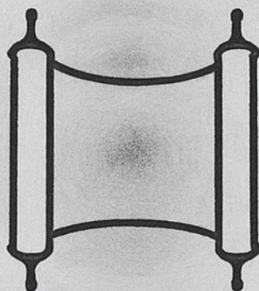


בס"ד

The Rebbe Chanukah

זאת חנוכה ה'תשמ"ג



*Dedicated To:
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The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשַׁת מִקֵּץ, זֹאת הַנוֹפֶה ה'תשמ"ג

With the help of Heaven. Shabbat, Parashat Miketz, this is Chanukah, 1983

Introduction

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe (1902–1994), served as the seventh Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch and articulated a vast body of Torah teachings that integrate Nigleh, Chassidus, and Kabbalah into a unified spiritual worldview. In this maamar, delivered on Shabbat Parashat Miketz during Chanukah 5743, the Rebbe develops a profound explanation of the miracle of the oil, revealing why the essence of Chanukah lies specifically in the light produced from oil, and how this reflects the deepest levels of Divine wisdom drawn into the world.

(א)

Blessed is He Who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time. Behold, this blessing stands not upon the miracle of the victory of the war, “You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak,” and so forth, rather upon the miracle that occurred with the jug of oil.

בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּיָמֵנו הַזֶּה, הַיְהִי בִּרְכָה זוֹ קֵאֵי (לֹא עַל הַנֶּס דְּנִצְחֹן הַמִּלְחָמָה, מִסִּרְתָּ גְבוּרִים בְּיַד חַלְשִׁים וְכוּי, אֱלֵא) עַל הַנֶּס אֲשֶׁרֶה בַּפֶּה הַשֶּׁמֶן.

Therefore, we recite this blessing when lighting the Chanukah candles, or when seeing the candles, which were instituted as a remembrance of the miracle that occurred with the jug of oil.

וְלִכֵּן מְבַרְכִים אוֹתָהּ כְּשֶׁמְדַלִּיקִין גְּרוֹת חֲנוּכָה (אוֹ כְּשֶׁרֹאִים אֶת הַגְּרוֹת) שֶׁתִּקְנוּם לְזִכָּר הַנֶּס אֲשֶׁרֶה בַּפֶּה הַשֶּׁמֶן.

It is explained in the discourse beginning “Blessed is He Who performed miracles,” by the Alter Rebbe, with the glosses and notes of the Tzemach Tzedek, that in order to understand why the miracle of Chanukah was established through candles, one must first preface an explanation of the concept of oil.

וְהִנֵּה מְבוֹאֵר בְּדִיבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַדְמו"ר הַזָּקֵן (עַם הַגְּהוּת וְהַעֲרוֹת וְכוּ' דְּהַצְמַח צֶדֶק), שֶׁבְּכַדִּי לְהַבִּין מַה שֶּׁנֶּס דְּחֲנוּכָה קָבְעוּ בְּגְרוֹת, צָרִיד לְהַקְדִּים תַּחֲלָה בִּיאור עֲנִינוֹ הַשֶּׁמֶן.

There he explains at length that the fact that oil floats above all liquids, wine and water, is like all matters in physicality that are a chain extending from their source in spirituality, because oil is above wine and water.

וּמְבָאֵר שֵׁם בְּאוֹרֹכָה, דְּזֶה שֶׁשֶּׁמֶן צָף עַל גְּבֵי כָּל הַמְּשָׁקִין (יַיִן וּמַיִם) הוּא, כְּכֹל הַעֲנִינִים שֶׁבְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת שֶׁהֵם מְשַׁתְּלֵשְׁלִים מֵעֲנִינֵם בְּרוּחַ הַיּוֹת, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁשֶּׁמֶן הוּא לְמַעְלָה מִיַּיִן וּמַיִם.

Wine and water correspond to understanding and wisdom, wine being understanding and water being wisdom, whereas oil is concealed wisdom, the wisdom within the crown.

דִּינֵן וּמַיִם הֵם בִּינָה וְחֻכְמָה (יַיִן בִּינָה וּמַיִם חֻכְמָה), וְשֶׁמֶן הוּא חֻכְמָה סְתִימָא, חֻכְמָה שֶׁבְּכֹתֵר.

Based on this, he explains there that the dedication of the altar was effected through anointing it with the anointing oil, for the inauguration of the altar, from the term inauguration, was through drawing down sublime lights.

וְעַל פִּי זֶה מְבָאֵר שֵׁם זֶה שֶׁחֲנוּכַת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הָיְתָה עַל יְדֵי שֶׁמֶשְׁחוּ אוֹתוֹ בְּשֶׁמֶן הַמְּשֻׁחָה, כִּי חֲנוּכַת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ (חֲנוּכָה מִלְשׁוֹן חֲנוּכָה) הָיְתָה עַל יְדֵי הַמְּשַׁכֵּת אוֹרוֹת בְּעֵלִים.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשַׁת מִקֵּץ, זֹאת הַחֲנוּכָה ה'תשמ"ג

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These lights were higher than the drawdowns that came through the offerings and so forth, which followed afterward. As explained elsewhere, the princes contributed numerous gifts for the dedication of the altar and also offered incense upon the outer altar.

שְׁלֹמֶעֱלָה מֵהַמְשָׁכוֹת שֶׁעַל יְדֵי הַקְּרָבָנוֹת וְכוּ' שֶׁהָיוּ אַחֵר כָּד. וְכַמְבֹאֵר בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר, דְּזֶה שֶׁהַנְּשִׂאִים הַתְּנַדְּבוּ לַחֲנוּפֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ רִיבּוּי מִתְּנֻנּוֹת, וְגַם הַקְּרִיבוּ קְטֹרֶת עַל גְּבֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הַחִיצוֹן.

This is because in order to inaugurate the altar so that it would be fit to bring offerings upon it, it was necessary to draw into it exceedingly lofty emanations, higher than those drawn through the offerings afterward.

הוּא, כִּי בְּכַדֵּי לְחַנּוּךְ אֵת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ שֶׁיִּהְיֶה רְאוּי לְהַקְרִיב עֲלָיו קְרָבָנוֹת, הָיָה צָרִיךְ לְהַמְשִׁיךְ בּוֹ הַמְשָׁכוֹת נְעֻלוֹת בְּיוֹתֵר, שְׁלֹמֶעֱלָה מֵהַמְשָׁכוֹת שֶׁעַל יְדֵי הַקְּרָבָנוֹת וְכוּ' שֶׁהָיוּ אַחֵר כָּד.

Therefore, the inauguration of the altar was through anointing it with oil, the level of concealed wisdom, which is higher than the drawdowns that were later drawn through the offerings and libations.

