

LIVING JEWISH

Tell Your Children

The Delayed Lighting

The first night of Chanukah in the study hall of the Maggid of Mezeritch.

A special atmosphere filled the air from the moment twilight fell—the time for lighting the Chanukah candles. The Maggid's disciples were immersed in lofty spiritual preparations for the moment of candle lighting with their Rebbe.

Everyone waited for the Maggid to emerge and light the candles. As usual, the unique figure among the group, Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli, would stand ready to hand the Maggid the lit shamash.

Rabbi Zusha had mysterious missions. He devoted much of his time to traveling through remote towns and villages, seeking out wandering souls and helping them find their way back to their Father in Heaven. As every year, he set out on his journeys immediately after the month of Tishrei, planning to return on the eve of Chanukah to uphold his steadfast custom.

But this time Rabbi Zusha was delayed. Chanukah eve arrived and he still had not come. The other chassidim understood he would not make it, and waited for their Rebbe to begin the lighting. Yet to their surprise, the Maggid remained closed in his room and did not come out. As the hour grew later, the students increasingly suspected that the delay had something to do with Rabbi Zusha.

At Midnight

Only close to midnight did the Maggid's door suddenly open. The Maggid's eyes shone with a special light, and with joy on his face he approached the menorah to light it. He did not ask where Rabbi Zusha was, and the disciples assumed they had been mistaken. Apparently there was no connection between Rabbi Zusha's absence and the delayed lighting.

The next morning, Rabbi Zusha suddenly entered the study hall. He looked exhausted, his clothes soaked, but his face carried an expression of happiness. His friends



World's Largest Menorah, 5th Avenue, N.Y., 32 feet high —picture from COLlive

asked how he was and told him about the Maggid's unusual delay the previous night. Rabbi Zusha remained silent and began preparing for prayer.

The Snow Storm

Some time later, the students received word that that evening, after lighting the second candle, the Maggid would hold a farbrengen with all his disciples present. This was always a time of special elevation—singing the special holiday melodies and hearing the Maggid speak words of Chassidus. During the meal, the Maggid turned to Rabbi Zusha and asked him to explain why he had been late that year for the first candle.

A hush fell over the study hall, and Rabbi Zusha began:

"As you know, every year I arrange my travels so that I can return to the Rebbe for the lighting of the first candle. For all the wealth in the world, I would not give up the privilege of handing the Rebbe the shamash for the first candle.

"This time a fierce snowstorm broke out. Walking on the roads bordered on danger to life, but my burning desire to be with the Rebbe at the candle lighting pushed me to continue on. I made my way through roads and forests, my feet sinking deep into the heavy snow.

"Yesterday, when I was not far from the

town, the storm raged with full strength. Freezing winds blew with force. I felt my strength draining, but I knew that if I gave in, Heaven forbid, no one would come to help me.

Back into the Snow

I strengthened myself with trust in G-d, gathered my remaining strength, and pushed forward toward the nearest village, where my friend, Reb Yankel, lived. At last I reached his door and knocked with a blue, frozen hand.

"Instead of the warm welcome I expected, his wife opened the door with tears in her eyes. She told me that in the morning Yankel had decided to go work in the forest, despite her pleas that he remain home. He had not returned, and she greatly feared for his safety.

continued on page three

Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	4:04	5:19
Tel Aviv	4:18	5:20
Haifa	4:07	5:18
Beer Sheva	4:22	5:21
New York	4:13	5:17

Shabbos Table



The Power of Chanukah

The mitzvah of the Chanukah lights is similar to the mitzvah of the mezuzah in two ways: both are placed at the entrance of the home, and specifically on the outside.

However, there is a fundamental difference between them, also in two aspects: 1. The mezuzah is affixed on the right side of the doorway, while the Chanukah lights are placed on the left side; 2. The mezuzah is placed outside because it marks the beginning of the home, while the Chanukah lights are placed outside in order to illuminate the outside — the public domain.

These two differences are connected. The public domain represents the negative side — the absence of nullification within Divine oneness (which is “the private domain”). It draws its energy from the “left side,” and therefore the Chanukah lights, which are meant to illuminate the public domain, are placed specifically on the left.

Light Outside

Regarding the mitzvah of mezuzah it is said that it is equivalent to all the mitzvot.

