

בסיעתא דשמיא

# Tashbar

CHANUKAH 2020 - 5781 חנוכה תשפ"א

תינוקות של בית רבן



*A Chanukah Reader written by the students of  
Cheder Levi Yitzchok - Melbourne, Australia*



Cheder  
Levi Yitzchok  
חינוך על טהרת הקודש

# Tashbar

MAGAZINE

תינוקות של בית רבן



Cheder  
Levi Yitzchok  
דו"ק על סדרת הקודש

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# Foreward

## On behalf of our English class Happy Chanukah!

It is with great pride and pleasure that we are publishing the second issue of Tashbar and may there be many more to come.

We are an English group, that integrates Kodesh (Hebrew studies) with General Studies, and *Baruch Hashem* the magazine has helped achieve this. It is becoming a project that the younger students in the Cheder look forward to being part of in the future.

In this magazine we have written about many different topics covering the subject of *Chanukah*. Two main themes that emerge are the light of the *Menorah* penetrating the Jewish unconscious soul and taking pride in being Jewish.

It is our hope that you enjoy and learn from each of our contributions. We

have written about the spiritual concept of light and oil in *P'nimius Hatorah*. We covered the story of *Chanukah* through a diary, and also wrote about a few miraculous *Chanukah* stories throughout the generations. We explore the real meaning of the war of *Chanukah* and what it means to us, and we also wrote about the connection between *Yud Tes Kislev* and *Chanukah*. We discuss the shape of the menorah and the main *Chanukah* personalities who played big parts in the miracles of *Chanukah*.

There is also a special section of the magazine where we interviewed two people. One of whom was Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, the Rebbe's secretary who played a very big part in the public *Menorah* lighting campaign. The second person was Rabbi Shmueli Feldman, who is a *Shliach* of the Rebbe in Canberra Australia, who still works on spreading the light of the *Chanukah Menorah* in Australia.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Gut Yom Tov,*

*Mendy Abenaim  
Shneur Zalman Cohen  
Yossel Dolnikov  
Arik Hoch  
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Achiyah Kerbel  
Mottel Kurinsky  
Yossi Raskin  
Schneur Reicher  
Aizik Schachter  
Yossi Shapiro  
Berel Stern*



❖❖❖

# A Letter

❖ from ❖

## The REBBE



By the Grace of G-d

On the eve of Chanukah, 5741 [1980]  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To all Participants in the Public  
Lighting of the Chanukah Menorah  
in the USA

*Greeting and Blessing!*

**Chanukah,** the Festival of Lights, recalls the victory—more than 2100 years ago—of a militarily weak but spiritually strong Jewish people over the mighty forces of a ruthless enemy that had overrun the Holy Land and

threatened to engulf the land and its people in darkness.

The miraculous victory—culminating with the dedication of the Sanctuary in Jerusalem and the rekindling of the Menorah which had been desecrated and extinguished by

the enemy—has been celebrated annually ever since during these eight days of Chanukah, especially by lighting the Chanukah Menorah, also as a symbol and message of the triumph of freedom over oppression, of spirit over matter, of light over darkness.

It is a timely and reassuring message, for the forces of darkness are ever present. Moreover, the danger does not come exclusively from outside; it often lurks close to home, in the form of insidious erosion of time-honored values and principles that are at the foundation of any decent human society. Needless to say, darkness is not chased away by brooms and sticks, but by illumination. Our sages said, “A little light expels a lot of darkness.”

The Chanukah Lights remind us in a most obvious way that illumination begins at home, within oneself and one’s family, by increasing and intensifying the light

of Torah and Mitzvos in the everyday experience, even as the Chanukah Lights are kindled in growing numbers from day to day. But though it begins at home, it does not stop there. Such is the nature of light that when one kindles a light for one’s own benefit, it benefits also all who are in the vicinity. Indeed, the Chanukah Lights are expressly meant to illuminate the “outside,” symbolically alluding to the duty to bring light also to those who, for one reason or another, still walk in darkness.

What is true of the individual is true of a nation, especially this great United States, united under G-d, and generously blessed by G-d with material as well as spiritual riches. It is surely the duty and privilege of this Nation to promote all the forces of light both at home and abroad, and in a steadily growing measure.

Let us pray that the message of the Chanukah



Lights will illuminate the everyday life of everyone personally, and of the society at large, for a brighter life in every respect, both materially and spiritually.

