



## Source Sheet on The Chanuka Miracle and Jacob's Jar of Oil

Rabbi David Hertzberg z"l in his book *Pri Mayim Chaim* ( [Pri Mayim Chaim](#), 2003, Shir L'Shlomo: Jerusalem, p. 20-21) writes:

“According to an oral tradition, as explained the Imrei Noam (Rabbi Eliezer of Dzikov, a Chassidic Master circa 1865), the olives from the branch that Noach received from the dove were made into pure olive oil. The oil was given to Noach's firstborn, Shem. Shem, otherwise known as Malchitzedek, the priest to the Most High God—sealed this little jar of oil and gave it to Abraham as a gift. Abraham, in turn, handed it over to Isaac who passed it down to Jacob.

According to our sages, Jacob forgot some small jars on the other side of the Jabbok River and returned to retrieve them. One of these jars was the oil from Noah's ark. Jacob prophetically hid this oil at the site of the Holy Temple and laid the foundations for the miracle of Chanuka. This is the oil that originated with the dove, the symbol of peace, and continues to shine until the Messiah comes.”

יריעות שלמה של המרש"ל ז"ל לרש"י לבראשית לב:כה  
נ"ב ולי נראה מ"ה פי' פכים קטנים דהא כתיב לעיל ויעבר את כל אשר לו אלא היה פכים קטנים עם שמן ליצוק  
על האבן אשר נדר וזהו אינו שלו אלא של שמים ומ"ה נשא את נפשו עליו ופכים קטנים לאו דוקא קאמר אלא פך  
קטן ואולי רמז בזה בעבור שנשא את נפשו לקיים נדרו בפך קטן נעשה נס לבני השמונאי ע"י פך קטן וזהו שכח  
פכים קטנים ודוק

[Yeri'ot Shlomo](#), commentary to Rashi on Bereshit 32:25 by Rabbi Shlomo Luria (HaMaharshal), originally published in 1609 in Prague, author of [Yam shel Shlomo](#), translation by Jonathan Neril

"Nota bene: And it seems to me in the explanation of the 'small vessels' that it is written above 'and he transferred all that was his' (verse 24); but they were small vessels with oil to pour on the rock as he vowed, and they were not his but rather belonged to Heaven, and because of this he troubled himself over them; and when it is written 'small vessels,' that is not the precise meaning, but rather 'a small vessel,' and perhaps this is hinted at that because he troubled himself to fulfill his vow through the small vessel, a miracle was made for his children the Hashmoni'im through the 'small vessel,' and this is the meaning of [Rashi]: that 'he forgot small vessels.' "

צדה לדרך לרש"י לבראשית לב:כה  
רש"י: שכח פכים קטנים: כתב הרב הגדול המרש"ל ז"ל וז"ל שכח פכים קטנים לפי שנאמר ויעבר את כל אשר  
לו וא"כ על מה ויותר וכו'...אי נמי לכך אמר פכים קטנים לפי שמצינו שהקדוש ברוך הוא אמר לו ליעקב אתה  
מסרת נפשך על פך קטן בשבילי וגם אני בעצמי אשלם לבניך בפך קטן לבני חשמונאי שנעשה נס ע"י פך קטן.  
והיכן מצינו שיעקב מסר נפשך על פך קטן אלא ודאי הכא לפי שנאמר כבר ויעבר את כל אשר לו ולמה ויותר  
לבדו אלא ודאי פך קטן של שמן שהיה רוצה לנסך על גבי המזבח בבית אל וזה שהיה שכוח וחזר עליו לפי  
שאינו שלו אלא של הקדוש ברוך הוא לנסך עכ"ל



Tzedah L'derech, commentary to Genesis 32:25, by Rabbi Yisachar Ber Ailanberg, Moravia, 1510-1623.

"The great Rabbi HaMaharshal z'l wrote, and this is his language<sup>1</sup>: 'And he forgot small vessels' [Rashi] is taught since it is written 'and he transferred all that was his' (Bereshit 32:24). If this is so, why is it written 'and he was left alone' (verse 25)? ...It says 'small vessels' because we find that the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Yaakov, you risked your life for a small vessel for My sake, and therefore I Myself will repay your descendents through a small vessel for the children of Hasmonians, who made a miracle through a small vessel. And from where do we find that Yaakov risked his life for a small vessel? It must be here, since it already said, 'and he transferred all that was his.' Why is it written 'and he was left alone' (verse 25)? It is clearly a small vessel of oil that he wanted to pour on the pillar in Beit El. This was forgotten and he returned for it since it was not his, but rather belonged to the Holy One, Blessed be He to pour.

