

The Weekly *Farbrenngen*

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנשי

למען ישמעו • וישב תשע"ט • 490
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 זיון מועדים ע' 181)

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 היומן ע' שכג, תר"מ תשמ"ב ח"ב ע' 618)

CONSIDER

Why is it specifically the light 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?

The Rebbe explained that Chanukah is an opportune time to increase one's Torah study and *shemiras hamitzvos*, since the *nes* was related to those *ruchniyusdike* matters. One should especially upgrade one's *yiras Shomayim*, for that is the purpose of Torah and *mitzvos*, and that was what the *Yevanim* were particularly opposed to.

This we can learn from the way in which we light an additional candle every night. During Chanukah, one should increase one's contributions to *tzedaka* and study more Torah than usual.

Through the *mitzva* of *neiros* Chanukah, one is granted the light of Torah.

(התועודיות תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 67, התועודיות תשמ"ד ח"ב ע' 596)

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' טבח)

The Rebbe explained how the goal of the *Yevanim* and the *misyanim* 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.

(לקורש 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, לקורש ח"כ ע' 483)

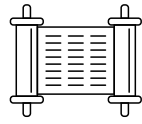


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MENORAH FOR CHILDREN

May my child light menorah with the colorful candles which burn for only twenty-five minutes?

Chanuka candles are for *pirumei nisa*, and in the times of the Gemara, they were required to be lit when people were passing by outside, which was during the first half hour after nightfall. Therefore, the minimum amount of time that they must burn is thirty minutes. Some *poskim* hold this applies only when lighting outdoors, when different people pass by throughout the half hour, and not when lighting in the house for the family for which a shorter time suffices. Yet, the consensus amongst the majority of *poskim* is that even Chanuka candles lit indoors should burn for a full half hour.¹

Children should be educated to light their own Chanuka candles from the age of six onwards.² The obligation of *chinuch* requires educating the child to fulfill the *mitzva* properly with all of its components.³ Thus, it is imperative to ensure that one's children light their menorah with all the specifications of *halacha*. Besides, the objective is to train the child to fulfill the *mitzva* in the halachic manner when he gets older.

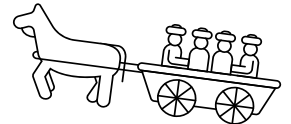
Many of the cheaper candles on the market do not burn for the necessary amount of time, and an adult may not recite a *bracha* over them. Some *acharonim* posit that a child may fulfill his obligation with such candles, since they burn for almost the full *shiur*, and in the child's mind he has fulfilled the *mitzva*.⁴ Yet, if *chinuch* mandates fulfilling the *mitzva* properly (as mentioned above), the child must light with the correct *shiur*.

Similarly, the basic *mitzva* of menorah is to light one candle per night (per household), and it is only the *mehadrin min hamehadrin* to add an additional candle each night.⁵ Some *poskim* therefore write that *chinuch* doesn't apply to *hiddurim* and one candle a night suffices for a child. However, many contend that even children should add each night, and that is indeed the custom.⁶

In practice, one should endeavor for a child over six to light candles that burn for a full half hour. If this isn't feasible, at least one of the candles – the minimum *mitzva* – should burn for that time length. Similarly, candles for Shabbos Chanuka should contain at least **one** that will burn for 50 minutes (i.e. 30 minutes after nightfall) so he will fulfill the basic *mitzva*.⁷

Children under six who light a menorah may use shorter candles since they aren't yet obligated by *chinuch*.⁸

