



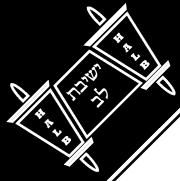
Volume XXII - Issue 9



Special Chanukah Issue!!!



The DRS Weekly Torah Publication

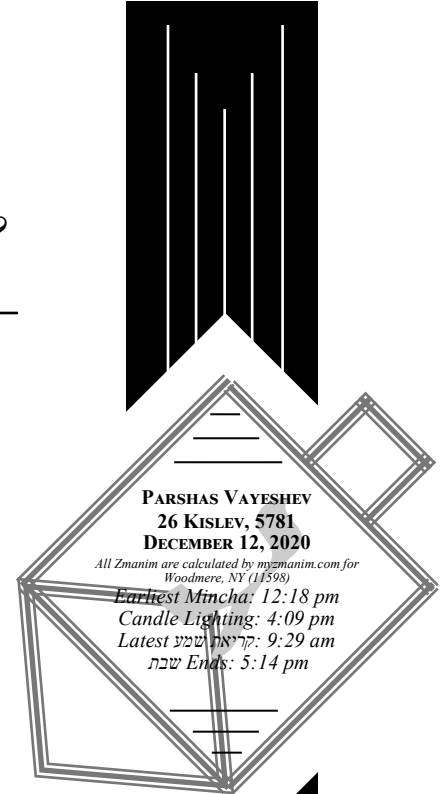


Why Do We Celebrate Chanukah on the 25th of Kislev?

By Joseph Cohen, 12th Grade

The 25th of Kislev marks the beginning of Chanukah, but is there any significance as to why we celebrate Chanukah specifically on that day? Many would answer that the word Chanukah, is an acronym for Chanu - they rested - Kah (spelled Chaf Hei) - on the 25th. Since the Jews rested from battle on the 25th day, we celebrate. However, according to this reasoning, if the battle were to end on another date would we celebrate Chanukah on that day? A closer examination of various traditional sources relating to Chanuka would indicate the significance of the 25th of Kislev. The book of Maccabees informs us that the decision to rededicate the Temple on the 25th of Kislev was intentional. Furthermore, Chagai explains that this date had already borne prophetic significance for the Second Temple, since the time of its construction some two hundred years earlier! "Pay attention now, from this day and before-from the twenty-fourth [day] of the ninth [month](Kislev) - from the day that the Temple of the Lord was founded, pay attention." (Chagai 2:18). Here we find that the construction of the second Temple began on the 24th day of Kislev! And in the prophecies delivered by Chagai on that special date, we find promises for economic prosperity, as well as predictions of great military victories over mighty enemies! Unfortunately, the prophecies of Chagai - of prosperity, sovereignty, and the "Shechina's return" - never material-

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PARSHAS VAYESHEV
26 KISLEV, 5781
DECEMBER 12, 2020

All Zmanim are calculated by myzmanim.com for
Woodmere, NY (11598)

Earliest Mincha: 12:18 pm
Candle Lighting: 4:09 pm
Latest Qri'at Shema: 9:29 am
Shabbat Ends: 5:14 pm

The staff of
דברים היוצאים מן הל"ב
wishes all of its readers a
Freilichin Chanukah!

Nation of the Moon

By Baer Boczeko, 10th Grade

In their effort to destroy the spiritual essence and Emunah of the Jews, the Greeks prohibited the observance of Shabbos, Bris Milah, and Rosh Chodesh. Rav Shmuel Bornstein in the Shem Mishmuel asks a question he heard from his father, the Avnei Nezer. It is easy to comprehend why the Greeks tried to eradicate Shabbos and Bris Milah. They are public declarations of a Bris, a covenant, between Am Yisroel and Hashem. They were opposed by the Greeks who perceived themselves as the chosen nation. Thus, they should be the only nation with a special relationship between the divine and man. But why did they combat the observance of Rosh Chodesh? The moon waxes and wanes through a natural cycle without being influenced by man. There seems to be nothing with the celebration of a new moon that should threaten the Greek belief of their divine existence on Earth.

