, was lit by man, and was a testimony to the *Shechina* resting amidst the souls of the Jewish people; thus, the Menorah, symbolized *The Oral Law*, showing man's involvement in the Torah, to add and create.⁷ Since *The Oral Law* represented the purity of the souls of the Jews, that is why the primary battle of the Greeks over the Jews was specifically against *The Oral Law*; *The Oral Law* and what it represented was

6. And the Bais HaMikdash

7. Of course, the Chachamim cannot actually add a mitzvah in the Torah, however, through the power of *mesorah*, *chiddush*, etc. the Torah can be explained and understood properly.



the primary difference that separated the Jews from the non-Jews. And the Greeks wanted to get rid of this separation.

This, explains Rabbi Schorr, is why the miracle of Chanukah was with the Menorah, the very vessel that represented the secret holy light of *The Oral Law*. When the Kohanim came and the Menorah was kindled in purity, they realized that there was a ניצחון, *a great victory*. They understood that the wisdom of *The Oral Law* prevailed and overcame the wisdom of the Greeks.

Rabbi Nota Schiller shlit"א⁸ writes: *The blessing we say when lighting the Chanukah lights is "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us to light the flame of Chanukah." Where are we commanded? Which verse in the Torah mandates such? The oblique origin of this mitzvah is its very strength: Because the Torah endows our Sages with the initiative in each generation to legislate for the Jewish people, a mitzvah such as Chanukah symbolizes the power of The Oral Torah. That which the Greeks sought to extinguish is symbolized in the light that illuminates the darkness of exile.*

We see how just how close the connection is between Chanukah and *The Oral Law*.

But this chapter would not be complete without showing the incredible connection between *The Oral Law* and the dove, our main character!

8. Rosh Yeshiva of Ohr Sameach, Yerushalayim



Amazingly, there is a fascinating teaching from the Chasam Sofer,⁹ who draws a parallel between the dove and *The Oral Law*. When Noach sent out the raven, the raven refused to go on its mission, giving all sorts of excuses.¹⁰ The reason why the raven refused to go on its mission was because Hashem had not commanded it to do so. When all the living creatures entered the Teivah, Hashem commanded that they not leave until He granted them permission to do so. The raven, therefore, chose not to listen to Noach, who seemed to be commanding it to do something against the Will of Hashem. The refusal of the raven seemed to make sense!

However, the Chasam Sofer explains that therein lied the mistake of the raven. It was an *apikores* – a heretic – since it only believed in Hashem, but not in the power of the Chachamim! The raven listened to Hashem, but only to an extent. The Torah itself teaches that we must listen to the Chachamim, to the great Sages. We must not deviate from *their* words! Noach knew that Hashem had not granted permission for anyone to leave yet. However, he also knew that Hashem gave a special power to the Chachamim to uproot something from Hashem in certain pressing situations!¹¹

9. See (פרשת נח ד"ה וישלח...)

10. See Sanhedrin 108b

11. In the Chasam Sofer's words: אך נח ידע שיש כח ביד חכמים לעקור דבר היכא שהשעה צריכה לכך



The mistake of the raven was that it did not believe in this power of the Chachamim!

This notion that the Chachamim have the power to uproot a Torah matter if necessary is one of the foundational aspects of *The Oral Law*. The raven was considered a heretic since it only listened to Hashem and not to the Chachamim! The raven did not believe in *The Oral Law*.

The Jewish people are compared to the dove, which – by listening to Noach “instead” of Hashem – became the first creature technically to display its appreciation and respect for *The Oral Law*. When the dove chose to listen to Noach, it tapped in to the very essence of *The Oral Law*!

This Chanukah, when we stand by the light of the Menorah, let us remember that the emanating light represents *The Oral Law* which is actually hidden in our souls. And let us, like the dove, display our appreciation and respect for *The Oral Law*. Chanukah is a Yom Tov that reminds us about the importance of having teachers, mentors, and Rebbeim. It is a Yom Tov that educates us about the importance of Mesorah and the power of the Chachamim. When we listen to our Rebbeim and Gedolim, we are showing our utmost respect and admiration for *The Oral Law*.



The Passuk in Shir HaShirim¹² writes: הַנֶּגַד יָפֵה עֵינַיִךְ יוֹנִים – *Behold, you are beautiful, with your dove-like eyes.* The Midrash¹³ says that this is a reference to Sanhedrin. The great Sages, the Chachamim, that made up the Sanhedrin were likened to a pair of eyes. These were people that were so big and great, that their level of Divine wisdom enabled them to see the world with a lofty sense of vision.

When we value *The Oral Law* and respect our great Chachamim, we will merit a special illumination, thus allowing us to see the world properly, correctly, and in line with the Will of Hashem.



