

# SICHA SUMMARY

## Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 25

### *Chanukah*

#### **The Curious Prayer:**

The V'al Hanissim insertion recounting the miracles of Chanukah concludes:

“Then Your children entered the shrine of Your House, cleansed Your Temple, purified Your Sanctuary, kindled lights in Your holy courtyards, and instituted these eight days of Chanukah to give thanks and praise to Your great Name.”

Seemingly the phrase “kindled lights in Your holy courtyards” refers to the lighting of the Menorah. Yet the Menorah was not lit in the “courtyard” of the Beis Hamikdash, but in the Heichel, the more sacred, private chamber of the Beis Hamikdash.

#### **A Suggested Answer:**

The Chasam Sofer suggests that the Heichel was still contaminated with idolatry, and so the people used the dispensation that allows a non-Kohen to light the Menorah, meaning that it can be lit outside the Heichel if necessary.

But the language of “Then Your children entered the shrine of Your House, cleansed Your Temple, purified Your Sanctuary, kindled lights in Your holy courtyards,” implies that the lighting of the candles was a conclusion of a process that began with entering the House and cleansing the Beis Hamikdash. Furthermore, why would the prayer use the plural, “Your holy courtyards” if the Menorah was lit in just one location?

#### **The Explanation:**

It seems reasonable to interpret this “kindling of lights” as referring not to the lighting of the Menorah, but to other celebratory lights as an expression of thanksgiving to G-d for the miraculous events of their victory over the Greco-Syrian forces.

This would lead to the realization that the V'al Hanissim prayer does not mention the miracle of the Menorah's lighting. Conversely, the Gemara in Shabbos which details the events of Chanukah does not highlight the military victory, but rather only the miracle of the candles.

This division can be explained as follows: The essential battle of Chanukah was spiritual. The Greeks attacked the Jewish attachment to transcendent Divine wisdom, and to their suprarational dedication to the Divine. This devolved into a physical war when their ideological battle intensified. The main victory therefore was the spiritual victory of the Maccabees' dedication. This was expressed in the miracle of the Menorah, since light is the most ethereal physical substance which alludes to a spiritual victory.

Therefore, when the Gemara asks “what is Chanukah,” what is essential meaning and character, the Gemara only speaks of the spiritual victory since the physical victory pales in comparison to the significance of

the spiritual one. And when we do want to express gratitude to G-d for the military victory, we do so without mention of the spiritual victory since, again, that would overshadow its significance.

### **The Lesson:**

From the Sage's prioritization of the spiritual victory over the physical we can draw the necessary fortitude to similarly order our lives around spiritual priorities. Our connection to G-d, our study of Torah, our acts of love for fellow Jews can become our essential focus, and our personal material concerns can become a mere means to an end — to serve our spiritual aspirations.

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