



פרשת וישב
שבת מברכים
כסלו תשע"ז

YARCHEI KALLAH 5777

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Rabbi Ari Shishler.

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The Mysticism & Message of Chanukah

Wednesday night, fifth night of Chanukah, 7:30pm in the Goldhirsch Hall

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Your Soulmate is here - are you? Divorce is on the rise, what can we do about it?

Sunday January 1—Teves 3
8:00pm in the Goldhirsch Hall

With a gourmet ice-cream bar

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אין בית המדרש בלא
חידוש Chiddush



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Of Dreamers and Scholars

Based on Torah Ohr Parshas Vayeishev

We all dream. What do you dream about? Dreams are fantastical and can be downright absurd. We can conceive the bizarre and imagine the impossible. What do we dream and where do they come from?

When we dream our intellectual brain recedes and our power of imagination comes alive. Unrestrained by logic and rationality, our imagination can conjure up the most fantastical, vivid images with no limit to what we can see, where we can go and how things can be.

In a dream we can see the impossible. Two inconsistent, contradictory things can co-exist without contradiction. Our rational mind does not allow us to accept this reality. We discern the incompatibility and we shut it down, dismissing the impossible as just that. But in a dream the opposites are not opposites. They merge and blend into a single reality.

For example, in our rational mind, a boat does not, cannot and will not fly in the sky. But in a dream boats can soar through the heavens.

Exile is like a dream. When we return from exile with Moshiach's arrival we will look back at Golus and say "we were like dreamers." This is not just because exile is transient and soon we will wake-up to the true reality of redemption. Rather the very nature we experience in exile is like a dream.

In the dream of exile, two opposites can coexist and we do not see or sense their incongruity. On one hand we have spiritual aspirations and emotions. We have moments of desire to unite with our creator and connect with our souls. The world means nothing. All that we crave is G-dliness. This is the experience of Davening each day.

But when we leave the Shule the love that we experience fades as we spend the rest of our day pursuing worldly success and craving the pleasures of the physical world. The world means everything.

During exile, the intellectual component of the soul recedes and our ability to discern truth is blurred. Our confused imagination augments the contradictory tensions of our physical and spiritual selves into a life of duplicity and that's all okay.

But when we wake up to the dawn of redemption, the G-dly rational will once again come to the fore. We will see the incompatibility and we will realise that we were like dreamers in how we lived, how we thought and how we viewed ourselves in exile.

This makes it sound like dreams are inferior to intellect and that the dream-like state is immature, irrational and we will soon wake-up to our senses.

But in truth, dreams come from a deep place, a subconscious reality which is deeper than our rational brain. Our dreams tell us things to which our rational mind is limited and unable to appreciate or grasp.

The Kabbalists describe the source of dreams as coming from a spiritual level which is so lofty that we cannot rationally grasp or understand it. In this G-dly reality, like Hashem Himself opposites *can* be united and coexist.

This level is referred to as *Igulim*, circles. Unlike a line which has a top and bottom which are identifiable, a circle has neither top or bottom beginning or end. In the circle, the opposites of beginning and end are one and the same.

In exile, these spiritual levels cannot be revealed and accessed intellectually and remain hidden from us. But they serve as the source of our corrupted form of dream; our dichotomous dream of exile where we are holy and worldly, craving G-dliness and materiality at the same time.

In the reality of redemption this concealment will be removed and the spiritual light which transcends intellect will make perfect sense. The opposites of rational and supra-rational will unite.

Then we will realise what a dream is; where the impossible will seem absolutely true and logical.

So the mystics tell us that the dreamer is greater than the scholar, Yosef the dreamers surpassed even Moshe the scholar. For dreams represent our ability to transcend our rigid and finite confines of our rational brain and be able to touch the infinite.

Let's wake up from the dream of Golus and enter the deepest dream of the reality of Geulah.

Lighting Chanukah Candle On Time

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

The Braisa¹ teaches that the Mitzvah of Chanukah candles is to light “from when the sun goes down until the feet leave the market” i.e. there are no more people there. The Gemora explains that this refers to the feet of the *Tarmudai*, a nationality who would sell kindling wood and thus remain later than others in the market. The Rishonim define this measure as being half an hour after the sun has gone down².

(There is a dispute amongst the Rishonim and Poskim whether sundown refers to sunset or *Tzeis Hakochavim*. This is further subject to an argument on the definition of these times. This article will not focus on this issue. Each person should apply this discussion to their custom of lighting time.)

The Gemora presents 2 possible explanations of this Braisa. The first explanation is that the Braisa defines the window of time in which one may light. Accordingly, if one did not light at sundown, they may do so only until “the feet leave the market”. After this time one may no longer light Chanukah candles³.

Alternatively the Braisa does not define the window of time, but rather the length of time for which the candles must burn. Accordingly one must ensure that sufficient oil has been placed into the candle before lighting, to allow it to burn for this duration⁴. Likewise, after the candles have burned for the required time, they may be extinguished or used for personal needs⁵.