The Shem Mishmuel offers the following answer from his father: Through the Chachamim's ability to add dates to the calendar, they stake out the ability to alter physical reality. For example, if a boy was born on the second day of Adar, 13 years later, on that day, his status is changed into a gadol. If however, Beis Din

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Chanukah Questions

1. What are words associated with Chanukah that contain within the letters *shin* and *mem* (6 answers)?
2. Where is there a hint to Chanukah from the first chapter in the Torah?
3. Where is the only time in the Torah where any form of the word *Nun*, *Samech* actually means a miracle?
4. Where is the first time that a *Milchama*—a war—occurs in the Torah?
5. What in the *Al Hanisim* is described as *Gadol*—great?
6. Which kings are named in the *Ma'oz Tzur*? (3 answers)
7. What two letter word appears four times?
8. Where does *Yavan* appear in the Torah?

Answers

1. *Shemen* - oil; *Shemonah* - eight; *Chashmona'im* - the family of priests who led the rebellion; *Sham* - there (the last word of the phrase found in the *dreidel*); *Shemesh* - the light on the chanukiah from which we light from; *Shimeon* - one of the sons of *Mattisyahu*.
2. The 25th word of the Torah is "*Or*"/"light", when Hashem states "*Vayehi Or*"/"let there be light" (Genesis 1:3)
3. Although the root word of *Nun*, *Samech* appears many times in the Torah, the only time where it means miracle is in Parshas Beshalach after the war against *Amalek*. Moshe builds a *Mizbeyach* and calls it "*Hashem Nis*"/"Hashem is My Miracle" (see Rashi there), (Exodus 17:15).
4. In Parshas Lech Lecha the Torah describes the war of the four kings against the five kings that led to the capture of Lot and him being rescued by Avraham (Genesis 14:2)
5. Hashem's name is described twice as being great: "*Ulcha Asisa Shem Gadol*" and "*Lehodos Ulehallel Leshimcha Hagadol*". The salvation is also described as "*Teshuah Gedolah*"
6. (1) Paroah king of *Mitzrayim* is mentioned in the second stanza. (2) *Zrubavel* who is mentioned in the third stanza, is chosen by Hashem to be the first king of the second Temple era. (3) *Agag* king of *Amalek* is alluded to the fourth stanza to describe *Haman Harasha* who descends from *Agag*.
7. The word *Kaitz* (end), appears four times: "*Kaitz Bavel*" - "the end of *Bavel*", "*Lekeitz Shivim*" - "to the end of seventy (years)", "*Vekareiv Kaitz Hayeshuah*" - "and hasten the end of the salvation", and "*Ve'ain Kaitz Le-me'i Hara'ah*" - "there is no end to the difficult days."
8. *Yavan* is a son of *Yavas*, the son of *Noach* (Genesis 10:2)

ALIYAH SUMMARY

First Aliyah: Yaakov and his family settle in Canaan. Yaakov favored Yosef and he made for him a special coat. Yosef's brothers were jealous; when Yosef told his brothers the two dreams — one of stalks in the field and one of the stars in the sky — in which they bowed down to him, their jealousy increased.

Second Aliyah: Yaakov sent Yosef to check on his brothers and the flocks they were shepherding. When Yosef's brothers saw him approaching they plotted to kill him. Reuven tried to save Yosef by suggesting they throw him into a pit instead. Unbeknownst to his brothers, Reuven planned to later rescue Yosef and take him out of the pit.

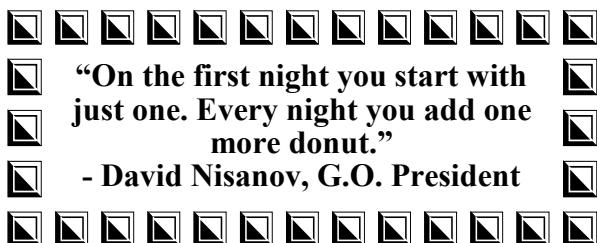
Third Aliyah: The Shevatim followed Reuven's plan, stripping Yosef of his coat and throwing him in a pit. Yehudah then advised his brothers to sell Yosef to travelers. Yosef was then sold as a slave from the travelers to Potiphar, Pharaoh's chief butcher. Back in Canaan the brothers deceived their father by dipping Yosef's robe in blood and showing it to him, which made it seem that Yosef was killed by a beast.