וְלָכֵן הָיָה הַחֲנוּךְ דֵּהַמִּזְבֵּחַ עַל יְדֵי שֶׁמֶשְׁחָהוּ אוֹתוֹ בְּשֶׁמֶן, בְּחִינַת חֻכְמָה סְתִימָאָה, שְׁלֹמֶעֱלָה מֵהַמְשָׁכוֹת שֶׁנִּמְשְׁכוּ אַחֵר כָּד עַל יְדֵי הַקְּרָבָנוֹת וְהַנְּסָכִים.

After explaining the concept of the anointing oil, he further explains that the oil for illumination, in which the miracle of Chanukah occurred, is even higher than the anointing oil.

וְלֵאחֲרֵי שֶׁמְבָאָר עֲנִינוֹ שֶׁמֶן הַמְשָׁחָה, הוּא מְבָאָר, דְּשֶׁמֶן לְמֵאוֹר וְשֶׁבּוֹ הָיָה הַנֶּס דְּחֲנוּכָה, הוּא נְעֻלָּה יוֹתֵר גַּם מִשֶׁמֶן הַמְשָׁחָה.

(ב)

And it is possible to say that this which is explained at length in the maamar of Chanukah, the reason for this that the dedication of the altar was through the anointing oil, is not only in the capacity of an introduction.

וְיֵשׁ לוֹמֵר, דְּזֶה שֶׁמְבָאָר בְּאַרְבָּעוֹת בְּהַמְאָמֵר דְּחֲנוּכָה, הַטַּעַם לְזֶה שֶׁחֲנוּפֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הִיָּתְתָה עַל יְדֵי שֶׁמֶן הַמְשָׁחָה, הוּא לֹא רַק בְּתוֹר הַקְּדָמָה.

Through this, one understands more deeply the great elevation of the oil for illumination, which is even higher than the anointing oil, in which the miracle of Chanukah occurred.

שֶׁעַל יְדֵי זֶה יוֹבֵן יוֹתֵר גּוֹדֵל הָעֵילוּי דְּשֶׁמֶן לְמֵאוֹר, שְׁלֹמֶעֱלָה יוֹתֵר גַּם מִשֶׁמֶן הַמְשָׁחָה, שֶׁבּוֹ הָיָה הַנֶּס דְּחֲנוּכָה.

Rather, this matter itself, the dedication of the altar through the anointing oil, is also connected to Chanukah.

אֵלֶּא שֶׁגַּם עֲנִינוֹ זֶה, חֲנוּפֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּשֶׁמֶן הַמְשָׁחָה, שֶׁיָּיִךְ לְחֲנוּכָה.

For the reason it is called Chanukah is because of the dedication of the altar that took place then.

שֶׁהָרִי הַטַּעַם עַל זֶה שֶׁנִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם חֲנוּכָה הוּא עַל שֵׁם חֲנוּפֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ שֶׁהִיָּתְתָה אָז.

This is also among the reasons that during Chanukah we read about the offerings of the princes.

וְזֶה גַּם מֵהַטַּעַמִּים עַל זֶה שֶׁבְּחֲנוּכָה קוֹרְאִין קְרָבָנוֹת הַנְּשִׂאִים.

Accordingly, it may be said that also in the dedication of the altar that occurred on Chanukah there was the concept of the anointing oil in spirituality.

דְּעַל פִּי זֶה יֵשׁ לוֹמֵר, שֶׁגַּם בְּחֲנוּפֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ שֶׁהִיָּתְתָה בְּחֲנוּכָה, הָיָה הָעֲנָנוֹ דְּשֶׁמֶן הַמְשָׁחָה בְּרוּחָנִיּוֹת.

The Rebbe

בסייעתא דשמיא. שבת פרשת מקץ, זאת חנוכה ה'תשמ"ג

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However, it includes an even higher matter, the miracle that occurred with the oil for illumination, which is higher, as mentioned earlier, than the anointing oil.

אלא שיש בו ענין נעלה יותר, הנס שהיה בהשמן למאור, שהוא נעלה יותר, כנזכר לעיל, משמן המשקה.

This also explains why the conclusion of the Chanukah readings, after reading the offerings of the princes and also "this is the dedication of the altar on the day it was anointed," is "When you raise up the lamps." (Numbers 8:2)

ונהו גם מה שסיום הקריאה דימי החנוכה, לאתרי שקוראין הקרבנות דהנשיאים, וגם זאת חנוכת המזבח ביום המשח אותו, הוא בהעלותך את הנרות.

This alludes also to the Chanukah lamps, and it may be said that this follows an order from below to above.

שרומז גם על נרות חנוכה, דיש לומר שהוא בסדר דמלמטה למעלה.

First comes the dedication of the altar through the anointing oil, and afterward the matter of the oil for illumination and the miracle that was performed through it.

בתחלה חנוכת המזבח על ידי שמן המשחה, ולאחריו זה הענין דשמן למאור והנס שנעשה בו.

(ג)

The explanation of the matter is as follows. The offerings that were brought upon the altar, and likewise the libations that were poured upon it, are a drawing down of the level of inwardness.

וביאור הענין, הנה הקרבנות שהקריבו על גבי המזבח, וכן הנסכים שהיו מנסכים עליו, הם המשכת בחינת פנימיות.

Therefore they are called offerings and libations by the name of eating and drinking, for the drawing down effected through offerings and libations is the level of inwardness.

שלא כן נקראים קרבנות ונסכים בשם אכילה ושתיה, פי ההמשכה שעל ידי הקרבנות והנסכים היא בחינת פנימיות.

This is analogous to physical eating and drinking, where they become blood and flesh like his own flesh. The drawing down through libations is higher than the drawing down through offerings.

בדוגמת אכילה ושתיה בגשמיות שנעשים דם ובשר בפשרו. וההמשכה שעל ידי הנסכים היא נעלית יותר מההמשכה שעל ידי הקרבנות.

Just as in physical eating and drinking, through bread only the external vitality of the soul is revealed, whereas through wine the inwardness of the soul is revealed.

דכמו שבאכילה ושתיה בגשמיות, על ידי הלחם מתגלה רק חיצוניות החיות דהנפש, ועל ידי הין מתגלה פנימיות הנפש.

So too it is with the eating and drinking of the altar. The drawing down through offerings, which are called bread, is only the diffusion of vitality to enliven all the worlds.

כמו כן הוא באכילה ושתיה דמזבח, דההמשכה שעל ידי הקרבנות שנקראים בשם לחם, הוא רק התפשטות החיות להחיות כל העולמות.

This is the filling of all worlds. Through the libations there is a drawing down and revelation of inwardness, which is above the vitality of the worlds, the encompassing of all worlds.

