

## CHANUKAH

### The Kedusha of Chanukah

In the household of the *tzaddik*, 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 Chanuka, 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, the *tzaddik*, 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 ז'ין מועדים ע' 281)

One Chanuka, a group of chassidim traveled to see the Chozeh of Lublin. One of them handed the Rebbe a *pan* on which his friend's name was written, and when the *tzaddik* looked at the note, he spat. Later the same evening, the chossid decided to try giving the note again. This time, as soon as the *tzaddik*

saw it, he said, "This man illuminates all the worlds!" He then added, "When I first saw the *pan*, that man was playing cards; this time he is lighting his *menora*."

(ספורים חסידים ז'ין מועדים ע' 286)

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 *Medrash* 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' בתר)

In a *sicha* (כ"א כסלו תש"מ), the Rebbe explained how the goal of the *Yevanim* and the *misyavim* 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 *tahor*, this leads a child to become a *Misyaven* (ר"ל).

The lesson from Chanuka 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 *ruchniyusdike* one, annulling the decrees of the *Yevanim* against the observance of *Yiddishkeit* and the offering of *korbanos*, we commemorate it in a *ruchniyusdike* 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 *nes* 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"ר ובהשלמה לשו"ע ר"ש)

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 היומן חנוכה תרצ"ג)

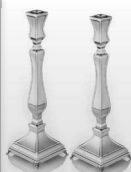
### CONSIDER THIS!

- 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*?

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## Blocking a Neighbor's View

My neighbor wants to extend his house and block my spectacular ocean view. Can I stop him?

- Halacha says<sup>1</sup> that one may stop a neighbor from building a wall or planting a thick tree<sup>2</sup> that will block sunlight from entering his window. (Exact distances are enumerated in Shulchan Aruch<sup>3</sup>)
- If one built a wall blocking his neighbor's window and the neighbor noticed it and was silent, the neighbor cannot later demand that the wall be removed<sup>4</sup>. The reason is that since people are generally particular about this even for a short period of time, having remained silent is considered as consent.<sup>5</sup>
- One may prevent a neighbor from building a sukkah that will block sunlight even though it is temporary. If one does permit his neighbor to build a sukkah near a window, it does not permit building a permanent structure, since he only allowed the sukkah for the purpose of a temporary *mitzvah*.<sup>6</sup>
- Poskim write<sup>7</sup> that if the wall is far enough to allow sunlight to enter the window, the neighbor cannot stop the construction because of obstruction of view. Not having light is considered real damage which can be prevented, whereas losing a nice view may be less comfortable but is not considered damage.
- Later Poskim note<sup>8</sup> that in a situation when it is clear that the primary purpose of that window was for the view (such as over the water etc.), one may prevent a neighbor from blocking it.
- Contemporary Poskim<sup>9</sup> add that these *halachos* only apply to **blocking light**. However, one cannot stop a neighbor from hanging lights outside his house at night although the excess light disturbs his sleep. Since in this scenario he can easily resolve the problem by use of a curtain, he therefore cannot demand his neighbor to inconvenience himself.

Please note that the above may not be applicable for your situation. Consult your Rov for a final psak.

- |                                      |                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. א"כסו י"ס דנק י"ס מ"וח ע"ש        | 7. ראה בשו"ת מהרל"ח ח"ט ס"ד.                                             |
| 2. ראה פתחי תשובה שם סק"א.           | 8. כי רוצים לדמות זה למ"ש המהרל"ח                                        |
| 3. ראה גם בשו"ע ורמ"א שם סכ"ב ואילך. | 9. שם דהמונע מחבירו הבטח לשדותיו מצי מעבב ליה דמוכחא דהאי חלון להכי קאי. |
| 4. שו"ע ורמ"א שם סעיף י.             | 10. ראה ספר פתחי חושן - נזקין פי"ד הע' 21.                               |
| 5. ראה סמ"ע שם סק"ז.                 |                                                                          |
| 6. שו"ת המב"ט ח"ג סי' קכה.           |                                                                          |

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

### Important Correction

In issue 227 we wrote that according to the Remo occasional gambling is permitted for one who has another trade (unlike the Mechaber who considers it theft). It would therefore follow that for Ashkenzim it would be permissible to play *dreidel* for money.

