

## The Rebbe

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זאת חנוכה, ה'תשל"ח

מצותה (של נר חנוכה)

With G-d's help. This is Chanukah, 5738 (1977)

א-The mitzvah (commandment) of Chanukah lights is from "when the sun sets until people cease walking in the marketplace," as explained regarding "until the feet of the Tarmodites cease." It is elucidated in the discourses of our Rebbeim (leaders) the difference between the Chanukah lights, the lights of the Temple, and the Shabbat candles. The lights of the Temple and Shabbat candles are lit during the daytime: the Temple lights were kindled from *plag hamincha* (about 1¼ hours before sunset), well before sundown. Similarly, Shabbat candles must be lit before sunset, in respect of Shabbat observance.

In contrast, the Chanukah lights are specifically lit after the sun sets. Although the Chanukah lights commemorate the miracle of the Temple lights, and logically their timing should align, especially since "all rabbinic ordinances are modeled after Torah law," nonetheless, the mitzvah of Chanukah lights is specifically from when the sun sets.

This is explained in the context of "when the sun sets" referring to the time of exile, which is likened to darkness. The reason for the darkness of exile is the spiritual darkness caused by sins, which are the opposite of "a mitzvah is a lamp, and Torah is light," as we say, "Because of our sins, we were exiled." Therefore, the mitzvah of Chanukah lights is to illuminate the darkness of exile. Indeed, the period of the Chanukah miracle (even though the Temple still stood) is also called an exile, specifically the Greek exile. During that time, and particularly before the miracle, the darkness was intense, as evident in the prayer "and for the miracles," which recounts the troubles and oppression of that era.

This is also why the time for lighting the Chanukah lamp is "until people cease walking in the marketplace," meaning until "the feet of the Tarmodites" are no longer present. The Tarmodites symbolize those who rebel against the Kingdom of Heaven (the word "Tarmod" shares letters with *moredet*, "rebellion"). They linger in the marketplace, representing the public domain, a fragmented and divisive realm.

The light of the Chanukah lamp combats and subdues "the feet of the Tarmodites," bringing about their cessation in both interpretations. The light of Chanukah not only overcomes but transforms rebellion, causing even those who oppose to ultimately be nullified and converted to a state of yearning and spiritual longing. Their thirst and yearning become ever stronger, as it is known that the thirst of those who return (penitents) is greater than the thirst of the righteous. This is because "the advantage of light comes specifically from the darkness."

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ב -It is known that every existence in the world, even those that oppose holiness, has its origin and root in holiness. (Moreover, our Sages said: "There is nothing besides Him," even sorcery, which appears to manipulate the heavenly forces.) However, there are matters that cannot be drawn from their source through a gradual chain of descent (even one involving countless levels), but rather require interruption, contraction, concealment, or even breaking.

From this, we understand regarding the aforementioned concepts—"from when the sun sets," "marketplace," and "Tarmodites"—that their origin and root are in holiness, but they come about through contraction, interruption, concealment, and breaking. (Similar to the concept of Pharaoh [in our Torah portion], whose root is in the highest aspect of holiness, as it is known that Pharaoh represents "that which is revealed and uncovered from him are all lights." Yet, through many levels of descent and breaking, this led to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, "the great serpent who lies in the midst of his rivers and says, 'The river is mine, and I made myself.'")

The very fact that they have fallen so low proves that their root is in a very lofty level, as the principle is: "The higher something is, the lower it falls." Therefore, by refining and elevating these matters that have fallen to the lowest depths (such as the refinement of Pharaoh, which was specifically through Moses our teacher, to whom a unique power was given for this, as expressed in the command "Come to Pharaoh"), they ascend to their root, which is of the highest level.

Furthermore, since every descent is for the purpose of ascent, their elevation after the refinement is even higher than their state in their root prior to the descent and fall.

ג -Based on this, we can understand what is stated in connection with the time "from when the sun sets," in the teaching of the *Zohar* on the verse, "And to its place it aspires; it shines there" (*Kohelet* 1:5): "When the sun goes to the west, this west is called the place of the sun." It is known that the explanation of this refers to the west as *Malchut* (so it is said, "The Shechinah is in the west").