1. ראה גמ' שבת כ"ג ע"ב. בקיצור פסקי הרא"ש שבת פ"ב אות ג (בזה"ו אין להקפיד). אבל ראה דרכ"מ ס' תע"ב סק"א ומשנ"ב שם סק"ד.
2. ראה ר"ן שבת י' ע"ב. וראה כף החיים ס' תרע"ה ש"ש שבע. וראה התועודיות תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 64 בכללות הענין של חינוך ילדים לנ"ח ושדיליקו על פתח חדרם אבל כמובן וגם פשוט שיש לעשות ככה רק כאשר זה באופן ביטוחי לגמרי.
3. ראה ריטב"א סוכה ב ע"ב. רמב"ם הל' חמץ.
4. ראה רמ"א א"ח ס' תרע"א ס"ב (ולהעיר שלפי שיטת המחבר אין חינוך לילדים לנ"ח).
5. משנ"ב א"ח ס' תרע"ה סק"ד (נר אחד סג' ס' מבית הלוי - חנוכה ע' קל"ה המנהג להוסיף בכל לילה).
6. ס' מבית הלוי - חנוכה שם ברב ואזנר ע"ה.
7. שו"ת מקדש ישראל חנוכה ס' קפ"ז.



RASHBATZ

R. Shmuel Betzalel Sheptel, known among chassidim as Rashbatz, was one of the prominent *chassidim* of the Tzemach Tzedek, Rebbe Maharash and Rebbe Rashab. In the publications "HaTomim", the Frierdiker Rebbe describes his incredible journey to Chassidus Chabad and the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe Maharash entrusted him with the education of his son, the Rebbe Rashab, who later entrusted him with the education of his son, the Frierdiker Rebbe. In the year תר"ס (1900), he was appointed as the leading *mashpia* of Tomchei Temimim, a position which he kept until his last day. He passed away on the 15th of Sivan, תרס"ה (1905) and was buried, according to his wish, within 50 amos of the *ohel* of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash.

The Rashbatz once asked his mentor R. Michel Opotzker to show him *klipah* (impurity). At first R. Michel would not agree, but after much pestering R. Michel agreed to show him. The Rashbatz would later regret this and said that it would have been better had he not seen *klipah*.

(רשימו"ד החדש עמ' 239)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related that as a child he had the habit of looking out of the window. There was nothing essentially wrong with this, since there was nothing to wrong to see in the streets of Lubavitch. Yet, his mentor the Rashbatz would tell him: Rather than sitting in the home and looking out, it would be better for you to stand outside and look into the Rebbe's holy home.

The Rebbe applied this in practice: Being a "Torah yid" means not just to study Torah, but for the Torah to teach the person so that it becomes the person's identity. When one is fully engrossed in the study of Torah, he doesn't look at what is around him.

(ספה"ש תרצ"ו עמ' 10, תו"מ חמ"ה עמ' 117 ואילך)

The Rashbatz valued time exceedingly. During the time when he mentored the Frierdiker Rebbe (then a young *bochur*), he would sometimes wake him up at 1 am saying, "Wake up, wake up, *vehinei Hashem nitzav alav*", Hashem's presence is upon us.

(רשימות היומן עמ' ש"פ)

A Moment with The Rebbe



TANKS AGAINST ASSIMILATION

It began on Chanukah 5734 (1973), when the Rebbe initiated a massive Chanukah campaign involving *anash* and *bochurim*. Subsequently, *bochurim* decided to spend their own free time visiting the people they had met to lay *tefilin* with them. Thus began "Friday *mitvzoyim*."

I reported this to the Rebbe, the Rebbe said, "Tell him that these are the tanks against assimilation!"

The name stuck. Soon the *balabatim* bought their own "tank," which they would operate.

Bochurim would be driven each week in cars which dropped them off at their locations, and were parked at the last stop. Soon, these cars became *tefilin* booths. Large vans eventually replaced them, bedecked with decorative signs.

At the Yud Beis Tammuz *farbrengen*, the Rebbe observed that the word tank is an acronym for the three final *sedorim* of *Mishnah: Taharos, Nezikin* and *Kodshim*.

"This could serve as a lesson, that on *mitvzoyim* if one has pure motives (*taharos*), then he will influence others to avoid spiritual damage (*nezikin*), and ultimately do acts of holiness (*kodshim*)."

Reb Yudel Krinsky relates, "I was in touch with an editor of the New York Times, and invited him to see the vehicles parked in front of 770. When

(Tchayenu, issue 2, page 39; issue 6 page 36)