With esteem and blessing in the spirit of Chanukah,

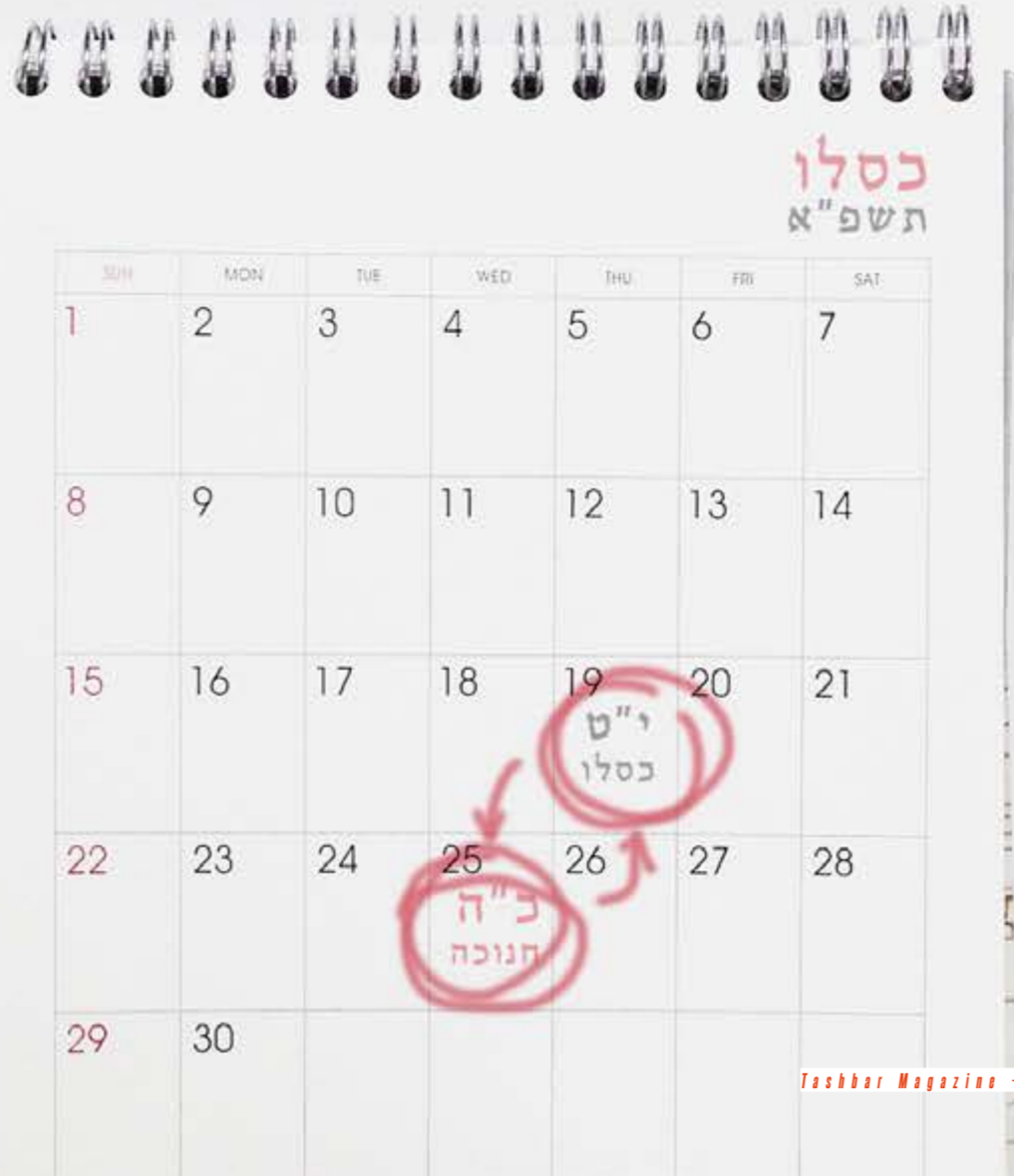
[Signed] M. Schneerson





# LINKING YUD TES KISLEV & Chanukah

By Berel Stern



For Chabad *chassidim*, the month of Kislev contains many important days which commemorate the history of the Jewish people and the lives of the Rebbeim.

In quite a number of his talks, the Rebbe draws a connection between *Yud Tes Kislev* and *Chanukah*.

*Yud Tes Kislev* is the day that the Alter Rebbe was released from jail, after 53 days of imprisonment during which his life was under threat. *Yud Tes Kislev* is the day which *Chassidim* call the *Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus*. After the Alter Rebbe was freed, *Chassidus* was spread with greater energy and urgency, following the direction from the Ba'al Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezritch which the Alter Rebbe received while in prison.

The main miracle of *Chanukah* is associated with the oil. The *Gemorah* relates that when the Greeks entered the *Beis Hamikdash* they defiled the oil.

When the *Chashmonoim* defeated them, they found one flask of oil with the seal of the *Kohen Gadol* still intact. Although the amount of oil in the flask was enough to last one day, miraculously it lasted for eight days.

We find that the *Torah* is compared to a number of liquids, such as water, milk, honey, wine and oil.

Water refers to the revealed parts of *Torah*, because the nature of water is to flow downwards, which shows that as it descends, it becomes revealed and accessible.

Wine and oil represent the secrets of *Torah*, because with wine and oil you have to apply pressure to the grape/olive to bring out the juice.

However, whereas grapes are squeezed, olives must be crushed to produce oil and therefore we say that the oil which comes from olives refers to the secrets of the secrets of the *Torah*.



## MAKING THE CONNECTION

Although on the surface there might seem to be little to link *Yud Tes Kislev* with *Chanukah*, the Rebbe offers the following points of connection:

1. *Yud Tes Kislev* commemorates the spreading of the wellsprings of *Chassidus* (the most concealed part of the *Torah*). *Chanukah* deals with the miracle of the oil (which is also a metaphor for the concealed part of *Torah*). Both wellsprings and oil are concealed in their original state.
2. According to what *Moshiach* told the Ba'al Shemtov, these wellsprings must be spread out. This concept is also found with the *Menorah*, whose light was intended to shine outward. As the *Gemorah* says, the windows in the *Beis Hamikdosh* were smaller on the inside and wider on the outside precisely so people on the outside could benefit from the light. So both *Yud Tes Kislev* and *Chanukah* emphasise the importance of influencing those on the outside.
3. The wellsprings of *Chassidus* should be spread till the furthest destination and should not be affected by opposition, as we see with the Alter Rebbe, who, when he was released from prison, began

to spread *Chassidus* with a much greater intensity. Likewise in relation to *Chanukah*, where the illumination (of the *Menorah*) came only after the challenges placed on the Jews by the Greeks. In both instances we see a higher quality light follows the darkness brought about by those who sought to oppose G-d's will.

4. Another quality which they share is that while both events involved miracles from Above, nevertheless, the strength of the miracle was related to the tremendous effort put into their service of the Almighty by both the *Chashmonoim* and the Alter Rebbe.
5. Finally, both in relation to the spreading of the wellsprings of *Chassidus* (*Yud Tes Kislev*) and the publication of the miracle of the oil (*Chanukah*), the intention is that the influence should reach not just Jewish people, but also the nations of the world, in anticipation of their transformation in the times of *Moshiach*. To elaborate, after the Alter Rebbe was released from prison he spread the miracle of his release to all people; it even came to the attention of the Czar. Likewise with *Chanukah*, we light the *Menorah* on the outside so everyone can see it and appreciate the miracle of *Chanukah*.

## WHY LINK THESE EVENTS?

There are many places in the Rebbe's teachings where he compares and links seemingly unconnected concepts, events and people (apparently following the style of his father HaRav Levi Yitzchok). Here are two reasons why, we might say, the Rebbe does this:

- As the Rebbe himself has said, the main focus of a *Nosi* is to encourage and prepare *Yidden* for the coming of *Moshiach*. By focusing on what connects (rather than our differences) the Rebbe is giving us a taste of *Moshiach* when the unity of all existence will be revealed.
- By creating connections, the Rebbe introduces new ways to appreciate what is being compared, and this gives an extra *chayus* in our learning and how we commemorate and celebrate events like *Yud Tes Kislev* and *Chanukah*.

And through the *chayus* which we show in serving *Hashem*, we can follow the Rebbe's example and reveal the unity of the world through the immediate coming of *Moshiach*. 🕎

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TORAH IS  
COMPARED  
TO A  
NUMBER  
OF LIQUIDS,  
SUCH AS  
WATER,  
MILK, HONEY,  
WINE AND  
OIL.

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# HAPPY CHANUKAH?

BY ARIK HOCH



**A**re we obliged by Halacha to celebrate Chanukah with joy and feasting or only through praise and thanksgiving to Hashem?

The only *sugya* in the *Gemorah* that discusses the miracle and the *Mitzvos* of Chanukah is in *Maseches Shabbos*, where it quotes a *Braisa* from *Megillas Tanis*, which briefly discusses Chanukah.

The *Braisa* asks, 'What is Chanukah?'. The *Braisa* goes on to answer, that when the Greeks went into the *Beis Hamikdash* they rendered all the oil in the *Heichal* impure. The *Chashmonoim* came in to the *Beis Hamikdash*,

and they only found one remaining jug of oil that still had the seal of the *Kohen Godol*. Although the quantity of oil was only enough to light the *Menorah* for one day, a miracle occurred, and it lasted for eight days. The next year, the *Chachomim* established the festival of Chanukah to **praise and thank Hashem**.

