

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYESHEV - CHANUKA · 21 KISLEV 5775 - DEC. 13, 2014 · VOL. 22 NO. 9

OHRNET CHANUKA *Special*

CHANUKA

Shedding New Light on Boredom

BY RABBI PERETZ SEGAL

I would like to clarify one thing before I begin. Chanuka is not just about miracle oil or Jewish military heroism. It is about the trial of assimilation. There was no physical threat posed to the Jewish People during the Hellenist period. Join the gym and you'd be safe and sound, and you'd probably get a free membership to boot! All the Greeks wanted was for you to chill out on your observance.

That is why the *Chashmonaim* went to war. They fought for the preservation of the *mitzvot*, not to save their skins. Nowadays it sounds a bit extreme to join a commando unit to defend Jewish observance. We are too bored by ritualistic religion to even feel the need to fight. But in truth it was no different back then. Jews were diving into the pleasures of secular life for the same reason — there was no fire left in their own religious lives. The candle of enthusiasm that should have burnt bright was extinguished or at least dimmed until its warmth and life was too weak to feel.

Yet, in the inner chambers of the Jewish heart lies a “vial of oil”, too pure to be defiled and too powerful to be extinguished. From that oil a flame would spring forth that would re-ignite the passion and the love for Torah. This fire would consume the boredom and the empty ritualistic practice of the Torah and reveal the true nature of Torah — the pulsating reality of life itself.

There is a surprising halachic leniency in regard to the wicks that may be used on Chanuka. Even those wicks which are not allowed to be used on Shabbat can be used on Chanuka. It's surprising because the reason why those wicks aren't allowed on Shabbat is because they are really bad;

they go out easily and they don't hold the flame. So why would you be able to use them on Chanuka?

The Sefer “Me'or Eynaim” resolves the difficulty by introducing another seemingly quirky halacha in regard to the Chanuka menorah. Ideally it should be placed above three *tefachim* (approximately 30 cm) and below ten. Those measurements are symbolic. Below three *tefachim* is considered to be part of the ground itself. It is too close to the surface of the earth to be considered a separate entity. The symbolism is clear: if a person is too involved in “earthliness” he can't experience the spiritual light of Chanuka. The upper measurement appears difficult to understand. Ten *tefachim* is deemed as the lowest place that the Shechina will rest (or in our terms, the barest minimum of personality development needed to experience a spiritual connection). To get close to G-d you have to leave the earthliness behind. So why should we light below this height?

Chanuka changes this entire way of thinking. The halacha tells us to light the menorah specifically *below ten tefachim* as *here* lies the real miracle of Chanuka — to light up the uninspired and unmotivated Jew. To him the menorah beckons and says, “Light me!” The Shechina dips down below the ten *tefachim* line, as it were, in order to elevate and inspire that Jew who has been dulled by the onslaught of the mundane world. And when he takes the initiative to strike that match and touch it to the wick — even a second-grade wick that in general would not be able to hold the flame of Divine connection — he will light up the purity of his inner soul!

WANTING AND SEEKING

“And Yaakov dwelled...” (37:1)

A cardinal rule when analyzing the lives of the Patriarchs is that when the Torah describes their failings it always speaks relative to their lofty spiritual level. G-d judges the righteous to within a hair's breadth; the higher the spiritual level of a person the more penetrating and uncompromising is G-d's inspection of their deeds and motives.

With this in mind we can appreciate a comment by the Alschich on this week's Torah portion.

Rashi tells us that the first word in this week's Torah portion — *Vayeshiv* — implies that Yaakov sought to dwell in tranquility, and G-d said: “Is it not sufficient for the righteous the portion which is set for them in the World-to-Come, rather they should seek to dwell in tranquility also in this world? As a result of this, G-d sprung upon him the ordeal of the loss of his favorite son Yosef and the assumption for twenty-one years that Yosef had been killed.

Why was Yaakov punished so severely for wanting a normal life? What's wrong with living in comfort and peace? Why couldn't Yaakov enjoy the dividends of his good deeds in this world, and the principal await him in the next world?

There's a big difference between “wanting” and “seeking.” Rashi uses the word “seeking” here.

One can want to have comfort and tranquility in this world. There's nothing wrong with that.

And if G-d sends it to us we should be very grateful. However, we should never exert ourselves to achieve that material comfort. If, through a modicum of effort, G-d blesses our labors, then the fruits are permitted to us.