ממלא כל עלמין. ועל ידי הנסכים הוא המשכת וגלוי הפנימיות, שלמעלה מהחיות דעולמות, סובב כל עלמין.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעֵתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשַׁת מִקֶּטֶז, זֹאת הַנוּפָה ה'תשמ"ג

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Within the libations themselves, on the festival of Sukkot there was also the water libation, in addition to the wine libation that existed all the days of the year.

ובבנסכים גופא, הנהגה בחג הסוכות היתה גם ניסוף המים, בנוסף על ניסוף היין שהיה גם בכל ימי השנה.

This is higher even than the wine libation, as explained in Likkutei Torah, that the wine libation is explicit in the Written Torah.

שהוא למעלה גם מניסוף היין, וכמבואר בלקוטי תורה, דזהו מה שניסוף היין מפורש בתורה שבכתב.

Whereas the water libation is a law given to Moses at Sinai, and the Sages only supported it by verses.

מה שאין בן ניסוף המים הוא הלכה למשה מסיני, ורק דרבנן סמכוה אקראי.

For the level of wisdom, which corresponds to the water libation, cannot be written in the Written Torah in a form of letters.

כי בחינת חכמה, ניסוף המים, אינה יכולה להיות כתובה בתורה שבכתב, שתפשט בבחינת כתב אותיות.

Therefore, the water libation belongs specifically to the Oral Torah, in the manner of the saying, sweeter to Me are the words of the Scribes more than the wine of Torah.

ולכן ניסוף המים הוא בתורה שבעל פה דוקא, על דרך ערבים עלי דברי סופרים יותר מיינה של תורה.

One may further add that the connection of this idea, that wine is understanding and water is wisdom, to physical wine and water is as follows.

ויש להוסיף, שהשיכות דעננו זה, שייך הוא בינה ומים הם חכמה, ליין ומים כפשוטם בגשמיות היא.

Wine has taste and is something that gladdens, to the extent that song is recited only over wine.

שיין יש בו טעם והוא דבר המשמח, ועד שאין אומרים שירה אלא על היין.

Water, by contrast, has no taste, and therefore no blessing is recited over water except when one drinks due to thirst.

מה שאין בן מים אין בהם טעם, שלכן אין מברכים על המים אלא בפשוטה לצמא.

This is because a person derives pleasure from drinking water only at the time he is thirsty. This distinction corresponds to their spiritual meaning.

לפי שאין הנאה לאדם בשתיית המים אלא בשעה שהוא צמא. דחלוק זה שבין יין למים הוא בהתאם לענינם ברוחניות.

Wine is understanding, taste, comprehension and grasp, whereas water is wisdom, above taste.

כי יין הוא בינה, טעם, הבנה והשגה, ומים הם חכמה, למעלה מהטעם.

(ד)

It is explained in several discourses that the fact that Torah is likened to wine and oil refers to the secrets of Torah.

והנה מבואר בחכמה דרושים, דזה שתורה נמשלה ליין ושמן קאי על רזי תורה.

These are comparable to wine and oil, which are covered and concealed within grapes and olives.

שהם דוגמת היין והשמן שהם מכוסים ונעלמים בענבים ובזיתים.

The distinction between wine and oil is that wine corresponds to the secrets of Torah, whereas oil corresponds to the secrets of secrets.

והחלוק בין יין לשמן הוא, דיין הוא רזי תורה, ושמן הוא רזי דרזין.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשַׁת מִקֵּץ, זֹאת הַנוֹכָחָה ה'תשמ"ג

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From this it is understood that the fact that Torah is likened to water refers to the revealed dimension of Torah.

וּמִזֶּה מוֹכָן, דְּזֶה שְׁתוּרָה נִמְשָׁלָה לְמַיִם קָאֵי עַל גְּלִיָּא דְּתוּרָה.

As explained in Tanya, the reason Torah is likened to water is that just as water descends from a high place to a low place.

וּכְמִבּוֹאֵר בְּתַנְיָא, דְּהִטְעַם עַל זֶה שְׁתוּרָה נִמְשָׁלָה לְמַיִם הוּא, כִּי כְמוֹ שְׁמַיִם יוֹרְדִים מִמָּקוֹם גָּבוֹה לְמָקוֹם נְמוּךְ.

So too the Torah descended from its place, which is His blessed will and wisdom.

כִּף הַתּוּרָה יֵרֵד מִמָּקוֹמָהּ, שֶׁהִיא רְצוֹנוֹ וְחֻקְתּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ.

From there it journeyed and descended until it became encllothed in physical matters and affairs of this world.

וּמִשָּׁם נִסְעָה וְיָרְדָה עַד שֶׁנִּתְלַבְּשָׁה בְּדְבָרִים גְּשָׁמִיִּים וְנַעֲנִינֵי עוֹלָם הַזֶּה.

For the majority of the laws of the Torah deal with physical matters.

דְּרַב הַלְכוֹת הַתּוּרָה הֵן בְּדְבָרִים גְּשָׁמִיִּים.

This requires understanding, for this explanation appears, at first glance, to be the opposite of what is explained in this maamar.

וְצָרִיךְ לְהִבִּין, דְּבִיאֹר זֶה הוּא לְכַאוּרָה לְהִפָּךְ מִהַמְּבֹאֵר בְּמֵאֵמֶר זֶה.

Namely, in the discourse beginning “Blessed is He Who performed miracles,” and in the discourses of the festival of Sukkot.

דִּיבּוּר הַמִּתְחִיל בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים, וּבְהַדְרוּשִׁים דְּחַג הַסּוּכוֹת.

There it is explained, in the matter of the wine libation and the water libation, that water is higher than wine.

בְּעֲנַן נִיסוּף הַיַּיִן וְהַמַּיִם, שְׁמַיִם הֵם לְמַעְלָה מִיַּיִן.

One may say the explanation of this is according to the well known principle that the highest descends the lowest.

וַיֵּשׁ לֹאמַר הַבִּיאֹר בְּזֶה, עַל פִּי הַכָּלָל הַיְדוּעַ, דְּכָל הַגְּבוּהָ בְּיוֹתֵר יוֹרֵד לְמִטָּה יוֹתֵר.

From this it is understood that the fact that water, by its very nature, is in a mode of drawing down and revelation, to the extent that it descends specifically to a low place.

דְּמִזֶּה מוֹכָן, דְּזֶה שְׁמַיִם מְצַד עֲצָמָם הֵם בְּטַבֵּעַ הַהֶמְשָׁכָה וְהַגִּילּוּי, עַד שִׁיּוֹרְדִים דְּוָקָא לְמָקוֹם נְמוּךְ.

Even after they have already been drawn downward, they continue by their nature to be drawn to an even lower place.

דְּגַם לְאַחֲרֵי שֶׁנִּמְשָׁכוּ לְמִטָּה הֵם נִמְשָׁכִים בְּטַבֵּעַם לְמָקוֹם נְמוּךְ יוֹתֵר.

This is because the root of their drawing down is from an exceedingly high place.