"When the sun goes to the west" refers to the descent and diminishing of *Ze'ir Anpin* (the sun) into *Malchut*, to the extent that *Malchut* becomes the source of *Beriah* (creation), *Yetzirah* (formation), and *Asiyah* (action), until the light of *Atzilut* (emanation) sets. Nevertheless, this "west" is called "the place of the sun," for it is its true place. (The ultimate intent of the emanation of *Atzilut* is for the purpose of the creation of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and \**Asiyah*.)

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And specifically there, it shines, as the primary and true purpose of the shining is in *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. As explained in the holy book of *Tanya*, the higher worlds are considered a descent from the light of His blessed countenance. This is not the case with the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, especially this lowest world, where there is no lower realm below it. It is here that a dwelling place for Him, blessed be He, is made—a dwelling for His very essence (similar to a human dwelling, where the essence of the person resides).

As it is known, the created "something" (which perceives its existence as independent) is analogous to the "true Something." This explains why the mitzvah of the Chanukah light is "from when the sun sets," as the purpose of the Chanukah light is to illuminate the darkness of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah* (the "setting of the sun" of *Atzilut*). Through this, the shining is achieved, leading to the revelation and dwelling of His essence, as mentioned above.

ד-It can be said that the concept of "from when the sun sets" at an even lower level refers to the formation of the *kelipot* (spiritual shells or forces of concealment), a descent far removed from the light of holiness. Since "the higher something is, the lower it descends" (as mentioned above in section 2), the illumination achieved through this descent is an even loftier illumination than that brought about by the descent of the "sun of *Atzilut*" mentioned earlier.

This can be compared to the advantage in the formation of the specific *yesh* (independent existence) of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah* (the particular descent of *Atzilut*), as compared to the advantage in the formation of the general *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah* (the general descent of *Atzilut*). Specifically in the formation of the *yesh* of the particular *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, the power of the Divine essence is revealed. Furthermore, even within *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah* themselves, the primary revelation of this essential power is evident in the act of formation itself.

It is specifically within the physical *yesh* (material existence) that this is achieved. As it is stated: "When the *sitra achra* (the other side, forces of impurity) is subdued, the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, is revealed in all worlds." This is because the very existence of the *sitra achra* (brought about by the "setting of the sun" of holiness), and its subsequent subjugation and transformation, draws down a revelation of an exceedingly lofty light—light that is beyond the realm of revelation, which is why it is referred to as *istalek* ("withdrawn").

Through this process, the ultimate purpose of creation is fulfilled: that the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to have a dwelling place in the lowest realms. To achieve this

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purpose, the existence of the negative forces (*ra*) was necessary, as expressed by our Sages regarding the verse, "Awesome in His deeds towards mankind." This refers to the process by which the Holy One, blessed be He, "built worlds and destroyed them." This alludes to the creation of the world of *Tohu* (chaos) and its subsequent breaking, so that humanity (referred to as "Adam," aligned with the Divine likeness) would refine the sparks (those not refined by the higher realms) and elevate them through their service.

It is specifically through this work that the ultimate purpose of creation—making a dwelling place for the Divine in the lowest realms—is fulfilled.

ה-This is the explanation of "until the feet have ceased from the marketplace":

The first interpretation is that it refers to a matter of holiness. The "marketplace" (*shuk*) corresponds to "His thighs are pillars of marble" (*Song of Songs* 5:15), symbolizing the world for which the Holy One, blessed be He, longed to create. "Feet" (from the marketplace) alludes to the three pilgrimage festivals (*shalosh regalim*), representing the highest level of holiness, as our Sages said: "Just as one comes to be seen, so too one comes to see, and just as one comes to see, so too one comes to be seen."

The second interpretation, however, refers to the "marketplace" and the "public domain." The public domain symbolizes *turrei de'peruda* (mountains of separation), representing division. Within this marketplace are also found the Tarmodites, those who rebel against the sovereignty of Heaven (as "Tarmod" shares letters with *moredet*, "rebellion"). "Feet from the marketplace" refers to the "feet of the Tarmodites," meaning that in this marketplace exist rebels who also walk within it ("feet" indicating movement), using and operating within the marketplace.