12. Shir HaShirim, Chapter 1, Passuk 15

13. See מדרש שיר השירים רבה (א:טו). osla eeS מדרש תנחומא (תצוה ו)



Chapter 12

THE UNIQUE DRINKING METHOD OF THE DOVE

One of the unique characteristics of the dove is how it drinks up liquid. The Gemarah¹ states that the dove drinks by sucking up liquid in a continuous draft – a process assisted by muscular contraction of the esophagus – which is different from the way most other birds drink. Most birds drink by lowering their beaks into the liquid, then tilting their heads backwards, allowing the liquid to enter their throat and stomach. The dove, however, inserts its bill into the liquid, and with a special pumping action, sucks the liquid up.

Whereas the dove's method of drinking allows for a clean and smooth consumption of the liquid, the method used by the other birds causes "backwash." The Gemarah² says that when all birds – except for the dove – drink from a vessel filled with *Chatas* water,³

1. See Chullin 62b

2. Ibid.

3. *Chatas* water is water that has ashes of the Red Cow – פרה אדומה – mixed into it; it is used to purify peoples and objects from טמאת מת, *corpse tumah*.



it invalidates the purity of that water and it becomes disqualified. This is because a bird normally drinks by scooping up the water in its lower beak and then lifting its head to swallow, thereby allowing some water to dribble from its mouth back into the vessel. But if a dove drinks from that same vessel, it would not invalidate the purity of the water, since the dove sucks the water straight, resulting in no water dribbling back into the vessel.

If we think about this unique drinking quality of the dove, we can learn a powerful lesson as it relates to our lives. In the case of the Gemarah, the birds are obviously thirsty, which is why they drink from the vessel filled with water. The dove, which uses a sucking action, does not negatively impact the water; however, the other birds – which merely tilt their heads – do negatively impact the water.

One of the great Torah ideals and values is to not attain personal gain at the expense of someone else. If, in the process of trying to excel in your service of Hashem and Torah study, you find yourself hurting others and trampling them along the way, then that is a sure sign that what you are doing is not genuine, truthful, and ideal. Rav Elimelech Biderman *shlit"א* relates that someone once asked the Chofetz Chaim to reveal to him the secret of the *Hakafos* (dancing with the Torah in circles) on the Yom Tov of Shemini Atzeres/Simchas Torah. The Chofetz Chaim responded, “*When one is covered in his Tallis and is clutching the Sefer Torah, he must be so careful to not step on the foot of his friend... this is the secret of the Hakafos!*”



Dancing with the Torah is so wonderful, special, and beautiful. However, if a person tramples upon others in the process, then his dancing and clutching of the Torah is not really meaningful and worthwhile.

When most birds drink from the *Chatas* water vessel, they negatively impact something else in the process. While they are in the process of attaining a personal gain of becoming quenched, they make the remaining water in the vessel impure and disqualified. However, not so when it comes to the dove. The dove drinks in a special way where it gains,⁴ however, it does not negatively impact the remaining water in the process.

This attitude of the dove is an important quality that we – who are compared to the dove – should try and strive to emulate. We all want to grow, achieve, and accomplish. We all, deep down, want to get closer to Hashem. But, if in the process of “trying to get closer to Hashem” we find ourselves “stepping” on other people and “trampling” them, that shows something is wrong with our approach, and we should find another route.

Rav Naftali Halberstam זצ”ל⁵ says that he heard one time from a great man a fascinating reason why צדיקים – *righteous people* – are called צדיק, like the letter “צ” (pronounced *Tzadik*) in the *Aleph-Bais*. The great man explained that if you look at the shape

4. It becomes quenched

5. See דברי נפתלי, pg. 427



of a "צ", it has a bent back, and on top of it is a letter "י" – *yud*. Similarly, a Tzadik is someone that "bends his back" to be able to carry on his shoulders every single *yud*, i.e. *yid*! When asked, "What about the letter כ (aleph), which not only has a *yud* on top, but a *yud* on bottom as well?", the great man answered that the Tzadik is more like the letter "צ" than the letter "כ" because at the time and moment when the Tzadik is carrying one *yid* on his shoulders, he is not trampling another *yid* underneath him!

If you think about it, the difference between יון, *the Greeks*, and ציון, which represents *the Jews*, is the letter "צ" – *Tzadik*. The Greeks lived their lives servicing themselves, even at the expense of others. They were like the birds that drank from a vessel to quench their thirst, and in the process, made the rest of the water impure. They lived in an egotistical bubble, simply ignoring the needs and feelings of other people.

However, the Jews – referred to as ציון – live their lives gaining and growing, though not at the expense of others along the way. The letter "צ" has a numerical value of 90, the same as חנוכה.⁶ On the Yom Tov of Chanukah, we can connect to the letter "צ" which, as we've seen from Rav Halberstam, is symbolic of a great person that is bent over and carrying a *yud* (*a yid*), without trampling on another *yid* in the process!