Indeed, we see in all mitzvot the same characteristics found in the mezuzah: all mitzvot are to be performed with the right hand (and in the Temple service, this detail is indispensable even after the fact, *bidiyaved*).

Additionally, mitzvot generally have no connection with the outside. Some mitzvot must be performed indoors, and even those that may be performed outdoors, in the public domain, are not intended for the sake of the public domain — they simply *can* be performed there, just as indoors.

Thus, the mitzvah of lighting the Chanukah candles — which must be performed specifically on the left and specifically outside — stands apart from almost all other mitzvot, not only from the mitzvah of mezuzah.

Infinite Light

Chassidic teachings explain that the difference between positive commandments and prohibitions is that positive commandments draw down a Divine light that requires an appropriate vessel; prohibitions, however, draw down a Divine light that is not limited by any vessel. Therefore, positive mitzvot can be fulfilled only through permissible things,

whereas prohibitions are fulfilled through *not* doing prohibited things.

When a Jew refrains from something forbidden, the Divine light drawn down is so great and infinite that it can reach even the lowest places and have an effect there.

Purifying the Public Domain

This is the great virtue of the Chanukah lights: through fulfilling this mitzvah in a positive, active manner (and not merely through refraining from action, as in prohibitions), an unlimited Divine light descends into the world — a light capable of illuminating the left side and the public domain.

In this, the Chanukah lights surpass even the prohibitions: Through prohibitions, we push away the forbidden, but we do not purify it.

Through the Chanukah lights, however, we illuminate and purify the left side and the public domain. By fulfilling this mitzvah, we cause even the public domain to become purified and illuminated — just as through a positive mitzvah the physical object used becomes purified.

(from the teachings of the Rebbe, Likutei Sichot, Volume 5)

From Our Sages

Chanukah

The Power of Torah

“What is Chanukah? As our Rabbis taught us...” (Shabbat 21a)

The essence of Chanukah is “*as our Rabbis taught us*.” The strength to stand against our enemies comes from the holy flames we light—from Torah and mitzvot.

(Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin)

Light Against Darkness

From the Chanukah candles we learn that even when darkness is great, one should not be affected by it. On the contrary, one must go forth with self-sacrifice to illuminate the streets, adding more and more light day by day.

(the Rebbe)

The Revealed Miracle

The Sages established the miracle of the oil and not the other miracles because, in the other miracles, skeptics could claim coincidence—for example, that many fell into the hands of a few by chance. But the miracle of the oil leaves no room to suggest chance, G-d forbid; all agree that it was entirely from G-d.

(Mateh Moshe)

The Shamash Exalts

The Shamash is placed higher than the other candles, teaching us that one who engages in “lighting souls”, who lights the soul of his fellow Jew—ascends above the rest.

(the Rebbe)

Miracle for Generations

It was asked of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev: why was it decreed to celebrate the victory over the Greeks and the miracle of salvation from Haman’s decree, but not to celebrate the miracle of the battle of Sisera or the war of Sennacherib?

The tzaddik explained: there are miracles that occurred in their time, and at that moment there was indeed a great Divine revelation, but this revelation does not shine for future generations.

Yet there are miracles in which the Divine light is renewed every year, and such are the miracles of Chanukah and Purim.

This is the deep meaning of the wording of the blessing, “Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days, at this time” — the miracle of Chanukah that occurred “in those days” continues to shine even “at this time.”

Chassidus Page



The Essence of the Triumph of Chanukah

In the days of Moshiach, evil will be eradicated, and all the kelipot (spiritual impurities) will be destroyed. One of these kelipot is the kelipa of Greece, whose defeat we celebrate during Chanukah.

Chassidic teachings explain the spiritual significance of the Greeks and what they represent. Similarly, Chassidut explains concepts such as the kelipa of Amalek, the kelipa of Midian, and so on. For everything that occurs in this world has a spiritual root, which drives the processes in our world. The spiritual force expressed in Amalek's activity is the kelipa of Amalek, and the spiritual force behind the Greeks' war is the kelipa of Greece. Thus, the war of the Greeks is not limited to the days of the Hasmoneans; it is an ongoing struggle, taking place within the soul of each person, against the kelipa of Greece within us.

We can understand the essence of the kelipa of Greece by observing the Greeks' struggle in those days. They did not deny the concept of spirituality. On the contrary, more than any previous nation, they developed philosophy and engaged in abstract and profound questions about the nature of creation and the forces above it. Certainly, they did not oppose Jews studying Torah and wisdom, as they appreciated intelligence. Their opposition was not to the Torah itself—they respected and valued it—but to something deeper.

