

THE LIGHT OF THE ETERNAL PEOPLE  
Presented by Rabbi Shmuel Irons

Series III Lecture #9

## CHANUKAH AND THE MACCABEE REVOLT

### I. The Nature of the Greek Exile

#### A. The Darkness of Greece

ר"ש בן לקיש פתר קריא בגליות, והארץ היתה תהו זה גלות בבל שנאמר (ירמיה ד) ראיתי את הארץ והנה תהו, ובהו זה גלות מדי (אסתר ו) ויבהילו להביא את המן, וחושך זה גלות יון שהחשיכה עיניהם של ישראל בגזירותיהן שהיתה אומרת להם, כתבו על קרן השור שאין לכם חלק באלקי ישראל, על פני תהום זה גלות ממלכת הרשעה שאין להם חקר כמו התהום מה התהום הזה אין לו חקר אף הרשעים כן, ורוח אלקים מרחפת זה רוחו של מלך המשיח, היאך מה דאת אמר (ישעיה יא) ונחה עליו רוח ד', באיזו זכות ממשמשת ובאה, המרחפת על פני המים בזכות התשובה שנמשלה כמים, שנאמר (איכה ב) שפכי כמים לבך. בראשית רבה פרשה ב:ד

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish explained the verses [of Genesis 1:2,3] to refer to the [Jewish] exiles. **And the earth was void** refers to the exile of Babylon. . . . **And empty** refers to the exile of Media. . . . **And darkness** refers to the exile of Greece who darkened the eyes of Israel through their decrees, for they said to them: Write upon the horn of a ox that you have no portion in the G-d of Israel. **Upon the face of the deep waters** refers to the kingdom of evil (Rome) that is unfathomable. . . . **The spirit of G-d hovered over the water's surface** refers to the spirit of Moshiach. . . . By what merit does the spirit that hovers over the water's surface eventually come? Through the merit of repentance. . . . **Midrash Beraishis Rabbah 2:4**

חדקל זו יון שהיתה קלה וחדה בגזירותיה, שהיתה אומרת לישראל כתבו על קרן השור שאין לכם חלק באלקי ישראל, א"ר הונא בשלשה דברים קדמה מלכות יון למלכות הרשעה בנימוסין ובפנקיסין ובלשון. בראשית רבה (וילנא) פרשה טז ד"ה ד אמר רבי

[Regarding the symbolism of the four rivers,] the Tigris refers to Greece which was light and sharp in its decrees for she said to Israel: Write on the horn of the ox that you have no portion in the G-d of Israel. Rav Huna said, "Through three things the kingdom of Greece preceded the evil kingdom: Through its laws and etiquette, its writing and its language." **Midrash Beraishis Rabbah Chapter 16:4**

### B. The Brightness of Greece

ברה כחמה במלכות יון, סנדריאוס אם אוליאוס חמה שמה והשמש גבור נקרא שנאמר (תהלים יט) ישיש כגבור לרוץ אורח בתקופת תמוז מי יוכל לעמוד כנגד השמש הכל בורחים ממנו, שנאמר (תהלים י"ט) ואין נסתר מחמתו, כך במלכות יון הכל ברחו ממנו ומתתיה הכהן ובניו עמדו באמונתו של הקב"ה וברחו מפניהם האוכלוסין של יון ונהרגו כולן. שמות רבה פרשה טו

**Bright as the sun (Shir HaShirim 6)** refers to Greece. The Synod of Helios [is the name for the governmental body of Athens] is named for the sun (helios). And the sun is called a mighty hero as it is stated in Scripture (Psalms 19): The sun rejoices like a mighty hero to run its course. [In addition] in the season of Tamuz (summer) who can withstand its heat. . . . so too is the kingdom of Greece. All flee from it. Mattisyahu the Kohen and his sons, however, stood fast through their faith in the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Greek hordes fled from them and were all killed. **Midrash Shemos Rabbah Chapter 15:6**

בהרת זו יון שהיתה מבהרת בגזרותיה על ישראל ואומרת להן כתבו על קרן השור שאין לכם חלק באלקי ישראל. ויקרא רבה (וילנא) פרשה טו ד"ה ט שאת זו