הוּא מִפְּנֵי שֶׁשֶׁרֵשׁ הַמְשָׁכָתָם הוּא מִמָּקוֹם גָּבוֹה בְּיוֹתֵר.

Accordingly, one may say that what is implied in several discourses that water is lower than wine is from the perspective of their actual nature in practice.

וְעַל פִּי זֶה יֵשׁ לֹאמַר, דְּזֶה שְׁמִשְׁמָע בְּכַמָּה דְּרוּשִׁים דְּמַיִם הֵם לְמִטָּה מִיַּיִן הוּא מְצַד הַטַּבֵּעַ שֶׁלָּהֶם שֶׁבְּפועַל.

For water is by nature in a state of drawing down and revelation, as explained above.

דְּמַיִם הֵם בְּטַבֵּעַ הַהֶמְשָׁכָה וְהַגִּילּוּי כַּנ"ל.

Wine, by contrast, by its very nature is covered and concealed within its grapes.

מֵה שְׂאִין כּוּן יַיִן, מְצַד עֲצָמוֹ, הוּא מְכֻסָּה וְטָמוּן בְּעֲנַבֵּי.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשַׁת מִקֵּץ, זֹאת הַנוֹכָחָה ה'תשמ"ג

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In order for it to pass from concealment to revelation, it requires action and effort.

ובכדי שִׁבּוֹא מִהַעֲלָם לְגִילּוּי הוּא עַל יְדֵי פְעוּלָה וְהַשְׁתַּדְּלוּת.

This is also the reason for the statement that when wine enters, the secret emerges.

דָּוָהוּ גַם הַטַּעַם עַל זֶה שֶׁנִּכְנָס יַיִן יֵצֵא סוּד.

Just as wine itself is the revelation of what was hidden, what was initially concealed within the grapes emerges into revelation.

כִּי כְמוֹ שֶׁהַיַּיִן עֲצֻמוֹ הוּא גִילּוּי הַהַעֲלָם, דָּוָה שֶׁהֵנָּה תְּחִלָּה בְּהַעֲלָם טְמוּן בְּעֲנַבִּיּוֹ, יֵצֵא לְגִילּוּי.

In this manner it also affects a person, drawing out the secret within him so that it comes into revelation.

עַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה הוּא פּוֹעֵל גַּם בְּהֶאָדָם, שֶׁהוּא מוֹצִיא אֶת הַסּוּד שֶׁבּוֹ, שִׁבּוֹא בְּגִילּוּי.

What is explained in those discourses that water is higher than wine is from the perspective of the superiority of the root of water.

וּמָה שֶׁמְבּוֹאֵר בְּדֵרוּשִׁים אֵלוֹ דְּמִים הֵם לְמַעְלָה מִיַּיִן. הוּא מֵצַד מַעְלַת שָׂרֵשׁ הַמַּיִם.

This superiority is also evident in their actual nature.

שֶׁנִּיכָר גַּם בְּהַטָּבַע שֶׁלָּהֶם בְּפוּעֵל.

Their descent to a low place is precisely because, at their root, they are higher.

דָּוָה שִׁיּוּרְדִים לְמַקּוֹם נְמוּךְ הוּא, כַּנ"ל, מֵצַד זֶה שֶׁבְּשָׂרֵשׁ הֵם גְּבוּהִים יוֹתֵר.

This also explains why water has no taste.

וְזֶה גַם מֵה שְׁמַיִם אֵין לָהֶם טַעַם.

Since even in their descent downward it is evident that at their root they are higher, therefore they are above taste even in their descent.

כִּי מִכַּיִן וְשָׁגַם בִּירִידָתָם לְמַטָּה נִיכָר בָּהֶם שֶׁבְּשָׂרֵשׁ הֵם גְּבוּהִים יוֹתֵר, לְכֵן גַּם בִּירִידָתָם לְמַטָּה הֵם לְמַעְלָה מִהַטַּעַם.

(ה)

It was explained earlier, in section one of the maamar beginning "Blessed is He Who performed miracles," that oil floats above all liquids because oil is higher than them.

וְהִנֵּה מְבּוֹאֵר לְעֵיל (סְעִיפָא, מִהַמְאָמֵר דִּיבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים), דָּוָה שֶׁשָּׁמֶן צָף עַל גְּבֵי כָּל הַמְשָׁקִין הוּא מִפְּנֵי שֶׁשָּׁמֶן הוּא לְמַעְלָה מֵהֶם.

According to what was explained earlier, in section four, the superiority of wine over water is that wine by its nature is concealed, hidden within its grapes.

וְעַל פִּי הַמְבּוֹאֵר לְעֵיל (סְעִיפָא ד), דְּמַעְלַת הַיַּיִן עַל הַמַּיִם הִיא שֶׁהַיַּיִן מֵצַד עֲצֻמוֹ הוּא בְּהַעֲלָם, טְמוּן בְּעֲנַבִּיּוֹ.

The superiority of water over wine is from the standpoint of their root, which is evident also in that water is above taste.

וּמַעְלַת הַמַּיִם עַל הַיַּיִן הִיא מֵצַד שָׂרֵשׁ, שֶׁנָּה נִיכָר בָּהֶם גַּם בְּזֶה שֶׁהֵם לְמַעְלָה מִהַטַּעַם.

Therefore, it must be said that oil being higher than both wine and water applies in both respects.

צָרִיךְ לומר, דָּוָה שֶׁשָּׁמֶן הוּא לְמַעְלָה הוּ מִיַּיִן וְהוּ מִמַּיִם הוּא בְּשֵׁנֵי הַעֲנַבִּיּוֹת.

The Rebbe

בסייעתא דשמיא. שבת פרשת מקץ, זאת הנופך ה'תשמ"ג

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This is so both regarding its concealment, for the concealment of oil, hidden within olives, is greater than the concealment of wine hidden within grapes.

הו בענין ההעלם שבו, דההעלם דשמן, זה שהוא טמון בזיתים, הוא העלם גדול יותר מההעלם דין, לשטמון בענביו.

It is also so in that oil is above human taste and pleasure, as will be explained later in section seven.

והו בזה שהוא למעלה מהטעם, הנאה, דהאדם, (כדלקמן) (סע"ף ז).

The explanation is as follows. The concealment of wine, hidden within grapes, is a concealment close to revelation.

והענין הוא, דההעלם דין, שהוא טמון בענביו, הוא העלם הקרוב לגילוי.

Therefore, revealing wine from its concealment is accomplished by pressing the grapes, which does not require excessive effort.

שלא כגילוי הנין מהעלמו הוא על ידי שכוחשים את הענבים, שאין זה השתדלות כל כך.

In contrast, the concealment of oil, as it is hidden within olives, is not close to revelation.

