

The Weekly Farbrenging



למען ישמעו • וישב תשפ"ו • 857
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

CHANUKAH

A LUMINOUS TIME

In the household of Reb Dovid of Tolna, *hadlokas haneiros* was a special event. His chassidim would gather excitedly in his house to take part in the lighting of his golden *menora*, which was an elaborate piece of artistic craftsmanship. One year, on the first night of Chanukah, when the *tzaddik* was ready to light it, he turned to one of his chassidim and said, "Your wife is short, isn't she? When you want to speak to her, what do you do? Do you bend over towards her, or does she raise herself up to your height?" Without waiting for an answer, he recited the *berachos* and lit the *menora*. Needless to say, the chossid and all those present were very puzzled.

During this time, Reb Dovid's great nephew, Reb Mordechai Dov of Hornisteipol, was staying at his home, and seeing the confusion of the chassidim, he explained: The *Gemara* says that "The Shechina does not descend lower than ten *tefachim* from the ground." However, there is an exception to this rule, for the Chanuka *menora* is ideally required to be lower than ten *tefachim*, and it brings the Shechina itself here below. Reb Mordechai concluded by quoting from the *AriZal* that this is the deeper meaning of the words of the *Gemara*, 'If your wife is short, you should bend over and whisper to her.'

The following evening, at the time of *hadlokas haneiros*, Reb Dovid again made some puzzling comment to one of his chassidim. Immediately, though he had not been told of the previous night's explanation, he turned to Reb Mordechai and said, "This time, you will not understand as you did yesterday!"

(סיפורי חסידים זווין מועדים ע' 281)

In *Haneiros Halalu* we say that we have no permission to use the lights, only to look at them ("elo *lir'oison bilvad*"). This can mean that gazing at the lights is actually a benefit, healing any damage the eyes have incurred from seeing improper images, and protects one for the future. In fact many *tzaddikim* would sit and gaze at the *licht* as they burned.

(שו"ת שב יעקב סי' כב, זרע קודש - ראפשיץ)

After kindling the Chanukah *licht*, the Rebbe Rashab would sit near them for half an hour and learn, though at a slight distance, in order not to benefit

from its light. He would learn *Gemara*, wherever he was holding in his learning of Shas.

The Rebbe explained that this practice highlights the special connection of Torah to light, and is a lesson for everyone – Chanukah is a time to increase one's learning. Furthermore, since the Yevanim wished to prevent us from studying Torah, we respond by increasing our study.

(רשימות הימון ע' שכג, תו"מ תשמ"ב ח"כ ע' 618)

CONSIDER

Why is it specifically the light of Chanukah that draws the Shechina below ten *tefachim*?

How do we distinguish between "pure *Yiddische* light" and "contaminated *goyishkeit*" when they both incorporate the study of Torah and the observance of mitzvos?

THE WAR OF THE YEVANIM

The Rebbe explained how the goal of the *Yevanim* and the *misayavim* was to remove the separation that exists between Yidden and *goyim*, and to educate children to be similar to the other nations. This is more severe than placing decrees against the observance of Torah and *mitzvos*, because its effect remains even after the decree is over. It begins with something 'small', through 'lighting up' the way for a child with 'oil' that is contaminated with *goyishkeit*, claiming that it produces the same light. When one educates children improperly, drawing 'light' from a source which is not pure, this leads a child to become a *Misyaven R"L*.

The lesson from Chanukah is: when lighting up

Yiddische homes, one must use only pure *Yiddische* light, uncontaminated by any *goyishkeit*. By doing so, with *mesirus nefesh* (not giving in to the majority, who also appear to be stronger), we will be victorious, for *HaShem* is on our side.

(לקו"ש ח"כ ע' 438)

At a children's rally the Rebbe pointed out the war against the *Yevanim* in our times. During the time of Chanukah, the Chashmona'im withstood a tremendous challenge, battling a mighty army with *mesirus nefesh*. Today's *nisyonos* are not as formidable, but are of a different nature. The *Yetzer hara* comes to a child and tells him to spend his time playing games like others around him, thus causing him to forget to learn Torah. Or he will try to convince him to eat a candy which others are eating, even though its *kashrus* is uncertain. In such a situation, the child must act strongly, with *mesirus nefesh*, no matter how exciting or enticing the challenge is, and then he will certainly be victorious.