**A bright [leprous] spot (Leviticus 13:4)** refers to Greece which shined through its decrees against Israel and said to them: Write on the horn of an ox that you have no portion in the G-d of Israel. **Midrash Vayikrah Rabbah Chapter 15:9**

### C. The Brazenness of Greece

מה כתיב למעלה וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם זהב וכסף ונחשת, זהב זהב זהב, שנאמר (דניאל ג') הוא צלמא ראשה די דהב טב, וכסף זהב זהב שנאמר (דניאל ג') חדוהי ודרעוהי די כסף, נחושת זהב זהב שנאמר (דניאל ג') מעוהי וירכתיה די נחש. שמות רבה פרשה לה

What is the meaning of that which is written above (Exodus 25:3) The offering that you take from them shall consist of the following: Gold, silver and copper . . . **Gold** refers to Babylon . . . **silver** refers to Media . . . **copper (or brass)** refers to Greece. **Midrash Shemos Rabbah Chapter 35:5**

עגלה משולשת ועז משולשת ואיל משולש ותור וגזל, וגליות מנין שנאמר אימה זהב זהב שנאמר (חבקוק א) איום ונורא הוא ממנו משפטו ושאתו יצא, חשכה זהב זהב שנאמר (דניאל ח) וצפיר העזים הגדיל עד מאד וכעצמו נשברה הקרן הגדולה ותעלנה חזות ארבע תחתיה לארבע רוחות השמים. שמות רבה פרשה נא:ז

(Genesis 15:9) A prime calf, a prime goat, a prime ram, a dove and a pigeon. Where is the reference to exiles stated? (Ibid. 15:12) **horror** refers to Babylon . . . **darkness** refers to Media . . . **great [darkness]** refers to Greece as it is stated (Daniel 8:8) And the he-goat waxed very great; and when he was strong, the great horn was broken and from it came up four notable ones toward the four quarters of heaven. **Midrash Shemos Rabbah Chapter 51:7**

## II. Alexander the Great and the True Essence of the Exile

### A.

אמר להם: אידין מתקרי חכים? אמרו ליה: איזהו חכם - הרואה את הנולד. אמר להם: אידין מתקרי גבור? אמרו לו: איזהו גבור - הכובש את יצרו. אמר להן: אידין מתקרי עשיר? אמרו ליה: איזהו עשיר - השמח בחלקו. אמר להן: מה יעביד איניש ויחיה? אמרו ליה: ימית עצמו. מה יעביד איניש וימות? יחיה את עצמו. תמיד לב.

He said to them: Who is called wise? They replied: Who is wise? He who discerns what is about to come to pass. He said to them: Who is called a mighty man? They replied: Who is a mighty man? He who subdues his evil passions. He said to them: Who is called a rich man? They replied: Who is rich? He who rejoices in his lot. He said to them: What shall a man do to live? They replied: Let him mortify himself. What should a man do to kill himself? They replied: Let him keep himself alive. **Tamid 32a**

### B.

והסתכל בשלשה דברים ואי אתה בא לידי עברה. דע מה למעלה ממך. עין רואה ואוזן שומעת. וכל מעשיך בספר נכתבין. אבות ב:א

Apply thy mind to three things and thou wilt not come into the power of sin. Know what there is above thee: An eye that sees, an ear that hears, and all thy deeds are being written in a book.. **Avos 2:1**

### C.

עקביא בן מהללאל אומר הסתכל בשלשה דברים ואין אתה בא לידי עברה. דע. מאין באת. ולאן אתה הולך. ולפני מי אתה עתיד לתן דין וחשבון. מאין באת. מטפה סרוחה. ולאן אתה הולך. למקום עפר רמה ותולעה. ולפני מי אתה עתיד לתן דין וחשבון. לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא: אבות ג:א

Akavia Ben Mahalel said: Apply thy mind to three things and thou wilt not come into the power of sin: know whence thou camest, and whither thou art going, and before whom thou art destined to give an account and reckoning. Whence camest thou? - From a fetid drop. Whither art thou going? - To a place of dust, of worm and of maggot. Before whom art thou destined to give an account and reckoning? - Before the King of kings, the Holy One blessed be He. **Avos Chapter 3:1**

D.