However, we must never allow ourselves to be distracted from our true mission in this world — to serve G-d, to do the *mitzvot* and to meet life's challenges. If the desire for material comfort and success becomes our goal, then we have missed the point.

On his level Yaakov made more than the acceptable level of effort to achieve a tranquil life.

Rashi doesn't say “he wanted” to dwell in tranquility, but rather that “he sought.” There's nothing wrong with wanting. However for someone on the level of Yaakov *Avinu* to take active steps, however minimal, to achieve that “want” was considered a flaw.

• Source: as seen in *Talelei Orot*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Yaakov settles in the land of Canaan. His favorite son, Yosef, brings him critical reports about his brothers. Yaakov makes Yosef a fine tunic of multi-colored woolen strips. Yosef exacerbates his brothers' hatred by recounting prophetic dreams of sheaves of wheat bowing to his sheaf, and of the sun, moon and stars bowing to him, signifying that all his family will appoint him king. The brothers indict Yosef and resolve to execute him. When Yosef comes to Shechem, the brothers relent and decide, at Reuven's instigation, to throw him into a pit instead. Reuven's intent was to save Yosef. Yehuda persuades the brothers to take Yosef out of the pit and sell him to a caravan of passing Ishmaelites. Reuven returns to find the pit empty and rends his clothes. The brothers soak Yosef's tunic in goat's blood and show it to Yaakov, who assumes that Yosef has been devoured by a wild beast. Yaakov is inconsolable. Meanwhile, in Egypt, Yosef has been

sold to Potiphar, Pharaoh's Chamberlain of the Butchers. In the Parsha's sub-plot, Yehuda's son Er dies as punishment for preventing his wife Tamar from becoming pregnant. Onan, Yehuda's second son, then weds Tamar by levirate marriage. He too is punished in similar circumstances. When Yehuda's wife dies, Tamar resolves to have children through Yehuda, as this union will found the Davidic line culminating in the *Mashiach*. Meanwhile, Yosef rises to power in the house of his Egyptian master. His exceptional beauty attracts the unwanted advances of his master's wife. Enraged by his rejection, she accuses Yosef of attempting to seduce her, and he is imprisoned. In jail, Yosef successfully predicts the outcome of the dream of Pharaoh's wine steward, who is reinstated, and the dream of Pharaoh's baker, who is hanged. In spite of his promise, the wine steward forgets to help Yosef, and Yosef languishes in prison.

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. "These are the offspring of Yaakov: Yosef..." Give three reasons why Yosef is considered Yaakov's main offspring.
2. What was praiseworthy about the fact that Yosef's brothers did not speak to him in a friendly manner?
3. How do we see from Yosef's dream about the sun, moon and stars that all dreams contain some untrue element?
4. Who brought Yosef down to Egypt?
5. Where was Reuven when Yosef was sold?
6. In addition to the brothers, who else knew that Yosef was alive?
7. Why didn't G-d reveal prophetically to Yaakov that Yosef was alive?
8. For how long did Yaakov mourn the loss of Yosef?
9. Verse 37:35 states "his father wept." To whom does this refer?
10. Who was Tamar's father?
11. In what merit did Tamar deserve to have kings as her descendants?
12. Why is the word "hand" mentioned four times in connection to the birth of Zerach?
13. Why does the Torah relate the incident with Potiphar's wife immediately after the incident of Yehuda and Tamar?
14. How did Potiphar "see" that G-d was with Yosef?
15. Who in this week's Parsha pretended to be sick?
16. Why were the butler and the baker imprisoned?
17. For how long were the butler and the baker in prison?
18. How did the baker know that Yosef had correctly interpreted the butler's dream?
19. What prompted the butler and baker to tell Yosef their dreams?
20. How was Yosef punished for asking the butler for help?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 37:2 - (a) Yosef was the son of Rachel, Yaakov's primary wife. (b) Yosef looked like Yaakov. (c) All that befell Yaakov befell Yosef.
2. 37:4 - They did not act hypocritically.
3. 37:10 - The moon represented Rachel. Since she had already died, it was impossible for that element of the dream to come true.
4. 37:28 - A caravan of Midianites.
5. 37:29 - He was attending to Yaakov.
6. 37:33 - Yitzchak.
7. 37:33 - Because the brothers had issued a ban against revealing the truth to Yaakov, and G-d, so to speak, abided by their ban.
8. 37:34 - Twenty-two years.
9. 37:35 - Yitzchak, who wept because of Yaakov's suffering.
10. 38:24 - Shem.
11. 38:26 - In the merit of her modesty.
12. 38:30 - To allude to his descendent, Achan, who sinned with his hand by taking four things from the spoils of Jericho.
13. 39:1 - To teach us that just as Tamar acted with pure motives, so did Potiphar's wife.
14. 39:3 - Yosef mentioned G-d's name frequently in his speech.
15. 39:11 - Potiphar's wife.
16. 40:1 - The butler was imprisoned because a fly was found in the king's goblet, and the baker was imprisoned because a pebble was found in the king's bread.
17. 40:4 - Twelve months.
18. 40:5 - The baker dreamed the interpretation of the butler's dream.
19. 40:6 - Yosef asked them why they looked troubled.
20. 40:23 - He remained in prison an additional two years.