מה שאין פו ההעלם דשמן, כמו שהוא טמון בזיתים, הוא העלם שאינו קרוב לגילוי.

Therefore, in order to reveal oil from its concealment, it is necessary to crush the olives, which constitutes a far greater exertion.

שלא כבכדי לגלות השמן מהעלמו צריך לכתוש את הזיתים, שהוא, כתישה, השתדלות ביותר.

This corresponds to what is explained in the discourses, that wine is the secrets of Torah, whereas oil is the secrets of secrets.

וזהו שמבואר בהדרושים, דין הוא רזי תורה ושמן הוא רזין דרזין.

To reveal the secrets of Torah, since they are a concealment related to revelation, ordinary effort suffices.

שכדי לגלות רזי תורה, להיותם בחינת העלם השני לגילוי, מספיק גיעה על דרך הרגיל.

To reveal the secrets of secrets, since they are a concealment not related to revelation, tremendous exertion is required.

ובכדי לגלות רזין דרזין, להיותם בחינת העלם שאינו שני לגילוי, צריך ליגיעה עצומה.

(1)

This will be understood, the distinction between the two aforementioned modes of exertion, from the fact that even within the revealed dimension of Torah there are two types of exertion.

ויוכן זה (החילוק שבין שני אופני גיעה הנ"ל) מזה שגם בנגלה דתורה יש שני סוגים ביגיעה.

For although the study of Torah, in general and in any subject whatsoever, must be with exertion specifically.

דעם היות שלימוד התורה (בכלל, באיזה ענין שיהיה) צריך להיות ביגיעה דוקא.

To the extent that even when one reviews a subject that he already learned, his study must be with analysis and exertion.

ועד שגם כשחוזר על ענין שלמד כבר, צריך להיות לימודו בעיון ויגיעה.

To the extent that if one reviews a subject already learned without analysis, this is called neglect of Torah.

ועד שבאם חוזר על הענין שלמד כבר בלי עיון נקרא זה בשם ביטול תורה.

The Rebbe

בסייעתא דשמיא. שבת פרשת מיקץ, זאת הנופך השמי"ג

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All the more so when one studies deep matters in Torah, where one must exert oneself with far greater exertion.

ועל אחת כמה וכמה כשלומד ענינים עמוקים בתורה שאז צריך לנגע עצמו ביגיעה עצומה יותר.

In this there are, as understood, many levels.

וניש בזה (כמוכן) כמה וכמה דרגות.

Nevertheless, the exertion in all these levels is not in a manner that requires nullifying one's prior existence.

מכל מקום, היגיעה שבכל דרגות אלו אינה באופן שצריך לבטל מציאותו הקודמת.

This is not so when one studies a matter in Torah that is not within his capacity.

מה שאין פן כשלומד ענין בתורה שאינו בערכו.

Then the exertion is in a manner that requires nullifying one's prior existence, like crushing.

היגיעה היא באופן שצריך לבטל מציאותו הקודמת (כתישה).

This is similar to the conduct of Rabbi Zeira, who fasted one hundred fasts in order to forget the Babylonian Talmud so that he could study the Jerusalem Talmud.

ועל דרך שרבי זיירא צם מאה תעניתא כדי לשכוח תלמוד בבלי בכדי שיוכל לתלמוד תלמוד ירושלמי.

In this manner is the distinction between exertion for the revelation of the secrets of Torah and exertion for the revelation of the secrets of secrets.

ועל דרך זה הוא החילוק שבין היגיעה בשביל הגילוי דרוזי תורה להיגיעה בשביל הגילוי דרוזין דרוזין.

(ז)

There is an additional superiority of oil over wine, in that even after oil comes into revelation, through crushing, it is not fit for drinking when it stands by itself.

ועוד מעלה בשמן על יין, דהשמן גם לאחר שהוא בא לגילוי (על ידי הכתישה), אינו ראוי לשתיה כשהוא בפני עצמו.

One does not recite a blessing over it when drinking it as it is, unlike wine, which is considered significant and over which one recites "Who creates the fruit of the vine."

ואין מברכים עליו כששותים אותו כמו שהוא, חשוב ומברכים עליו בורא פרי הגפן.

This is because oil, even after crushing, is still above the level of actual revelation and therefore is not fit for drinking.

לפי שהשמן גם לאחר הכתישה הוא למעלה עדיין מבחינת גילוי ממשי, אינו ראוי לשתיה.

One may add that this aspect of the concealment of oil, that it is not fit for drinking, is even higher than the concealment of water, which has no taste.

וניש להוסיף, דענין זה בהעלם דשמן, שאינו ראוי לשתיה, הוא נעלה יותר גם מההעלם דמים שאין בהם טעם.

Water, although it has no taste, is fit for drinking, and moreover it is possible to derive pleasure from it.

דמים, עם היות שאין בהם טעם, הם ראויים לשתיה, ויתרה מיו, שאפשר גם ליהנות מהם.

However, in order to enjoy water one must have a sense of lack, thirst.

אלא שבכדי ליהנות מהם צריך להיות באדם הרגש דחק, צמא.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעֵתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשַׁת מִקֶּטֶז, זֹאת הַנוֹכָחָה ה'תשמ"ג

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Oil, by contrast, when it stands by itself, is not only impossible to enjoy, but is entirely unfit for drinking, for it is above revelation.

מה שאין פו שמן, כשהוא בפני עצמו, הנה לא רק שאי אפשר ליהנות ממנו, אלא שאינו ראוי לשלמעה מגילוי לשתייה קלל.

One may say that this distinction between wine, water, and oil corresponds to their meaning in spirituality.

ויש לומר, דחילוק זה שבין יין, מים ושמן הוא בהתאם לענינם ברוחניות.

Wine has taste, water has no taste yet is fit for drinking, and oil is not fit for drinking.

דיין יש לו טעם, מים אין להם טעם אבל ראויים לשתייה, ושמן אינו ראוי לשתייה.

Wine corresponds to understanding, therefore it has taste, meaning comprehension and grasp.

דיין הוא בינה, ולכן יש לו טעם, הבנה והשגה.

Water corresponds to wisdom, which is above comprehension and grasp, therefore it has no taste.

מים הם חכמה, שלמעלה מהבנה והשגה, ולכן אין להם טעם.

Nevertheless, water is fit for drinking and it is possible to derive pleasure from it, since it is revealed wisdom.

אבל אף על פי כן הם ראויים לשתייה ועד ששייך גם ליהנות מהם, להיותם חכמה הגלויה.

Oil corresponds to concealed wisdom, which is above the revelation of understanding and even above the revelation of wisdom, and therefore is not fit for drinking.

ושמן הוא חכמה סתומה שלמעלה מהגילוי דבינה וגם מהגילוי דחכמה, אינו ראוי לשתייה.

(ח)

This explains why the dedication of the altar was accomplished by anointing it with the anointing oil.