6. The gematria of חנוכה is 89, plus the 90 = כולל



One more thought on this topic. There is a Halacha when it comes to lighting Chanukah candles that really brings this idea home. Rav Shlomo Ganzfried *zt”l*, in his *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*,⁷ writes the following: *יהיה הפסק בין נר לנר, שלא יתקרב הלהב של זה לזה ויהיה כמו מדורה, ובנרות של שעוה יהיה הפסק שלא יתחמם זה מזה ויטוף לזה ויהיה כזה – There should be a space between each light, so that the flames do not draw close to one another, which would give the appearance of a torch. With wax candles, there should be enough of a space between each one, so that they are not heated by one another, causing the wax to drip and the candles to be ruined.*

How incredible is this?! The Halacha is that we must keep the candles of the Menorah positioned in a row, equal in *height*, however, each candle should not be too close to the other, which could potentially ruin the adjacent candles. My friends, this is the same idea we have been discussing! We, like the candles, must strive to be lit, “on fire” in our service of Hashem, and produce light. However, we cannot be “too close” to the other candles in a way that can end up hurting and damaging them along the way, in our process of becoming closer to Hashem.

Remember, if you are “on fire” and producing light, keep doing what you are doing. However, if you are “burning” others and causing them to “melt,” maybe you should readjust, rethink, and redirect what it is that you are doing.

7. *ספר קיצור שלחן ערוך (הלכות חנוכה סימן קלט סעיף ט)*



One of the primary differences between us, who are called ציון, and the Greeks, who are called ἵν, is the letter "צ". Let us connect to what it means to be a Tzadik, and to learn the art of accomplishing great things, without stepping on others along the way.





Chapter 13

THE FINAL RETURN OF THE DOVE

After the dramatic return of the dove to Noah with the olive leaf in its mouth, the Torah¹ tells us that Noah sent the dove out one last time: *וייחל עוד שבעת ימים אחרים וישלח את היונה ולא יספה שוב אליו עוד* – *He waited again for another seven days, and he sent out the dove, but it did not return to him any more.* Immediately, then, the Torah digresses from the dove saga and tells us about the events of Noah and his family leaving the Teivah. The dramatic back and forth with the dove is over, and for the remainder of the Torah, we do not hear about this dove again. But what, indeed, did happen to the dove? Where did it go? What mission did it embark on?

The dove that saved the day and “brought light to the world” seemed to have just vanished. Disappeared. Gone!

The Torah leaves us hanging, in the dark, in sheer and utter mystery. *וייחל עוד שוב אליו עוד* – *it did not return to him any more.* Reading these words gives me the chills. Where on earth could

1. Parshas Noach, Chapter 8, Passu, 12



the dove have possibly gone? What was – or is – the last mission of the dove?

The Zohar² reveals to us something astonishing. He says that hidden by the door of a certain tower, there is a most magnificent crown of gold, elaborately engraved and embellished with all kinds of precious stones. When the time comes, this crown is going to be placed on the head of מלך המשיח – *the Moshiach*, and he will descend that tower. But who will be the one to place this precious crown upon the head of Moshiach? The Zohar reveals to us that it will be none other than ***the dove*** from the Noach story.

When Noach sent out the dove the last time, לא ידע אדם לאן הלכה – *no one knew where it went*, because it had returned to its designated place by the door of that certain tower, next to the magnificent crown, waiting for the opportune time to finally place the crown on the head of Moshiach!

In Parshas Noach, each time the dove is referenced, the Torah says היונה – ***the dove***, with the ה"א הידיעה, *a definite article*, as if describing a particular dove. Well guess what? That very same dove, says the Zohar, which was sent off but did not return, will indeed return, one day in the near future, may it be soon. However, when the dove does make its final return, it will not be carrying an olive leaf in its mouth; instead, it will be carrying

2. See Zohar to Shelach (146)



the magnificent crown of Moshiach in its mouth, and it will place it upon his head!

As mentioned already a few times throughout the *sefer*, the Torah highlights the timing – לעת ערב, *in the evening* – of when the dove returned with the olive leaf in its mouth. This was the moment when light was brought into the world, that unforgettable moment that would have everlasting ramifications, and would end up reflecting the very light of Moshiach at the End of Days.

Rebbe Nosson of Breslov³ relates a startling teaching. The very same phrase – לעת ערב – that is used in the dove story is also used in the Passuk describing the End of Days. The Passuk in Zecharia⁴ states: והיה לעת ערב יהיה אור - *it will happen towards the evening time that there will be light*. This Passuk is talking about the End of Days, when the might and wonders of Hashem will become revealed; there will be a tremendous clarity and light that brightens up the darkness of exile. Rebbe Nosson explains that the dove returning towards the evening with the olive leaf in its mouth is an allusion to the oil of the Chanukah Menorah as well as an allusion to the End of Days!