רבי אליעזר הקפר אומר הקנאה והתאוה והכבוד מוציאים את האדם מן העולם. אבות פרק ד משנה כא

Rabbi Elazar HaKappar says: Jealousy, lust and glory remove a man from the world.

**Avos 4:21**

E.

מקדש ראשון מפני מה חרב? מפני שלשה דברים שהיו בו: עבודה זרה, וגלוי עריות, ושפיכות דמים. יומא ט:

Why was the first Sanctuary destroyed? Because of three [evil] things which prevailed there: idolatry, immorality, bloodshed. **Yoma 9b**

F.

כתיב הכא וכבוד, וכתיב התם (משלי ג') כבוד חכמים ינחלו. בבא בתרא י.

And [he shall find] honor: and it is written elsewhere: The wise shall inherit honor. **Bava Basra 10a**

### III. The Oral Law

#### A. The Chosen People

שנתן הקב"ה לישראל שתי תורות תורה שבכתב ותורה שבעל פה נתן להם תורה שבכתב שיש בה תרי"ג מצות כדי למלאם מצות ולזכותם שנאמר (ישעיהו מב) ד' חפץ למען צדקן יגדיל תורה ויאדיר נתן להם תורה שבעל פה להיות מצויינין בה משאר האומות שעל כך לא נתנה בכתב כדי שלא יזיפוה ישמעאלים כשם שעשו תורה שבכתב ויאמרו שהם ישראל ועל זה אמר הכתוב (הושע ח) אכתוב לו רובי תורתני כמו זר נחשבו אמר הקב"ה אם אכתוב לישראל רובי תורתני זה המשנה שהיא גדולה מן המקרא כמו זר נחשבו. במדבר רבה פרשה י"ד

Hashem gave two Torahs to the Jews: a written Torah and an oral Torah. He gave them a written Torah that contains in it the 613 Mitzvos in order to fill them with Mitzvos and to bestow upon them merit as it is written "Hashem is desirous for his righteousness' sake to magnify the Torah and make it glorious" (Yeshiah 42:21). **He gave them an oral law to make them stand out from amongst the nations. For that reason he did not give the Talmud in writing so that the nations would not be able to tamper with it as they did with Scripture and make the claim that they are the true Israelites.** Regarding this is it written "Were I to write down the bulk of my Torah they would be considered as strangers." Hashem said, "If I were to write for the Jews the bulk of my Torah (referring to the Mishna which is greater in length), then the Jews would be considered as strangers." **Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah 14:10**

### B. The Greek Translation

תניא: מעשה בתלמי המלך שכינס שבעים ושנים זקנים, והכניסן בשבעים ושנים בתים ולא גילה להם על מה כינסן. ונכנס אצל כל אחד ואחד ואמר להם: כתבו לי תורת משה רבכם. נתן הקדוש ברוך הוא בלב כל אחד ואחד עצה, והסכימו כולן לדעת אחת. וכתבו לו . . . מגילה ט.

There was an incident with (a) Ptolemy King (of Egypt) who gathered seventy two scholars and placed them in seventy two different houses but did not reveal to them his purpose. He entered each one's house separately and said: " **Translate for me** the Torah of Moshe your teacher." Hashem gave wisdom into the heart of each of them and they all independently agreed to translate it in the same manner. **Megilla 9a**

### C. The Beginnings of the Sadducees

אנטיגנוס איש סוכו קבל משמעון הצדיק. הוא היה אומר אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב על מנת לקבל פרס. אלא הו' כעבדים המשמשין את הרב שלא על מנת לקבל פרס. ויהי מורא שמים עליכם. אבות פרק א משנה ג

Antigonos, leader of Socho, received the tradition from Shimon HaTzaddik. He used to say: Be not like servants that serve their master for the sake of receiving reward; instead be like servants that serve their master not for the sake of receiving reward. And let the fear of Heaven be upon you. **Avos 1:3**