Fourth Aliyah: Meanwhile, Yehudah married and had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. After marrying a woman named Tamar, Er soon died. Yehudah then gave Onan to be her new husband, but he had the same fate as his brother. Yehudah then hesitated to give Shelah to marry Tamar but Tamar was adamant about marrying into this family. After Yehudah's wife died he embarked on a business trip. Tamar dressed herself like a prostitute and sat by the side of the road. Yehudah, not recognizing her, was intimate with her and she became pregnant. A few months later, when her pregnancy became evident, Yehudah ordered her executed for harlotry. When she was about to be killed she showed Yehudah some of his belongings he had left by her as collateral. Yehudah then admitted that he was the father, Tamar was spared, and she gave birth to twin sons, Zerach and Peretz.

Fifth Aliyah: In Egypt Yosef had become quite successful. God was with him. Because of Yosef's success, Potiphar put Yosef in charge of his entire household.

Sixth Aliyah: Yosef was exceedingly handsome and Potiphar's wife was attracted to him. After trying to make advances on Yosef, which he resisted, she lied and told her husband that Yosef was making advances on her. Potiphar had Yosef thrown in prison. Hashem was still with Yosef and Yosef was put in charge of all the prisoners.

Seventh Aliyah: Two of Pharaoh's officers, his butler and baker, angered the king and were put in prison. One night, they both had odd dreams, and Yosef interpreted them. Yosef told the butler that he'd soon be released and restored to Pharaoh's service. The baker was told by Yosef that he would soon be hung. Yosef pleaded with the butler to mention him to Pharaoh and ask for his release. Yosef's interpretations came true three days later and the butler was released, but he forgot about Yosef.



The complete edition of
Rabbi Moshe Atik's Torah Teasers
is available on **AMAZON**
(keyword Torah Teasers)

10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Avi Ash

Lighting the Menorah

Question: When is one supposed to light the Chanukah Candles?

- Gemara Shabbos 25b: The best time to light is from when the sun sets until people stop walking through the shuk (marketplace).
- Rambam Hilchos Megillah v'Chanuka (4:5): Light at the beginning of shekiah (sunset).
- Shulchan Aruch: Light at the end of the shekiah - tzais hakochavim (nightfall/3 stars are visible).
- Aruch Hashulchan holds like Shulchan Aruch, but many hold like Rambam.
- R' Soleveitchik used to light long candles at shekiah so that they would last until after tzais hakochavim.
- R' Ovadya Yosef (Yalkut Yosef Chelek 5:208): In Eretz Yisrael the best time to light is 15 minutes after sunset - but it gets darker quicker than it does in New York.
- R' Moshe Feinstein holds like R' Eider: In NY, light between 13-18 minutes after sunset, which is really earlier than Rav Ovadya Yosef, since it gets dark later in NY.
- R' Aharon Felder says that R' Moshe held that the best time to light is even 10 min after shekiah.
- R' Aharon Kotler holds 25-30 minutes after sunset is the best time to light.
- R' Yaakov Kaminetzky writes that in NY, candles should be lit 20 minutes after shekiah.

Question: The Gemara in Shabbos (23a) says that R Zeira would travel and his wife would light for him. But in a different time zone, what should one do?

- R' Moshe says that the lighting of the spouse doesn't work if they are in different time zones.
- The Rambam holds that people come back from the shuk 30 minutes after the ideal time to light
 - Tosfos writes that nowadays, even after 30 minutes is fine since there is no shuk and Parsumei Nisah is just in the household.
 - However, the Rema holds that ideally you light before the people used to stop walking in the shuk.
 - The Aruch Hashulchan agrees with the Rema because we always try to do mitzvos like what chazal wanted us to do originally.

Question: Does someone need to be present for you to light with a berachah?

- Mishneh Berurah - Magen Avraham - Tuf Reish Ayin Beis - You can light with a berachah when others are awake and can see.
- Cheved Moshe - Can light with berachah until dawn, even if no one else is awake
 - R' Moshe paskens like the Cheved Moshe

Question: What about one who works late and can't light on time? Should his wife light for him, or wait for him to return?