This *Gemorah* leaves us with a question:

What is the real meaning of the *Gemorah's* enquiry, 'What is Chanukah?' The *Gemorah* seems to imply that the main miracle of Chanukah is the miracle of the oil and it does not mention

much at all about the victory of the war. Therefore, is Chanukah commemorating only the miracle of the oil, or is it also for the miracle of the war?

## Rambam

The Rambam holds that Chanukah commemorates both miracles. However, each one is commemorated in a different way.

**A** The miracle of the oil, which is a **spiritual** victory, is commemorated with **spiritual** acts: praise and thanks to Hashem.

**B** The miracle of the war, which is mainly a **physical** victory, is celebrated for the most part with **physical** feasting and joy.

(But because the victory over the Greeks was also a spiritual battle, the 'thanks and praise' aspect of Chanukah is also for the victory of the war).

## Another question:

If both the military victory and the miracle of the oil are being commemorated, why does the *Gemorah* only elaborate on the miracle of the oil?

**A1:** The Rambam explains, that when the *Gemorah* asks 'What is Chanukah', it is really asking what is the "praise and thanks to Hashem" aspect of Chanukah. To this, it answers that it was the miracle of the oil. It is true that, in addition, there is also the joyous aspect of Chanukah, but that is not what this *Braisa* is discussing.

**A2:** The Rebbe suggests another way to understand the *Braisa* according to the Rambam:

When the *Gemorah* asks "What is Chanukah?" the *Gemorah* is asking why are there **eight** days of Chanukah.



**Is Chanukah commemorating only the miracle of the oil, or is it also for the miracle of the war?**

To which the *Gemora* answers: because the oil lasted for eight days, not only the 'thanks and praise to *Hashem*' aspect of *Chanukah* goes for eight days, but also the victory of the war. Why? Because according to the Rambam the war had a spiritual component, and therefore it must also be commemorated – to some extent - by eight days of thanks and praise to *Hashem*, even though the victory of the war is mainly commemorated by the physical acts of joy and feasting.

**Mordechai**

The Mordechai says, based on another *Braisa* in *Megillas Taanis* (echoing the Rambam) that when the *Gemora* asks "What is *Chanukah*", it is only asking about the 'praise and thanks' aspect of *Chanukah*. However, unlike the Rambam, the Mordechai says that the reason we celebrate *Chanukah* with joy is because of the **Chanukas Hamizbeach**.

**Rashi**

Rashi, on the other hand, explains that the *Gemora* is asking about all aspects of *Chanukah*. And so, the question "What is *Chanukah*?" is asking "which miracle are we commemorating?". To this, the *Gemora* answers that the miracle of the oil is the sole miracle for which *Chanukah* is celebrated. According to this explanation, there is no *mitzvah* of 'simcha' - joy and feasting on *Chanukah*.

**Tur**

Like Rashi, the Tur says that the 'thanks and praise' aspect of the festival is the only *mitzvah* of *Chanukah* and all the feasts that people make are merely customary and are not part of the *mitzvah*.

The Levush, commenting on the Tur, explains that because the battle was

not a physical war against the Jewish **people**, but a spiritual one, against the Jewish **religion**, we only commemorate through spiritual 'thanks and praise to *Hashem*'. This is in contrast to the Rambam, who says that not only was it a spiritual battle, to fight *yiddishkeit*, but also, and mainly, a physical one.

On the surface it would seem that the *machlokes* between the Levush and the Rambam, is 'B'metzius' i.e., what actually happened: The Rambam would say that it was a physical war, and the Levush would say that it was a spiritual war. However, the Rebbe explains, that they both agree on what actually occurred. They both say that it was a spiritual war against *Yiddishkeit* which resulted in a physical war.

The *machlokes* between them is not in relation to what happened, but rather,

whether we establish a *mitzvah* of joy and feasting to commemorate a physical war which originated from a spiritual one.

**Halocha**

Because the Rosh and the Rif disagree with the Rambam and only mention what is said in the *Gemora*, the *Beis Yosef* establishes the *Halocha* in keeping with the views of Rosh and Rif, namely, that there is no *mitzvah* of simcha on *Chanukah*.

The practical *Halocha* is that although there is no specific *mitzvah* of *simcha* on *Chanukah*, nonetheless the *seudos* that people make are considered to be a *seudas mitzvah*, as long as the *seuda* includes *hallel vehoydo'o* - praise and thanksgiving. 🕍







# Chanukah Personalities

By Berel Stern

In this article, we read about some of the primary figures involved in the Chanukah story:

## Antiochus



In 3586, Antiochus became the ruler of the Assyrian Greeks. His vision for life was to make his kingdom follow the Greek culture. He was known as Epiphanes (The Great), although many called him Epimanos (The Mad)! Many *Yidden* followed his ways because they saw opportunities to overthrow the *Kohen Gadol*.

## Mattisyahu



The Greeks who ruled over *Eretz Yisroel* disrespected the *Beis HaMikdosh* and tempted the Jews to join them in *avodah zorah*. One day a Greek built an altar in the marketplace and invited Mattisyahu to offer “sacrifices” to the Greek gods. Mattisyahu answered ‘All the *Yidden* should be connected to *Hashem* and stay connected to Him, because of the *bris*

our *Avos* made with *Hashem*’.

After saying that, one of the *Yidden* who unfortunately followed the Greek ways, made a sacrifice on the altar, which angered Mattisyahu who cried “*Mi Camochah Bo’eilim Hashem*”, and he killed the Greek with a sword. Then he, his sons and friends killed many Greeks, and chased others away. And then they destroyed the Altar.

They were afraid that Antiochus would hear about what happened and would punish them, so they ran to the hills in Yehudah.

After a year of leading the revolt, Mattisyahu passed away on the 15th of Cheshvan 3622 (139 BCE). Just before he passed away he told his sons to continue fighting. He asked that Yehudah should be the leader because he was strong.

His five sons, Yehudah, Yochanan, Shimon,

Antiochus became the ruler of the Assyrian Greeks. His vision for life was to make his kingdom follow the Greek culture

Elazar and Yonasan - the Maccabees - took over the revolt and eventually were victorious in the war.

## Maccabees



‘Maccabees’ takes its name from the initials of “*Mi Camocha Bo’eilim Hashem*”. Yehudah and his four brothers led the Maccabees in their successful war against the Greeks. They restored the *Beis Hamikdash* after the Greeks defiled it and they built a new *mizbeach*. When it came time to light the *Menorah*, they found a tiny jug of oil which was only enough for one day. By a miracle, it lasted for 8 days.



# The Women of Chanukah

## Yehudis

Yehudis was the daughter of Yochanan the *Kohen Gadol*. After her husband Menashe passed away, she spent her time *davening* and giving *tzedaka*.

When Antiochus went out to war, his mighty general Holofernes led the charge against Besulia and introduced terrible decrees. During this time the Jewish leaders of Besulia talked about negotiating with Holofernes, but Yehudis spoke against compromise and she also had a bold idea. With her maid, she would leave town to meet Holofernes. The leaders protested but Yehudis replied, "It happened once that *Hashem* helped the *Yidden* through a woman, Yael". And they finally agreed.

