

CHAGIM U'ZMANIM - SHABBAT CHANUKAH

by Rabbi Dr. Meir Tamari

Neirot Chanukah precede the lights of Shabbat and it is the custom that havdalah precedes the lights of Chanukah. These two lights carry with them two different messages that determine this order.

The language of the Al Hanisim ' You championed their cause [or], You stood up for their grievances; ravta et rivam', is difficult to understand. After all, that is not speaking of victory nor of judgment of evil ones. Rather, it is like ' if there should be a controversy between two men' (Devarim, 25:1), in which there are claims and counter claims, so that the outcome is in doubt. This was exactly the situation on Chanukah when the Greeks succeeded in breaking the spirit of the Jews, until they had no strength to oppose their oppressors. They were quite incapable of doing anything except to die on Kiddush Hashem. Then Hashem raised up their spirit and their hearts were elevated and proud in His Name, so that they could envisage themselves as being capable of challenging the oppression. Then they were able to regard themselves as worthy opponents in the controversy with the Greeks so that after ravta et rivam came danta et dinam. This is similar to the explanation of the Chiddushei Harim of Gur to the verse in Shmot, 6:6. ' I will take you out from under the â??sivlot' [burdens but literally â??to tolerate'] of the Egyptians ' means that Hashem led Israel to gain strength so that they no longer tolerated the oppression.

This has always been the message of Chanukah, that then a person should arise himself to regard himself as a worthy opponent of the yetzer harah and not despair or regard himself as somebody burdened with an impossible task. He should examine his deeds carefully, as it is written, ' I will search Jerusalem with candles' (Zephaniah, 1:12) in order to discover his wrong deeds, even the smallest of them.; in the Pesikta this is regarded as referring to the candles of Chanukah.

Shabbat, however, is different and its candles are because of shalom beito (Shabbat, 23b). All the six days of the week the body pressures us towards material things and concerns, while the nefesh urges us in the direction of the spiritual and the heavenly. There is no peace between body and soul rather there is a conflict and one or other of them rules. On Shabbat, however, the body surrenders to the nefesh so there is shalom between them and that is shalom beito, of his home, for a man is the home of the nefesh while the body is his flesh (Avnei Nezer). Furthermore, the sins of a person disturb his peace, as it is written, ' Neither is there any peace in my bones because of my sins' (Tehilim, 38:3). A person's very bones are in conflict with one another. Yet on Shabbat all one's work should be completed; the Chidushei Harim taught that this applies even to heavenly things. So that

one is completely given over to Hashem, without considering ones shortcomings.

So the neirot Shabbat are the converse of the neirot Chanukah, since the latter call for one to struggle with himself until even the smallest sins are forgotten, whereas those of Shabbat are shalom beito that brings requite from even the major ones and all a persons work is completed. On Motzaei Shabbat before havdalah, there is no need for the neirot Chanukah.

'One who observes Shabbat according to all its regulations, even if he worships idols like the generation of Enosh, his sins are forgiven. It is written, "Blessed be Enosh that does this.....that keeps the Shabbat machallo, read not machallo but rather machul lo" (Shabbat, 118b). Even one who does not observe it strictly, since the whole of Israel collectively keeps it then even then ones sins are weakened thereby so that Shabbat brings peace to his bones.

Now the Greeks obscured the light for Israel but when the Bet Hashmonaim defeated them, this changed so that their eyes were lit up with light and His kedusha became a flame. Something of this ability to light up the world beyond the kedusha remained with Israel forever. As a symbol of this we light the Chanukah lights at the entrance to our homes in the public thoroughfare.

Now the neirot Chanukah and the lights of Shabbat, parallel the 2 Messichim, Ben Yosef and Ben David. First will come Mashiach ben Yosef and he will purify the world, remove evil forces and complete the war against Amalek. Then will come Eliyahu Hanavi to bring peace to the world and he will reconcile the hearts of the fathers and the sons. After that will come Ben David to bring the Revelation of G-d's holiness throughout the world. Neirot Chanukah are Messiach ben Yosef and Eliyahu Hanavi, they correspond to the eve of Shabbat when the angels bless with shalom. Neirot Shabbat are Meshiach ben David and they correspond to Shabbat day, 'and the Heavens recount the glory of the Almighty and the sky proclaims His handiwork'; as the Avnei Nezer taught, 'the light of the day of Shabbat is the candle of Shabbat day'.

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