- R' Yaakov Kaminetsky writes that really if the wife is home she should light at the time. But because of Sholom bayis (Peaceful house) the husband could light later.

Question: What about Yeshiva guys who have a seder during candle-lighting time? Or more generally, should you stop your learning in order to light the candles?

- R' Schachter held you should continue learning and therefore miss the best time to light
- The Meiri also notes that the Bnei Hayeshiva didn't interrupt their learning to light on time.
- R' Moshe Feinstein also holds this way, but some don't and will interrupt their learning.
- However, when it comes to lighting at all, everyone holds you must stop your learning at some point.
- It's better to light late than early, but bedieved (acceptable, but not preferable) from plag hamincha.

SPARKS OF CHASSIDUS



*With Jared
Mark*

To be able to see the greatness within everyone: a trait we strive for. One trait, *emes*, is one that if everyone were to have, would make the world a much better place. It may seem tough as we can look at some people in our history and make a seemingly fair claim that within them nothing can be found. When we look at a recurring character in these parshios, Eisav, on the surface, can seemingly present this challenge. When we see all the bad things he has done and the opportunities for greatness that he passed up it seems befitting to say, "In him, there's for sure nothing great even deep, deep down."

To exemplify this idea we can look at a *meisa* told in the times of the great Chassidic masters. The way in which the *yeshivas* worked was if the *Menahel* wanted to expel a boy for a specific reason he would have to ask the *Rosh Yeshiva* first. There was one time where the *Menahel* caught a *bochur* reading Christian books. While attempting to get the kid expelled, the *Rosh Yeshiva* asked the *Menahel* whether he himself saw the boy holding the books. He responded that one time he actually did see the boy reading these books. The *Rosh Yeshiva's* astounding response can teach us such a valuable lesson. He replied, "Why? Why did you choose to see it?" The *Menahel* was shocked, "Choose!?! He was carrying them around. I couldn't just leave this unnoticed." The *Rosh Yeshiva* then went on to explain that all of our *neshamos* came from Hashem and all of us have a tiny piece of Hashem in us. So if we want, we can allow that light of Hashem to take over any *Yid* because, of course, Hashem can radiate throughout all aspects of the body, even the part that is sinning!

This is *pshat* by Eisav as well. He came from the *Avos*, the greatest *Yidden* of all time. His *neshama* was so pure that even when he went so far away to such terrible things we see *Yaakov* still love him and even try to be *mekareiv* him. It is so essential that we try to emulate this trait into all other *Yidden*.

The light of *Chanukah* can help bring out this idea so much more. In a certain sense, our *neshama* is like a light. It shines within us and we bring it out to inspire others. When any *Yid* sees the light of the candles, that light is automatically flared up no matter how 'bad' they may seem. If we can use these lights to help us clearly see the greatness within every single other *Yid* we will easily fix the *Sinas Chinam* that destroyed the last *Beis Hamikdash* and bring us so much closer to the *Moshiach Bimheira Beyameinu*.

Holiday Lights: The Chidush of Chanukah

Moti Schreck
10th Grade

When Chanukah comes around each year, we all recall the story of the Chashmonaim that we have been taught since we were kids. After the Chashmonaim, a family of Kohanim, led the victorious Jewish war effort against the Greeks, they came into the Beis Hamikdash, where they found only one kosher jar of oil. Miraculously, it provided enough oil for the Menorah for eight consecutive days.

However, Rav Sternbuch's Sefer Moadim Uzmanim points out a few basic issues with this understanding of the Chanukah story. Firstly, why is it taken for granted that the one small jar of oil went towards the use in the Menorah? There were other parts of the Avoda that required oil, like the Menachos and Nesachim. Why should the Menorah get priority? Additionally, the Rambam says that the Menorah was lit twice a day in the Beis HaMikdash. If the neis we are commemorating was the miraculous burning of the Menorah for 8 days part of the normal avoda cycle, we should be lighting the Menorah twice a day! Thirdly, they cleaned the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash daily. How, then, was it possible that the Menorah had the opportunity to continue burning for eight consecutive days? Finally, we know that there were miracles that took place on a constant basis in the Beis HaMikdash, such as the lack of flies, the smoke going straight up, and a fire coming down. Why do we only give attention to the neis of the Menorah that happened in the story of Chanukah?