ונהו שחגיגת המזבח היתה על ידי שמן שחיו אותו בשמן המשחה.

Through drawing into it the level of concealed wisdom, wisdom of the crown, there was thereby also drawn the power for the bread of offerings.

שעל ידי שנמשך בו מבחינת חכמה סתומה, חכמה שבכתר, על ידי זה נמשך גם הכח להלקחם דקרבתות.

And for the libation of wine of understanding and the libation of water of wisdom.

ולניסוף היין דבינה ולניסוף המים דחכמה.

The maamar adds that within the anointing oil there were spices, the aspect of fragrance, which is higher even than oil.

ומוסיף בהמאמר, דבשמן המשחה היו בשמים, ענין הריח, שהוא למעלה גם משמן.

The explanation is that oil, though above taste and human pleasure and not fit for drinking, is nevertheless grasped through touch.

ויש לומר הביאור בזה, דשמן, עם היותו למעלה מהטעם וההנאה דהאדם ועד שאינו ראוי לשתייה, הוא נתפס במישוש.

Fragrance, by contrast, is not grasped through touch, and moreover it is something from which the soul derives pleasure, not the body.

מה שאין פו ריח אינו נתפס במישוש, ויתרה מיו, דריח הוא דבר שהנשמה נהנית ממנו ולא הגוף.

From this one also understands the gradations of the wisdom of Torah likened to oil and to fragrance.

ומזה מובן גם בהדרגות דחכמת התורה שנמשלו לשמן ולריח.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרָשַׁת מִקֶּטֶז, זֹאת הַנוֹכַח ה'תשמ"ג

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Torah being likened to oil refers, as above, to the secrets of secrets, which do come into intellectual revelation and even become en clothed in letters.

דְּזֶה שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה נִמְשָׁלָה לְשֵׁמוֹן קָאֵי כַּנ"ל עַל רִזּוֹן דְּרִזּוֹן, שְׁגָם הֵם בְּאִים בְּגִילוּי שְׂכָלֵי וְעַד שֶׁהֵם מִתְלַבְּשִׁים בְּאוֹתֵיזוֹת.

The aspect of fragrance in Torah, however, is entirely above intellect.

מֵה שְׂאִין כּוֹן עֲנִינוּ הַרִיחַ שֶׁבַתּוֹרָה הוּא לְמַעְלָה מִהַשְׂכָּל לְגַמְרֵי.

Nevertheless, just as fragrance, though enjoyed by the soul and not the body, can restore the soul to be drawn into the body.

אֵלָא שְׂאֵף עַל פִּי כּוֹן, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהַרִיחַ, עִם הַיּוֹתוֹ דְּכָר שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה נִהְיֵית מְמַנּוֹ וְלֹא הַגּוֹף, יָדוּעַ שֶׁעַל יְדֵי רִיחַ תְּחִיב מְשִׁיבִים אֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ לְהִתְמַשְׁכֵּתָהּ בְּגוֹף.

So too regarding the fragrance of Torah, it is drawn down into an actual legal ruling.

עַל דְּרָף זֶה יֵשׁ לוֹמַר בְּעִנְיֵן הַרִיחַ דְּתוֹרָה, שֶׁהוּא נִמְשָׁךְ בְּפִסְק דִּין בְּפוֹעַל.

To the point that Mashiach will judge by fragrance and understanding, Isaiah 11:3.

(Isaiah 11:3) וְעַד שֶׁמְשִׁיחַ יִהְיֶה מוֹרַח וְדָאִין.

The fragrance within him will be drawn into an actual ruling, though the reason of the ruling is entirely above intellect.

דְּבַחֲיֵינָת הַרִיחַ שְׂבּוֹ יוֹמְשָׁךְ בְּפִסְק דִּין בְּפוֹעַל, אֵלָא שֶׁהַטַּעַם דְּהַפְּסָק דִּין הוּא לְמַעְלָה מִהַשְׂכָּל לְגַמְרֵי.

This may be compared to the case of Rav who remained silent yet did not retract, ruling in practice based on a perception above intellect.

וַיֵּשׁ לוֹמַר שֶׁהוּא עַל דְּרָף שֶׁתַּק רַב וּמְכַל מְקוֹם לֹא הָדַר בֵּיהּ, דְּהַגַּם שָׁנָה הָיָה אֶצְלוֹ בְּבַחֲיֵינָת רֵאִיָּה דְּתַכְמָה שְׂלֵא נִתְגַּלָּה בְּשִׂכָל כָּלָל.

Even so, on the basis of this perception above intellect, he issued an actual legal ruling.

מְכַל מְקוֹם עַל פִּי רֵאִיָּה זֶה שֶׁלְּמַעְלָה מִהַשְׂכָּל פְּסַק פְּסַק דִּין בְּפוֹעַל.

(ט)

After the maamar, the discourse beginning “Blessed is He Who performed miracles,” explains the great elevation of the anointing oil, it further explains that the oil for illumination, in which the miracle of Chanukah occurred, is even higher than the anointing oil.

וְהִנֵּה לְאַחֲרֵי שֶׁמְבַאֲרֵה מְאֵמָר (דִּיבּוּר הַמִּתְחִיל בְּרוּף שְׁעֵשָׂה נְסִים) גּוֹדֵל הָעֵילוּי דְּשֵׁמוֹן הַמְּשֻׁקָּה, הוּא מְבַאֵר, דְּשֵׁמוֹן לְמֵאוֹר שְׂבּוֹ הָיָה הַנֵּס דְּחִנוּכָה הוּא נִעְלָה יוֹתֵר גַּם מִשֵׁמוֹן הַמְּשֻׁקָּה.

The light that is produced from the oil, since the light comes through the consumption of the oil, is higher than the oil itself.

דְּהִנֵּה הָאוֹר שֶׁנִּעְשָׂה מִהַשְׂמוֹן, דְּהָאוֹר בָּא מִכְּלִיּוֹן הַשְׂמוֹן, הוּא לְמַעְלָה מִהַשְׂמוֹן.

This is comparable to the fragrance that was in the anointing oil, which is higher than the oil.

וְהוּא עַל דְּרָף הַרִיחַ שֶׁהָיָה בְּשֵׁמוֹן הַמְּשֻׁקָּה שֶׁהוּא לְמַעְלָה מִהַשְׂמוֹן.

Moreover, the light produced from the oil is even higher than the fragrance of oil, as explained in the maamar.