Together with her maid, Yehudis came to the camp of Holofernes where she announced that she had a message for the great general. Upon being taken to Holofernes, she said:

"My name is Yehudis and I am a simple widow from Besulia. I came here to tell you how to capture this city".

After listening, Holofernes

responded: "If what you are saying is true, and it will help me capture the city, you will be my wife". He allowed Yehudis and her maid to walk freely around the site and gave them a tent to sleep in, near his.

On the third day following her arrival, Holofernes – often drunk – was getting quite impatient and called for Yehudis again to ask her for news. Yehudis answered "Yes in fact, there is no Kosher food left in Besulia. Soon they will be starving and you'll be able to capture them".

Later that night, Yehudis came into Holofernes' tent and invited him to taste her cheese. After eating the cheese and drinking wine, he soon fell asleep on the floor.

Yehudis prayed to *Hashem*, and then killed Holofernes with his own sword.

Yehudis and her maid then went back to Besulia. Realising that Holofernes was dead, the leader of Besulia felt it was the right time to launch a surprise attack as the enemy would sink into chaos without their leader.

This prediction was correct and the Jewish fighters won, and captured loads of booty.

## Chana & Her Seven Sons

Because of their faithful service of *Hashem*, Chana and her seven sons were arrested and brought before Antiochus. Antiochus spoke to the oldest son and tried to convince him to convert. The child replied "We are ready to die rather than separate from *Torah!*"

Antiochus ordered that the oldest boy's tongue, hands and feet should be cut off and thrown in the fire. He made sure that Chana and her six other sons would see it so they would change their decision. Instead, they resolved to make a *Kiddush Hashem*.

Servants and ministers of the king asked the next brother to give in to the king. Chana's son replied, "I am no

different to my brother, I am also devoted to *Hashem!* Do whatever to me". With that Antiochus ordered the same should be done to him as his older brother.

The same fate was delivered to the third and fourth brothers. While the fifth brother was dying he told Antiochus, "don't think *Hashem* is giving us to you, or is honouring you or hates us. *Hashem* will punish you and your descendants". The same happened to the sixth son.

The last child, a seven year old, was offered gold and silver if he would do as Antiochus wanted. The 7 year old ignored him and had the same courage as his brothers.

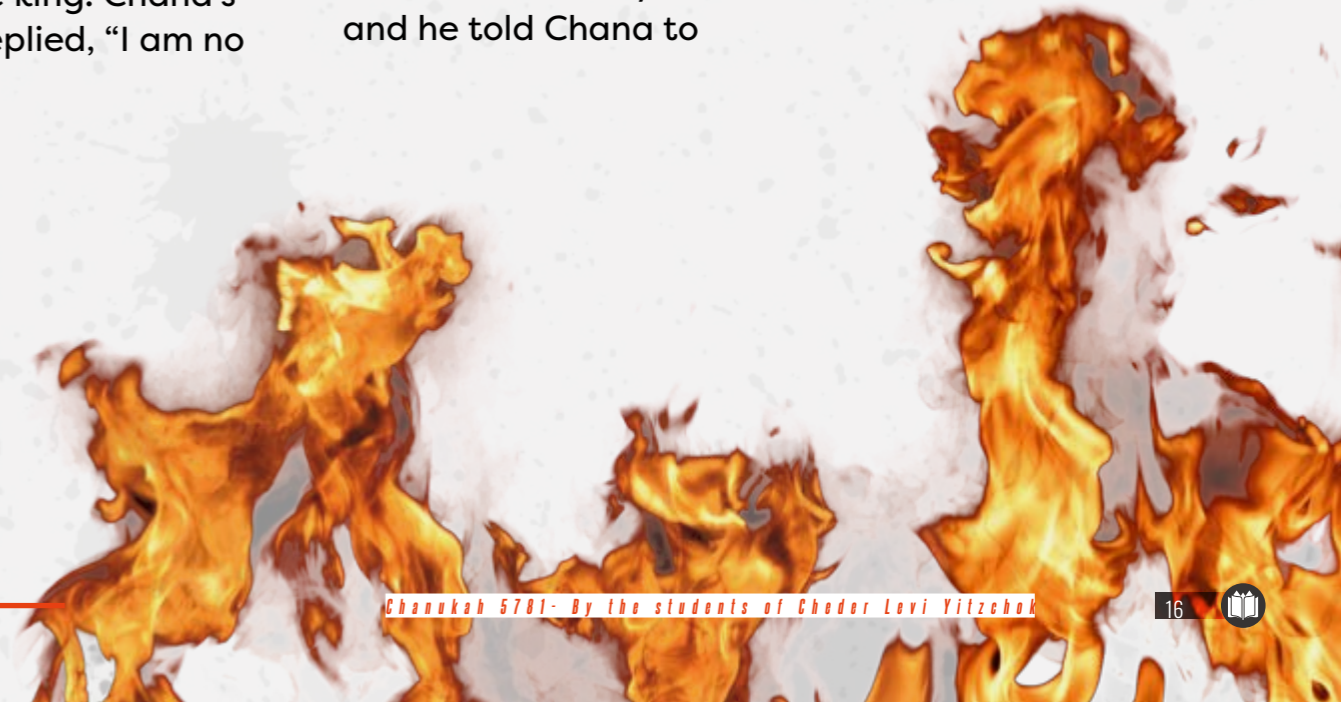
Antiochus couldn't believe his bravery, and he told Chana to

persuade her son to listen so that he could stay alive. Chana agreed but she was not able to persuade the child.

According to *Gemorah*, Antiochus gave the boy one more chance – that by bowing to his signet ring he could be saved. But the boy refused. As they were taking him away, Chana said to him as if saying to all her sons, "My sons, tell Avraham, you put one of your children on the *Mizbeach*, while I put 7".

Antiochus ordered that the boy should be tortured even more than his brothers. Overwhelmed, Chana jumped from a roof while *davening* to *Hashem* in order to join her sons *al kiddush Hashem*.<sup>24</sup>

**Yehudis**  
**had a bold**  
**idea. With**  
**her maid,**  
**she would**  
**leave town**  
**to meet**  
**Holofernes.**



# CHANUKAH DIARY ENTRIES

*By Yessel Dolnikov*

**Dear Diary, 2nd Kislev 3594**

It's been a whole year already. Nothing has changed since the beginning of these terrible times. Antiochus still reigns over the Jewish people, in our own land, with manic dominance and there is nothing we can do but cower under his forceful sceptre. Rather than spending my youthful days with my friends in the sun, we live in dark times as if behind bars.

So many rules and unfair restrictions have been set to try to squeeze out the Jewishness from within us. The Greeks have made prohibitions against giving young Jewish boys circumcisions and they do not allow us to keep Kashrus and Shabbos. My siblings and I all have to attend secret lessons in underground tunnels and caves. I can see the worry and fear on my Rabbi's face every day and the horror in his eyes whenever we hear a rustle in the bushes nearby; almost as though Greek soldiers are scratching savagely at our door like wild cats, leaving us to hide and tremble in the corner of our cold, desolate mouse hole.