Please daven for a refuah shleimah for

Chaim Yechiel ben Malka (Ohr Somayach alumnus Chaim Howard Rothman)

Chaim Eitan ben Sarah - Yitzchak ben Chaya

Shmuel Yerucham ben Baila (Rebbetzin Heller's son-in-law)

May we all hear Besoros Tovos.

Abarbanel

ON PARSHAT VAYESHEV

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

Yosef's brothers are threatened by his dreams which seem to predict that he will eventually rule over them. All of them agree that such a situation cannot be allowed to develop. They disagreed, however, on how to remove the threat. Shimon and Levy were of the opinion that the dreams were fabricated; it was actually Yosef's conscious desire to rule over his brothers. As a result they counseled, "...come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits..." Since they realized that they could not let their father Yaakov know what they had done, they continued, "...and we will say that a wild beast devoured him..."

Reuven, however, was afraid that Yosef's dreams were a prophetic message from G-d. How could they interfere with the will of G-d by killing him? He proposed instead that they "Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him." If his dreams were of a prophetic, miraculous nature then G-d would extricate him from the pit miraculously as well. If he died, however, this would prove that Shimon and Levy were correct. In any case, at least, the brothers would not have been the direct cause of his death, and the threat would be removed. What Reuven did not tell his brothers was that he actually intended to rescue Yosef from the pit and return him to his father, hoping to atone for having previously interfered with his father's marital life.

The other brothers accepted Reuven's solution and threw him into an empty pit. "The pit was empty, no water was in it." Abarbanel explains that if the pit was full of water he would have drowned immediately and there would have been no opportunity for a 'test' to see if G-d would save him.

At this point Reuven leaves the scene and the other brothers, demonstrating their cruelty, sit down to enjoy a leisurely meal. When they notice a caravan of Arabs coming by on its way to Egypt they come up with a different plan for dealing with Yosef. Even though the pit was empty they realize that a sudden deluge could drown him; again there would not be sufficient opportunity for a proper test. Yehuda also realized that there was actually not sufficient justification for killing him, however indirectly: "What gain

will there be if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?" There are three reasons that people kill: protecting property, defeating a known sworn enemy, or demonstrating dominance. None of these reasons applies in this case. There is no monetary loss, he is not a sworn enemy, but rather "...our brother, our own flesh." Finally, there is no demonstration of power because they are actually covering up their actions by saying that he was torn apart by wild beasts.

Selling him into slavery in Egypt is the ideal solution. If his dreams were actually prophetic then we are leaving room for G-d to bring about a miracle later on wherever he goes. If, on the other hand, his ideas were his own, dominance over us will be replaced by its opposite — lowly servitude in a faraway place. Everyone agrees to the plan. They remove him from the pit and sell him to the Arabs. Since they had no intention of profiting greatly from this, intending only to get rid of him, they sell him for a nominal price.

When Reuven returns and notices that Yosef is gone, he is afraid that perhaps his brothers ultimately decided to kill him. He cries out, "The boy is gone!" which means that an innocent boy has been executed. As a result he then says, "And I, where can I go?" What he is saying is that how can I rejoin my brothers since they may want to kill me as well?

The brothers take Yosef's special tunic that Yaakov had given him, dip it in animal blood, and show it to Yaakov while explaining that a wild animal had devoured him. They ask him to identify it and he says, "My son's tunic!" Abarbanel is bothered by this strange response. Yaakov should have said, "*It is my son's tunic!*" Yaakov is actually speaking to the garment, as it were. Yosef is not only his son, but a very special individual, which the tunic represents. When Yaakov cries out, "A savage beast devoured him!" he is actually asking questions: "How is it that a savage beast devoured him? Why wasn't he Divinely protected by the merit of being my son or his own exceptional merit? Additionally, how could it be that not a single bone remained?" Yaakov refuses to be comforted and instead says, "I will go down to the grave mourning for my son." Something is amiss; he refuses to believe the brothers and there can be no closure.