The name for the Yom Tov of Chanukah – חנוכה – comes from the word חינוך, *education*. What does this mean? What education is associated with Chanukah? What is Chanukah educating us about?

3. Likutei Halachos, Orach Chaim, Laws for Morning Blessings, 5:48

4. Chapter 14, Passuk 7



The Bnei Yissaschar⁵ tells us that the days of Chanukah are חנוך והרגל על לעתיד גאלה העתידה שאז יתגלה לנו האור הגנוז בשלמות – *educational practice for the future, when the hidden light will be revealed to us in its entirety.*

My friends, we each hope and pray (hopefully every day!) for the End of Days, for the arrival of Moshiach. We await, with baited breath, for the dove's final return with the magnificent crown of Moshiach perched in its mouth.

But we do not wait passively. We do not merely twiddle our thumbs, talk about it, and recite passages about the coming of Moshiach. As the Jewish nation – the ambassadors of Hashem – we wait **actively** for the arrival of Moshiach. We wait by living each day with excitement, passion, and a deep desire for spirituality and connection to Hashem. Practically speaking, we do this by acting in line with רצון השם – *the Will of Hashem*, through walking in His ways by means of performing His Mitzvos. The Gemarah⁶ compares the Jewish people to the dove: ...דדמא כנסת ישראל ליונה... – *The Jewish people are likened to a dove...Just as a dove is protected through its wings, so too, the Jewish people are protected through the Mitzvos!* From this Gemarah we see that the Mitzvos that we perform act

5. See ספר בני יששכר (מאמרי חדש כסלו מאמר ב' אור תורה)

6. Shabbos 130a



as our wings, which protects us and allows us to soar to incredibly lofty places.

The Ishbitzer Rebbe⁷ learns a powerful lesson from the Gemarah⁸ which teaches us that *a baby dove that hops will not hop far from the nest*. The Jewish people, who are compared to the dove, have this same quality. We have an especially close connection to Hashem, and every Jewish soul looks to Hashem for genuine closeness, as not to be immersed in his own desires and pleasures. Just as a baby dove will not hop too far from the mother's nest, so too we are meant to turn our heads from the impurity of the world, and look towards Hashem and think of His ways. No matter how far you think you may be from the nest, realize that you are much closer to Hashem than you think. Just turn your head, look inside, and connect to your inner self of truth and holiness. Remember, we learned that the soul of a person is called a dove. Just as a dove does not hop far from the nest, so too a soul does not hop far from Hashem.

Amidst a world filled with so much impurity, darkness, and negativity, we – the dove-like nation – carry a personal olive leaf, bringing our very own torch of holiness that is meant to light up the world.

7. See *מִן הַשִּׁילוּחַ* (חלק א ספר דברים ואתחנן, ו)

8. See Beitza 11a and Bava Basra 23a



It is my sincerest hope that you connected with all the wonderful lessons and ideas that we have gleaned from the incredible dove. May Hashem bless you with a life filled with meaning, purpose, vitality, and joy. And may we be the generation that merits to see the final return of the dove, this time with the crown of Moshiach perched in its mouth, thus signaling the end of our exile and the rebuilding of Bayis Shlishi. Amen!



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He is also the founder of Torah Sparks, a spiritually pulsating platform that provides Torah inspiration in the form of eye-catching *inspographics*, weekly Divrei Torah, relatable videos, and more. To join the Torah Sparks WhatsApp chat, to subscribe to the email list, for sponsorship opportunities, or to provide feedback, please reach out to oristrum@torahsparks.com

סדר הדלקת נרות זנוכה

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל זִנּוּכָה

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂה
נְסִים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֵמַן הַזֶּה

[בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהֲזִינָנו
וְקִיַּמָּנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֵמַן הַזֶּה]

הַנֵּרוֹת הַכֵּלוּ אֵנוּ מִדְּלִיקוֹן, עַל הַנְּסִים וְעַל
הַנְּפִלְאוֹת וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל הַמְּלֻחָמוֹת,
שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֵמַן הַזֶּה,
עַל יְדֵי כַּהֲנֵיךָ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים. וְכָל שְׂמוֹנֵת יָמֵי
הַזִּנּוּכָה הַנֵּרוֹת הַכֵּלוּ קִדְּשׁ הֵם וְאִין לָנוּ
רְשׁוּת לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהֶם, אֶלְא לְרְאוּתָם בְּלְבָד,
כְּדֵי לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל עַל נְסִיךָ
וְעַל נְפִלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְעַל יְשׁוּעָתֶךָ.