Most days we are able to eat only herbs and vegetables because no kosher meat or milk is being sold in the market anymore. Every day at home, I feel like I am going to burst into tears; I cannot hold them back; I do not want to hold them back. I let them flow uncontrollably like an endless river, they drift away so innocently down my cheeks and escape to freedom through worn cracks between the floorboards by my bed. Why does it always feel that you are unwanted and worthless? As I walk in the street, the feeling you get is that you are nothing; that we shouldn't exist. A worthless burden that has fallen off a camel, almost intentionally, to be left on the side of the dusty road; to be forgotten; to disappear.

**Dear Diary, 4th Kislev 3594**


Today, rumours have spread that a local Jewish woman named Chana along with her seven sons were put to death after bravely refusing to bow to Antiochus. Her sons were gruesomely burnt alive one by one on a stake after having their ears and tongues chopped off, all with their mother watching! How could any human being be physically able to

**Secret  
lessons in  
underground  
tunnels and  
caves**

kill seven young people; how much more so with their mother there to witness this treachery? After all that, Chana herself jumped from a roof screaming and crying; unable to live after witnessing her own sons' executions. When will this all end? Why is this happening to us? What if our mother is taken away from us? Or my father or my brother or sister? Will we ever be able to bring karbonas to the Temple? Today, when I was walking through the neighbourhood, I could feel a Greek soldier's piercing eyes in the back of my head. I held my breath until I was out of his sight and as I turned the corner, I sighed with relief. Yet, I was still feeling anxious and restless for the rest of the day, knowing that one day I could suddenly be dragged away by an officer, never to be seen by my family again. All day I have been restless, nervous, depressed, unsure. I just wish there could be better days.

**Dear Diary, 4th Kislev 3594**

It's now Motzei Shabbos. The tranquility of the past Shabbos has lifted our spirits and the whole family is feeling more hopeful and grateful. Besides for the fact that our Shabbos activities had to be done secretly, we still had an extremely lively, uplifting Shabbos. No one felt at all insecure or nervous that we might be caught, no one was hesitant to begin singing the songs of prayer aloud in our little, barren hole.

If only the feelings inspired by Shabbos could stay with us forever... 

**I could  
suddenly  
be dragged  
away, never  
to be seen by  
my family  
again**



# ATHENS

VS.

# JERUSALEM

## THE REAL WAR OF CHANUKAH

By Yossi Jacobson

There was once a person who came to Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev claiming to be an *apikores*. He told Reb Levi Yitzchok "science has proved that a G-d can't exist, and so I don't believe in G-d". Reb Levi Yitzchok answered him: "the same G-d that you don't believe in, and that science has disproved, I also don't believe in"!

The Rebbe delivered a *maamar* in 5738 entitled *Tanu Rabanan Mitzvas Ner Chanukah*. The *maamar* makes the same basic point as Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev. You can't disprove *yiddishkeit*! *Yiddishkeit*, as the Rebbe explains in the *maamar*, is beyond understanding, and at that level, it doesn't intend to make sense! Accordingly, if something makes no sense, how could you disprove it logically? By way of analogy, if you love somebody and

someone else challenges the truth of your love, you won't pay attention to their arguments because you know how you feel about the other person. Real love doesn't make sense and can't be proven logically. Just as the Alter Rebbe says in *Tanya, Shaar Hayichud Vebaemunah*, chapter 9: if somebody tells you that he will propose an idea that is so rarified that you won't be able to touch it, you'll laugh it off because you can't touch *any* idea. Likewise, says the Alter

Rebbe in relation to *Emunah*; if somebody tells you that they can disprove your faith, it won't affect you because faith is not something which can be disproved logically.

It is this proposition, which is at the heart of the *Yom Tov* of Chanukah.

### THE GREEK PHILOSOPHY AND ITS COLLISION WITH THE JEWISH FAITH

Let's contrast the view expressed above with Greek philosophy. The Greeks

argued that all of existence can be explained with logic.

### THEY COULDN'T TOLERATE BELIEFS OR CUSTOMS WHICH WERE NOT LOGICAL.

What appears above highlights the collision between the Jews and the Greeks. The foundation of *Yiddishkeit* is faith - doing only what *Hashem* wants, even when we don't understand why. On the other hand, the basis of Greek philosophy is all about logic and scientific proof.

This is exactly the reason why the Greeks opposed the Jews. They could not tolerate the fact that the *Yidden* were devoted to

"*chukai retzonecha*" - certain *mitzvos* that make absolutely no sense. And that explains why the Greeks applied their decrees to particular Jewish practices. *Bris Milah* and *Rosh Chodesh*, for example were targeted because they made no sense to the Greeks. On the other hand, other *mitzvos* which have a foundation in logic, were tolerated by the Greeks.

At a deeper level, not only did the Greeks prohibit the *chukim* (the *mitzvos* which make no sense), but even in relation to those *mitzvos* which could be rationalised, they could only be permitted by the Greeks if they were followed as a matter of

REB LEVI

YITZCHOK

ANSWERED:

"THE SAME

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human logic, and not as an expression of faith. The *Yidden* were motivated by *mesiras nefesh*, (a preparedness to die for what they believed in) and *mesiras nefesh* defies nature and human logic. This deeper understanding of the collision expressed itself as a fight between *mesiras nefesh* and logic, *emunah* and humanistic philosophy.

## THE OIL AND THE HEICHAL

The *heichal* (where the *Menorah* stood) symbolises *binah* – understanding. Understanding is something which you **can** disprove. Since you can disprove it, the Greeks were able to defile the *heichal* and everything in it - including the oil.

Oil represents *Chochma* - awareness which is above nature and understanding. This is apparent in a physical sense because oil doesn't mix with other liquids, but rather floats on top of them.

If the oil is inside the *heichal*, ie if a person's understanding is the priority, and their faith is based on their understanding, then their faith is vulnerable to contamination. As long as they don't understand something, do they really accept its truth? The Greeks came into the *heichal* and were able to defile the *heichal*, because the *heichal* represents *Binah* – understanding, and that can be disproved or doubted (defiled).

Defiling the *heichal* was possible, but the Greeks couldn't contaminate the jug of oil which bore the seal of the *Kohen Gadol*. This oil represents the pure faith in the soul of a *yid* which is so powerful that it is way beyond logic and understanding. If a *yid* searches very

**BRIS MILAH AND**

**ROSH CHODESH, FOR**

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**TO THE GREEKS**

hard (inside of himself) and fights for his *Yiddishkeit* with *mesiras nefesh* and full *emunah* in *Hashem* - like the *Chashmonaim* - then he will be able to take these qualities and 'light the *Menorah*' with them: they will shine and illuminate his *Yiddishkeit*. With this powerful weapon, the *Yidden* defeated the Greeks and purified the *heichal*.

