



פרשת מקץ

טבת תש"פ

## YARCHEI KALLAH

This year's Yarchei Kallah program has started off with a bang!

Well over 200 people came on the Public Holidays and a strong crowd came on Friday to enjoy the shiurim and presentations.

All of the shiurim have been of the highest quality; well researched, well structured and well delivered.

Rabbi Reuven Wolf has enthralled us with his lectures, taking deep concepts of Chassidus and bringing it down eloquently and clearly, relating contemporary world event to the themes of Chanukah and Moshiach.

The program continues next week on Sunday morning, concluding on Wednesday.

To see the full program with all of the topics and speakers and to book your tickets online, visit our website

[www.jewishlearning.com.au](http://www.jewishlearning.com.au)

Hardcopy brochures are available in your local Shule

## YARCHEI KALLAH RETREAT

Spaces are still available for the Yarchei Kallah learning retreat in Marysville.

Join us for the whole week or for part of the program and enjoy the amazing shiurim, fully catered meals, kids programs and beautiful surroundings.

For more info 0422455565



Rabbi Wolf presenting at Yarchei Kallah

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## Lighting the Menorah of imperfect people

The Gemara records a dispute between the sages on how we should light our Chanukah candles;

The school of Shammai are of the view that the Chanukah candles should be lit in descending order, starting with eight on the first night and working down to one candle on the final night.

Their colleagues in the academy of Hillel rule that the candles are lit in an ascending manner, starting with one light on the first night and adding an extra candle on each subsequent night.

The Gemara explains the logic underlying each of their respective opinions. The academy of Shammai wish to reflect the days of Chanukah which are yet to come. The academy of Hillel require the Chanukah lights to mark the days which have already entered.

A recurring theme in the disputes between Beis Hillel and Beis Shammai throughout the Gemara is that Beis Shammai focuses on the potential whereas Beis Hillel sees the situation as it currently is.

In the case at hand, on the first night of Chanukah, one day has actually entered, but there are 8 remaining days. For the disciples of Shammai, lighting eight candles marks this potential, the days that are yet to come. Beis Hillel rules that we mark the actual; symbolising the days which we have actually experienced.

The mystical sources teach that the disputes of Hillel and Shammai stem from deep within their souls.

Shammai's soul comes from the aspect of *Gevurah* – a quality of discipline and rigidity. His very name means to measure. This is why most of Shammai's rulings take a more stringent or forbidding approach. As a personality, Shammai seems intolerant and exacting.

Hillel's soul-root is in the aspect of *Chessed*, expressing loving-kindness and acceptance. Hillel's Halachic rulings generally take a lenient and permissive approach. Hillel embodies patience, warmth and acceptance.

How do the rulings of Beis Hillel and Beis Shammai about lighting candles, Shammai seeing the "potential" and Hillel measuring the "actual", fit with their soul-personalities?

At first glance it seems completely contrary. Surely the ability to see the potential in something is an expression of *Chessed*? Isn't seeing and believing in someone's potential a display of kindness and love; we don't judge a person for how they appear but rather see who they can be?

Seeing the potential is a great thing but it can very easily become an expectation. The expectations then become the measuring stick by which we evaluate others and how we relate to the individual in front of us. Do they measure up or not?

Shammai relates to the potential he sees in every person and situation. How they *could* be becomes how they *should* be. When this expectation and projection of reality is not met, it can lead to disappointment and resentment; if this is who you can be and what you are capable of, then why aren't you living up to it?

Further, focusing on someone's potential prevents us from being able to recognise and celebrate what they have actually accomplished.

A more damaging variation of this is when the potential we see, is one that we project on how others should be as measured by our own measuring stick – not theirs. We benchmark the behaviour of others on our own standards, which may not be a fair expectation. When the measuring bar is dissociated from the reality and the bar is set too high, the subject is set up to fail.

In contrast, *Chessed* is pragmatic and understanding, focusing on the other person and the reality of who they are now. We understand their strengths and their weaknesses and celebrate their achievements.

That's not to say that the Hillel approach does not believe in seeing the potential.

On the first night of Chanukah, even though we are lighting just one candle, we light it on the Menorah with all eight branches. We believe in and note the potential that can be achieved, but we celebrate what has been accomplished - relating to the person how they are and not how they can be.

When we follow Hillel's approach, we celebrate accomplishments and recognise struggles, we allow people to be on their journey and not yet be finished products. With acceptance, we give them space and encouragement to continue to grow.

In a perfect world, with perfect people, Shammai's standards and expectations are appropriate. And so, when Moshiach comes, the Halacha will follow the rulings of Shammai.

