

Forge On!

written by Yehudis Golshevsky
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Reb Noson explains that Chanukah is a time when the spiritually ill – really, all of us – have a chance to recover. When the king hears that his trusted servant is sick, he goes to visit him. Seeing the monarch at his bedside, the sick man wants desperately to get up to serve his king, yet the king demurs. “I came here only to encourage you. Don’t get up. Just enjoy my attention, and rest and recover.”

Similarly, the menorah shines God’s light into our homes during the depths of winter and our spiritual slumber, helping us gather the strength we need to emerge from our challenges.

The Maccabees faced impossible odds when fighting the Assyrian Greeks. We, too, sometimes feel overwhelmed. We need a lot of encouragement to remember that God can help us prevail against any odds.

Breslover Chassidim would recount the powerful parable of the Baal Shem Tov, as Rebbe Nachman told it:

Once there was a king who wished to see how determined his

subjects were. He placed a great treasure in a particular place and, using the power of illusion, enclosed it within many walls.

When people attempted to reach the treasure, they encountered what appeared to be solid walls. They understood how difficult it would be to penetrate such formidable barriers and some gave up. Others managed to surmount one wall, only to encounter another obstacle behind it. They, too, didn't get very far before giving up. But when the king's son attempted to reach the treasure, he encouraged himself, "I know that all of these obstacles are merely illusions. In truth, there are no walls at all!" He forged ahead with confidence until he reached the treasure.

Rebbe Nachman added: "A discerning person understands from this that all obstacles and enticements that diminish one's vital connection to God have no genuine reality. This connection to God is the treasure we can all reach. If we truly know that all barriers to this goal are insubstantial, we can easily overcome them. The barrier may be the lack of money or other some other material obstacle. It may be other people trying to influence us to leave the path of truth. All one requires to surmount these difficulties is a strong heart. Enthusiasm and boldness enable one to prevail against any obstacle!"

Based on Likutey Moharan II, 46