### בראשית פרק לב פסוק כה

יָד וְיָלֵן שָׁם, בְּלִילָהּ הַהוּא; וַיִּקַּח מִן-הַבָּא בְּיָדוֹ, מִנְחָה--לְעֵשׂוֹ אָחִיו

כִּב וַתַּעֲבֵר הַמְּנַחָה, עַל-פְּנֵיו; וְהוּא לָן בְּלִילָהּ-הַהוּא, בְּמַחְנֶה

כִּג וַיִּקַּח בְּלִילָהּ הַהוּא, וַיִּקַּח אֶת-שְׁתֵּי נַשְׂיוֹ וְאֶת-שְׁתֵּי שְׂפָחֹתָיו, וְאֶת-אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר, יְלָדָיו; וַיַּעֲבֵר, אֶת מַעְבַּר יַבֵּק

כד וַיִּקְחֵם--וַיַּעֲבֵרֵם, אֶת-הַנְּחָל; וַיַּעֲבֵר, אֶת-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ

כה וַיִּזְתֵּר יַעֲקֹב, לְבָדוֹ; וַיֵּאבֶק אִישׁ עִמוֹ, עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר

### Genesis 32:14, 22-25

14. So he [Jacob] lodged there on that night, and he took from what came into his hand a gift for his brother Esau...

22. So the gift passed on before him, and he lodged that night in the camp.

23. And he arose during that night, and he took his two wives and his two maidservants and his eleven children, and he crossed the ford of [the] Jabbok.

24. And he took them and brought them across the stream, and he took across what was his.

25. **And Jacob was left alone**, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.

(Judaica Press Translation)

### תלמוד בבלי מסכת חולין דף צא עמוד א

ויותר יעקב לבדו - אמר רבי אלעזר: שנשתיר על פכין קטנים  
מכאן לצדיקים שחביב עליהם ממונם יותר מגופם וכל כך למה

לפי שאין פושטין ידיהן בגזל

### Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Chulin 91:1

'And Jacob was left alone:' Said Rabbi. Eleazar: He remained behind for the sake of some

<sup>1</sup> Note: this quotation of the Maharshal by R' Ailanberg differs slightly from the Maharshal as recorded in his book Yeri'ot Shlomo, although the essential meaning remains the same.



small jars. Hence [it is learned] that to the righteous their money is dearer than their body; and why is this? Because they do not stretch out their hands to robbery. (Judaica Classics Library translation)

### ספר ליקוטי מוהר"ן - מהדורא קמא סימן נד

כי כל דבר שבעולם, יש בו ניצוצות הקדושה שנפלו בשעת שביירה. ושבירה, הוא בחינת אותיות שנשברו ונפלו לכל דבר ודבר מזה העולם. וכל דבר יש לו שעה (ה). וצריך לבוא בשעה זו לאדם זה, שהוא משרש אחד עם אותן הניצוצות שיש בזה הדבר. וכשמגיע זה הדבר לאדם זה, והוא מקבל חיות מזה הדבר, הינו מהאותיות הנשברים שיש שם. על - ידי - זה נכללין האותיות הנשברים בזה האדם, בחיות שלו, ונעשה מהם קומה שלמה, ומתפשט בחיות של כל הגוף. ועל - ידי - זה נשלמין האותיות, ויש להם שלמות. וצריך לשהות הדבר אצל זה האדם להשתמש בו, עד שנפסקין האותיות והניצוצות השכיין לשרשו. ואחר - כך יוצא מרשותו לאדם אחר, שהגיע העת שיהיה עליה להאותיות הנשארים, שהם משרש אחד עם האדם האחר, ועל - כן יוצא לרשותו. ולפעמים חוזר הדבר ובא לאותו האדם שהיה שלו מתחלה, כי מחמת שלא היה לו אז חלקי נפש רוח נשמה אלו, לא היה יכול אז להשלים האותיות אלו, עד עתה שהגיעו לו אלו חלקי נפש - רוח - נשמה, שעל ידם יכול להשלים אלו האותיות הנשארים. ובין כך, הכרח לשהות אצל אחר

### Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, Likutei Moharan, Torah 54c, Ukraine, late 18th—early 19<sup>th</sup> century

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The union between the righteous person and the Community of Israel is achieved through masa u'matan (doing business). This is because everything in the world has in it sparks of holiness that fell at the time of the Shattering of the Vessels. "Shattering" is the aspect of letters that shattered and fell into each and every thing of this world. For every thing has its time: it must come at that time, to that person who shares the same root with those sparks in that thing

Thus, when that thing comes to this person, and he receives vitality from it--i.e., from the shattered letters that are there--through this the shattered letters are encompassed in this person, in his vitality. They become a complete entity, and infuse the vitality of the entire body. Through this the letters are restored and become complete. Then that thing must stay with this person, for him to use, until the letters and sparks that are associated with his root terminate. After this it leaves his possession for someone else; the time has come for the remaining letters to have an ascent. They share the same root with that other person and so depart for his possession