THOSE DAYS, THIS TIME

From: Michal

Dear Rabbi,

On Chanuka we recite the blessing which praises G-d for "performing miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time." Please remind me what's particular about reciting "at this time". Also, as far as I remember, the Sages didn't actually decree observance at the time of the miracle, but rather the year after. How can this be reconciled with the wording "in those days, at this time"?

Dear Michal,

This is a very timely observation. I hope you'll find my explanation illuminating!

The festivals of the Torah are like portals connecting to the spiritual worlds through which the influence of each holiday flows year after year, generation after generation, on the very day when the event that holiday commemorates occurred. At that time, the Divine Gates are opened and the quality and light particular to that holiday permeate the world.

Thus, Pesach radiates the light of redemption, Shavuot that of Torah, Succot that of rejoicing and the High Holidays radiate the light of repentance and forgiveness.

There are other days which are festivals not ordained by the Torah, such as Chanuka and Purim, which also commemorate spectacular miracles and acts of salvation. These days were judged by either Prophets or outstanding Sages as times inherently infused with the quality of salvation – portals in time through which this influence would flow throughout the generations. They were thus ordained as holidays.

Therefore when we praise G-d during Chanuka and Purim, "...Who made miracles for our forefathers in those days at this time", we are saying that the light of His miraculous salvation shines for us during these festivals even at this time!

This presents an explanation as to why, despite emphasizing that the miracles were wrought in those days, the festival of Chanuka was ordained not then, but only the following year (Shabbat 21b). At that time prophecy no longer existed and the Sages of the generation were unable to discern if the salvation was inherent to that time and eternal, or only temporary. When they saw the following year that these days emanated the light of salvation as during the previous one, they fixed them as days for "reciting praise and thanksgiving for every generation"!

MEMORIAL KENNES



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SHEMONAH ESREI - SEVENTH BLESSING - PART 2

“See our affliction... and redeem us.”

On the surface it is difficult to understand why we ask G-d to “see our affliction”. Is it possible for the One who gives sight not to see? The fact that G-d is aware of all things is one of the fundamental principles of Jewish faith. In fact, this point was made clear to Moshe when G-d appeared to him on Mount Sinai and said, “I have indeed seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt.”

One may ask: “If G-d sees our affliction why does He allow our suffering to continue?” In order to understand the answer to this question one must first understand the true purpose and essence of punishment.

What motivates Divine punishment?

The first thing one must realize is that Divine punishment is never done as a result of anger or to be vindictive. Rather, it is the result of perfect calculation.

Since the purpose of the Creation is to bestow good, it would follow that everything that G-d does, including punishment, is also for the good. Accordingly, the Talmud states that one must bless on the bad just as he blesses on the

good, because all that the Merciful One does is for the good.

Why do our Sages refer to G-d as the “Merciful One” when speaking about seemingly negative things? The reason is that even negative things that befall a person are rooted in the attribute of love. For just as a father who loves his child will sometimes punish him in order to ensure his proper growth, so too, the reason that G-d decrees punishment upon us is in order to help us learn and become better. G-d’s love is not turned off when He decrees punishment upon a person; rather, the punishment is the result of the deep love G-d has for him.

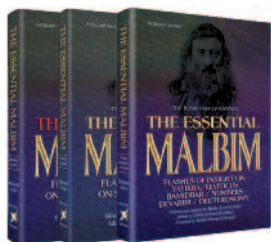
In a deeper sense, punishment can be compared to medicine. When one sins, the soul becomes blemished, like being sick. Through Divine punishment the soul is cleansed of the impurity caused by sin, thus enabling it to “heal” and return to its former state of glory.

Repentance and forgiveness have the power to speed up the healing process of the soul, causing a person’s Divinely ordained punishment to become nullified. Accordingly, we can now understand why we ask G-d to “see our affliction”. Since in our current state we may no longer need to suffer, we ask G-d to re-evaluate our circumstances in the hope that He will see us worthy of redemption.

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YEVAMOT 72 - 78

“Because they (the Jewish People) were being chastised.”