Therefore, because of these difficulties, Rav Shternbach offers an entirely new approach to what the miracle of Chanukah was. There is a Midrash Tanchuma in Parshas Tetzaveh which explains that a major aspect of lighting the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash was the miraculous spreading of a super light over the surrounding areas of Yerushalayim. R'Shternbach suggests that perhaps this is what happened in the Beis Hamikdash on Chanukah. The Chashmonaim came into the Beis Hamikdash and realized due to technical difficulties that they wouldn't be able to light the actual Menorah. Nevertheless, they wanted desperately to replicate the special light of the Menorah with a sole purpose of spreading this light all over, and to broadcast to all Jews a sign of Hashem's love for them that was displayed in their military victory. Therefore, the Chashmonaim took the small bit of oil and lit it in a Menorah in the Chatzer of the Beis HaMikdash, with the hopes that it would shine all over, as it did in the Beis Hamikdash. The miracle was not just that the oil lasted the eight days, but also that the light did indeed shine even though it wasn't from the actual Menorah. This explanation also goes very well with the nusach we say in Al Hanisim of "V'Hidliku Neiros B'Chatzros Kadshecha". If this lighting was the usual in the Beis Hamikdash, what would "Chatzros Kadshecha" mean!? It should have said "Heichal Kadshecha?" With R'Shternbach's pshat we understand perfectly what it means, as they actually did light in the chatzer!

With this new understanding, we can answer all our questions from before. First of all, the oil was given priority to the Menorah over other parts of the Avodah, because that's what the Chashmonaim's quest was at the time, to spread the light. Also, since the Menorah was lit in the Chatzer, it was not subject to the usual aspects of the Menorah service as part of the regular Avoda. It did not need to be lit twice a day, and it did not need cleaning. Also, we are specifically highlighting the miracle of Chanukah as opposed to the others because this was not included in the regular service! This was a separate lighting the Chashmonaim performed, and was purely novel and miraculous!

STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: YOSEF SCHAFLER

Repeatedly arrested for his "counter-revolutionary" activities to preserve the flickering flame of Judaism in the Soviet Union, Reb Mordechai Chanzin frequently found himself behind bars. His first sentence amounted to 10 years in a forced-labor camp. After his release, Reb Mordechai was again found guilty and punished with five more years. His third and final sentence resulted in six years. Overall, between the years 1935 and 1956, he spent 21 years in Soviet prisons and camps. In his short stints of freedom he selflessly devoted himself to preserving Judaism behind the Iron Curtain.

Among his many experiences, there was one story that he would tell again and again:

As the Siberian winter deepened, Chanukah came, and a group of young Jewish men, all prisoners of the Gulag, convened for a short meeting. The topic: how to obtain and light a secret Menorah. One promised to supply margarine to be used as fuel. Some frayed threads from standard-issue camp garb would suffice as wicks. Even small cups to hold the margarine were procured from somewhere. Of course, all this was against camp regulations, and they all understood the implication of their actions should they be caught.

Reb Mordechai was the eldest of the group of 18 men, and was therefore honored to usher in the holiday by lighting the first candle. In the dead of night, in a small garden shed, the hardy crew crowded around their makeshift menorah and listened to Reb Mordechai's emotional voice as he recited the first blessings, tears trickling down his cheeks. Reb Mordechai and his comrades gazed silently at the small yellow light, each one recalling Chanukah in his parents' home.

The loud crash of the door opening shattered the men's reverie. Camp guards rushed through the doorway and flooded the cramped space. The Jewish inmates were grabbed by brutish hands and shoved through the camp. When they reached a small dank cell, they were ordered to pile inside.

The first to be brought to trial was the ringleader, Reb Mordechai. Inside the small courtroom, which consisted of the judge's desk and a bench for the defendant, the kangaroo court commenced. Reb Mordechai had already predicted his indictment, and solemnly awaited the verdict.

"This is an act of treason," said the prosecutor. "By lighting the candles, you intended to signal to enemy forces. The penalty for this is death."