These two interpretations are interconnected. The reason the Holy One, blessed be He, longed to create the world (the first interpretation of the marketplace) is to establish a dwelling place for Him, blessed be He, in the lowest realms—this physical world, which is the lowest of all in terms of the concealment of His light. Therefore, the world was created in a way that allowed for multiplicity and division, as represented by the public domain (the second interpretation of the marketplace), giving room for error. This multiplicity allows for free choice, as in the verse: "And you shall choose life," which requires the possibility of making a mistake.

It is specifically through the creation of the world in a manner that appears as a "public domain," with the potential for division and error, that humanity—through their service—transforms the world into a "private domain" for the One Who is uniquely One.

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Through this transformation, the longing ("thighs" or "desire") of the Holy One, blessed be He, in creating the world is fulfilled: to have a dwelling place in the lowest realms.

I-The delight (*ta'anug*, longing) above that results from a person transforming the *shuk* (marketplace), the public domain (*reshut harabim*, representing division and separation) into a private domain (*reshut hayachid*), and from turning darkness into light (*it'hapcha chashocha l'nehora*), is the highest form of delight. As it is known regarding the concept of joy (*tzchok*), which is a form of delight that specifically comes from novelty. This applies similarly, so to speak, to the delight and joy above, which results from the novelty of transforming darkness into light—a greater delight than all other delights in the world.

It can be said that this is what is meant when it is stated, "Whoever teaches Torah to the child of an ignorant person, even if the Holy One, blessed be He, decrees a decree, it is annulled for his sake," as it is written: "If you extract the precious from the worthless, you shall be My mouth." The reasoning is as follows: when a tzaddik (righteous person) annuls the decree of the Holy One, blessed be He (even though he knows that the decree was made by G-d), it is because this itself is G-d's will—that the tzaddik annul the decree. This brings great satisfaction (*nachat ruach*) and immense delight to the Holy One, blessed be He.

This is similar to the teaching of our Sages: "What does the Holy One, blessed be He, do at that moment? He laughs and says, 'My children have defeated Me, My children have defeated Me.'" From this "defeat" by His children, an immense delight, joy, and laughter are generated above. Just as this is true in matters of *halacha* (Jewish law), where the Holy One, blessed be He, laughs and says, "My children have defeated Me," it is also true regarding worldly matters, the conduct of the world, and G-d's decrees. From this too, the Holy One, blessed be He, derives great satisfaction and immense delight.

This is akin to the teaching of our Sages regarding the sanctification of the month: "You [the Jewish people] even if intentionally errant—when you sanctify the month against Torah laws, it is nevertheless sanctified." In such instances, the Holy One, blessed be He, says to the Heavenly Court: "I and you will go to the earthly court." This highlights the delight and joy generated above when humanity refines and rectifies the sparks, extracting the precious from the worthless.

Therefore, when one teaches and spreads Torah to even the child of an ignorant person, it is said that "the Holy One, blessed be He, decrees, and the tzaddik annuls it," because the delight and joy above are created through the tzaddik's efforts. Thus, the

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Holy One, blessed be He, decrees, and the tzaddik annuls it, and G-d, so to speak, laughs and says, "My children have defeated Me, My children have defeated Me."

τ-The concept mentioned above (Section 5)—that the purpose of the concealments and obscurities in the world is to enable free choice (*"u'vacharta ba'chayim"* / "you shall choose life")—provides strength and encouragement to a person not to be disheartened by seeing that the world is filled with *kelipot* (impurities) and *sitra achra* (the opposing forces of holiness), a reality likened to a marketplace (*shuk*) or public domain, where *Tarmodites* (rebels against the sovereignty of Heaven) are present and even walk within it, as previously explained. This very state of the world exists so that a person may overcome and transform it.

This idea is akin to what is explained in the work *Tzavaat HaRivash* (the Will of the Baal Shem Tov), which teaches that when a person prays with intention (*kavanah*) and encounters a gentile who disturbs and confuses their prayer by speaking, this disturbance itself should inspire the person to pray with even deeper intention, from the depths of their heart. By contemplating that the vitality of the gentile derives from the Divine speech and breath of G-d, which animates and sustains them even as they speak words that disturb one's prayer—and that within those very words lies the Divine speech in a state of exile—the person is moved to pray with greater focus and intensity.