(ז' חנוכה תשל"ח, לקו"ש ח"כ ע' 483)

CELEBRATING CHANUKAH

Since the primary *nes* of Chanukah was a spiritual one, annulling the decrees of the *Yevanim* against the observance of *Yiddishkeit* and the offering of *korbanos*, we commemorate it in a spiritual way, by saying *Hallel* and praising *HaShem*. However, it is also customary to make one's *seudos* finer during Chanukah in order to recall the miracle of winning the war and to commemorate the completion of the *Mishkan* on *chaf-hei* Kislev. During such a *seuda*, one should sing praises to *HaShem* for His *nissim*, thus making it a *seudas mitzva*.

(שו"ע אורח סי' תע"ד ובהשלמה לשו"ע"ר שם)

It was customary for the *Tzemach Tzedek*, as it had been for the Alter Rebbe and the Mittlerer Rebbe before him, to hold a gathering on one of the evenings of Chanukah with his family, including his daughters-in-law. This was called a "*latkes ovent*", a *latkes* evening. At this gathering the Rebbes would tell stories, some of which were repeated year after year. The Rebbe Rashab would also set aside time during Chanukah to speak to the children.

(היום יום כ"ח כסלו, רשימות הימון חנוכה תרצ"ג)



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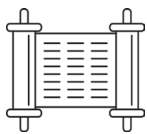


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ELECTRIC MENORAH

If someone cannot light a flame menorah, should they light an electric menorah?

The Gemara teaches that all oils and wicks qualify for *neiros Chanuka*, with olive oil being most ideal since its light is clear and illuminating.¹ Based on the premise that light production is the primary criterion for *neiros Chanuka*, as the method of publicizing the miracle, some *acharonim* suggested that electric lamps should qualify for the mitzva as well.²

However, the vast majority of *acharonim* question the validity of electric bulbs for the mitzva, and note various issues:³

Many note that if the light needs to be produced by “fire,” which by definition also radiates heat, then fluorescent and LED bulbs would be disqualified. Moreover, even an incandescent bulb, though it may be “fire,” may not qualify as a “candle.”⁴ While some argue that turning on the light does not constitute an act of “kindling,” others hold that it is sufficient in this regard.⁵

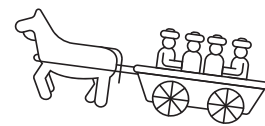
Since our Chanuka candles commemorate the miracle in the Beis Hamikdash, it stands to reason that they should resemble the Menora that burned miraculously with oil-fueled flames. Electric bulbs have neither a flame nor tangible “fuel” or consumable material.⁶

Chanuka candles must be lit with enough fuel at the time of lighting to last half an hour. A wall-plugged lamp doesn’t have enough stored energy to last 30 minutes on its own and relies on a continuous power supply (a battery-powered light wouldn’t have this issue). Yet, turning on the light establishes a connection that should last without any additional intervention necessary.⁷ We need not be concerned about power turning off since that is an outside force, similar to a wind extinguishing a flame.⁸

For these reasons, one who can light real flames for *neiros Chanuka* must do so. However, in a case where one cannot light (e.g., in a hospital), *poskim* rule that one should light an electric one (ideally incandescent), without a bracha, for the sake of *pirsumei nisa*.⁹