The judge regarded the young man standing in front of him. "Do you have anything to say for yourself?"

Reb Mordechai's heart pounded in his chest as he approached the judge. "Is it just me, or is it the rest of the group too?"

"All of you," enunciated the judge dryly.

Reb Mordechai was devastated.

The courtroom began to spin around him. Whatever indifference he was able to afford until then vanished in the

terror-stricken realization that his fellow brothers would be led to their deaths. He blamed himself.

Reb Mordechai burst into bitter tears, and for a few minutes he stood in front of the judge, sobbing uncontrollably. Years of crushing pain and pent-up emotions overwhelmed him and couldn't be stopped.

"Come close," said the judge.

Reb Mordechai took a step towards the judge's desk. Softly, the judge asked about his relatives, their means of livelihood and other personal details. Reb Mordechai answered the judge's inquiries.

"What do you have to say for yourself?" the judge pressed on.

Mustering temerity he did not feel, Reb Mordechai addressed the judge, "We are Jews, and we lit the candles that night to observe the holiday of Chanukah."

"You lit Chanukah candles? You lit Chanukah candles?" the judge repeated to himself, clearly unsettled. "You don't say . . . Chanukah candles."

Recomposing himself, the judge called to the two guards present in the courtroom and asked them to stand outside. When the door clicked closed, the judge turned his attention back to Reb Mordechai.

"If you lit Chanukah candles, let me demonstrate the right way to light them."

Reb Mordechai watched the judge light a small lamp. Picking up the incriminating documents gingerly, with trembling hands, the judge slid the first one off and held it to the flame. The paper caught fire and disappeared quickly in an orange blaze and a few wisps of smoke. As if he were afraid to delay lest he change his mind, the judge worked quickly through the pile, saying "You see? This is how you light Chanukah candles." Soon there was nothing remaining of the pile.

Finished, the judge scooped up the scattered ashes, strode over to the window and tossed them into the Siberian wind. Sitting down, the judge reached for the buzzer on his table and summoned the guards.

"Take this group of 18 men," the judge barked, "and separate them, making sure that it would be impossible for them to see one another. There's no point in killing them; they are not worth even one bullet."

The guards marched out, and Reb Mordechai was again left alone with the judge. The latter faced Reb Mordechai and said in a trembling voice, "I too am a Jew, and I beg you to make sure that the future generations of our people will know to light the Chanukah candles."

Yehuda Goller

10th Grade

THE OIL'S NOT SO GOOD

On Friday night when we light the Shabbos candles, there are laws about what kind of oil and wicks are used. This is because the Rabbeim were afraid that if the candles were to go out, one might relight them and violate Shabbos. On Chanukah, however, there are no restrictions; one may use any kind and quality of oil or wicks. This is because there is no prohibition against relighting a flame on Chanukah and since it's prohibited for one to use the light of the menorah for reading or any other use one wouldn't really care to relight it anyway. There is a deeper meaning to this seemingly random difference. Rav Kook, the first Ashkenaz (Eastern European) Chief Rabbi of Palestine, explains that these differences correspond to the conflict against the Greeks both spiritually and physically.

The authentic heritage of Israel is Torah. The purity of the Torah is symbolized by the pure oil that burns clearly and brightly. However, there were many times during our history where the Jews were interested in the beliefs of other, powerful nations. This occurred particularly during times of occupation or exile where we were under the rule of powerful successful nations. During these times it was up to scholars such as the Rambam (Maimonides) to make intricate connections to show how the Torah fit into the foreign nation's ideology. These foreign philosophies, however, lacked the purity of the Torah and were often refuted within a generation or two. These foreign ideas do not smoothly flow with the Torah, as the oil does not flow smoothly through an inferior wick. During the time of the story of Chanukah, the stacking of the Torah was done on top of Greek ideology, diluting the purity of the Torah. Therefore, to remember that this is not the right way and that sometimes we need a little rekindling, we are allowed to use not so pure oil.