אנטיגנוס איש סוכו היו לו שני תלמידים שהיו שונים בדבריו והיו שונים לתלמידים ותלמידים לתלמידיהם עמדו ודקדקו אחריהן ואמרו מה ראו אבותינו לומר דבר זה אפשר שיעשה פועל מלאכה כל היום ולא יטול שכרו ערבית אלא אילו היו יודעין אבותינו שיש עולם אחר ויש תחיית המתים לא היו אומרים כך. עמדו ופירשו מן התורה ונפרצו מהם שתי פרצות צדוקין וביתוסין. צדוקים על שם צדוק ובייתוסין על שם בייתוס. והיו משתשמים בכלי כסף וכלי זהב כל ימיהם שהיתה דעתן גסה עליהם. היו צדוקים אומרים מסורת הוא ביד פרושים שהן מצערין עצמן בעוה"ז ובעוה"ב אין להם. אבות דרבי נתן ה:ב

Antigonos the man of Socho had two disciples that studied and repeated his words and repeated them to their disciples who in turn taught it to their disciples. They (the disciples) arose and analyzed their words and commented: "How could our forefathers ever make such a statement (that one should serve Hashem without the motivation of receiving reward)? Is it possible that a laborer should not receive his wages at night? If our forefathers were aware of another world and of the resurrection of the dead they would never have made such a statement." They arose and severed their ties to the Torah. Two breaches came out from them: Sadducees, the self styled disciples of Sadduc (one of Antigonos' disciples) and the Baithusim, the self styled disciples of Baithus (another disciple). Throughout their lives the Sadducees would use only the finest vessels of silver and gold. They were gross and arrogant people. They would often say that the Pharisees have a tradition to torment themselves in this world without having anything in the next. **Avos D'Rabbi Nassan 5:2**

D. But the Sadducees are those that compose the second order, **and take away fate entirely, and suppose that G-d is not concerned in our doing or not doing what is evil; and they say, that to act what is good, or what is evil, is at men's own choice, and that the one or the other belongs so to every one, that they may act as they please. They also take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades.** Moreover, the Pharisees are friendly to one another, and are for the exercise of concord and regard for the public. **But the behavior of the Sadducees one towards another is in some degree wild; and their conversation with those that are of their own party is as barbarous as if they were strangers to them.** And this is what I had to say concerning the philosophic sects among the Jews. **The Wars of the Jews Book II Chapter 8**

#### IV. The Tax Collectors and the Beginnings of Assimilation

A. Joseph then asked him (Onias) if he would not give him leave to go as ambassador on behalf of the nation? He replied that he would give him leave. . . . So Joseph sent to his friends at Samaria, and borrowed money of them; and got ready what was necessary for his journey, garments and cups, and beasts for burden, which amounted to about twenty thousand drachmae, and went to Alexandria...And when the day came on which the king was to let the taxes of the cities to farm, and those that were the principal men of dignity in their several countries were to bid for them, the sum of the taxes together, of Celesyria and Phoenicia, and Judea, with Samaria (as they were bidden for,) came to eight thousand talents. Hereupon Joseph accused the bidders, as having agreed together to estimate the value of the taxes at too low a rate; and he promised, that he would himself give twice as much for them; but for those who did not pay, he would send the king home their whole substance; for this privilege was sold together with the taxes themselves. The king was pleased to hear that offer; and because it augmented his revenues, he said he would confirm the sale of the taxes to him. . . . **By this means he gathered great wealth together, and made vast gains by this farming of the taxes ; and he made use of what estate he had thus gotten, in order to support his authority,** as thinking it a piece of prudence to keep what had been the occasion and foundation of his present good fortune; and this he did by the assistance of what he was already possessed of, for he privately sent many presents to the king , and Cleopatra, and to their friends, and to all that were powerful about the court, and thereby purchased their good-will to himself. **This good fortune he enjoyed for twenty two years.** **Josephus, Antiquities Book XII Chapt. IV.**