1. שבת כג ע"ב ורש"י שם.
2. ראה אשל אברהם ח' לשבת כב ע"ב. שו"ת מים חיים (משאש) או"ח ח"א סי' רעט וח"ב סי' שצא.
3. ראה הנסמן בא"ק ח"י ע' רכח וע' שלה. החשמל בהלכה ח"א פ"ג וראה בארוכה מאמרו של הרב פייטל לוי בתחומין ח"ט ע' 317 ואילך ובאור הדרום ח"א ע' 12 ואילך.
4. ראה שו"ת הר צבי ח"ב סי' קיד.
5. ראה שו"ת הר צבי שם. מאורי אש פ"ה ענף ב. ומנגד ראה אחיעזר ח"ג סי' ס. שו"ת באר משה ח"ו קונטרס על עקלקרק א"ח סי' נח אותיות ג, ז.
6. ראה כף החיים או"ח סי' תרע"ג סק"ט. מהרש"ג ח"ב סי' קז. מאורי אש פ"ה ענף ב. אבל ראה שו"ת מים חיים שם.
7. ראה פקודת אלעזר סי' כ"ג. מאורי אש שם. הליכות שלמה תנוכה ע' רפג.
8. כוכבי יצחק ח"א סי' ה-ח.
9. אג"ק ח"י ע' רכח.
10. ראה יביע אומר או"ח ח"ג סי' לה. וראה שו"ת באר משה שם סי' נט שאין לחוש דנפיק חורבא מיני עיי"ש.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה



R. LEIZER SHIMON TUMARKIN

R. Leizer Shimon Tumarkin of Homil (born c. 5595) was the son of R. Yosef Tumarkin, the Rov of Kremenichug, and the grandson-in-law of R. Aizel Homiler. A close *talmid* of R. Aizel, R. Leizer Shimon was a chasid of the Tzemach Tzedek, Rebbe Maharash, and Rebbe Rashab. He was a prominent figure in the town of Homil and published R. Aizel's *maamarim*.

After the Tzemach Tzedek passed away, R. Leizer Shimon became a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash. Once he asked the Rebbe: “We’re the same age; why do you look so worn out?”

“It’s from the ‘heartwarming’ *yechidusen*,” the Rebbe replied.

(לשמע און ע' 73)

When R. Leizer Shimon came to Homil to learn by R. Aizel Homiler, he was already fluent in *Likkutei Torah*. R. Mordechai Yoel Duchman took him as a *chavrusa*, and they began learning together *nigleh* and

Chassidus.

R. Aizel boasted: “With Mordechai Yoel and Leizer Shimon, I fulfilled the Alter Rebbe’s vision of *knei lecha chaver*, acquire for yourself a friend.”

R. Aizel once farbrenged on *Yud-Tes Kislev* with them two and a third person and said “The four of us correspond to the four letters of Hashem’s Name, *Havayah*. Let us resolve to live the right way only, and no other!”

(לשמע און ע' 161, 168)

In 5657, R. Aizel’s grandsons-in-law — R. Leizer Shimon and R. Tzvi Dov (Hersh Ber) Lotker — finished *davening* on their *zeide’s yahrzeit* and R. Mordechai Yoel joined them for a *LeChaim*.

“Nu,” they said, “it’s already forty years. Shouldn’t we have then the wisdom of our teacher?”

“But that’s only if you ‘follow in his ways,’” replied R. Mordechai Yoel.

(לשמע און ע' 198)

A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חוה לאה בת ר' שמשון הכהן ע"ה



WE ARE ALL MARRANOS

Mr. Zalman Shazar, who became President of Israel, had a unique relationship with the Rebbe. As a descendant of chassidim, despite not being observant, he had a spark in his heart for Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, which was fanned to a flame as the Rebbe continuously drew him close.

Knowing the Rebbe’s love for seforim, Mr. Shazar sent the Rebbe a precious item, a collection of *tefillot* printed in Amsterdam in the year 5447.

When the Rebbe received the gift, he responded in a letter by pointing out that the pamphlet was printed for the Anusim, the Spanish Marranos, who were forced to convert. It is even possible that it was

published by the Marranos themselves, when they came to Amsterdam.

The Rebbe concluded with a poignant message:

“From time to time when I look at this booklet, I ponder the idea that everyone is, to an extent, coerced (“anus”), and does numerous things as an outcome, directly or indirectly, of the pressure of his environment. Like the words of the Rambam, that one is under the compulsion of his *yetzer hara* and ‘He really wishes to be a part of Yisroel: to preform all the mitzvos and distance himself from *aveiros*...’

(*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 10, p. 100)

לעילוי נשמת

מרת מוסיא בת ר' אברהם ישעי' ע"ה שטראקס

נפטרה כ"ה אדר תשפ"ד