But until that time, in an imperfect world with imperfect people, our Halacha, the path which the Torah teaches us to take in our relationships with others, is the approach of Hillel.

# The weekly Halacha analysis

## Mentioning Chanukah in Al Hamichya

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

The Gemara<sup>1</sup> records that one year after the victory of the Chashmonaim and the miracle of Chanukah, the Chachamim established the festival of Chanukah to be celebrated as days of Hallel and Hodaah – praise and thanksgiving.

Rashi<sup>2</sup> explains that this refers to the obligation to recite Hallel and to say Al Hanisim in the blessing of Hodaah. We recite Al Hanisim in the blessing of Hodaah in Shemoneh Esrei (after Modim) and in bentching (after Nodeh Lecha).

### Al Hanisim in Bentching

On Shabbos, Yomtov and Rosh Chodesh there is a requirement to mention the day in bentching. The Gemara<sup>3</sup> asks whether one is required to mention Chanukah and Purim in bentching;

Perhaps because they are only Rabbinic festivals they need not be mentioned (as opposed to Shabbos, Yomtov and Rosh Chodesh which are Biblical). Or do we say that because it entails Pirsumei Nissa (publicising the miracle) they should be mentioned in bentching?

Rava rules that one is not required to mention Chanukah in bentching, but if one wishes to, they should mention it during the blessing of Hodaah just as it is done in the Shemoneh Esrei.

Tosfos<sup>4</sup> notes that the requirement to recite Al Hanisim in davening is taken as an obvious requirement and therefore the Gemara's question only pertains to bentching. Tosfos explains that since davening is Betzibbur there is clearly an element of Pirsumei Nissa. Bentching is done at home and therefore has less Pirsumei Nissa.

The Gemara's conclusion is that reciting Al Hanisim in bentching is optional. Nonetheless it has subsequently been accepted as an obligation and has become binding Halacha<sup>5</sup>.

The Shulchan Aruch rules that if one forgot Al Hanisim in either davening or bentching, one need not repeat the Shemoneh Esrei or bentching<sup>6</sup>. The Ram"o adds that if one forgot to say Al Hanisim in bentching after Nodeh Lecha, they can add it as a Harachaman at the point where we recite the Harachaman for other festivals. In Shemoneh Esrei one can add it before the final Yihyu Leratzon<sup>7</sup>.

### Mentioning Chanukah in Al Hamichya

The Yerushalmi<sup>8</sup> teaches that one should mention מעין המאורע (the specialness of the day) in the ברכה מעין שלוש (Al Hamichya)<sup>9</sup>. This is codified as Halacha by the Rambam<sup>10</sup> who writes that on Shabbos and Yomtov one must mention the sanctity of the day. The Shulchan Aruch rules like the Rambam that we should mention Shabbos and Yomtov in Al Hamichya. The Shulchan Aruch also adds Rosh Chodesh<sup>11</sup>.

And so, on Shabbos we add ורצה והחליצנו ביום ורצה and on Yomtov and Rosh Chodesh we add ... וזכרנו לטובה ביום. - mentioning the name of the specific Yomtov<sup>12</sup>.

The Rambam does not mention Chanukah or Purim and the Shulchan Aruch explicitly writes that we do not mention Chanukah and Purim in Al Hamichya.

### Why are Chanukah and Purim different?

The Acharonim question why Chanukah and Purim are not mentioned in Al Hamichya. Why are they different from the other Yomim Tovim?

**Mahara"m and Levush:** The earliest source which discusses this distinction is a Teshuvah of the Mahara"m Rottenberg<sup>13</sup>. He explains that Shabbos and the other Yomim Tovim need only be 'mentioned' and this can be done before the concluding line of Al Hamichya ... כי אלה. Chanukah and Purim must specifically be mentioned in the Bracha of Hodaah. Since the Al Hamichya does not contain an express Hodaah, Al Hanisim cannot be said<sup>14</sup>. This answer is also found in the Levush<sup>15</sup>, although it seems that it is presented as his own teaching and that he had not seen the Mahara"m.

**Lechem Chamudos**<sup>16</sup> questions the Mahara"m's distinction. Just as the Ram"o writes that just as (bedieved) one may recite Al Hanisim in the Harachamans at the end of bentching, one could mention Chanukah and Purim at the conclusion of Al Hamichya even though it is not Hodaah. Rather, the distinction is that Chanukah and Purim are only Rabbinic as opposed to Shabbos, Yomtov and Rosh Chodesh which are mentioned in the Torah. This is also the answer of Hagahos Maimonios<sup>17</sup>.