## THE VICTORY OF CHANUKAH

The Greeks fought the *Yidden* with logic. They weren't just fighting against the specific *Mitzvos* called *Chukim*, which made no logical sense, but they were fighting against the whole approach to *yiddishkeit*. They were fighting against a people who follow a G-d without a proof; a people who follow G-d just with pure *Emunah* which is beyond nature, beyond the culture of logic and humanism.

If there is oil in the *Heichal* then this can be defiled because it's within the realm of understanding. However, the oil with the seal of the *Kohen Gadol* represents the *yechidah* (i.e. the highest level of the soul of a *yid*), whose relationship to G-d is beyond

understanding and therefore cannot be contaminated.

So when the *Chashmonaim* re-entered the *Heichal* after defeating the Greeks through *Mesiras Nefesh*, (which is above logic), they had to purify it, but they weren't able to because initially they couldn't find any oil that hadn't been contaminated by the Greeks. (Contaminated oil might have sufficed, but not for the *Chashmonaim*), and when they searched extremely hard, they found the pure oil with the seal of the *Kohen Gadol*. With that oil, which represents the level of *yechidah* which is above nature, they were able to purify the *Beis HaMikdash*, and light the *Menorah*.

## THE 8 DAYS OF CELEBRATION


The following year the *Chachamim* instituted 8 days of celebration corresponding to the miracle of the jug of oil which lasted eight days. The amount of days in a week is seven which corresponds to nature. The number eight however is above nature, representing the faith and *Mesiras Nefesh* of the *Yidden*.

This concept can be seen in the story of *Yitzchok Avinu*. *Yitzchok* had his *bris* at the age of 8 days, unlike *Avrohom* who had his *bris* at 99 and *Yishmael* who had his *Bris* at 13 years old. *Avrohom* and *Yishmael* were able to understand what was happening to them, and they chose to be circumcised. *Yitzchok* however, had no choice regarding his circumcision – his *bris* was beyond understanding. Today, every Jew is circumcised at 8 days following the example of

*Yitzchok*.

This is the reason why we celebrate *Chanukah* for 8 days (which represents a level above nature), because the Jews were victorious over the Greeks because they fought at a level beyond reason and above logic. The *Chashmonaim* were a tiny untrained band of Jews, opposed by an army with hundreds of thousands of trained soldiers. However, the *Chashmonaim* had *Mesiras Nefesh* which they used against the Greeks and this is precisely what brought about their victory. Since they refused to compromise their *Yiddishkeit*, *Hashem* brought about a miracle which enabled them to do the *mitzvah* in the most perfect way, without compromise. The *Yidden* could technically have used the contaminated oil. However, in light of their *Mesiras Nefesh*, *Hashem* produced a miracle which enabled the *Menorah* to be lit in a perfect, pure way for eight days.

## LESSON

Since *Hashem* made a miracle for us above nature, we celebrate *Chanukah* by lighting the *menorah* for 8 nights, and this light of the *Chanukah* candles strengthens the faith in every Jewish soul which exists at a level beyond reason. Our celebration of *Chanukah* inspires us to follow the way of the *Chashmonaim* and when any challenge comes our way we should fight it and pass over it with *Mesiras Nefesh* just like the *Chashmonaim* did. If we do this then we will have a real *Menorah* lighting in the *Beis Hamikdash* with *Moshiach*, G-d willing very soon. 



# Oil in Chassidus

By Aizik Schachter

**C**hassidus is full of references to oil and its properties. Whether we are talking about the miraculous Chanukah oil or *Moshiach* standing on Har Hazeisim (Mount of Olives), we are given to understand the importance and potency of oil, through the lens of Chassidus.

To understand this, it is necessary to focus on three explanations of oil given in the Rebbe's Torah that explain the nature of oil, its spiritual strength and its connection to *Moshiach*.

## *Kuntres Inyona Shel Toras Hachassidus*

### - The nature of oil

The core of all things (both spiritual and physical) is called its 'distilled essence'. This is referred to as its 'oil'. Thus, oil is a word synonymous with essence (*etzem*). The process of extracting oil is to crush an olive until it loses its externality and you extract its *etzem*.

To better understand oil we can compare it to wine. Wine is only its true good self once it has been in the fruit

and then fermented. Oil however stays at the same strength no matter how long it remains in its fruit. This shows that the strength of oil is above concealment and revelation as it remains unchanged whether in the fruit or out.

Further, wine represents the secret aspects of Torah (*Soid*) but oil represents the secret of secrets (*Soid Shbesoid*) of Torah. This is illustrated by how oil floats above wine even though both are extracted liquids. There is also the concept that oil does not mix with

other liquids. Even in *Halocha*, oil doesn't mix with any liquid but at the same time it penetrates all matter.

*Chassidus* too cannot get contaminated by mixing with any other thing because it IS the essence of everything and it also permeates everything in a revealed fashion.

## *Maamor VaAtoch Tezaveh 5741*

### - Oil's spiritual strength

Oil for the *Menorah* comes about through crushing olives. In this *maamar* the Rebbe explains that through the process of crushing you can approach not only to light, but also connect to the luminary itself. By bringing the oil to Moshe the *Yidden* will be uplifted and bring about the elevation of even a leader as great as Moshe. This shows the power of oil and its impact on the *Yidden*.

## *Maamar Hallelu Es Hashem 5731*

### - Oil's connection to Moshiach

In this *maamar*, the prophet Zacharia tells of the time when *Moshiach* will stand on the Mount of Olives. This signifies that even after discussing

the greatness of oil and olives as the source of oil, *Moshiach* will be on an even higher level reflected by the fact that the lowest part of his body (his feet) are connected to the highest point of creation (the Mount of Olives). By using olives and olive oil to bring out the great quality of *Moshiach*,

**Oil represents  
the secret of  
secrets**

we see that there is a connection between the two ideas.

As is seen from these sources above, *Chassidus*, just like oil, relates to the essence of all entities. It is tremendously powerful and is a link in the chain to the arrival of *Moshiach*.<sup>23</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

1. Almost without exception the oil described in *Chassidus* and *Halocha* is olive oil.
2. 19 Kislev was the crushing of the olive to get out the pure refined oil, which resulted in the Alter Rebbe giving longer and deeper *Maamorim*, like the olive that is crushed to bring out its essence.
3. *Halocha*, just like *Gemarah* and *Chumash*, are revealed Torah (*Nigleh*) in contrast to the concealed elements like *Kabalah*, *Chassidus* etc. (*Nistar*).



# The Use of Meshalim in Chassidus

By Yossi Shapiro

The *Torah* discusses many spiritual concepts that are not understandable or relatable for humans in the physical world. Our human understanding is limited to our experience in this physical world. Because of this, *Kabbalah* and *Chassidus* often have to use anthropomorphic terms

and examples borrowed from human experience in the physical world. One of the most common is “אור” (light).