This is one of two reasons offered in our *sugya* for the reason that the North Wind — a comfortable wind with “healing powers” — did not blow while they were in the desert (except at midnight as taught later on this *daf*), and therefore they did not perform the mitzvah of *brit mila* during all the years in the desert. The other reason given in the *gemara* is that since they were travelling in the desert there was a “weakness of being on the road” that could pose a risk of danger to a newly circumcised baby.

Regarding the reason of “chastisement” — why were they being chastised in the desert? Rashi explains that it was a punishment for the incident of the golden calf after the exodus from Egypt. One of the Tosefot Sages, Rabbeinu Yitzchak, questions Rashi’s reason, citing a verse in which G-d told the nation that He had forgiven them for the sin of the golden calf, and instructed them to build the Tabernacle as a “home” for the G-d’s Divine Presence. Instead, Rabbeinu Yitzchak claims that the punishment was a result of the transgression by the *meraglim* (spies). I heard from a great rabbi that Rashi understood the verse that Tosefot cites as indeed teaching a great forgiveness, but not absolute to the extent that there would be no further repercussions — such as deserving the healing North Wind in the desert throughout the day.

• Yevamot 72a

“This comes to teach that an ‘auspicious time’ is a significant and true factor.”

This is the message that our Sages see as being taught in a fascinating but seemingly disjointed *beraita* on our *daf*:

During the entire forty years that the Jewish People were in the desert not one day passed without the North Wind blowing at midnight, as it is stated (Ex. 12:29), “And it was at midnight, and G-d killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt...”

What is the connection here between the death of the firstborn at midnight and the North Wind (comfortable — Rashi) blowing every day in the desert? The answer is that “it’s all in the timing”. This is the message. Midnight is a particularly favorable time of day for the Jewish People. Since it was favorable for the punishment of the firstborn in Egypt, it was also favorable as the time for a specific, positive wind each night. This wind also acted as a sign for King David to arise from bed each midnight when this wind would blow through the strings of his musical instrument, awakening him to utilize the remainder of the night for Torah study. (Rashi, partly based on *Berachot* 3b)

• Yevamot 72a

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

MODI’IN - TOMB OF THE MACCABEES?

Although there is no firm evidence that the heroes of the Chanuka miracle that we are now celebrating are buried in Modi’in, the site east of Lod and Ben Shemen near the new city of Modi’in is visited by many Jews who consider it to be the resting place of the Maccabees.



Eshtori ha-Parchi identified Tzova, west of Jerusalem, as the Maccabean Modi’in, while other travelers named different sites. During the last century researchers have leaned towards the above-mentioned site near the Arab village of Mideah where visitors go to identify with the Chanuka heroes.

EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS

An Interview with Ohr Somayach and Ohr Lagolah alumnus Rabbi Richard Jacobs

Q. There's been a lot of buzz lately about your new *sefer* about Rav Weinbach's teachings — "As Heard From Rav Weinbach". First of all, what is the content of the *sefer*?

A. The *sefer* is based on Rav Weinbach's Ohr Lagolah *shiurim*. It has five sections. The first discusses public speaking, the rabbi's role as counselor, building a Torah society, the written word and *kiruv*, and is rewritten from transcriptions of his classes. The main body of the book is a collection of his source sheets and points to consider preparing a *shiur*. This section has material for fifty *shiurim*, and there is an accompanying CD of mp3 recordings of more than 40 *shiurim*. Sections three and four contain many of Rav Weinbach's writings on contemporary affairs and the Jewish year, and the final section is the Rosh Yeshiva's recommended reading selections on the *parsha*. Other alumni may well remember these from the sheets he used to place on the *bima* in the *Beit Hamidrash* every Thursday night.

Q. What's Ohr Lagolah?

A. Ohr Lagolah is Ohr Somayach's two-year rabbinic, *kiruv* and teacher training program with hands-on experience and the option for integrated *semicha* preparation; the world's longest running program of its kind. Hundreds of Ohr Lagolah alumni have found rewarding, meaningful and high-impact positions in *klei kodesh* across the world. We start a new cycle each year in Elul and anyone interested in finding out more can contact me on lagolah@ohr.edu.

Q. Returning to the *sefer*: Why you? Why now?

A. Good questions, but really it was just a matter of having the right idea, in the right place, at the right time.

Q. Rav Weinbach, whose *yahrzeit* is Kislev 27 on Chanuka, was known as a great writer and orator as well as a Rosh Yeshiva who founded great Torah institutions for *ba'alei*

teshuva and people from nearly any background. But if he didn't write this *sefer* with his own pen, perhaps this means he would rather it remain as part of the "Oral Law"?