Still there are times when the thing returns to that person who had it originally. Since he did not possess the components of soul-spirit-higher soul <that relate to the letters>, he was unable to complete these letters until now that these components of soul-spirit-higher soul have become his. Through them he is able to complete the remaining letters, which in the meanwhile had to remain with the other person

And when he completes these letters, he gains illumination in his soul-spirit-higher soul because of the illuminations of these letters that came to him and which he completed. Through this illumination he illuminates the root of his soul-spirit-higher soul, which is with the righteous person and the Community of Israel; the root of all the souls <being there>, as



explained above

**פרי צדיק פסח, דף ל"ו ע"ב באמצע ספר קול מבשר ח"ב - סוטה**  
וכאן שאמר, צדיקים ממונם חביב עליהם יותר מגופן, לפי שאין פושטין ידיהם בגזל (סוטה יב ע"א), היינו, שלא לוקחים מה שאינו מגיע להם מהשי"ת. על דבר מה שנאמר, 'לחם חוקי', היינו, שנחקק ונקצב מהשי"ת לחלקו. וקרי ליה 'גזל', על דרך מה שכתוב (ברכות לה ע"ב), כאילו גזל להקב"ה וכנסת ישראל, כי לה' הארץ ומלואה. ומה שלא נברא בשבילם, היה אצלם כגזל, ואין פושטין ידיהם ליקח. ומפני זה, ממונם שמוחד להם, שנברא בשבילם, חביב עליהם כל כך, עד שמסר יעקב אבינו ע"ה את נפשו עליהם. על דרך מה שסיפר רבינו הקדוש [האיז'ביצער] זצוק"ל ששמע מרבינו ר"ב מפשיסחא זצוק"ל, שאמר בשם היהודי הקדוש זצוקללה"ה, שדבר שיש לו שייכות לצדיק - מחוייב ליהנות ממנו אף במסירות נפש. ולכן, יעקב אבינו ע"ה שידע שהפכים קטנים הם שלו ושייכים לנפשו, ונבראו בשבילו - מסר נפשו להעבירם. וכן ענין כל כסף וזהב שהוציאו ממצרים, היה, מה שרצו להוציא הקדושה שהיה כבושה בתוכם

**Pri Tzadik** (Hassidic Commentary of Rabbi Zadok HaKohen Rabinowitz)<sup>2</sup> [Translation by J. Neril]

Here, where it says that 'for the righteous, their money is more dear to them than their bodies, so that they do not come to steal' (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sotah, p. 12a) [can be understood] to mean that they do not take that which is not destined for them from God...[The above teaching] calls it 'stealing,' based on the teaching (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Brachot p. 35b) that it is as if that person is stealing from God and the Jewish people, since "to God is the land and its fullness" (Psalms). That which is not created for this specific person is like stolen property when they are in possession of it, and thus [the righteous are careful] not to take possession of it. Because of this, property that is assigned to and created for them is very precious to them—so much so that our patriarch Jacob risked his life for his property. Thus the Ishbitzer Rebbe heard from his rebbe of Przysucha who said in the name of the Yehudi Hakadosh (three generations of Hassidic rebbes of Przysucha): a righteous person is obligated to enjoy an object which is fitting for them even if it means risking their life. That is why Jacob-- who knew that the small vessels were his, appropriate to his soul, and created for him—risked his life to save them. So too with all the silver and gold that they [the Jewish people] took out of Egypt—they sought to extract the holiness that was trapped inside of [the wealth]."

#### **Questions for discussion:**

- On the text: How do you understand this teaching? Why would Jacob leave his family vulnerable on the other side of the river to recover a few small vessels? What motivated Jacob to do this?
- Broader implications of the text: Discuss how Jacob would likely act in our society today. How would Jacob live today? What would he do about bagging his groceries at the checkout stand? What dishes would he likely use at the family barbeque? What would he do at the grocery store about having almost all his food and drink come in

<sup>2</sup> Pri Tzadik (Rabbi Zadok HaKohen Rabinowitz of Lublin (Kreisburg, 1823- Lublin, Poland, 1900)) on Pesach, p. 36b, in *Kol Mevasser*, ed. Yehuda Menachem Boem, Raanana, Israel, 1992. At age 65, Rabbi Zadok HaKohen began to give public classes on Shabbat, Holidays, Rosh Chodesh and special occasions. The transcription of those classes were compiled into his work known as *Pri Tzadik*. (adapted from Wikipedia, online at

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zadok\\_HaKohen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zadok_HaKohen)) *Kol Mevasser* is a four-volume anthology of Hasidic teachings.



disposable packaging? How would he live amidst a disposable society? What might he do differently?

Source Sheet prepared by Jonathan Neril.