The Greeks' war was primarily against the Divine essence within the Torah. More precisely, they opposed the wisdom of the Torah and its foundations, as transmitted to us by G-d through Moshe. The Greeks rejected the Jewish starting point: faith. They demanded the elevation of human intellect above all and the examination of everything solely according to pure reason.

Greek wisdom is called philosophy—intellect, reasoning; whereas the wisdom

of the Jewish people is called by the Hebrew word kabbalah—*reception and passing down* from one generation to the next, based on faith in the principles transmitted by Moshe at Mount Sinai.

The Greeks refused to accept this approach. In their view, intellect stands above all. But Jews do not see intellect as the ultimate. Kabbalistic wisdom is defined as a “point in the palace”—there is indeed a palace of intellect and understanding, but it centers around the “point,” which is faith. The intellect can and should understand, but only according to the foundations transmitted from generation to generation, beginning with Mount Sinai.

Chanukah, in which the pure oil was found, symbolizes the victory of Divine kabbalistic wisdom over Greek philosophical wisdom, and the triumph of holiness over the kelipa of Greece. Yet the struggle continues. It continues in every generation, taking shape and dissolving repeatedly. At all times, the Jew faces the question: to what extent may he use human reasoning?

This is not always a question of faith versus heresy. Sometimes it is a dilemma between adopting traditional and accepted interpretations, which may be difficult to understand, versus interpretations that are less traditionally accepted but seem more “logical.” If understanding and intellect dominate a Jew's personality, he may be tempted to deviate from the proper path in favor of his reasoning and logic. This is the ongoing struggle against the kelipa of Greece—against the tendency to prioritize intellect and logic over pure faith.

Victory over the kelipa of Greece is a preparation for the full triumph, with the coming of Moshiach.

Adapted and translated from Rabbi Menachem Brod, Sichat HaShavuah

Moshiach Now



The Catalyst of Chanukah Lights

Each night, we add a new Chanukah candle, emphasizing how every day we must increase our endeavors to spread light throughout the world. Every day should lead us to further growth and create new opportunities for spreading G-dly light in our homes and in the world at large, with the hope of ultimately banishing darkness entirely. In this manner, the kindling of the Chanukah lights serves as a catalyst to bring about the consummate light that will illuminate the world in the Era of the Redemption.

(based on the teachings of the Rebbe, Keeping in Touch, reprinted with permission from Sichos in English)

The Delayed Lighting

continued from page one:

“I understood that a crucial task was before me, and new strength entered me. I encouraged the woman and her children with words of faith and comfort, and immediately went back out to search for her husband.

“I headed toward the forest. I knew the path well, but because of the snow-storm and darkness I could barely see anything, and truly did not know how I would find him. Even so, I trusted in G-d—and indeed, He did not withhold His kindness from me—for suddenly I felt with my feet the body of a man lying across the path.

“I looked closely at his face and recognized my friend Yankel. He lay helpless, his lips blue, moments away from losing consciousness. Quickly I lifted him and then, with all my strength, began dragging him back to his home.

“By G-d's mercy, we reached the house. His wife and children vacillated between joy at his return and worry for his condition. But after he drank a bit of strong liquor and was wrapped in thick blankets, he revived and returned to himself.

Heaven Also Waited

“It was close to midnight. I therefore remained in Yankel's home, and together we lit the first Chanukah candle and thanked G-d for the miracles of ‘those days’—and for his very real salvation ‘at this time.’”

The chassidim listened emotionally to Rabbi Zusha's story and turned to hear their Rebbe's response. The Maggid smiled at Rabbi Zusha and said:

“Zusha, know that because of the saving of a Jewish life that you merited to perform, even in Heaven, among the heavenly hosts, they did not light the first Chanukah candle until you lit it together with Reb Yankel.”

Only then did all the students understand why the Maggid had delayed lighting the candle the previous night until nearly midnight.



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Human Interest

Chanukah at the Kotel

Under the theme, “U’feduyei Hashem Yeshuvun” - “And the redeemed of Hashem shall return” - (Isaiah 35:10), the Kotel’s traditional Chanukah candle lighting events will take place this year with the participation of former hostages, bereaved families, wounded IDF soldiers, active military personnel, and security forces.