Light is a unique phenomenon. Its special qualities provide us with an insight into spirituality and G-dliness.

Rabbi Yosef Albo, philosopher and author of *Sefer Ha'ikrim*, lists some of these qualities:

1. The existence of light cannot be denied.
2. Light is not a material thing.
3. Light is what creates vision.
4. Light is pleasurable for the soul.
5. Light can only be appreciated through a direct experience of it (unlike a blind person).
6. Even though light is what creates visibility in the first place, light can be so powerful to the point where it blinds a person.

Rabbi Yosef Ergas, Kabbalist and author of *Shomer Emunim*, lists another seven qualities of light which bring out the more mystical aspects of light:

1. Light spreads itself instantaneously.
2. Light irradiates all physical objects and is able to penetrate all transparent objects.
3. Light does not mix and

mingle with any other substance.

4. Light never changes. The perception of more or less intense light is not due to any change in the light per se but is due to external factors.
5. Light is essential to life.
6. Light is received and absorbed relative to the capacities of the recipient.


*Light is a unique phenomenon. Its special qualities provide us with an insight into spirituality and G-dliness.*

We know one of the main elements of *Chanukah* is light.

One of the most important details that *Chassidus* Chabad innovates in our understanding of light is that on the one hand, light is

‘similar to its source’ (all of the power and potential in the source is communicated through the ‘light’) and on the other hand, however, light is only a ‘radiance’ from its source (it has no substance and does not alter or diminish its source at all).

All the G-dliness that flows into the creation is *Hashem's* ‘light’. Therefore, any of the changes or concealments affect only the ‘light’. Whereas the “source”, *Hashem's* essence, remains unaffected.

On *Chanukah* we celebrate a new miraculous light that came into the world, thanks to the efforts and the dedication of the *Chashmonoim*. When the world is illuminated through the lights of our *Menorah*, the reality of the miracles they commemorate shine for the entire world to see. 





**Why** do we give Chanukah gelt if there is no obvious source for this minhag (custom)?

The Rebbe would often mention that the giving of Chanukah gelt was an authentic *minhag* that the previous *Rebbeim* would practice. This shows that the giving of Chanukah gelt has the power of a *Minhag Yisrael* which is like *Torah*. Furthermore, from the fact that this *minhag* was publicised, it is considered *divrei chachamim* and through giving Chanukah gelt we connect with the *Rebbeim*.

In addition, the Rebbe and his father (Harav Levi Yitzchok) refer to various hints and antecedents for this practice:

#### **A hint in the**

**Gemorah:** the *Gemorah* says that it is forbidden to use the Chanukah candles for any purpose other than "viewing". The *Gemorah* brings the example of not counting coins using the light of the candles. This shows that in the times of the *Gemorah*, they already had the concept of Chanukah gelt.

#### **Renewal of**

**education:** The word Chanukah comes from the word chinuch (education). Chanukah celebrates the renewal of the *Torah* and a more pure form of education, following the efforts of the Assyrian Greeks to cause the *Torah* to be forgotten. The same way that we give money to a child at the start of his

education (to encourage him to learn better), so too on Chanukah, we give Chanukah gelt to commemorate the renewal of Torah-true Jewish education.

**The left side:** We light the candles on the left side of the door. There is a *possuk* that says - בשמאלה עושר וכבוד - on the left side there are riches and honour." 'Riches' and 'honour' can also refer to money, i.e. Chanukah gelt.

#### **Defying the Assyrian**

**Greeks:** About the lead up to the miracle of Chanukah, the Rambam describes the persecution by the Assyrian Greeks saying - ופשטו ידם בממונם - they reached their hands into their (*the Yiddens'*) money." On Chanukah, by using our money for a *minhag Yisrael*, we show that the

Assyrian Greeks were not successful in changing the holy purpose for which our money should be used.

**Who** should give and who should receive?

Chanukah gelt should be given to our sons and daughters even when they are older and married. The Rebbe would often give the example of the Frierdiker Rebbe, who would give Chanukah gelt to his married children and even his sons-in-laws. It is also given to grandchildren even if they have already received Chanukah gelt from their parents.

In addition to the parents, other family members should also give Chanukah gelt. The Rebbe once mentioned that children should also give to each other. Even the Rebbe

would give Chanukah gelt to children at the Children's Rallies and told others to do the same. We find that *shluchim* also give Chanukah gelt to soldiers who they visit on *mitvzoim*.

**When** should Chanukah gelt be given?


The Rebbe mentions in *Hayom Yom* (on 28th Kislev) that the Tzemach Tzedek (and the earlier *Rebbeim*) would give Chanukah gelt on the fourth or fifth night of Chanukah.

In 5748 the Rebbe said that Chanukah gelt should be given on every night. The reason why the *Rebbeim* only gave once over Chanukah was so it would remain precious and should not become routine.

The Rebbe explained that currently the darkness of *galus* has intensified so much that Chanukah

A hint in the Gemorah says that it is forbidden to use the Chanukah candles for any purpose other than "viewing"

gelt should be given every night. To fulfill the original minhag of giving Chanukah gelt on the fourth or fifth night, we should give double or triple on these nights. The Rebbe also said that one should give Chanukah gelt on the last day of Chanukah, even past *Maariv*.

This was a very important practice because it was part of the Rebbe's wider campaign to encourage all Jews in this generation to be givers, regardless of their age or wealth. 

# CHANUKAH GELT

BY YOSSI  
RASKIN





# The Candles in the FOREST

WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY  
ACHIVAH KERBEL



AT A FABRENGEN ON SHABBOS, A CHOSSID OF THE REBBE MAHARASH TELLS THE STORY OF A MIRACLE THAT HIS REBBE PERFORMED FOR HIM.



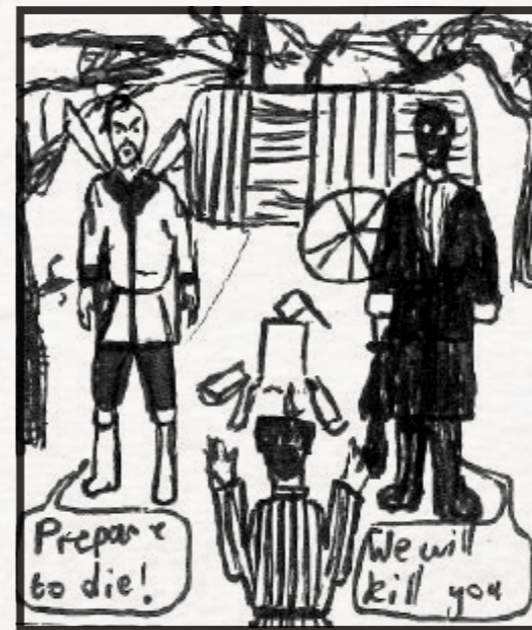
THIS CHOSSID EARNED HIS LIVELIHOOD BY CHOPPING WOOD IN THE FOREST. WITH CHANUKAH APPROACHING, THE REBBE MAHARASH INSTRUCTED HIM TO BRING VERY BIG CANDLES WITH HIM TO THE FOREST.



