



GLOBAL WOMEN'S CAMPAIGN TO LEARN
לע"נ הרב מנחם מענדל ע"ה בן יבלח"ט הרב ישראל שיחי

Chodesh Kislev

לקוטי שיחות חלק ט"ו

When we light the Menorah on Chanukah, we remember the Menorah that was lit in the Beis Hamikdash, that managed to burn for eight days, on oil that was meant to be enough for just one day.

However, we know that the lighting of Menorah also celebrates many of the other miracles of those times. In the **נסים**, תשועות we sing after we light the Menorah, we say that these lights are to remember the **נסים**, תשועות and **נפלאות** that Hashem did for us.

It is interesting to note that at the end of הנרות הללו we also thank and praise Hashem for the **נסים**, תשועות and **נפלאות**, and there they are listed in a different order.

נסים

Refers to an outright supernatural miracle that is higher than nature. Anyone, even someone who doesn't believe in Hashem, would concede that something out of the natural order of the world has occurred.

נפלאות

This refers to "wonders". There is no breaking of the natural order of the world, and what happened can be explained according to nature, yet it is improbable and one can clearly see the hand of Hashem helping and guiding the events. These are like miracles but they are done through the natural order of the world.

(Side bar: When the Alter Rebbe was freed from jail on י"ט כסלו, he described it as הפליא. His redemption from jail was accomplished through many efforts on many fronts including putting pressure on government officials, but it was certainly wondrous and not the expected, usual outcome.)

ישועות

Salvations are a description of Hashem's help when the fight against the enemy is an equal fight. According to nature the war can truly go either way and Hashem sends a **ישועה**, a salvation and with His help we are victorious. One can easily deny the existence of **ישועות** and claim that there was a reasonable chance of winning without any input from Hashem.

The beginning of הנרות הללו tells over the story, why we are lighting these candles tonight. Therefore the story is said in it's correct chronological order.

First there was the **תשועות** when the **חשמונאים** stopped some Greek soliders from offering a non kosher animal on a מזבח in מודיעין. It was a small group of soldiers and the Yidden managed to overcome them and get rid of them. This continued to happen many times following this, when the **חשמונאים** came across and fought small groups of troops and were victorious.

Until the big battle. The big battle was the clear **נס**. On one side you had a tiny army of inexperienced bochurim and older men. On the other side you had a huge army full of mighty, expertly trained warriors, fully equipped with the most advanced warfare technologies of the times. Yet, impossibly, the small army was victorious. This is a clear miracle, inconceivable in the natural order of the world.



Following the victory, the Yidden went to look for oil with which to light the Menorah. Here we see the נפלאות of Hashem. The Greeks had very deliberately entered the לשכת השמנים - the room in the בית המקדש where the oil is kept and broke the seal of every single bottle of oil there. The fact that they found one bottle left intact, in a different room, under a floor tile is truly remarkable, a wonder!

Later on in הנרות הללו, when we thank and praise Hashem's great name, להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול, the order is different. When we thank and praise Hashem we list them in the order in which a person gets emotional and gets excited to sing thanks and praise to Hashem. First the נסים are mentioned because they are the most impressive, then the, נפלאות, and then the ישועות.

On חנוכה we thank Hashem not only for the miracles that He did for us in those days but also for the wonders and even the natural salvations.

This is true not only on חנוכה, but also year round. It's important for us to recognize and thank Hashem for all the amazing things that happen to us throughout our day. Even the normal things like being ready in the morning on time, or successfully cooking a meal are worthy of us thanking Hashem.

Story

Every day the old water carrier passed by the study hall with his pails. Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov often stood outside the front door and talked with his disciples. Whenever he saw the water carrier, he interrupted their conversation and would ask him, "Berel, my good man, how are you doing today?" The water carrier would usually offer a polite response, "*Baruch Hashem*, thank G-d!" and continue on his way.

But one day the water carrier had a look of melancholy in his face. "Rebbe, it's nice of you to ask a poor man, but how should I feel? Not good! No! Day in and day out I carry these heavy pails. My back hurts, I am getting older, you know. . . My boots are in tatters, but I have no money for new ones. My family is large. The burden is too much. My children need food, shoes and clothes, and . . . ach, it's too much to even begin talking about . . . And those new houses at the end of the town want more and more water, and they are built up on the slope of the hill, and the water is so heavy, and I am so tired, so very tired . . ." And with a sigh he picked up his pails and walked away dragging his feet, with a twisted back and bent shoulders. He did not look back. The Baal Shem Tov said nothing.

A few days later the Baal Shem Tov again stood in front of the synagogue with his students when the water carrier passed by. "Berel, good to see you, how are you today?" The water carrier stood still. He beamed. "*Baruch Hashem*, Rebbe, I am doing fine. I have work, so I earn money to feed my family. I am blessed, because I have a large family, so many sweet children . . . I am happy that I can buy them food to eat and pay their teachers. And those new houses they recently built at the hill need a lot of water, that's extra income for me. *Baruch Hashem!* Thank you for asking a simple man how he is doing. *Baruch Hashem*, G-d is good to me!"

The Baal Shem Tov smiled and blessed him with some encouraging words. The water carrier lifted his heavy buckets and went joyfully on his way, and the water in his pails reflected the light of the sun.

The Baal Shem Tov's disciples were puzzled. Why was the old water carrier so much happier all of a sudden, with his same pair of tattered boots and his same old pails of water?

The Master of the Good Name looked at his disciples and knew what they were thinking. "Did you hear what Berel just said?" he asked them. "He said *Baruch Hashem*, thank G-d, because he knows that all blessings and everything else comes from G-d. A few days ago he did not seem to remember that, he did not thank G-d for his lot, so he was depressed. Even when things are difficult, there is always so much to be thankful for, so you praise and thank G-d. You acknowledge that all you receive is from G-d, and you feel better. Berel's pails are as heavy today as they were a few days ago, and he is still poor, but his perspective has changed. Now he sees what is important and what is not, and he is very aware of the One who provides him with everything he has. As a result, he is happy and content."

(From Chabad.org)