A. Absolutely not. When I mentioned this idea to Rav Weinbach (in what would turn out to be his last few weeks in yeshiva) he was tremendously excited, and immediately turned his hand to helping organize, title and order his handouts in order to make them easier to work with. He was positively invigorated with the opportunity to be able to continue to make an impact on *Klal Yisrael*. I feel tremendously privileged and honored that he entrusted me to take my idea from concept to fruition. I'm also very grateful for the warm support I received for this project from our Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Nota Schiller, *shlita*.

Q. Is the *sefer* for everyone or only for a specific audience?

A. It is aimed predominantly for Rabbis and educators who are looking to broaden their repertoire of material. However it is full of great insights and *chiddushei Torah* and any *ben Torah* should gain a great deal from it. And it would make a great Chanuka gift as well!

Q. How has the *sefer* been received?

A. *B"H* the response has been fantastic. *Rabbanim* across the world are using it and have sent great feedback. I've heard from Rabbis in Australia, South Africa, the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and of course in Israel, all with very positive comments. The book is selling well and *ly"H* when it sells out will have generated the money to reprint the *sefer*.

Q. Most importantly: how can one obtain a copy?

A. It's available in all good Jewish bookstores, from the Ohr Somayach Main Office in Jerusalem and online from Menucha Publishers in the States and from Lehmanns in the U.K. or at <http://ohr.edu/web/weinbach-resource-guide.htm>.



Questions

1. Which miracle do we celebrate with the lighting of candles?
2. How did they know that the oil found was uncontaminated?
3. Who led the battle against the Hellenites?
4. During which of the “four exiles” did the miracle of Chanuka take place?
5. Name two non-halachic customs connected with Chanuka.
6. How many blessings are made before lighting candles?
7. Why do we light the extra candle known as the “shamash”?
8. What is added to our regular prayers at least three times a day?
9. What is the special reading of the Torah each day?
10. Is it obligatory to eat a meal like on Purim?
11. When do we have occasion to use three Sifrei Torah on Chanuka?
12. What three mitzvot did the Hellenites decree against?
13. What damage did the Hellenites do to the Beit Hamikdash?
14. What two military advantages did the Hellenite army have over the Jews?
15. Is it permissible to do work on Chanuka?
16. Why is there no Mussaf prayer on Chanuka except for Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh?
17. How does the name Chanuka indicate the date when this holiday begins?
18. What special prayer do we add to the morning services?
19. What did the Jews do after victory that explains the name Chanuka?
20. Which regular prayers in the morning service do we omit on Chanuka?

Answers

1. The oil for lighting the Menorah in the Beit Hamikdash after the victory over the Hellenites was only enough for one day and it miraculously lasted for eight days until a new supply of pure oil was available. (Rambam, Laws of Chanuka 1:1)
2. Its container had the seal of the kohen gadol. (Mesechta Shabbat 21b)
3. Matityahu, the kohen gadol and his sons. (Rambam, Laws of Chanuka 1:1, and the “Al Hanissim” prayer in the Siddur)
4. The third exile under Hellenite oppression during the era of the second Beit Hamikdash. (Rambam, Laws of Chanuka 1:1)
5. Eating either donuts or potato pancakes made with oil and playing with the sivion (dreidel).
6. Three blessings the first night and two the other nights. (Rambam, Laws of Chanuka 1:4)
7. Since it is forbidden to benefit from the light of the candles we light an extra one so that if we do benefit it will be from that one called the shamash because it is sometimes used to serve as the lighting agent. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 673:1)
8. The prayer “Al Hanissim” (Ibid. 682:1)
9. The gifts of the nesi'im (heads of the twelve tribes at the inauguration of the Sanctuary as recorded in Bamidbar 7:1-8). (Ibid. 684:1)
10. No. But if the meal is accompanied by songs of praise to Heaven it is considered a seudat mitzvah. (Ibid. 670:2)
11. When Rosh Chodesh Tevet is on Shabbat and we read selections for Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and Chanuka. (Ibid. 684:3)
12. Shabbat, circumcision and Rosh Chodesh. (Midrash)
13. They made breaches in the walls and contaminated the sacred items. (Rambam, Laws of Chanuka 1:1)
14. They were stronger and more numerous. (“Al Hanissim” Prayer)
15. It is permissible to work but women have a custom of refraining from work for the first half hour that the candles are burning. (Mishna Berurah 670:1)
16. Because there were no additional sacrifices in the Beit Hamikdash during Chanuka. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 682:2)
17. If we break up the word into two parts — Chanu, and the letters chaf and hei, we read that they rested from the war on the 25th day of the month.
18. Hallel (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 683:1)
19. They rededicated the altar in the Beit Hamikdash, which the Hellenites had defiled. (“Chanuka” means inauguration.)
20. Tachanun and Psalm 20 before Uva Letzion. (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 683:1)

