

The Weekly *Farbrenge*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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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' 281)

In *Haneiros Halalu* we say that we have no permission to use the lights, only to look at them ("*elo lir'oisn 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 Yiddische 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' טבת)

The Rebbe explained how the goal of the *Yevanim* and the *misyavnim* 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"ה, לקו"ש ח"כ ע' 483)



Yoseph Shomer
Certified Public Accountant

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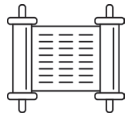
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MULTILEVEL CHANUKA MENORAH

Must the lights of a menorah be in a straight line?

Shulchan Aruch rules that multiple wicks along the circumference of a bowl are invalid for the mitzva of Chanuka candles since the flames combine with each other and resemble a torch (*medurah*). This dissimilarity to the menorah in the Beis Hamikdash disqualifies them from counting even as one candle.¹ The Rama quotes Rabbeinu Peretz that also when using wax candles, they may likewise not be arranged in a circle resembling a torch.²

The Magen Avrohom records that the Maharil saw Chanuka candles arranged in a zig-zag, and he instructed they be placed in a straight line so they don't appear like a torch.³ The Mishna Berurah understands it as a precaution, lest one come to arrange them in a circle (which resembles a torch).⁴ Aruch Hashulchan expressed concern that it won't be clear that all the candles are part of the same menorah.⁵

Yet, the Rama quotes the Terumas Hadeshen that a candelabra with candlesticks extending in a circle does qualify as a menorah since the candles are apart from each other.⁶ Poskim mention a separation of an *etzba* (2 cm) between the flames. Some poskim, however, hold that the separation of the cups' walls is sufficient, and the design makes it apparent that they are separate lights. Although separate cups or holders would allow placing them in a circle as well, it's still considered more mehudar to have them in a line.

What about having them at different heights? Later acharonim mention that candles should all be placed on the same level without any higher or lower.⁷ Although it is questionable if it is required, the accepted custom is for the base of the candles to be at approximately the same level.

In practice, we endeavor *lchatchila* that the lights of a menorah should be in a straight line even when there are separate cups or holders for the candles.

1. שו"ע או"ח סי' תרע"א ס"ד.
2. רמ"א שם.
3. מגן אברהם סימן תרע"א ס"ק ג.
4. משנה ברורה סי' תרע"א סקט"ו.
5. ערוה"ש שם סי"ב.
6. וראה שו"ת מאמר מרדכי ח"א או"ח סי' י' שו"ת רב פעלים או"ח ח"ד סי' ל'.
7. חיי אדם כלל קנ"ד ס"י. קיצור שו"ע סי' קל"ט ס"ט.

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

KOZHNETZER MAGGID

Reb Yisroel Hofshstein, the Kozhnetzer Maggid, was born in Poland around the year 5497 (1737). His father Reb Shabsi lived in Apta, and was a simple bookbinder who did not come from a distinguished family. Reb Yisroel was a *talmid* of the Mezritcher Maggid and Reb Elimelech of Lizensk. He settled in Kozhnetz and became a *maggid*, giving sermons and inspiring the people to *teshuva*, in the path of *Chassidus*. He was known for his greatness in the capacity of Rebbe. He passed away on *Erev Sukkos* 5575 (1814). He wrote many *seforim*, including *Avodas Yisroel*.

pleasure from the shine of the *Shechina* and forgot his promise. However when I come to the World of Truth, I will not forget! Listen *Yidden*, I will not forget! I am announcing and proclaiming that I will not enter *Gan Eden* until Moshiach comes!"

Shortly before his passing the Maggid told his son, "I don't have a body anymore." His son held him by the hand and said, "Father, I feel that you do have a body!" To this the Maggid answered, "That is because you are touching me with your body, therefore you feel it a body..."

(תורת שלום ע' 211)

The Rebbe Rashab related:

On the last *Rosh Chodesh* before his passing, during the meal the Kozhnetzer Maggid began to speak about the passing of *tzadikim* and then began to scream, "Why is Moshiach taking so long to come? The *tzadik* of Berditchev promised to storm up all the holy *neshamos* in *Gan Eden* to bring Moshiach, but the Berditchever is immersing in the rivers there, having

The Kozhnetzer Maggid was a great admirer of the Alter Rebbe and his manner of teaching *Chassidus*. He himself would learn a *perek* of Tanya every day while wearing *Rabeinu Tam's Tefilin*. When asked once why he does this, he responded, "You should know that the author can say Torah for Moshiach. The Tanya is a *sefer* of *Gan Eden*."

(נהרי אש ע' ריג)

A Moment with The Rebbe

לכות ר' שניאור זלמן בן רות חוה לאה וכל משפחתו שיחיו לכל המצטרך בגשמיות ורוחניות



THE CONDITION

Reb Meir Plotkin relates:

Across the hall from me at Yeshivas Torah Voda'as roomed an alumnus of the Chabad school in Montreal. He was very diligent and wanted to continue learning Torah, but his mother wanted him to attend college. Thinking that the Rebbe would be her ally on this issue, she arranged a *yechidus* for the family.

After she explained the dilemma, the Rebbe responded, "I don't understand. You are telling me that your son is succeeding in *yeshiva*, yet you want to send him to college. How can I agree to this?"

The Rebbe went on to test the boy on various Torah topics. As a result of the *yechidus*, he remained in *yeshiva*.

One evening, the payphone of the dormitory rang. At first, I ignored it, but it kept on ringing for twenty minutes, so I finally answered.

It was Rabbi Chadakov, and he wanted to speak to my friend. He said that the Rebbe was going to mention his name at the Ohel the next day. But the Rebbe had one condition, that he begin learning *Chitas* every day. Would he do it? Yes or no?

לעילוי נשמת

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

נפטרה כ"ה אדר תשפ"ד