Not only does this enable the person to avoid being disturbed by the gentile's words, continuing to pray as if there were no interruption, but even more so, the disturbance itself evokes an added inspiration to pray. This is because the sparks of holiness embedded within the disturbance are of an exceedingly lofty source (precisely because they have fallen to such a low state). By extracting these sparks from the *kelipot*, by "bringing forth the precious from the vile," their elevated source is revealed. This elevation grants the person additional strength in their service.

Particularly in light of what was explained earlier (Section 2) regarding the principle of descent for the sake of ascent, the elevation following the descent reaches a higher level than the state prior to the descent. The same applies to the elevation of the sparks: after their descent (and refinement), they ascend to a level even higher than their original root (which itself is exceedingly lofty). One could even suggest that their elevation surpasses the concept of "exceedingly lofty," reaching a state beyond any framework of "higher" or "lower." Through the work of refining the sparks, the ultimate purpose of creation is fulfilled: making a dwelling place for G-d in the lowest realms—a dwelling for His very essence, which transcends any categorization of high or low.

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This is analogous to the concept of the "cessation of the feet of the Tarmodites." Not only are the rebels (*Tarmodites*) nullified and eradicated, but within them, the process of refinement and elevation of their sparks leads them back to their original source. Thus, the ultimate goal is achieved: transforming the lowest into a revelation of the highest.

n-Based on this, we can also understand the connection between the two interpretations of "feet (from the marketplace)." One interpretation refers to the "feet" of *kelipah* and impurity (*r'igla d'Tarmodai*), while the other refers to the three pilgrimage festivals (*shalosh regalim*) of holiness.

The refinement and elevation of the sparks within the "feet" of the opposing forces (*r'igla d'Tarmodai*), through which the process of their nullification and transformation (*kilya r'igla d'Tarmodai*) is achieved, is intrinsically connected to the holiness of the *shalosh regalim*. Through this process, the opposing forces are not only nullified but also elevated and integrated into the ultimate sanctity and purpose of creation.

This is achieved through the service of the three pilgrimage festivals (*shalosh regalim*). The idea is as follows: It is known that the difference between the worlds of *Tohu* (chaos) and *Tikkun* (rectification) lies in the configuration of the *sefirot*. In *Tohu*, the *sefirot* exist in two distinct dimensions (*beis kadin*), whereas in *Tikkun*, they are aligned along three interconnected lines (*gimel kevin*). The refinement of the sparks from *Tohu* that fell into the opposing realm (*r'igla d'Tarmodai* of the other side) is achieved by elevating them into the framework of *Tikkun*, which operates along the structure of the three lines—the concept of the three pilgrimage festivals in holiness.

In human service, this corresponds to the "three pillars upon which the world stands"—both the microcosm of the human being (the *small world*) and the macrocosm of the entire universe, this physical and lowly world, which has no lower level. Upon this physical world depend and are sustained all the worlds and the entire order of creation.

This is the meaning of the verse regarding Jacob, "Behold, G-d stood over him." As our Sages explain, "The G-d of the righteous stands over them," indicating that the Divine Presence (*Elokut*) is "standing" (metaphorically supported) upon our actions and service. This is especially true during the time of exile, when through the refinement of the darkness of exile, this state of *Elokut* "standing over them" is achieved.

Furthermore, this can even be accomplished through the service of a "small finger" (minimal effort). As is well-known from the ruling of the Rambam, through a single mitzvah—whether in thought, speech, or action—a person can tip the balance for themselves and for the entire world towards merit, bringing salvation and deliverance.

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Based on all the above, we can also understand the connection between the eight days of Chanukah and the eight days of Sukkot, as explained at length in the earlier discourse (*Tanu Rabbanan: Mitzvat Ner Chanukah*), based on the teachings of our Rebbeim. The eight days of Chanukah correspond to the eight days of Sukkot. Just as during Sukkot, it is achieved that "Praise G-d, all nations; extol Him, all peoples, for His kindness has overwhelmed us,"—meaning that the overwhelming revelation of kindness (*chesed*) not only affects Israel but also inspires the nations and peoples of the world to praise and extol G-d—so too during Chanukah, the effect extends even to the nations and peoples.