The Gemora does not rule decisively like either of these two explanations.

Most Rishonim write that as a result, *Lechatchila* one should ensure to light within the allocated time frame⁶. However, *Bedieved* if the time passed, one should still light, relying on the second explanation⁷ according to which the *zman* for lighting candles extends for the entire night⁸.

In contrast, the Rambam⁹ rules that if one failed to light (either intentionally or unintentionally) at sundown, they may light up until “the feet leave the market”. After this time, they may no longer light. The Rambam understands that the two explanations in the Gemora are not mutually exclusive and therefore we rule conclusively like both of

them¹⁰ i.e. one must light within this window of time and one should have sufficient oil to burn for this length of time.

Baal Halachos Gedolos also rules that one may not light earlier or later than the times defined in the Braisa.

Some of the Rishonim qualify that the time window only applied when they used to light outside. Since the *Pirsumei Nissa* was to those in the street, the timeframe was restricted by the presence of passers-by. Nowadays when we light the Menorah inside and the *Pirsumei Nissa* is to the residents of the house, one may light at any time of night¹¹.

Others rule that even nowadays *Lechatchila* one should light at the proper *zman* because *zerizim makdimin l'mitzvos* – the diligent rush to do their Mitzvos at the earliest time¹².

What about lighting earlier; some Rishonim¹³ rule that one may light earlier from *Plag Hamincha*. The Gemora is only discussing the primary time to light. However according to the Rambam and Baal Halachos Gedolos quoted above, one may not light early, just as one may not light later according to their view.

The Mechaber¹⁴ initially quotes the view of the Rambam but subsequently brings the view of Tosfos that *Bedieved* we can light at any time during the night. The Ram”o¹⁵ quotes the opinion that nowadays when we light indoors, one may light later. However *Lechatchila* one should still light at sundown.

Doing other activities before lighting

The Magen Avraham¹⁶ rules that one should light before eating¹⁷. He quotes the Rasha”I that one may not even learn once the *zman* of lighting arrives. If one was already learning, they are required to stop when the *zman* arrives¹⁸.

The Acharonim rule that like Krias Shema, even within half an hour of the *zman* one should not start any Melacha, sleep, eat a meal¹⁹ or even learn. Mishna Berura²⁰ concurs. However he is lenient and allows one to learn Torah during the half hour preceding the time of lighting.

This safeguard is so that one does not become otherwise occupied and forget to do the Mitzvah. The reason we are stringent with this safeguard despite Chanukah only being a Rabbinic

Mitzvah is because according to the first explanation of the Gemora (above), there is only a small window of time in which to light.

According to most opinions, if one began a meal, work or other activity earlier than half an hour before the *zman*, they are not obligated to stop.

However the Bach likens this Halacha to that of Bedikas Chometz²¹. Therefore even if one began their activity hours before the *zman*, they are required to stop at sundown. The reason for distinction between this and Krias Shema is that where the Mitzvah was established to be preferably done at a specific time, one is required to stop at that time²².

It is appropriate for *Yarei Shamayim* to be strict and follow the ruling of the Bach and ensure to be at home to light at the proper time²³. This is especially so because according to the first explanation of the Gemora and the ruling of the Rambam, one is not *Yotzai* if they light later. If one was involved in another activity such as a meal, work, shiur etc. it is appropriate to stop and be home for lighting at sundown.

Bedieved or in situations of need (e.g. Shluchim who have Chanukah programs etc.) one may be lenient and rely on the majority of Poskim that *Bedieved* one is *Yotzai* and may light later, especially if the activity that they are involved in began more than half an hour before sundown.

1. Shabbos 21b
2. Rosh Chapter 2 Siman 3
3. Tosfos ibid ד"ה דאי לא מדליק
4. Rashi ר"ה לשיעורא, Rif
5. Tosfos ibid, Rosh ibid, Rif
6. Tosfos ibid, Rosh ibid
7. Tosfos ibid. See Beis Yosef who explains that this is because of the doubt that perhaps the halacha does not follow the first explanation. For a case of doubt in a Rabbinic law we can follow the lenient ruling (Bach).
8. Tur OC 672
9. Hilchos Chanukah 4:5. See Biur Halacha who questions Ramba's source. However the Rambam's ruling is the same as the Baha"g
10. Bach
11. Tosfos ibid, Rosh ibid. The Tur rules like this opinion ibid.
12. ד"ה דאי לא מדליק
13. Ran
14. OC 662:2
15. ibid
16. OC 662:5
17. This refers to an Achilles Keva as opposed to a snack
18. Referencing the Shulchan Aruch on Bedikas Chometz OC 341:2 and Bach
19. See Machatzis Hashekel
20. Shaar Hatziyun 14
21. OC 431
22. It could be that Chanukah candles are even more stringent than Bedikas Chometz since according to the first explanation of the Gemora (above) one is not allowed to light later in the night.
23. See Nitei Gavriel 4:2 and 5:3