



The Crown Jewel Out in the Streets

“For a candle is a mitzvah and the Torah is light.”¹ Every mitzvah is a candle, a tangible act that envelopes abstract, spiritual light. The soul is also a candle: “The candle of God is the soul of man.”² But in order to kindle the candle of the soul, we need the candle of the mitzvah. Together, man and mitzvah create the next candle: The body of man is the wick, the mitzvot are the oil that facilitates the process of combustion, and so the Shechina shines over the person’s head, “And light upon your head shall not be absent.”³

There are mitzvahs, however, that are actual candles: The candles in the menorah of the Holy Temple, the candles of Shabbat and the Havdalah ceremony at the end of Shabbat, the candle with which we search for leavening before Passover, and the Chanukah candles. These candles are in different places on the outer-inner continuum. The candles of the menorah are inside the Temple, the Shabbat candles are inside every Jewish home, the pre-Passover-leavening-search-candle investigates the nooks and crannies and the Chanukah candles go out into the street. This is the transformation from “inward-shining light” to “outward shining light.” Our ultimate goal is to shine outward, to others, and not just inwardly, for ourselves.

These different types of candles express the different levels of the soul. On the level of *Keter* (Crown), above revealed consciousness, there is the essential light, which is not consciously accessible, similar to the light of the menorah in the Temple. At the level of *Chochmah* and *Binah* (Wisdom and Understanding) the light is consciously accessible. It is the light of the intellect, which is inward-shining, similar to the Shabbat candles, which illuminate one’s home. The *Havdalah* candle is the candle of *Da’at* (Knowledge) which transforms the intellect into an active and influential force. But in order to influence the outside world, we must first use the leavening-checking candle to root out and eliminate the *hametz* - our inflated ego and evil inclination - from within. The level of *Malchut* (Kingdom) is when we actually leave our homes and go out to illuminate the world. This is the Chanukah candle.

The inward, internal candle of the menorah in the Temple encompasses the power of the Chanukah candle that will illuminate the outer world. The Chanukah candle shines the essential light of the menorah of the Temple.

¹ Proverbs 6:23

² Proverbs 20:27

³ Ecclesiastes 9:8

This can be better understood with a beautiful parable. Rabbi Pinchas of Kuritz was one of the important disciples of the Ba'al Shem Tov. He opposed the custom of the Ba'al Shem Tov's successor, the Magid of Mezeritch, to publicize Chassidic discourses to the general public. He thought that Chassidut should be reserved for the elite few. Once, when he was visiting in Mezeritch, he saw a Chassidic discourse thrown along with the garbage on the street and felt great sorrow. The Alter Rebbe of Chabad, who was with Rebbe Pinchas at the time, attempted to appease him with a parable:

There was once a great king who sent his only son overseas to study the wisdom of nature and hunting. After some time, the king was informed that his son was critically ill and that the doctors could not find a cure for his illness. The king announced that anyone who thought he could cure his son should come to the palace. "There is a very rare and expensive precious stone," said a doctor who came to the palace. "If it will be ground up and mixed with good wine and administered to the king's son, he will be cured."

The problem was that the only place that this precious stone could be found was in the king's crown. It was the crown jewel. The king's advisors were reluctant to inform him of this complication, for they knew that if the precious stone would be removed from the crown, the crown would lose all its beauty. But the king did not hesitate for a moment. He commanded them to remove the stone and grind it up.

Just then, the king was informed that his son's condition had worsened. He was so ill that his lips were sealed shut and it was impossible to pour the liquid down his throat. The advisors thought that now, there was really no reason to destroy the precious stone. But the king instructed them to hurry up and prepare the concoction. "Let it all spill on the floor, as long as one drop will enter my son's mouth," he said.

The parable is quite understandable. The prince who went overseas is the Nation of Israel, which had distanced itself from its Father in Heaven and His Torah. His illness represents the fact that he has forgotten where he came from. The crown jewel that could save the prince's life – even though much of it will be running through the streets – represents the crown jewel in the king's crown - the inner dimension of the Torah, the wisdom of Kabbalah and Chassidut.

This story brings us back to the first and last candles above, the candles of the Temple and the Chanukah candles. The candles of the menorah parallel the *sefirah* of Crown and the Chanukah candles are the 620th (numerical value of *Keter* - Crown) mitzvah. These two special mitzvahs reflect the jewel in the king's crown in its two different states: The candles of the menorah are the crown jewel when it is still in the crown. When the Holy Temple exists, the service in the Temple illuminates the world with uplifting holiness. The Chanukah candle, on the other hand, is the crown jewel after it has been removed from the crown, ground up and administered to the ill prince in an attempt to illuminate him and wake him from his state of illness and darkness.

When we publicize the miracle of Chanukah, we publicize the 'miraculous' part of the Torah – its wondrous secret dimension. Just as the prince went out into the world to study natural science and hunting, so Chanukah represents Judaism's confrontation

with Greek culture. Greek culture, the forebearer of Western culture, was the cradle of science and enlightenment. Judaism seeks to hunt the sparks of holiness encompassed in that wisdom and to connect them to the Torah. This mission, however, is not easy and many 'hunters' can be hunted, themselves. They are liable to lose their faith and even forget that they lost something.

Thus, as part of the kindling of the Chanukah candle, the 620th (Crown) mitzvah, we must ascend to the inner dimension of the Torah in the crown of Judaism, the root of Jewish faith. We must remove it from its concealed perch and spread its light throughout the world – until all the princes return home.