B. But when his brethren heard that Hyrcanus had received such favours from the king, and was returning home with great honor, they went out to meet him, and to destroy him, and that with the privity of their father; for he was angry at him for the [large] sum of money that he bestowed for presents, and so had no concern for his preservation. However, Joseph concealed the anger he had at his son, out of fear of the king. And when Hyrcanus' brethren came to fight him, he slew many others of those that were with them as also two of his brethren themselves, but the rest of them escaped to Jerusalem to their father. But when Hyrcanus came to the city, where nobody would receive him, he was afraid for himself, and retired beyond the river Jordan, and there abode. **Antiquities Book XII 4:9.**

C. But upon the death of Joseph, the people grew seditious, on account of his sons; For whereas the elders made war against Hyrcanus, who was the youngest of Joseph's sons, the multitude was divided, but the greater part joined with the elders in this war; as did Simon the high priest, by reason he was of kin to them. However, Hyrcanus determined not to return to Jerusalem any more, but seated himself beyond Jordan and was at perpetual war with the Arabians, and slew many of them, and took many of them captives. He also erected a strong castle, and built it entirely of white stone to the very roof; and had animals of a prodigious magnitude engraven upon it. **Antiquities Book XII 4:11.**

D. A great sedition fell among the men of power in Judea, and they had a contention about obtaining the government; while each of those that were of dignity could not endure to be subject to their equals. However, Onias, one of the High Priests, got the better and cast the sons of Tobias out of the city; who fled to Antiochus and besought him to make use of them for his leaders. **Josephus, The War of the Jews, Book I, Chapter 1:1.**

V. The Hellenists

A. But when Seleucus departed this life and Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, succeeded to the kingdom, Onias' brother **Jason obtained the high priesthood by corruption, promising the king in his petition three hundred and sixty talents of silver, and eighty talents from other revenues. Besides this he promised to pay a hundred and fifty more, if he was given authority to set up a gymnasium and a training place for youth there and to enroll the people of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch.** When the king had consented, and he had taken office, he immediately brought his countrymen over to the Greek way of living. He set aside the royal ordinances especially favoring the Jews, secured through John, the father of Eupolemius, who went on the mission to the Romans to establish friendly relations and an alliance with them, and abrogating the lawful ways of living he introduced new customs contrary to the Law. For he willingly established a gymnasium right under the citadel, and he made the finest of the young men wear the Greek hat. **Mac. II, 4:7-15**

B. After the lapse of three years, Jason sent Menelaus, the brother of this Simon, to take the money to the king and to present papers relating to necessary business. But he, on being presented to the king, extolled him with such apparent authority that he obtained the high priesthood for himself, **outbidding Jason by three hundred talents of silver.** Upon receiving the royal commission, he came back, possessing nothing that qualified him for the high priesthood, but with the passions of a savage tyrant and the rage of a wild beast. So Jason, who had supplanted his own brother, was supplanted by another, and driven as a fugitive into the country of the Ammonites. **Mac. II, 4:23-29.**

C. Now it came to pass, after two years, in the **hundred forty and fifth year, on the twenty-fifth day of that month, which is by us called Chasleu** and by the Macedonians Apelleus, in the hundred and fifty-third Olympiad, that the king came