There is a more physical explanation. In the Shabbos prayers it says, "You promised him that his candle will never be extinguished." This is in reference to the kingdom of David. In the times of the Greek rule after the Chashmonaim defeated the Greeks, they became the rulers of Israel. The weird thing about this is that usually only descendants of Judah could be rulers or kings. This corresponds to the not so good wicks that make the flame flicker. While Judah is usually the ruler sometimes there are breaks where others rule but they always come back eventually. May we be zocheh to only learn pure Torah and to see the coming of the Moshiach Bimheira Beyameinu.

(Adapted from ravkooktorah.org)

Illuminating the Darkness

By: Moshe Gerstley, 9th Grade

In the sefer Haneirot Halalu, the candles of Chanukah are described as "Haim Kadosh Hallallu Haneirot" - "These candles are holy." To call something holy is to assign it a divine aspect that is beyond the physical realm, but how exactly are the Chanukah candles, something of a physical nature, representative of something holy and spiritual? What is the precise significance of the Hanukkah lights, and what lesson can we derive from them?

In ketuvim, candles are compared to the Torah and mitzvot, "Or ViTorah Mitzvah Ner" - "A mitzvah is a candle and Torah is light." The practice of adding a new candle each night makes perfect sense when viewed from this new perspective. The addition of a candle to the Chanukah menorah each night teaches us that, with regards to Torah and mitzvot, one should never leave what should be done today for tomorrow.

An alternate explanation of the Chanukah lights is that it commemorates the menorah that was in the beis HaMikdash, despite the fact that our menorahs have significant differences than the Beis haMikdash. In the Beit Hamikdash the Menorah was lit in the afternoon and on the inside, whereas the Chanukah candles are lit by the entrance facing the street and after dark. The Lubavitcher Rebbe teaches in his sefer Likkutei Sichos that one shouldn't just light up his house as with the Shabbat candles, but he has the additional responsibility to illuminate the "outside," such as his social life and business environment. The Chanukah candles, therefore, not only represent an external light that each Jew is responsible to spread to those around him.

In these times in particular, when many are experiencing spiritual difficulties, when it is "dark" outside and the Jews are in exile, it is not sufficient to light a candle alone and maintain it. We must increase the lights steadily, constantly growing in our efforts to spread the light of Torah and mitzvot that will ultimately dispel the darkness of exile and illuminate the world.

(Joseph Cohen- Continued from page 1)

ized during that time period, nor during the following generations. Though still unrealized, these vital prophecies had most likely earned their place in the collective Jewish awareness, as they reflected the optimistic goals of the Second Temple. One might conclude that the people annually commemorated the anniversary of the original construction date, the 25th of Kislev. They may have viewed this day as an appropriate time to recall the hopeful prophecies of Chagai which had been pronounced on the preceding day, the 24th of Kislev.

Later during the Second Temple period, as the Jews lived under Greek rule, Hellenistic culture gradually established its dominance. The rise of Hellenism climaxed with the famous decrees of Antiochus. We learn that after these edicts, the Hellenists erected an idol on the Mizbeach on the 15th of Kislev of that year. They waited, however, until the 25th of Kislev before offering sacrifices thereupon. It stands to reason that the Hellenists selected the 25th of Kislev intentionally, to spite the Jews being well aware of its religious and nationalistic significance. The Hasmonean revolt began that same year, and three years later the Maccabees secured control of Jerusalem and purified the Beis Hamikdash. The day the battle ended was on the 25th of Kislev; according to this it would be nothing more than a sheer coincidence that the battle had ended on that date. However, the Sefer Hamakabim suggests that the Beis Hamikdash's purification and rededication ceremony was intentionally set for the 25th of Kislev, to coincide with the very same day on which it was defiled three years prior. Considering that the Temple Mount came under Hasmonean control already in Cheshvan, and in light of the account in Sefer HaMakabim, one may reasonably conclude that the decision to dedicate the Mikdash specifically on the 25th of Kislev was intentional. Most likely, they selected this date for the precise same reason that the Hellenists had picked this date three years earlier: because of its prophetic and historic significance.

