

חנוכה, לכבוד חנוכה, and לעילוי נשמת רב צבי בן אלכסנדר הכהן הי"ד, the man who was tragically killed in Abu Dhabi, we are learning now לעילוי נשמתו, and also for all those who need a רפואה שלמה and a big ישועה.

חנוכה is a joyous יום טוב, one that many of us cherish from childhood. The following is an idea found in "A Short Vort.": The בני יששכר and many other גדולי ישראל describe חנוכה as the יום טוב of תורה שבעל פה. This leads to a very obvious and straightforward question: Why are there no משניות in ש"ס that discuss חנוכה? We have a whole מסכת for פורים, a whole מסכת for פסח, and another for סוכות, filled with משניות. But for חנוכה, there is nothing. Why is that?

R' Nissan Kaplan offers a fascinating explanation. He suggests that רב יהודה הנשיא deliberately chose not to write down משניות for חנוכה in order to beat the יוונים at their own game. The יוונים did not seek to annihilate us physically, as המן did. Their war was ideological; they sought to erase תורה and מצוות, the very essence of what makes us Jews. As we say in על הנסים, both in שמונה עשרה and ברכת המזון, their goal was to cause the Yidden to forget the תורה.

רב יהודה הנשיא wrote down parts of תורה שבעל פה when he recognized that the was at risk of being forgotten. However, when it came to חנוכה, a יום טוב that commemorates our ניצחון over the Greeks and their attempt to obliterate תורה שבעל פה, he chose to preserve its unique connection to oral tradition. By leaving the הלכות of חנוכה unwritten in the משניות and accessible only through the גמרא, רב יהודה הנשיא emphasized that חנוכה remains a celebration of תורה שבעל פה.

In the zechus of learning תורה, may הקדוש ברוך הוא protect us from all our enemies, grant us גזונט, פרנסה, and נחת, and most importantly, הצלחה in עבודת הבורא. And as we look at the wonderful light of the מנורה, let us try to imagine - We can't see it - the אור הגנוז. We little people can't see it, but it's there. If we focus on the light of חנוכה, it can penetrate deep into our נשמות, and give us a tremendous ישועה and עזרה.