The ceremonies, organized by the Kotel Heritage Foundation, will be held nightly throughout Chanukah, from Sunday, December 14, to Sunday, December 21, 2025, and will feature live musical accompaniment.

The special bronze menorah, over two meters high and weighing approximately one ton, stands in the Kotel plaza. The events will include Rabbis, government officials, foreign ambassadors, and the general public.

All ceremonies will be broadcast live online (except Friday and Shabbat), allowing people across Israel—including soldiers and patients in rehabilitation centers—to join in the celebration.

(the Kotel Heritage Foundation, reprinted from Chabadinfo)

Farbrengen



Question: My wife stopped making dinner because I tend to complain. For example, if the chicken, vegetables or rice were undercooked—I would point it out. She finally said I should make dinner myself. I apologized, but it’s not helping. How can I appease her and have her agree to make dinner again?

Answer: In our relationship with Hashem, teshuva involves several components: (1) commitment not to repeat the mistake - the sin, (2) remorse, (3) verbal acknowledgment - confession, and (4) asking for forgiveness. Of these, remorse is the inner transformation that gives sincerity and authenticity to the others. Without remorse, teshuva can appear motivated by ulterior motives, personal benefit, rather than genuine change. When a person becomes aware of the greatness, loftiness, beauty and kindness of the Creator, his feelings of remorse intensify. He thinks, “how could I have transgressed His will?” Remorse creates the space for a true relationship with Hashem.

We can now understand why your apology may not be having the effect you hoped for. You wrote: “how can I appease her and have her agree to make dinner again?” If the primary motivation for the apology is to receive dinner, your wife may feel that nothing fundamental has changed. An apology driven by self-interest feels hollow; a sincere one grows from awareness and a desire to be different.

Many husbands do not fully appreciate the effort involved in preparing dinner — planning the meal, shopping, cooking, juggling children, home responsibilities, work, errands, and more. Beyond the logistics, making dinner is an act of giving. It is your wife expressing care and providing for you and the family. When those acts are met with criticism or correction, even if well-intentioned, it can feel ungrateful and taken for granted. Most people can give generously when they feel appreciated; it becomes much harder when their efforts seem unnoticed or undervalued. In addition, when a spouse is appreciative and thankful, they are less likely to be critical.

An apology is like a body and a soul. The body is the words spoken; the soul is the awareness and remorse. When your wife perceives your sincerity — not just a desire for dinner, but a deeper appreciation of her efforts — she will be far more likely to accept your apology and reopen that space of giving.

Aharon Schmidt, marriage & individual counseling: www.aharonschmidt.com.

To join email list and receive periodic tips, reach out to aharonschmidt@gmail.com.

Cooking Tip of the Week

Chicken Marsala

Season 4–6 parigot with salt and pepper, sauté 3–4 minutes, then place in a slow cooker. Add baby bella mushrooms, 3 chopped garlic cloves, oregano, thyme, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Marsala wine, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chicken broth. Cook 3 hours. Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cornstarch or potato starch with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup liquid from the pot and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup coconut cream. Stir back into the pot and cook 20 more minutes before serving.

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Halacha Corner – Using the Light of the Chanukah Candles

Question: After the Shabbat candles have gone out and the Chanukah candles are still illuminating the room, is it permissible to use this light?

Answer: In “*HaNerot Halalu*”, we say: “These candles are holy, and we are not permitted to use them, only to look at them.”

This prohibition applies to all Chanukah candles (even though the main obligation is for just one candle), and also to a menorah lit out of custom (such as in a synagogue; some write that this applies even to candles lit there during Shacharit). The prohibition also applies for the sake of a mitzvah, such as praying or studying Torah by their light. In practice, people do not use their light even after the designated burning time has passed (half an hour).

Therefore, the custom is to light an additional candle, the shamash, alongside the Chanukah candles, and to place the shamash in such a way that if one does use the light, it is from the shamash. It should be placed higher or slightly apart from the other candles, to make this distinction clear. Nevertheless, ideally, one should still not use the light of the Chanukah candles themselves. If there is other lighting in the room, it is permitted.

If the regular room light goes out, it is permitted to move by the light of the Chanukah candles so as not to stumble, since this is not considered “using” the light. However, it is forbidden to eat, read, or perform similar activities by the light of the Chanukah candles.

Adapted and translated from Sichat HaShavuah



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