



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR
DIRECTOR, TORAH INITIATIVES, OU ISRAEL

As we look ahead to the coming week with excitement and anticipation of celebrating *Chanukah*, it is important to consider not only the historical significance of this joyous and festive time of year, but also the eternal relevance and meaning inherent in these days of joy.

The Amshinover Rebbe, zy'a explained that *Chanukah* is really a window that allows us to gaze at the lights of eternity, the light which permeates our homes throughout *Chanukah* via the *neirot* we kindle each night, is a glimpse of the lights of eternity. The world was created in seven days, so the eight days of *Chanukah* represent moving beyond the world of nature and creation, and opening ourselves up to miracles, to events which can change us for all eternity.

The **Ohalei Yaakov, Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, zy'a of Husiyatin**, was a great Chasidic Rebbe who made *aliya* to *Tel Aviv* in 1938, narrowly escaping the Nazi onslaught, to live the last nineteen years of his life in *Artzeinu HaKedosha*. The Rebbe *zt'l*, lived during those difficult years of the *Shoah*, the early struggles to build the State of Israel, and the very challenging early years of *Medinat Yisrael*. His powerful teachings often give us not only incredibly deep and insightful messages of *chizuk* and hope, but also a glimpse of life in *Tel Aviv* during this important period in Jewish history. One particularly beautiful teaching was shared by the Rebbe during *Chanukah* of 1951.

Chasidim have the tradition to greet one another on *Chanukah* with the greeting of *Gmar Chatima Tova* (which of course means may we be sealed for good, and is most commonly associated with *Yom Kippur*), as *Chanukah* represents the finalization of the sealing of that which was inscribed during the *Yamim Noraim*. Now, this *Chanukah*, this greeting of *Gmar Chatima Tova*, takes on a dual meaning. Men from *Yerushalayim* recently visited to ask how we should view the new State which has taken hold here in *Artzeinu HaKedosha*, and I answered that it represents the *Atchalta DeGeula*, the beginning stage of our redemption. If indeed we have merited to see the beginning of our redemption, then as we wish one another *Gmar Chatima tova*, this *Chanukah*, may we merit to see the *gmar*, the completion of our redemption, may we merit to greet *Mashiach Tzidkaynu* this *Chanukah*! As our Master, **Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz, zy'a** taught, each *Chanukah*, as we kindle our lights, we are given a glimpse of the light of *Mashiach*. From the *Chanukah* lights, will come forth the light of *Mashiach Tzidkaynu*...

The Rebbe of *Husiyatin* cited the great student of the *Baal Shem Tov*, *Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz* that our *Chanukah* lights symbolize the hope and longing for *Mashiach*.

It is also taught in the name of *Reb Pinchas MiKoritz* that the letters on the *dreidel*, **Nun, Sheen, Hay, Gimmel** represent an acronym—not solely our familiar acronym associated with the miraculous nature of the *Chanukah* story, but rather these same letters, explains

Reb Pinchas, are equal in numerical value to **Mashiach**. Our *dreidels* remind us that as we recall the miraculous story of *Chanukah*, that we must also simultaneously look forward and anticipate the days of salvation yet to come.

Of course the Rebbe is referring to a *dreidel* with a letter *sheen* and not the letter *pay*. In fact, when the **Belzer Rebbe zy'a** made *Aliya* in 1951, he purportedly sent his *shamash* to find a *dreidel* specifically with the letter *sheen* and not a *pay*.

Yehi Ratzon, as we light our *Neirot* this *Chanukah*, may we merit to witness the proliferation of the light of eternity, to experience miracles, and to greet *Mashiach Tzidkaynu* as he shines his great light upon the entire world.

Gmar Chatima Tova! ■

Editor's Note:

In Rabbi Shor's column last week, an ad was inadvertently placed which covered an important line of text, acknowledging the source of one of the ideas being conveyed. We apologize for this error, and here is the corrected sentence and acknowledgment as it should have appeared:

“Of course many meforshim offer various interpretations of this incident, where Yaakov is left alone, and then engages in some sort of struggle with a mysterious individual. My distinguished teacher and colleague, Rabbi Ari Kahn, in his beautiful work *Explorations* offers a rather unique interpretation of our verse:”

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