



CHANUKAH

A Luminous Time

In the household of Reb Dovid of Tolna, *hadlokas haneirois* 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 זיון 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 ס" 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 increase our study.

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

The War of the Yevanim

The goal of the *Yevanim* was "*lehashkicham torasecha uleha'aviram meichukei retzonecha*" ("to make them forget Your Torah and transgress the decrees of Your will"). As the *Midrash* says, the *Yevanim* demanded the Yidden write that they have no part in *HaShem*. This was a war against *HaShem*. "Let them study Torah," said the Greeks. "Let them practice the *mitzvos*, *mishpatim*, and *eiduyos*, but they must not mention that the Torah is *HaShem's* and that the *mitzvos* are the decrees of His will. Torah and *mitzvos* must be severed from *HaShem*."

(היום יום ב' טבת)

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 *Yiddishe* homes, one must use only pure *Yiddishe* 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)

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 או"ח 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 Mittler 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 היומן חנוכה תרצ"ג)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why is it specifically the lights of Chanukah that draws the Shechinah below ten *tefachim*?
- How do we distinguish between "pure *Yiddishe* light" and "contaminated *goyishkeit*" when they both incorporate the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvos*?

A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Horaa Rechovot

Aliya During Davening

May I go up for an *aliya* in middle of *Birchos Krias Shema*?

- Throughout *davening* one is talking to Hashem and it is disrespectful to interrupt.¹ *Halacha* differentiates between various sections in *davening* and various forms of interruption.
- During *Pesukei D'zimra* one may not talk even for a *mitzva*,² yet, most *davening* responses are permissible since those praises integrate well into *Pesukei D'zimra*.³ This includes all of *Kedusha* with the Shabbos additions, the complete *Modim D'rabonam*, and "amen" for *Kaddish* (up until and including "da'amiran b'alma v'imru amen") and for any *bracha*.⁴ Purely customary responses, such as "Baruch Hu ubaruch Shemo," "amen" for the end of *Kaddish*, *Brich Shmei* and *Vezos haTorah*⁵ should not be answered.
- During *Birchos Krias Shema* one may only respond to *devarim shebikdusha*, certain chief responses which require a *minyan*. This includes *Borchu*, the main parts of *Kedusha* (*Kadosh*, *Boruch* and *Yimloch*), "Amen yehei Shmei raba," "amen" at the end of *Chatzi Kaddish* (after "da'amiran b'alma v'imru amen"), "amen" to the *brachos* on the Torah⁷ and to *Birkas Kohanim*.⁸ One should also respond to *Modim* with the first three words of "Modim anachnu Lach."
- Whenever one must interrupt to respond, he should try to do so between sections,⁹ *pesukim*, or at least stanzas of a *posuk*.¹⁰ If one interrupted in middle of a *posuk*, he should return afterwards to the beginning of that *posuk*.¹¹
- Whether one called up for an *aliya* during *Birchos Krias Shema* should go up is a *machlokes*: some say that even a *Yisroel* may go, while others say that even a *kohen* may not interrupt (since he has a valid reason). The Alter Rebbe records the *minhag* to take the *aliya* and recite the *brachos*, but not to read along with the *baal koreh*.¹² During *Pesukei D'zimra* one should not be called for an *aliya* unless he is the only *kohen* or *levi* available. However, if called up, he may go up and even read along.¹³

1. ראה לדוגמא, שו"ע ר"ק ס"א.
2. שו"ע ר"ק ס"א נ"א ס"ד.
3. שו"ע ר"ק ס"א נ"א ס"ה וראה מכתב הרבי נדפס בסוף ספה"מ.
4. ספר המנהגים עמ' 9 ע"פ מכתב רבינו שבסוף סהמ"ג. ועד"ז באשי ישראל פט"ז הע' כ' בשם הגרש"א. והוא דלא כקצוה"ש סי' י"ח בדה"ש סק"ח ע"פ שו"ע ר"ק ס"א ס"ה.
5. שו"ע ר"ק ס"א קכ"ד ס"ח.
6. ראה סידור ד"ה כשנפסק, שימלך חלק מעיקר הקדושה - דלא כמ"ש בשו"ע סי' ס"ה.
7. פסקי הסידור ד"ה ועל.
8. רק של מכהנים, אך לא של החזן.
9. וראה אשי ישראל פ"ט ס"א.
10. אשי ישראל פ"ט ס"א.
11. שני ענינים למשל בין "נפשכם" ל"וקשרתם".
12. ראה שו"ע ר"ק ס"א ס"ב.
13. שו"ע ר"ק ס"א ס"ו.
14. מוש"ב או"ח סי' נ"א סק"י.

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

THANK YOU!

IN APPRECIATION TO ALL THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO OUR
YUD TES KISLEV CAMPAIGN.

THE ZECHUS OF SPREADING CHASSIDUS SHOULD GRANT
THEM MANY BRACHOS AND BRING MOSHIACH NOW!

OUR HEROES

Reb Meir Simcha Chein

Reb Meir Simcha Chein was a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe. He was a great chossid and also a wealthy merchant who gave tremendous amounts of *tzedaka*. Reb Meir Simcha was involved in community work under the constant guidance of the Rebbe Rashab. He would learn *Chassidus* and *daven ba'arichus* with great fervor. Reb Meir Simcha passed away on the 4th of Shevat, תרצ"ד (1934).



At the advice of the Rebbe Rashab, Reb Meir Simcha became a major wholesaler of flour, sugar, oil and wax. As the business developed and managers began administering the transactions, Reb Meir Simcha dedicated his time to *davening* and learning. Early each morning he would learn *Chassidus* and then *daven* until four o'clock in the afternoon! Subsequently, he would spend time checking the mail and reviewing the dealings, before returning to his learning once more.

Being blessed with exceptional wealth, Reb Meir Simcha had the liberty to give generously to *tzedaka*. Every month he would calculate how much money he needed for his family, and the rest would go to *tzedaka*. His family related that there was never extra money in his bank account. Every penny that was not needed went to *tzedaka*.

When the communists took over in 1917, they nationalized all private businesses. Everyone's wealth disappeared overnight. Reb Meir Simcha was left penniless and constantly struggled to make a living, sometimes being left without anything to eat. But through it all, he never lost his temper. Bas Sheva, his daughter, related, "One day my father locked himself in his room. This was unusual for father, and as children we were curious to see what he was doing. I peeked through the key hole and saw my father pacing nervously. Suddenly, he raised his hands upward and said, 'Master of the Universe! Until now I was a 'Gabai Tzedaka'. I knew what to do with the money you gave me. Now, that you have taken your deposit back, I have one request from you: give me a clear mind so that I can sit and learn peacefully.'" When he finished this *tefilah* he sat down to learn.

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Weight of Tanyas

At the Chanukah 5744 (1983) Tzivos Hashem rally, the Rebbe began a campaign to print Tanyas throughout the world, as a vehicle for *hafotzas hamayonos*.

Reb Leibel Zajac of Brazil immediately set out to publish Tanyas in various locations, and sent a sample collection in a decorative case to the Rebbe's home.

The attendant at the Rebbe's home, Reb Sholom Ber Gansburg, relates:

"As the Rebbe was leaving home for 770, he took the box in one hand and his large brown paper bag in the other. When the Rebbetzin saw this, she asked me to 'please take the Tanyas from my husband so it won't be too heavy on him.'

"The Rebbe looked at her and said, 'Tanyas are never heavy,' and continued walking, holding on tightly to the Tanyas.

(Bakodesh Chazisicha, page 50)