

On Hannuka

Miracles are events in which the regular cause and effect mechanics of the world as we know it are overturned. An example of these mechanics is the dynamic of sin and punishment. When people do evil they alienate themselves from the divine *shefa*. Cut off from God, such people are led to greater evil, thus further cut off, and so on.

This downwards spiral is broken by an act of will - the will to reject evil and choose Good. No scientific model or philosophical theory has adequately explained or even defined freedom, and yet it is an existential fact. A human being may defy causality, reject the cycle of evil and alienation, and choose *Yirat Hashem*. *Yirah* leads to the imitation of God through the *Mitsvot*. Practicing the *Mitsvot* aligns one's human will with God's, and this alignment of the human and Divine Wills reveals *Sefirat Binah* in the form of *Gevurot*, in which form She annihilates the obstacles blocking the divine *shefa*. The renewed flow of *shefa* empowers the former doers of evil, now *baalei tshuvah*, to continue on their path of restoration. Thus *Binah* is also called *Tshuvah*, and She is the author of miracles.

Hannuka is the story of one such miracle. The replenishing of the oil, seemingly from the menorah itself as there was no other oil to refill it (the menorah symbolizes *Binah*), is the miraculous flowing of *shefa* released through *Yirah* and imitation of God by the People of Israel in their struggle for freedom. All miracles are ultimately a result of human freedom, the will to choose God's Goodness, and thus *Binah*, the author of miracles, is called not only *Tshuvah* but also *Herut* or Freedom.

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