**Mishna Berura**<sup>18</sup>, quoting the Gr"a, writes that unlike Shabbos and Yomtov where one is obligated to mention the day in bentching, mentioning Chanukah and Purim in bentching itself is only a minhag. The minhag was only adopted for bentching and was not adopted for Al Hamichya.

**Aruch Hashulchan** writes that since even for Shemoneh Esrei and bentching one is Yotzai if they did not mention Al Hanisim, one need not mention it in Al Hamichya. Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef<sup>19</sup> questions this logic. On Rosh Chodesh one is also Yotzai bedieved if one forgot Yaaleh Veyavo in bentching and yet we still mention Rosh Chodesh in Al Hamichya<sup>20</sup>.

**Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef**<sup>21</sup> was asked whether one may not mention Chanukah in Al Hamichya or whether it is not required but one may do so if they choose. In his Teshuvah he notes that not everyone agrees that even Shabbos and Yomtov need to be mentioned in Al Hamichya (despite the Yerushalmi and ruling of the Rambam quoted above).

Tosfos<sup>22</sup> and Rashba<sup>23</sup> write that the popular practise is not to do so. They suggest that perhaps in former times Shabbos and Yomtov had to be men-

tioned because people would be Koveia to drink wine and eat fruit. However, the Kesef Mishna writes that this argument is not sufficient to push away the Yerushalmi. The Shulchan Aruch rules that we do mention these days in Al Hamichya. Nonetheless we need not add a requirement for Purim and Chanukah (which are only Rabbinic) to a matter which is already in dispute<sup>24</sup>.

The **Minchas Elozor** of Munkatch<sup>25</sup> presents a couple of approaches. His second approach is based on the Tosfos<sup>26</sup> who explains that in Shemoneh Esrei it is a given that one must say Al Hanisim because davening is (usually) Betzibbur and there is Pirsumei Nissa. Bentching is usually done at home and so there is less Pirsumei Nissa. Nonetheless we say Al Hanisim in bentching because there is still a degree of Pirsumei Nissa.

The Munkatcher adds that perhaps this is only in bentching because a meal (with bread) is usually eaten in the company of family members or others. Since Mezonos, wine and fruits are usually eaten on one's own, there is no Pirsumei Nissa and so Al Hanisim is not said.

### Halachic conclusion

Following the majority of Acharonim<sup>27</sup>, the contemporary Poskim<sup>28</sup> conclude that one should not mention Chanukah or Purim in Al Hamichya. If however one did mention Chanukah or Purim, either in the beginning or end of Al Hamichya, one is nonetheless Yotzai and it does not constitute a Hefsek or an invalidating change to the text of the Brachos.

1. Shabbos 21b

2. ibid

3. 24a

4. 24a מהו להזכיר א

5. See Raviah quoted in the Bach OC 682. Another example is Maariv, which is only a reshuv but has been accepted as a binding obligation.

6. Shulchan Aruch OC 682. See Bach ibid who quotes the Mordechai who rules that because one is obligated to eat a meal (with bread) on Chanukah and Purim, one is obligated to repeat bentching if Al Hanisim was omitted. Maharsha<sup>1</sup> writes that this is only so for the Purim Seudah but does not apply to Chanukah. Their argument revolves around whether there is a chiyuv to have a Seudah on Chanukah. Bach rules like the Mordechai and Raviah.

7. Mishna Berura 682:4 quoting Elya Rabbah

8. Brachos 6:1

9. Note that the Yerushalmi does not mention which days this is required for.

10. Hilchos Brachos 3:13

11. Shulchan Aruch OC 208:12

12. In other Nuschaos for Yomtov one says וזכרנו לטובה ביום ורצה and Rosh Hashona do they use the formula וזכרנו

13. Siman 70

14. Even though the blessing concludes ... ונודה לך, מניין ההתיימה the Bracha

15. OC 208:12

16. Quoted in Elya Rabba 208:21

17. On Rambam ibid

18. 208:59

19. Yabia Omer 3:236

20. He does suggest that perhaps the Aruch Hashulchan is referring to the requirement to mention the day in Shemoneh Esrei (as opposed to bentching) where Yaaleh Veyavo on Rosh Chodesh is Meakev unlike Chanukah and Purim.

21. Yabia Omer ibid

22. Brachos 44a על הניע

23. Chiddushim Brachos 44a

24. He adds that this is especially so since even in bentching which is Biblically mandated, Al Hanisim is only a reshuv. If so, Al Hamichya which is only Rabbinic, one need not be concerned.

25. Nimukei Orach Chaim 682

26. Quoted above

27. Shulchan Aruch, Levush, Pri Megadim and others

28. Yabia Omer ibid and Tzitz Eliezer 14:63