וְיִתְרָה מִיּוֹ, דְּהָאוֹר שֶׁנִּעְשָׂה מִהַשְׂמוֹן הוּא לְמַעְלָה גַּם מִהַרִיחַ דְּשֵׁמוֹן, כְּמִבּוֹאֵר בְּהַמְּאָמָר.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשַׁת מִקֵּץ, זֹאת הַנוֹפֶה ה'תשמ"ג

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The distinction between them is that the fragrance in the anointing oil serves the oil itself.	והחילוק שבנייהם הוא, דהריח שבשמן המשחה הוא בשביל השמן.
Through the fragrance, the oil of concealed wisdom is drawn into revelation so that the altar could be inaugurated and become fit for offerings and libations.	שעל ידי הריח נמשך השמן דחכמה סתומה לגילוי, שיוכלו לחגוג בו את המזבח, שיהיה ראוי לקרבנות ולנסכים.
With oil and light, however, it is the opposite, the oil exists for the sake of the light.	מה שאין בו בשמן ואור הוא אדרבה, דהשמן הוא בשביל האור.
To the extent that the oil is consumed and transformed into light.	ועד שהשמן נכלה ונעשה ממנו אור.
There is an additional aspect here. The light that is produced from the consumption of the oil, although by its nature it is a mode of concealment.	ועוד ענין בזה, דהאור שנעשה מכליון השמן, עם היותו שמצד עצמו הוא בחינת העלם.
In addition to the fact that the nature of fire, of whatever kind, is to withdraw to its source.	בנוסף לזה שהשבע דאור, אינה אש שיהיה, הוא להסתלק לשרשו.
Nevertheless, regarding this light that is produced from the consumption of the oil, it becomes illuminating light.	הנה בנוגע לאור זה שנעשה מכליון השמן, הרי אף על פי שהשמן הוא בחינת העלם.
All the more so the light, which comes from the consumption of the oil and is higher than it, and despite this, it becomes illuminating light.	ועל אחת כמה וכמה האור שנעשה מכליון השמן והמעלה ממנו, ואף על פי כן הוא נעשה אור המאיר.
Moreover, through the oil it burns calmly, a light of settledness.	ולא עוד, אלא שעל ידי השמן הוא דולק בנחת, אור לשבתות.

(יו"ד)

From all of this one understands the great elevation of the miracle of Chanukah that occurred with the jug of oil.	ומכל זה מובן גודלהעילוי של הנס דחנוכה שהיה בפך השמן.
It contained enough only to light for one day, yet a miracle occurred and they lit from it for eight days.	שלא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד, ונעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים.
The light lit from this oil, since it came through a miracle, was even higher still.	דהאור שהדליקו משמן זה, מכיון שהיה על ידי נס, הוא נעלה עוד יותר.
Yet even this light shone in revealed and settled form.	ואף על פי כן, גם אור זה האיר בגילוי ובהתישבות.
This may also be connected with the fact that they lit for eight days, for the days of Chanukah are eight.	ויש לקשר זה גם עם זה שהדליקו שמונה ימים, יומי דחנוכה תמנא אינון.
The matter of eight days is the drawing down from the seven days of Atik, a most sublime level, into Malchut.	דענין שמונת ימים הוא ההמשכה משבועה יומין דעתיק, בחינה נעלית ביותר, במלכות.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשַׁת מִקֵּץ, זֹאת הַנוֹפֶה ה'תשמ"ג

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Malchut is the root of created beings, and through Malchut this light is drawn in revelation also below.

שָׂרֵשׁ הַנְּבִרָאִים, וְעַל יְדֵי הַמַּלְכוּת נִמְשָׁךְ אֹרֶזְהָ בְּגִילּוּי גַם לְמַטָּה.

Section eleven. May it be the Divine will that very soon we merit the coming of our righteous Mashiach.

(יֵא) וְיִהְיֶה רְצוֹן שְׂבָקָרוּב מִמֶּשׁ נִזְכָּה לְבִיאַת מְשִׁיחַ צְדֻקְנוּ.

Then He will strike it into seven streams, and together with this there will be a harp of eight strings.

שָׂאֵז יִהְיֶה וְהִפְהוּ לְשִׁבְעָה נְחָלִים, וּבְיַחַד עִם זֶה לְכַנּוֹר שֶׁל שְׂמוֹנָה נִימִין.

And even to the harp of the World to Come, which will have ten strings.

וְעַד לְהַכְנֹר דְּעוֹלָם הַבָּא שְׂיִהְיֶה שֶׁל עֶשְׂרֵי נִימִין.

This harp too will be in the Third Temple, which will be built with the coming of our righteous Mashiach.

שְׁגַם כְּנֹר זֶה יִהְיֶה בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי שְׂיִבְנֶה בְּבִיאַת מְשִׁיחַ צְדֻקְנוּ.

For the Third Temple will be an eternal house.

וְשֶׁהָרִי בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יִהְיֶה בֵּית נֶצְחִי.

All of this should be very soon, immediately.

וְכֹל זֶה בְּקָרוּב מִמֶּשׁ, וְעַד בְּאוֹפֶן דְּמִיד.

In the wording of Rambam, immediately they are redeemed.

וּבְלִשׁוֹן הַרַמְבַּ"ם מִיד הוּ נִגְאָלִין.

[NOTE Summary:

The maamar opens by clarifying the nature of the blessing “Who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days at this time.” This blessing is not primarily recited over the military victory of Chanukah, but over the miracle of the jug of oil. Accordingly, the mitzvah of Chanukah is established through lighting candles, since they commemorate the miracle that occurred specifically with oil.

To understand why the miracle is associated with oil and light, the Rebbe introduces the spiritual meaning of oil. Oil naturally floats above all other liquids because it corresponds to a higher spiritual root. Wine corresponds to Binah, understanding, and water corresponds to Chochmah, wisdom. Oil, however, represents concealed wisdom, Chochmah of Keter, a level above both comprehension and conscious revelation.

This explains why the dedication of the altar was performed through anointing with oil. The inauguration of the altar required drawing down a level of Divine light higher than what would later be drawn through offerings and libations. The oil of anointment provided the altar with the capacity to receive the service of offerings, wine libations of Binah, and water libations of Chochmah.

The Rebbe then explains the spiritual structure of offerings and libations. Offerings correspond to “eating” and draw down an internalized Divine vitality, while libations represent a higher form of internal revelation. Among libations themselves, wine is higher than offerings, and water is higher than wine, as seen in the unique water libation of Sukkot. Water, representing Chochmah, cannot be fully expressed in written form and therefore belongs essentially to the Oral Torah.

At first glance, this seems contradictory to other teachings that associate water with revealed Torah and wine and oil with hidden dimensions. The resolution lies in the principle that the highest root descends the lowest.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשְׁת מִקֶּץ, זֹאת הַנוֹפֶה ה'תשמ"ג

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Water flows downward precisely because its source is exceedingly high. Thus, in terms of practical manifestation, water appears lower than wine, but in terms of origin, it is higher.