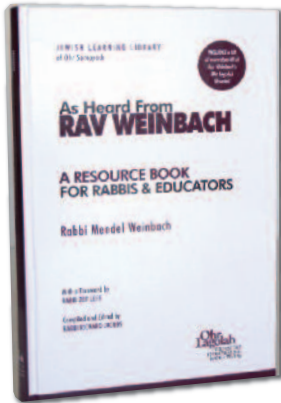
- Chanuka begins on the evening of the 25th of Kislev and continues for eight days.
- For the entire eight days of Chanuka it is forbidden to fast or to eulogize.
- It is permitted to work. However, it is customary for women not to work for at least the first half hour of the candles' burning, and some have the custom not to work for the entire time of burning. The types of activities that are forbidden are things like sewing and laundry etc. (Cooking is permitted.)
- There is no obligation to have festive meals. However, it is customary to celebrate by eating special meals anyway, because of the fact that the dedication of the Temple and Altar took place during Chanuka.
- It is customary to sing during the meals songs that thank and praise G-d. To sing and speak about Torah makes the meal into a seudat mitzvah, a meal of religious significance.
- It is customary to eat milk foods because Yehudit, daughter of Yochanan the High Priest, was taken to be defiled by the Greek ruler Holofernes. She fed him cheese (to make him thirsty) and wine (to quench his thirst); and after getting him drunk she killed him. This was one of the events that sparked the Maccabean uprising. Food fried in oil is also eaten to commemorate the miracle of the Menorah. Latkes and donuts are the most common foods.
- One should not fast during Chanuka, even on the occasion of a parent's yahrzeit (anniversary of death).
- The festivities of Chanuka should be combined with study of Torah. Although many people have a custom to play card games on Chanuka, the Mishna Berurah states that, "He who cares for his soul should not involve himself in card games."
- It is obligatory to light candles, and one should even borrow money to fulfill this mitzvah. If a poor person needs money for Chanuka candles the community is obligated to provide for him.
- The minimum obligation is that every household should have one candle burning every night. It is customary to be scrupulous regarding this mitzvah: to have one candle on the first night and an additional candle every night (1-8), and for everyone in the house as well.
- Any type of oil is acceptable for use in the menorah. However, it is best to use olive oil. The oil should not be made of a forbidden substance, nor should it be something from which it is forbidden to derive benefit.
- The menorah should be similar to the Menorah in the Temple and hence most authorities forbid using electric lights or gas lamps.
- The light should be clear, and the wicks should not flicker.
- Wax candles are also acceptable, providing they have a single wick.
- All wicks are acceptable, but it is best to use cotton. The same wicks may be used over and over again.
- It is correct to have a menorah of glass or metal if one is lighting with oil, since other substances such as clay become disgusting after one use. If one can afford it, it is correct to buy a beautiful menorah.
- If one is using candles a menorah is not necessary.
- If a number of people are lighting in one household they should make a slight separation between their menorahs so that there is no confusion to the observer as to the number of candles.
- Ideally, the menorah should be placed outside the house to the left of the entrance. Since anti-Semitism was so common throughout Jewish history it became customary among many communities to place the menorah inside the house, near the entrance or on the table. In many families it is the custom to place the menorah in a window facing the public, especially where many people share one entrance (e.g., apartment building). In Israel it is customary to light outside in a special box that prevents the flames from blowing out.
- In most Yeshivot and Seminaries, it is customary for students to place their menorahs in the dining room at windows facing the street or public thoroughfare. (Lighting in the dormitories is usually a fire hazard and should therefore be avoided)
- The menorah should be no lower than three *tfachim* from the floor (approx. 10.5 inches or 27cm) and should be no higher than 20 amot from ground level (35.5 ft or 10.8 m). Ideally, it should be about 10 *tfachim* high (35 inches or 90 cm).
- The menorah should have all the candle or wicks on the same level, none higher or lower than the others.
- It is customary to have an additional candle (the shamash) with which to light the other candles and in order to use its light. The shamash should be placed in a way that shows that it is not one of the Chanuka candles.
- It is forbidden to derive benefit from the light of the menorah just as it was forbidden to derive benefit from the Menorah in the Temple, and also in order to show that its purpose of the menorah is for a Mitzvah, not just for illumination.