up to Jerusalem, and pretending peace, he got possession of the city by treachery; at which time he spared not so much as those that admitted him into it, on account of the riches that lay in the temple; but led by his covetous inclination, (for he saw there was in it a great deal of gold, and many ornaments that had been dedicated to it of very great value,) and in order to plunder its wealth, he ventured to break the league he had made. So he left the temple bare; and took away the golden candlesticks, and the golden altar of incense, and table of shew-bread, ... and did not abstain from even the veils, which were made of fine linen and scarlet. He also emptied it of its secret treasures and left nothing at all remaining; and by these means cast the Jews into great lamentation, for he forbade them to offer those daily sacrifices which they used to offer to G-d, according to the law. And when he had pillaged the whole city, some of the inhabitants he slew, and some he carried captive, together with their wives and children, so that the multitude of those captives that were taken alive amounted to about ten thousand. He also burnt down the finest buildings; and when he had overthrown the city walls, he built a citadel in the lower part of the city, for the place was high and overlooked the temple, on which account he fortified it with high walls and towers; and put into it a garrison of Macedonians. **However, in that citadel dwelt the impious and wicked part of the Jewish multitude, from whom it proved that the citizens suffered many and sore calamities.** And when the king had built an idol altar upon G-d's altar, he slew swine upon it, and so offered a sacrifice neither according to the law, nor the Jewish religious worship in that country. He also compelled them to forsake the worship which they paid their own G-d and to adore those whom he took to be gods, and made them build temples, and raise idol altars in every city and village, and offer swine upon them every day. He also commanded them not to circumcise their sons, and threatened to punish any that should be found to have transgressed his injunctions. He also appointed overseers, who should compel them to do what he commanded. And indeed many Jews there were who complied with the king's commands, either voluntarily or out of fear of the penalty that was denounced but the best men, and those of the noblest souls, did not regard him, but did pay a greater respect to the customs of their country, that concern as to the punishment which he threatened to the disobedient on which account they every day underwent great miseries, and bitter torments, for they were whipped with rods, and their bodies were torn to pieces, and were crucified, while they were still alive, and breathed; They also strangled those women and their sons whom they had circumcised, as the king had appointed, hanging their sons about their necks as they were upon the crosses. And if there were any sacred book of the law found, it was destroyed, and those with whom they were found miserably perished also.

**Antiquities XII 5:3, 4**



D. Accordingly the king sent to Judas, and to those that were besieged with them, and promised to give them peace, and to permit them to make use of, and live according to the laws of their fathers. And they gladly received his proposals; and when they had gained security upon oath, for their performance, they went out of the temple. But when Antiochus came into it, and saw how strong the place was, he broke his oaths, and ordered his army that was there to pluck down the walls to the ground, and when he had so done, he returned to Antioch; he also carried with him Onias the high priest, who was also called Menelaus; for **Lysias advised the king to slay Menelaus, if he would have the Jews be quiet, and cause him no farther disturbance for that this man was the origin of all the mischief the Jews had done them, by persuading his father to compel the Jews to leave the religion of their fathers; so the king sent Menelaus to Berea, a city of Syria, and there had him put to death, when he had been high priest ten years. He had been wicked and an impious man; and in order to get the government to himself, had compelled his nation to transgress their own laws.** Antiquities Book XII Chap. 9:7

E. **It happened after the death of Judas that those who had no regard for the Law raised their heads all over Israel, and all the wrongdoers reappeared. In those days there was a very great famine, and the country went over to their side. And Bacchides chose the ungodly men and appointed them masters of the country.** Macc. I 9:23

F. **Then all those who disregarded the Law plotted, saying, " Here Jonathan and his men are living undisturbed and secure, so now we will bring Bacchides back, and he will arrest them all in a single night. "** And they went and consulted him. And he set out and came with a strong force and he sent letters secretly to all his allies in Judea to arrest Jonathan and his men, but they could not because their plan became known to them.

And Simon and his men went out of the town and set fire to the siege engines, and they fought with Bacchides, and he was beaten by them, **and they pressed him very hard, for his plan and his attack were in vain. And he was very angry with the men who disregarded the Law who had advised him to come into the country, and he killed many of them, and resolved to go back to his country.** And Jonathan learned of it, and he sent envoys to him to make peace with him, and obtain the release of his prisoners. And he agreed and did as he promised and made oath to him that he would not seek to injure him so long as he lived. And he released to him the prisoners that he had taken before from the land of Judea, and he went away and returned to his own country, and did not come into their borders again. **So the sword ceased in Israel. And Jonathan lived in Michmash. And Jonathan began to judge the people, and he destroyed the ungodly out of Israel.** Mac. I 9:58-73

G. But the men in the citadel in Jerusalem were being kept from going in and out of the country to buy and sell, and they were famished and a good many of them died of starvation. **And they cried out to Simon to make terms with them and he did so. And he expelled them from it and purified the citadel from its defilements**, and they took possession of it on the **twenty third day of the second month in the**