Oil surpasses both wine and water in two ways. First, it is more concealed than wine, requiring crushing rather than pressing to be revealed. This parallels the difference between revealing secrets of Torah and revealing secrets of secrets, which requires total self-nullification and intense exertion. Second, oil remains above human taste and pleasure even after being revealed, unlike water which, though tasteless, is still drinkable.

The Rebbe further explains that oil represents concealed wisdom that can still be grasped intellectually, while fragrance represents a level above intellect entirely. This is why the anointing oil included spices. Fragrance is something the soul enjoys, not the body, and yet it can draw the soul back into the body. Similarly, Torah insights that transcend intellect entirely can still be drawn down into concrete halachic rulings, as seen in the concept of judging through spiritual perception.

The maamar then reaches its climax by explaining why oil for illumination is even higher than anointing oil. The light produced by oil comes through the oil's consumption, meaning the oil exists for the sake of the light. This light, though originating from concealment and naturally inclined to ascend, nevertheless shines steadily and calmly, illuminating the world in a settled and revealed manner.

This explains the unique greatness of the Chanukah miracle. The oil was sufficient for only one day, yet through a miracle it burned for eight days. The light produced was not only higher than natural light but remained fully revealed and stable. The number eight reflects a drawing down from the seven supernal levels of Atik into Malchut, allowing transcendent light to be revealed within the created world.

The maamar concludes with a prayer for the imminent arrival of Mashiach, when the deepest levels of Divine light will be fully revealed. This includes the transformation of the world symbolized by the splitting into seven streams, the harp of eight strings, and ultimately the harp of ten strings in the Third Beit HaMikdash, an eternal structure that will embody complete and lasting revelation.

Practical Takeaway:

The teaching of Chanukah is not merely about overcoming darkness, but about revealing the highest levels of Divine wisdom in a way that is stable, calm, and integrated into daily life. Even truths that lie beyond understanding can and must illuminate action, commitment, and clarity. Through perseverance, self-nullification, and dedication to Torah and mitzvot, one draws transcendent light into the most concrete aspects of existence, transforming the world itself into a vessel for holiness.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שָׁבֶת פְּרִשְׁת מִקֵּץ, זֹאת הַנוֹפֶה ה'תשמ"ג

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Chassidic Story:

During a Chanukah farbrengen in the early years of the Rebbe's leadership, a chassid approached him privately and confessed that although he studied Chassidus diligently, he often felt no emotional inspiration. "I understand the ideas," he said, "but the light does not burn within me."

The Rebbe listened carefully and then replied, "Oil by itself does not shine. It must be consumed to produce light. If one wishes the light of Chassidus to illuminate, one must be willing to give of oneself."

Years later, that chassid became deeply involved in helping others, teaching Torah to Jews who knew little, often at great personal sacrifice. He once remarked that it was only then that he truly understood Chanukah. The light did not come from inspiration alone, but from steady dedication. Like the oil of Chanukah, it burned calmly, consistently, and far beyond what he thought possible.

TPX: When the Oil Is Spent and the Light Remains

Core Teaching Integrated

The Rebbe's teaching reframes Chanukah as a psychology of transformation, not inspiration. Oil represents the deepest layers of the self, resources that are not immediately accessible, not emotionally gratifying, and not even "pleasant" to engage. Light appears only when oil is consumed. Not when it is admired, understood, or stored, but when it is used up in action.

Wine has taste. Water refreshes. Oil is different. Oil does not feel good. Oil is not drinkable. Oil is effort that does not reward the nervous system immediately. Yet oil produces the most stable and enduring light.

From a psychological perspective, this maps precisely onto deep change. Surface motivation, emotional highs, and intellectual insight correspond to wine and water. They matter, but they fluctuate. Real transformation comes from engaging layers of the self that are not emotionally reinforcing. Commitment without mood. Action without inspiration. Showing up without dopamine.

Chanukah light is not a flash. It is calm, steady, settled illumination. This is not burnout energy. It is regulated, integrated output that comes from inner alignment rather than emotional intensity.

Psychological Translation

Many people believe that progress should feel good. When it does not, they assume something is wrong. The Rebbe is teaching the opposite. The absence of emotional payoff is often a sign that one is touching something deeper.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשַׁת מִקֶּץ, זֹאת הַנוֹכַחַה ה'תשמ"ג

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Oil being crushed is not pathology. It is not trauma reenactment. It is purposeful exertion that does not erase the self, but uses the self as fuel for something larger. This is the difference between self-negation and self-transcendence.

In therapy language, this is the movement from insight to integration. Insight can feel exciting. Integration feels boring, repetitive, and unglamorous. Yet integration is where change stabilizes.

The miracle of Chanukah is not that the oil burned longer than expected. The miracle is that the light remained steady. No flickering. No chaos. No emotional volatility. This is what healthy regulation looks like. High-level functioning without constant stimulation.

Inner Conflict Reframed

Many people struggle with thoughts like:

Why does this feel effortful?

Why am I not inspired?

Why does growth feel heavy?

The teaching answers clearly. Because you are working with oil, not wine. You are not failing. You are doing the correct work at the correct depth.

Oil belongs to concealed wisdom. It is not accessed through excitement. It is accessed through consistency. Through commitment that outlasts mood. Through choosing values over feelings.

The Rebbe emphasizes that even the highest light must end up illuminating the physical world calmly. Psychological health is not transcendence without grounding. It is transcendence that shows up as reliability, steadiness, and presence in daily life.

Practical Therapeutic Takeaway

Stop using feeling good as your primary metric of growth.

Instead, ask:

Am I showing up consistently?

Is my behavior aligned with my values even when I feel flat?

Is the light steady, even if it is not dramatic?

If the answer is yes, you are not stuck. You are integrating.

Burning oil does not feel like inspiration. It feels like responsibility. It feels like choosing again. And again. And again.

The Rebbe

בְּסִיעָתָא דְשָׁמַיָא. שַׁבַּת פְּרִשַׁת מִקֵּץ, זֹאת הַנוֹכָחָה ה'תשמ"ג

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That is not weakness. That is maturity.

Modern Story

A software engineer in his mid thirties entered therapy after what he described as “emotional burnout.” He was successful, disciplined, and outwardly stable, but felt empty and disconnected. He kept searching for motivation. Podcasts. Retreats. Books. Nothing lasted.

At one point he said, “I just want to feel inspired again.”

The therapist asked a different question. “What do you do when you are not inspired?”

He paused. “I still do what needs to be done. I go to work. I help my kids. I exercise. I don’t quit.”

The therapist responded, “That’s the oil.”

Over the next months, nothing dramatic happened. No emotional breakthroughs. No euphoric moments. But something subtle changed. His anxiety decreased. His relationships stabilized. His sense of self became quieter but stronger.

One day he said, almost surprised, “I don’t feel inspired. But I feel clear. And I feel steady.”

That was the light.

Not loud. Not flashy. But illuminating everything around him.

END NOTE]