continued on page eleven

The Laws of CHANUKA

continued from page ten

- It is preferable to have the candles in a straight line, and not in a semi-circle. However, it is permitted to have them in a semi-circle providing each candle is clearly separated from the others.
- It is prohibited to light the shamash from the Chanuka candles.
- Left-over wicks and oils should be destroyed after Chanuka (except for unused oil left in bottle) since they may not be used for anything else. One should not store the used wicks and oil for the next year, since there is a probability that it will be used for profane purposes by accident.
- There are different customs as to the lighting of the menorah. Some light at sunset. Some light about ten minutes after sunset and some light 1/2 hour after. Some specifically light after the evening service is recited (Maariv). Ideally a person should follow the custom of his father. If this is not known or is inapplicable for any reason, one should follow the custom of the local community.
- It is obligatory to put in enough oil, or a long enough candle to burn for at least 1/2 hour after nightfall (i.e. the appearance of three medium size stars).
- In exceptional circumstances one may light one and a quarter hours before sunset with a blessing. (However, one should be careful to put in more oil or to use longer candles). If possible it is better to appoint an agent to light candles at the correct time, than to light early. .
- If one forgot or was not able to light at the correct time, one may light as long as people are still awake in the house in which one is lighting.
- One should prepare the wicks and candles etc. before Maariv (if you light after) or well before the time of lighting in order to light the menorah at the correct time.
- It is best to light in the presence of many people in order to publicize the miracle.
- On the first night three brachot, blessings are recited. "Lehadlik ner shel Chanuka", "She asa nissim" and "Shehecheyanu"...
- On the other nights only the first two blessings are said.
- All the blessings should be recited before actually lighting the candles. First light the Shamash before the blessings to avoid delay. It is forbidden to speak between the recitation of the blessings and the completion of candle lighting.
- "Haneirot Halalu" is recited either during or after the lighting of the additional candles.
- "Maoz tsur yeshuaty" is then sung.
- Place first candle on the extreme right of the menorah. On the second night add a candle on the left. Light the newest candle first and proceed to the right.
- There are different customs regarding the placement of the candles, some follow the right and left of the observer from outside, some follow the right and left of the person lighting inside.
- Do not remove the Shamash from the wick until the flame catches on most of the wick.
- One does not add candles if he forgot to light on any night.
- The menorah should not be moved after it has been lit.
- If the menorah was lit in accordance with the requirements of Jewish law and it was extinguished, one is not obligated to relight it, but one may relight it without reciting a blessing.
- If the menorah was not lit properly in the first place, or was lit in a windy place and blew out, then one is obligated to relight if it went out within 1/2 hour after nightfall.
- On Friday afternoon, the Chanuka candles should be lit before the Shabbat candle-lighting time (if one accepted Shabbat early, it is forbidden to light Chanuka candles). Mincha should be said before lighting, if possible.
- Remember to put in more oil or bigger candles on Friday, so that they burn 1/2 hour after nightfall. Try to light just before the Shabbat candles, (without of course delaying the lighting of the Shabbat candles).
- When lighting on Saturday night, some authorities say that one should light Chanuka candles before Havdalah, others say after Havdalah. One should follow their family custom in this. (Mishna Berurah 681:2 and Aruch HaShulchan 681:2)
- If one is a guest at someone's house (and sleeping there), one should give the owner a small amount of money to buy a portion in their candles and one may fulfil the obligation through the owner. Alternatively the guest may light his own menorah.
- If one is eating out then one should light the menorah at his place of residence.
- During morning prayers, Shacharit, one should recite the full Hallel every day.
- "Al Hanissim," the special paragraph of prayers for Chanuka, is added in the silent prayers, Shmoneh Esreh and also in Grace after Meals. If one forgot to say this addition, one should not repeat either Shmoneh Esreh or Grace.
- It is customary to light a menorah in the Synagogue every evening. It is placed at the southern wall of the Synagogue, in imitation of the Menorah in the Temple in Jerusalem.



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In the Ohr Somayach Dining Room

Mincha at 1:00 PM in the Beis Hamedrash