**one hundred and seventy first year** , with praise and palm branches and with lyres and cymbals and harps, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been destroyed out of Israel. **Mac. I 13:49-51**

H. And the land of Judah was at peace as long as Simon lived; he sought the good of his nation; his rule and his renown pleased them all his life...There was no one left in the land to fight them, and the kings were destroyed in those days. He re-established all those of his people who had been humbled; **he sought out the Law, and removed everyone who was lawless and wicked.** **Mac. I 14:4,13-15**

## VI. The Miracle

### A.

In the days of Mattisyahu, the son of Yochanan, the High priest, the Hasmonean, and his sons, when the wicked Greek kingdom rose up against Your people Israel to make them **forget Your Torah** and **compel them to stray from the statutes of Your Will** --You in Your great mercy stood up for them in the time of their distress. You took up their grievance, judged their claim, and 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 wanton into the hands of the diligent students of Your Torah.** For Yourself You made a great and holy Name in Your world, and for Your people Israel You worked a great victory and salvation as this very day. Thereafter, Your children came to the Holy of Holies of your House, cleansed Your Temple, **purified** the site of Your Holiness and **kindled lights in the Courtyards of Your Sanctuary** ; and they established these eight days of Chanukah to express thanks and praise to Your great Name. **"Al HaNisim" Prayer**

### B.

(ויקרא כ"ד) מחוץ לפרוכת העדת יערך, וכי לאורה הוא צריך והלא כל ארבעים שנה שהלכו בני ישראל במדבר לא הלכו אלא לאורו אלא עדות היא לבאי עולם שהשכינה שורה בישראל. מאי עדות? אמר רב: זו נר מערבי, שנותן בה שמן כמדת חברותיה, וממנה היה מדליק ובה היה מסיים. שבת כב:

**Without the curtain of testimony** ... shall [Aaron] order it: does He then require its light: surely, during the entire forty years that the Israelites travelled in the wilderness they travelled only by His light! **But it is a testimony to mankind that the Divine Presence rests in Israel.** What is the testimony? — Said Rav: That was the western branch [of the candelabrum ] in which the same quantity of oil was poured as into the rest, and yet he kindled [the others] from it and ended therewith. **Shabbos 22b**

C.

א"ר חנינא סגן הכהנים אני הייתי משמש בבית המקדש ומעשה נסים היה במנורה משהיו מדליקין אותה מראש השנה לא היתה מתכבה עד שנה אחרת ופעם אחת לא עשו הזיתים שמן התחילו הכהנים לכבות (ס"א לבכות) ואמר רבי חנינא סגן הכהנים אני הייתי בבית המקדש ומצאתי מנורה דליקה יותר ממה שהיתה דליקה כל ימות השנה ראה מעשה נסים כך נאמר כתית למאור ולא למנחות, ולמה כן אלא כך אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא פעם אחת בשנה יהיו מדליקין את המנורה לפיכך יהיו מדליקין שמן זית זך כתית אבל למנחות שהיו מקריבין בכל יום לא לכך נאמר בה שמן זית זך כתית, אמרו ז"ל כיון שהיו מדליקין מן המנורה כל חצר שהיתה בירושלים היתה משתמשת לאורה לכך נאמר ויקחו אליך שמן זית זך כתית. מדרש תנחומא (ורשא) – פרשת תצוה סימן ג

Rabbi Chanina the deputy High Priest said: I used to serve in the Temple and [I witnessed that] there were miracles that occurred with the Menorah. When they lit it on the beginning of the year it did not extinguish until the next year. Once when the olives were not producing oil, the priests began to cry. Rabbi Chanina the deputy High Priest said: I was in the Temple and I found that the Menorah lit longer than it did throughout the year. . . . Our Sages said: When they lit the Menorah every courtyard that was in Jerusalem was using its light. For this reason Scripture states: **And they shall bring you clear illuminating oil, made from hand crushed olives. (Exodus 27:20) Midrash Tanchuma Parshas Tetzaveh 3**

D.

נר קרויה נר, ונשמתו של אדם קרויה נר, מוטב תכבה נר של בשר ודם מפני נרו של הקדוש ברוך הוא. שבת ל':

A lamp is designated lamp, and the soul of man is called a lamp: better it is that the lamp of flesh and blood be extinguished before the lamp of the Holy One, blessed be He.

