



פרשת וישב

כסלו

תשע"ט

### CHASSIDUS EVENING FOR ANASH

Last Sunday 80 men and bochorim filled the ORZ for a Chassidus evening in preparation for Yud Tes Kislev.

Chavrusas learned from a selection of Yud-Tes Kislev Maamarim of the Rebbe that were provided.

Shiurim were also given by Rabbi Doobie Lisker and Rabbi Yonason Johnson.

It was a beautiful evening of Achdus as members from all of the Yeshiva minyanim came together to strengthen Limmud Hachassidus in our community.

### CHALUKAS HASHAS

The Alter Rebbe wanted each community of Anash to complete the entire Shas each year. In Hayom Yom, the Rebbe writes that this is done on Yud-Tes Kislev.

Each year Kollel organises the Melbourne community Chalukas Hashas.

Many Mesechtas and individual chapters have already been taken.

We still have more to go.

You can sign up and select your Mesechta or Prakim online.

[www.kollelmenachem.com.au/shas](http://www.kollelmenachem.com.au/shas)

### MAZAL TOV

Kollel wishes a MazalTov to our Dor L'Dor director and former Kollel member, Rabbi Yisroel Lebenholz on the birth of a daughter Toiba Menucha. We wish them much Chassidische Nachas.



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## The pit that never stays empty

When the brothers wanted to kill Yosef, Reuven intervened. He suggested that rather than killing him, they should throw him into a pit. He planned to return later to save Yosef and bring him home to his father.

The Torah notes that 'the pit was empty, there was no water in it'. The Gemara points out a redundancy in this Posuk; having already said that the pit was empty, it is obvious that there was no water in it. The sages explain that the Posuk is hinting, that whilst the pit was empty of water, it was filled with snakes and scorpions.

This explanation raises a difficulty: Reuven suggested throwing Yosef into the pit in order to come back later to rescue him. If the pit was filled with poisonous snakes and scorpions, why would Reuven make this suggestion? Yosef would have been long dead before his brother returned.

The Torah Temima offers a novel resolution based on the passage in which this Talmudic teaching appears. The interpretation that the pit was filled with snakes comes directly after a ruling in the Gemara that Chanukah candles which are lit higher than 20 Amos (approx. 10 meters) are invalid.

A critical element of Chanukah candles is *Pirsumei Nissa* (that they be seen by passers by to publicise the miracle). Objects that are higher than 20 Amos are not readily seen by the eye. Since candles placed higher than 20 Amos lack *Pirsumei Nissa*, the lighting is deemed invalid.

The juxtaposition of these seemingly unrelated teachings is usually attributed to them being taught by the same Amora. The Torah Temima explains their association differently.

He proves from the Torah's wording that the pit was at least 20 Amos deep. Based on the previous ruling on Chanukah candles, Reuven would not have been able to notice the presence of the snakes and scorpions. And so he thought Yosef would be safe there until he returned.

The Midrash gives explains the Posuk in a more metaphoric way. The Torah is likened to water. By casting Yosef into the pit, the brothers demonstrated that the pit of Yaakov (a reference to his offspring) had run dry of the water; that they were acting against the values and morality of Torah that their father had taught them.

A key principle in mystical thought is that when holiness departs from a particular space, the space does not remain empty. The removal of Kedusha creates a vacuum which attracts and draws the forces of negativity and impurity to fill the void.

Our minds and thoughts are always working. These thoughts shape our perspective and guide our choices. What we fill our head-space with is so important.

When our pit is empty of water, when we are not constantly connecting; filling our minds with the perspective and values of Torah, Kedusha and the service of Hashem, we don't just stay spiritually neutral. The void of Kedusha is quickly inhabited by the snakes and scorpions of the thoughts and counsels of our Yetzer Hora.

Parshas Vayeshev is always read in proximity to Chanukah. The war of the Yevanim against the Jewish people was a spiritual one. They sought to Hellenise the Jews and poison their minds with their corrupted Hashkafos and world outlook.

As long as the Jewish people were involved in the study of Torah, they would not be able to succeed. And so they sought to cause us 'to forget Your Torah and take us away from the Mitzvos of Your will'. They tried to empty the pit of Yaakov of water, thereby exposing them to the snakes and scorpions of heresy and assimilation.

With the rally cry of 'Whoever is for Hashem join with us', the Chashmonaim took up arms, rallying the Jewish people to strengthen their commitment to Torah, washing away the snakes and scorpions and filling the pit of Yaakov with the Living Waters.

# Lighting Chanukah candles on time

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

The Gemara<sup>1</sup> records a Braisa that teaches that the Mitzvah of Chanukah candles is to light them “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 time as being half an hour after the sun has gone down - משתשקע החמה<sup>2</sup>.

[There is a dispute amongst the Rishonim and Poskim whether משתשקע החמה refers to *Shkiya* (sunset) or *Tzeis Hakochavim* (nightfall). There is also a dispute amongst the Rishonim on the calculation of these times. This article will not focus on these issues. Each person should apply these halachos to their accepted halachic time.]

The Gemora presents two explanations of the Braisa “from when the sun goes down until the feet leave the market”;

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 is not defining the window of time in which one may light, 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>. After the candles have burned for the required time, they may be extinguished or used for one’s personal needs<sup>5</sup>.

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

Most Rishonim write that therefore, *Lechatchila* we adopt the stringencies of both interpretations and 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 must have sufficient oil to burn for this length of time.

Baal Halachos Gedolos also rules that one may not light after the time defined in the Braisa.

Some of the Rishonim qualify that the time window limitation only applied when they used to light Chanukah candles outside. Since the *Pirsumei Nissa* was to those in the street, the timeframe was restricted to when there would be 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<sup>13</sup> 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 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”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* arrives<sup>18</sup>.

The Acharonim rule, that even within the half hour before the *zman* one should not start any Melacha, sleep, eat a meal<sup>19</sup> or even learn. We find a similar Halacha regarding Krias Shema. Mishna Berura<sup>20</sup> concurs with this view, however he is lenient and allows one to learn Torah during the half hour preceding the time of lighting.

This half-hour 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 (as opposed to Shema which is Mideoraisa) is because according to the first explanation of the Gemora (above), there is only a

small window of time in which to light and it could be easily missed.

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

However the Bach likens this Halacha to *Bedikas Chometz*<sup>21</sup>, where even if one began their activity many hours before the *zman*, they are required to stop at the *zman*. The reason this differs from Krias Shema is because the Mitzvos of *Bedikas Chometz* and Chanukah candles were set to be done at a preferred specific time (עיקר זמן). Therefore 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 than this time. If one was doing another activity such as a meal, work or shiur they should stop to light *b'zman*.

Based on the above, the Poskim do not look favourably on scheduling simchas or Chanuka parties at a time which would preclude people from being at home to light *b'zman*.

*Bedieved* or in situations of great need, 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 לא מדליק
4. Rashi ד"ה לא לשיעורא. According to the first explanation, there would be no required amount of oil or duration for the candles to burn.
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 Achilas 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