As mentioned earlier (end of Section 1 and Section 7), the concept of *kilya r'igla d'Tarmodai* (the cessation of the rebellious feet) reflects how the light of the Chanukah candles acts upon even the rebellious forces, bringing them to a state of *kilyon* (nullification) and *klot hanefesh* (soulful yearning for G-d).

While during Sukkot, the revelation of "His kindness has overwhelmed us" (referring to the higher surrounding lights, *makifim elyonim*) is complete and openly manifest, this is not the case during Chanukah. During Chanukah, a war was required, as is known from the decision of the Alter Rebbe, who clarified that the final victory of the war occurred on the 24th of Kislev. In contrast, the 25th of Kislev was already a day of rest—this is the meaning of *Chanukah (chanu kaf-hei)*, "they rested on the 25th." On this day, the Temple was purified, the menorah was lit, and they celebrated in the courtyards of the Holy Temple.

This culminated in the establishment of a day to "give thanks and praise to Your great Name." This represents a profoundly elevated state, as explained in the discourses on the Exodus from Egypt regarding the concept of "His great Name."

It is written regarding Sukkot, the "Time of Our Rejoicing" (*zman simchateinu*)—in the plural form—because it reflects the two joys: "G-d rejoices in His works" and "Israel rejoices in their Maker." Even though both use the future tense (*yismach*), indicating that their primary fulfillment will be in the future, the fact that Sukkot is called the "Time of Our Rejoicing" in the present demonstrates that these two forms of joy are also revealed now during Sukkot.

Similarly, the concept of *kilya r'igla d'Tarmodai* (the cessation of the rebellious feet) is connected to the influence upon the nations of the world during the days of Chanukah. While the ultimate fulfillment of this will occur in the future, as it is written, "Then I will transform the nations into a clear language to serve G-d with one accord," nevertheless, it is already achieved in some measure during Chanukah. This is like what occurred "in

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those days," when the dominion of the wicked Greek empire was nullified, even though complete redemption had not yet been achieved. (This is evident from the fact that the Second Temple lacked certain key aspects both before and after the Chanukah story.)

Similarly, "in those days at this time," even though we are still in the period of exile—prior even to the initial stages of redemption—through the actions and service of each individual (who were also part of the miracle of Chanukah) during the time of exile, especially during Chanukah, whose primary observance is lighting the Chanukah candles at the entrance to one's home facing outward, we achieve *kilya r'igla d'Tarmodai* (in both interpretations mentioned earlier) even before the redemption.

This parallels the redemption from Egypt (all exiles are named after Egypt), when "all the Children of Israel had light in their dwellings" even while still in Egypt. Through this, they "emptied Egypt," leaving it like a net with no grain (refining the sparks of the revealed world) and like a deep sea with no fish (refining the sparks of the concealed world). Similarly, even now, in the final moments before redemption, all the Children of Israel will have light in their dwellings, leading directly—immediately and without delay—to the complete redemption, when *kilya r'igla d'Tarmodai* will be fully achieved.

יד-Through our actions and service, we bring the redemption closer and hasten its arrival even more. As ruled by the Rambam, even a single mitzvah can bring salvation and deliverance to the entire world. How much more so when one studies and spreads the inner dimension of the Torah, which has been revealed specifically in these recent generations (as is known regarding "those who taste it will merit life"), for the greatness of Torah study is that it leads to action.

This study of the inner dimension of Torah also enhances vitality and beauty in the performance of mitzvot, leading to observance in a manner of *mehadrin min hamehadrin* (the most meticulous observance), as exemplified by the widespread custom of lighting the Chanukah candles according to this standard. Through this, we further hasten the redemption, and very soon we will greet our righteous Mashiach, who will teach Torah to the entire nation (the ultimate perfection of Torah study).

At that time, we will perform all the mitzvot fully in accordance with G-d's will (the ultimate perfection in mitzvah observance), and a great congregation will return here, all to give thanks and praise to Your great Name in the Third Holy Temple, the eternal house, "the Sanctuary, O Lord, that Your hands have established." May this happen speedily in our days, truly.