**Shabbos 30b**

## VII. The Struggle of the Mighty

A.

א"ר יוחנן (ירמיה ה) על כן הכם אריה מיער, זו בבל, זאב ערבות ישדדם, זו מדי ביד מי מלכות מדי נופלת ביד מרדכי שהוא בא משל בנימין, לוי כנגד מלכות יון, זה שבט שלישי וזו מלכות שלישיה, זה אותיותיו משולשין וזו אותיותיה משולשין, אלו תוקעי קרנים ואלו תוקעי סולפירים, אלו לובשי כובעים ואלו לובשי קיסים, אלו לובשי מכנסים ואלו לובשי פמליא, אלו מרובים באוכלסין ואלו מועטין באוכלסין, באו מרובים ונפלו ביד מועטין, באיזו זכות מברכתו של משה שאמר (דברים לג) מחץ מתנים קמיו, ביד מי מלכות יון נופלת ביד בני חשמונאי שהם משל לוי. בראשית רבה פרשה צט

Rabbi Yochanon said: **(Jeremiah 5:6) Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them,** refers to Babylon; **and a wolf of the deserts shall spoil them,** refers to Media. And through whom will the kingdom of Media fall? Through the hand of Mordechai who is a descendant of Benjamin [who is compared to a wolf]. **A leopard shall watch over their cities;** refers to Greece. Levi corresponds to Greece. Levi is the third tribe and Greece is the third kingdom. Levi's לוי name is made up of three [Hebrew] letters and so too is Greece's יון name. Levi blows horns and Greece blows trumpets. Levi wears hats and Greece wears helmets. Levi wears pants and Greece wears armour. Greece has a large population whereas Levi is small in numbers. The many came but fell through the hands of the few. What was their merit? The blessing of Moshe as it is stated: Levi will smite the loins of those that rise against them. (Deuteronomy 33:11) Through whom will the kingdom of Greece fall? Through the sons of Chashmonai who are descendants of Levi. **Midrash Beraishis Rabbah 99**

B.

תנא משמיה דרבי מאיר: מפני מה נתנה תורה לישראל - מפני שהן עזין. תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: (דברים לג) מימינו אש דת למו, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: ראויין הללו שתנתן להם דת אש. איכא דאמרי: דתיהם של אלו אש, שאלמלא נתנה תורה לישראל אין כל אומה ולשון יכולין לעמוד בפניהם. והיינו דאמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש: שלשה עזין הן: ישראל באומות, כלב בחיות, תרנגול בעופות. ויש אומרים: אף עז בבהמה דקה, ויש אומרים: אף צלף באילנות. ביצה כה:

A Tanna taught in the name of R. Meir: Why was the Torah given to Israel? Because they are impetuous. The School of R. Ishmael taught: 'At His right hand was a fiery law unto them'; the Holy One, blessed be He, said: These are worthy to be given the fiery law. Some say: The laws of these are like fire, for had not the Law been given to Israel no nation or tongue could withstand them. And this is what R. Simeon b. Lakish said: There are three distinguished in strength [fierce]: Israel among the nations, the dog among animals, [and] the cock among birds. Some say: Also the goat among small cattle. And some say: Also the caper-bush among shrubs. **Beitza 25b**

C.

שמעון ולוי אחים כלי חמס מכרתיהם. בסדם אל תבא נפשי בקהלם אל תחד כבדי כי באפם הרגו איש וברצנם עקרו שור. ארור אפם כי עז ועברתם כי קשתה אחלקם ביעקב ואפיצם בישראל. בראשית מט:ה-ז

Shimon and Levi are brethren, **weapons of violence are in their habitations** . Oh my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their wanton will they lamed an ox. Cursed be **their anger for it was fierce; and their wrath for it was cruel** . I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel. **Genesis 49:5-7**

D.

כי עזה כמות אהבה. שיר השירים ח:ו

For strong till death is my love. **Shir HaShirim 8:6**