## How Sweet it is!

וישבו לאכל לחם וישאו עיניהם ויראו והנה ארחת ישמעאלים באה מגלעד וגמליהם נשאים נכאת וצרי ולט הולכים להוריד מצרימה. (בראשית לז:כה)

And they sat down to eat a meal, and they lifted their eyes and saw, and behold, a caravan of Yishmaelites was coming from Gilead, and their camels were carrying spices, balm, and lotus, going to take [it] down to Egypt. (Bereshit 37:25)

The brothers throw Yosef in the pit, and then they sit down to eat. Soon enough, they see a caravan of Yishmaelites passing, carrying sweet-smelling, aromatic spices. Hazal wonder about this - since when do Yishmaelite merchants carry aromatic spices? They were actually known to sell foul-smelling products. So, why this time did they carry pleasant merchandise? Rashi on this pasuk, suggests that it was out of respect for Yosef. He was being exiled to Egypt. The least he could have was a pleasant journey.

On the surface this seems a bit strange. Yosef was undoubtedly lonely and depressed at this juncture. He was rejected by his brothers and he had no idea where he would eventually settle. So, the sweet fragrance was going to make him feel better? How would pleasant merchandise make any difference to Yosef in his situation?

A similar question may be raised with respect to Chanuka. The gemara inquires מאי חנוכה - and Rashi interprets this statement as an inquiry with respect to which miracle was the holiday of Chanuka declared. The gemara then resolves that it was with respect to the miracle of the pach shemen that contained enough oil to light the menorah for one day, yet miraculously it lasted for eight days. Wouldn't one have thought that the more significant miracle was the defeat by the outnumbered Jewish army of the mighty Greek troops? This saved our nation from extinction. Why is the emphasis here on the seemingly less significant miracle?

To answer both the significance of the sweet fragrance and the miracle of the pach shemen. Ray Chaim Shmulovitz in Sihas *Musar* explains as follows. In both instances Hashem portrayed his love and concern. Yosef was going through terribly trying times. The pleasant-smelling spices were a

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slight movement on Hashem's part, a wink, so to speak, to show Yosef that Hashem was at his side. That small notion from Hashem gave Yosef the strength and the optimism to continue, knowing that he was not alone, but that he had Hashem with him.

Similarly, after the Greeks defiled the mikdash, Hashem performed a miracle to literally "enlighten" the people, to indicate God's affection for their standing up in His honor!

Imagine that a family lost a valuable diamond that it had in their possession. After several hours one of the children was able to find the valuable gem. Of course everyone in the family Is relieved and perhaps ecstatic. Yet, the father's kiss on the child's forehead is an extra bonus of affection that provides the child with an added sense of pride and satisfaction.

When Klal Yisrael go through difficult times, there's often a wink from Hashem, or a kiss on our forehead to remind us that He is with us. Perhaps He is hidden, but He is definitely present. We have to look for and find the little notion from Hashem hidden within the challenge. Within every difficult challenge, Hashem threads a glimmer of hope, a silver lining around the cloud. It is up to us to recognize this communication from Hashem and to comprehend that He is with us throughout our challenges and triumphs.

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