It has since been brought to my attention, that the Alter Rebbe (ה"מ ה"א) (גזילה ס"א) (a) implies that the Mechaber's opinion should be followed here; (b) even according to those who do not consider it theft, there is another lesser *issur* involved. (Thank you to Rabbi Mendel Zirkind for pointing this out.)

Therefore, Chassidim who are bound by the Alter Rebbe's *psakim* should not play *dreidel* for money, unless all moneys are returned at the end of the game.

לזכות הילדה גאלדא איטא תחי  
שיגדלוה הורי לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

נדבת הורי הרה"ת מנחם מענדל ורעייתו מרים מושקא שיחיו פרלשטיין

לזכות יום הולדתם לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות  
מחלה אסתר בת חי מושקא וצמח הכהן בן מחלה אסתר  
חנה בת מחלה אסתר

# OUR HEROES

## Reb Sholom Reb Hillel's

The chossid Reb Sholom HaKohen Humer of Beshenkovitz was known as Reb Sholom Reb Hillel's because he was a devoted *talmid* of Reb Hillel Paritcher. He had a store in Beshenkovitz that his wife ran, while he would accompany Reb Hillel on all his travels.



On one of their journeys, they arrived at the estate of a big *poritz*. They stayed with a local Jew. The manager of the estate was also Jewish and came to greet Reb Hillel, but as soon as Reb Hillel saw that he was dressed like the squires with a trimmed beard, Reb Hillel lowered his eyes, answered him coldly, and bade him farewell without conversing.

Afterwards, Reb Hillel sent Reb Sholom to visit the home of the manager, adding, "Do not leave until he gives you a certain sum for *tzedaka*". Reb Sholom was quite surprised and reminded Reb Hillel of the manager's surly face when he left. Reb Hillel just repeated the instruction without any explanation.

When Reb Sholom came to the house, he saw the man pacing back and forth very perturbed. He did not even notice Reb Sholom. He was talking to himself. "He surely knew that I have the ability to grind him like a pebble and to turn him into absolute nothing. And he nevertheless was not impressed by me. Indeed, this is a true '*Guteh Yid*' (a *tzaddik*). When the manager calmed down a bit, he noticed Reb Sholom and asked him what he wanted. Reb Sholom replied that he needs a certain amount for *tzedaka*. The man did not hesitate and he gave him the desired amount.

Time passed and Reb Hillel again came to the town. They were greeted by a changed man. As time passed, the manager became a chossid.

On another journey, Reb Sholom and Reb Hillel visited a village in White Russia. Reb Sholom started to *daven ma'ariv* and *davened* until day break. There was no way he was going to go to sleep, as it was already time to prepare for *shacharis*! And so, he started with the preparations for *davening shacharis*. After about an hour he started *davening*, and by *mincha* time was only up to *Shema Yisrael*. When the villager who owned the inn came to *daven mincha*, he saw Reb Sholom still in middle of *shacharis*. The villager said in surprise, "What is with this Jew! He *davens* all night and all day! He must have a very blocked head."

Reb Hillel related, "The three years that Reb Sholom learned *Chassidus* with me did not affect him as much as the words of that villager..."

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

# A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

## A Request for Chanukah Gelt

On the 6<sup>th</sup> night of Chanukah, 5747, the Rebbe suddenly asked Reb Leibel Groner whether Reb Yossel HaKohen Gutnik was present at the recent *farbrengen*. The Rebbe immediately continued: "*zog im der possuk*" (tell him the *possuk*).

Reb Leibel was mystified. To which *possuk* was the Rebbe referring? The Rebbe explained, "I am referring to the *possuk* '*ten li hanefesh*' (give me your soul). Tell him I want a detailed list of his *shiurei Torah*!"

The next day, after Reb Yossel handed in a summary of his *shiurim*, the Rebbe called him and his father Reb Chaim, for a special *yechidus* in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. When they entered, the Rebbe lifted both hands in the air, and said with a smile, "We live in a strange age, when a *Yisrael* asks for Chanukah *gelt* from a *Kohen*..."

The Rebbe turned to Reb Chaim and said, "I want you to publish a book of all your *pilpulim* and talks."

Then to Reb Yossel, "From you I also want *Chanukah gelt*. I want you to increase in your *shiurim*."

לזכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה