



פרשת וישב

שבת חנוכה שבת  
מברכים טבת

כסלו תשפ"א

**YARCHEI KALLAH 5781**

This year's Yarchei Kallah in-town will be held from December 27-January 1. Stay tuned for details of this year's format and line-up of speakers and topics.

The program will run live in the Werdiger Hall and is open to all men and women.

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We hope you enjoyed the Kislev edition of our popular LIFT magazine. Thank you to all contributors and to the editorial staff.

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**REGULAR SHIURIM**

Our regular Shiurim continue this week, including;

**Monday Night Chassidus**  
with Rabbi Y Johnson

**Tuesday Night Parsha**  
with Rabbi L. Broh

**Wednesday Night Nach**  
with Rabbi Y. Gordon

A collection of Torah  
thoughts produced by  
Kollel Menachem

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**Four elements of a candle**

Chanukah is the festival of lights. We light candles to remember the miracle of the candles of the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash.

Light and candles are prominent motifs in Torah thought and particularly in the mystical teachings of Chassidus and Kabbalah.

The metaphor of a candle is used to describe the Mitzvos. The Neshama is also likened to a candle. This metaphor is explored and expanded in the teachings of Chassidus on the festival of Chanukah.

An oil lamp is made up of multiple elements; the oil, a wick and a flame. The Zohar further identifies that the flame itself is made up of 2 parts; the dark flame that surrounds the wick and the white flame of illumination that the candle creates.

When the oil is drawn up the wick in small amounts, it is able to combust and produce light as it burns. Without the wick the oil could not give light. On the contrary, the oil would extinguish the flame. Likewise, without the oil, the wick would burn up and be immediately consumed.

The oil of the candle represents the Mitzvos. In Kabbalah, oil represents the Sefirah of Chochma. The source of Torah and Mitzvos emanate from the Divine Wisdom and Will of Hashem.

The physical substance of the oil represents how the G-dliness of the Mitzvah descends into this world and is hidden within the physical object and finite action through which the Mitzvah is fulfilled.

This is why the oil itself cannot generate light. The object of the Mitzvah itself is physical and the physical alone in its natural state, cannot be a vessel for G-dly light, the Or Ein Sof.

Just like the oil requires a wick to be able to produce light, the Mitzvos need a wick. The wick is the Neshama of a Jew.

When a Jew fulfils a Mitzvah, the combination of the 'wick' and the 'oil' produce light, as the Mitzvah draws down a revelation of Hashem's infinite light.

This is the inner meaning of the Posuk אשר יעשה אדם. אורתם האדם. The Posuk means "the Mitzvos that a person does". But the word יעשה can also mean to make. The Torah is telling us that it is the Jew

through their action, that actually creates the Mitzvah itself.

This is because unlike the physicality of the Mitzvah, the Neshama is inherently connected to and surrendered to Hashem, like the wick which is connected to the flame.

Just like a single wick is capable of consuming a large quantity of oil, so too, every Neshama is able to perform many Mitzvos through the course of its lifetime in this world.

Neshamos in Heaven cannot fulfil Mitzvos. Because the Mitzvos are physical acts, the Mitzvah can only be fulfilled by a Jew in this world, where the Neshama has been enfolded in the physicality of the body and animalistic soul.

The Neshama does not only come into this world to serve Hashem through fulfilling Mitzvos and studying Torah. The Neshama has another mission and that is to refine the coarse physicality of the body and our animalistic soul.

These two aspects of the Neshamas service, produce the two different coloured flames.

The white flame which produces light and illumination, comes from the burning of the oil. This is the G-dly light that is drawn down through the fulfillment of the Mitzvos.

The dark flame which surrounds the wick, comes from the slow consumption of the wick itself. This is the Avodah of refining and transforming the coarse physicality and negativity of the body and animalistic soul.

The reason that this flame is dark is not because it is a lesser Avodah. On the contrary. Whilst we often associated darkness with evil and negativity, the mystics describe a darkness within holiness. Light represents G-dly revelations. Darkness represents the essence of G-dliness that it beyond revelation.

The same is true in the Avodah itself. Fulfilling Torah and Mitzvos comes from the 'revealed', conscious levels of the soul. To transform the physicality of our bodies and the emotions of our animalistic soul, we need to tap into the deeper hidden powers of the Neshama.

# The weekly Halacha analysis

## When to light Chanukah Candles

### Rabbi Yonason Johnson

The Braisa<sup>1</sup> 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 down<sup>2</sup>.

(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 candles<sup>3</sup>.

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 duration<sup>4</sup>. Likewise, after the candles have burned for the required time, they may be extinguished or used for personal needs<sup>5</sup>.

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-frame<sup>6</sup>. However, Bedieved if the time passed, one should still light, relying on the second explanation<sup>7</sup> according to which the zman for lighting candles extends for the entire night<sup>8</sup>.

In contrast, the Rambam<sup>9</sup> 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 them<sup>10</sup> 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 night<sup>11</sup>.

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 time<sup>12</sup>.

What about lighting earlier; some Rishonim rule that one may light earlier<sup>13</sup> from Plag Hamincha. The Gemora is 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 Mechaber<sup>14</sup> 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”o<sup>15</sup> 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 Avraham<sup>16</sup> rules that one should light before eating<sup>17</sup>. He quotes the Rasha”l 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 arrives<sup>18</sup>.

The Acharonim rule that like Krias Shema, even within half an hour of the zman one should not start any Melacha, sleep, eat a meal<sup>19</sup> or even learn. Mishna Berura<sup>20</sup> 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 Chometz<sup>21</sup>. 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 time<sup>22</sup>.

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 time<sup>23</sup>. 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.

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|--|---|
| 1. Shabbos 21b   | opinion ibid.   |
| 2. Rosh Chapter 2 Siman 3  | 12. ד"ה דאי לא מודליק   |
| 3. Tosfos ibid ד"ה דאי לא מודליק   | 13. Ran   |
| 4. Rashi ד"ה לשיעורא, Rif  | 14. OC 662:2  |
| 5. Tosfos ibid, Rosh ibid, Rif   | 15. ibid  |
| 6. Tosfos ibid, Rosh ibid  | 16. OC 662:5  |
| 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). | 17. This refers to an Achilles Keva as opposed to a snack   |
| 8. Tur OC 672  | 18. Referencing the Shulchan Aruch on Bedikas Chometz OC 341:2 and Bach   |
| 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  | 19. See Machatzis Hashekel  |
| 10. Bach   | 20. Shaar Hatziyun 14   |
| 11. Tosfos ibid, Rosh ibid. The Tur rules like this  | 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   |