(Baer Boczko- Continued from page 1)

creates a leap year on the 20th of Adar that same bar mitzvah year in order to make Pesach fall out in the correct season, then the boy's 13th birthday will fall out in Adar Sheni. As a result, retroactively, he stays at the age of 12 on the 2nd day of Adar Rishon. Had this boy committed a capital crime in that span between his original bar mitzvah day and the day the Beis Din declares a leap year, he would retroactively be patur from punishment since he was still a minor. Through being guardians of the lunar calendar, the Rabbis thus were able to establish their power even over physical reality. This possible Rabbinic power to control nature's cycle and how it affects man was not acceptable to the Greeks.

Rav Shmuel Bornstein offered another possible answer to the original question. The Hebrew word for month is Chodesh. This is the same basic word as Hischadshus, renewal. Bnei Yisroel is compared to the moon. Just as the moon renews itself every month, so too Bnei Yisroel has the opportunity to rejuvenate itself every month using the special powers each month instills. However, there seems to be a misconception. Why is the month called chodesh when nothing seemingly is new: the cycle of the months and the waxing and waning of the moon are predetermined.

The secret according to the Shem Mishmuel lies in the nature of the Hischadshus of Bnei Yisroel. This comes not from the monthly lunar cycle but from the power of the special relationship between the Jewish people and Hashem. He brings an Or HaChaim on the concept of Shabbos to clarify this. The Or HaChaim explains that Hashem only created the world for 6 days so he could rest on Shabbos and renew the world for another 6 days. Shabbos is the Neshama of the world. Just as the Neshama gives life to the body, so too, Shabbos gives life to all of existence. This idea can be applied to Rosh Chodesh. As the moon and stars follow their path through the sky, they bring to Bnei Yisroel the passage of days, weeks, months and years, but it is Hashem who instilled in this cycle, the ability to affect us and give us the spiritual charge we need to run our lives. Just as Shabbos is needed weekly, Rosh Chodesh is needed monthly and similarly, Pesach, and Sukkos yearly. The Chodesh itself is closely linked to the nature and spiritual needs of Bnei Yisroel. Bnei Yisroel's power to rejuvenate comes exclusively from its connection to Hashem. Just as the moon draws new life from Hashem each month, so too does Bnei Yisroel. And just as the cycle of the moon continues indefinitely, so too Bnei Yisroel will always exist in this world and outlast all other nations.

The moon reflects our special relationship with Hashem and our infinite future. It was this that the Greeks objected to. They could not tolerate the Jews being the chosen nation, the nation of the moon. It was for this reason that they sought to eliminate Rosh Chodesh.

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Daniel Lebowitz

9th Grade

Excitement of Chanukah

There is a machlokes between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel when it comes to lighting the candles on Chanukah. Beis Hillel says that starting with one candle, we add one every night (i.e. two candles for the 2nd night, three candles for the 3rd) while Beis Shammai holds that we start with eight candles and subtract one every night (i.e. eight candles for the 1st night, seven candles for the 2nd night). Now, what is the reason behind each opinion?

Perhaps this can be explained with a parable. Say that one day you made a very profitable business deal. You would probably be ecstatic. Now, imagine the same thing happened the next day. And the next, eventually occurring for eight straight days. Your excitement would only increase every day, peaking on the eighth and final day. However, let's say that one day your friend told you that he made a large business deal. On the first day, you would be happy for him. But if that occurred for eight straight days, your excitement would only dwindle each time until you think to yourself, "Enough already! I get that he's making a lot of money, and I don't care!"

Rav Eliyahu Dessler explains that when excitement is internal, each experience only makes you happier. But, when excitement is external, the thrill associated with internal excitement doesn't exist, and the excitement wears out over time.

Perhaps this mashal can explain the machlokes between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel. Chanukah is eight days long. Those tzaddikim who connect with the Yom Tov and possess an internal joy/Avodas Hashem grow in happiness with each passing day. However, regular folk, whose love of Chanukah is external, only lessen in their excitement with each passing day of Chanukah.

Beis Hillel says that we light an extra candle every day to show increased happiness and light from the Yom Tov. Although this is not our "madreiga", it is something we should aspire to. On the contrary, Beis Shammai says that we should light the candles in a way that best represents the feelings of most people, with dimming excitement each passing day. This Chanukah, let's aspire to achieve the ultimate level of excitement, with an increasing sense of joy/Avodas Hashem each and every day!

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