REMEMBERING THE REBBE'S WORDS, THE CHOSSID TAKES EXTRA LARGE CANDLES WITH HIM ON HIS JOURNEY TO THE FOREST

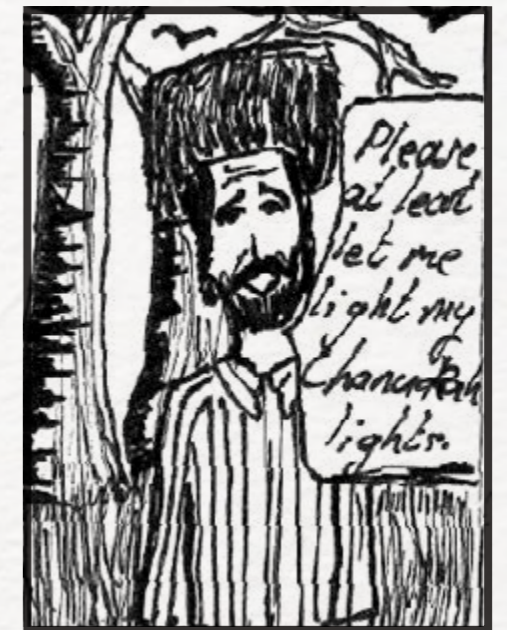


AS HE QUIETLY CHOPS WOOD, THE CHOSSID IS UNAWARE THAT HE IS BEING WATCHED BY THIEVES.



THE BANDITS SURPRISE THE CHOSSID AND THREATEN TO KILL HIM.

IN FEAR FOR HIS LIFE, THE CHOSSID MAKES A LAST REQUEST TO LIGHT THE CHANUKAH CANDLES



THE CHOSSID'S REQUEST IS GRANTED AND HE LIGHTS THE CANDLES.



THE LOCAL LANDOWNER WHO HAS BEEN HUNTING IN THE FOREST, NOTICES THE CANDLE LIGHTS AND APPROACHES THEM.



REALISING THE DANGER, THE LANDOWNER SCARES THE BANDITS AWAY AND SAVES THE CHOSSID.



AFTER RELATING HIS EMOTIONAL STORY, THE REBBE ENCOURAGES HIM: "START A NIGGUN", AND SO HE DID.

THE END!

# The shape of the Menorah

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN COHEN

The Menorah is one of the most visible and celebrated symbols of Judaism, especially because it represents Chanukah, commemorating the Jews' miraculous victory over the Assyrian Greeks. But about this iconic symbol, we find a controversy regarding its shape. We will investigate this controversy and the Rebbe's resolution and then take a personal lesson from this.

In the Torah, in parshas Terumah, Emor and Beha'alo-secha the Menorah is described in considerable detail, but there is no conclusive statement about the shape of the Menorah. In Terumah<sup>1</sup> it says:

*And you shall make a menorah of pure gold. The menorah shall be made of hammered work; its base and its stem, its goblets, its knobs, and its flowers shall [all] be [one piece] with it.*

*And six branches coming out of its sides: three menorah branches from its one side and three menorah branches from its second side.*

*Three decorated goblets on one branch, a knob, and a flower, and three decorated goblets on one branch, a knob, and a flower; so, for the six branches that come out of the menorah.*

*And on [the stem of] the menorah [shall be] four decorated goblets, its knobs, and its flowers.*

*And a knob under the two branches from it, and a knob under the two branches from it, and a knob under the two branches from it; so for the six branches that come out of the menorah.*

*Their knobs and their branches shall [all] be [one piece] with it; all of it [shall be] one hammered mass of pure gold.*

*And you shall make its lamps seven, and he shall kindle its lamps [so that they] shed light toward its face.*

In the Gemorah in Shabbos, where the miracle of Chanukah is discussed, it does not say anything conclusive regarding the shape of the Menorah.

Rashi<sup>2</sup> writes in his commentary to the Chumash that the branches are בְּאַלְכָסוֹן (diagonal). This is the first clear source as to the shape of the Menorah and indicates that the branches of the Menorah were straight.

Rambam does not state if the branches of the Menorah were straight or not, but in *Mishneh Torah* and *Sefer Hamaor* (Rambam's commentary on the *Mishneh*) the Rambam includes a hand drawn illustration showing the Menorah's branches to be straight. This manuscript has been verified to be the Rambam's and as such we can say confidently that the Rambam's opinion is that the

menorah was straight.

To support this, Reb Avrohom (the son of the Rambam) writes: 'do not think that my father accepted that the branches of the menorah were curved just because he omitted the word *ba'alachson* in his *Mishneh Torah*. Rather he held that the branches of the menorah were straight as depicted in the illustration'.

## *The opposing view*

Reb Avraham Ibn Ezra, an earlier Biblical commentator more commonly known as the Ibn Ezra, writes in *Terumah*, that according to the "ancients" the branches of the Menorah were "rounded like a crown"<sup>3</sup>. At the end of his commentary, he also writes of "the candles being about half-round"<sup>4</sup>.

From this, it seems that Ibn Ezra holds the view that the branches of the Menorah were curved. (We should keep in mind that although Ibn Ezra is not a *Sefer of Halocha*, he is a prominent scholar, a couple of decades older than the Rambam).

Reb Emmanuel Ricci (best known as the author of *Mishnas Chassidim*) writes in *Ma'aseh Choshev* that contrary to Rashi's view, the Menorah had rounded branches. He bases this conclusion on the fact

*the Rebbe was adamant that its shape should be portrayed accurately!*

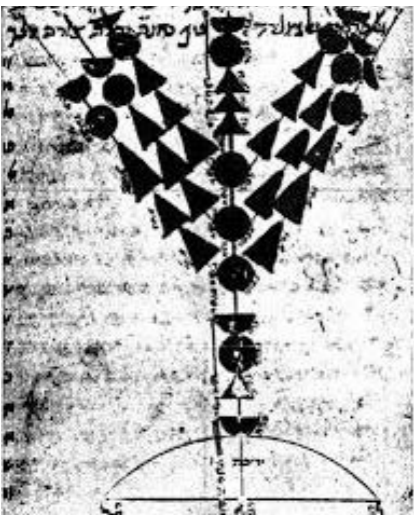
that neither the Gemorah nor the Rambam (here he is referring to the text of the Rambam, not the hand drawn illustration in the manuscript) states that the branches were diagonal. And if so, he concludes, they must have been curved. He also supports his conclusion with a complex reason based upon Kabbalah.

Reb Joseph Shalit ben Eliezer Riqueti, another Italian Torah scholar, also agrees with this conclusion stating in *Chochmas Hamishkan* that the Menorah's branches were curved.

Another compelling proof is that the Arch of Titus depicts a curved branched Menorah. The Arch was built by Titus



ON THE BASE IS A DEPICTION OF A SEA DRAGON, A ROMAN IDOL. THERE ARE NO LEGS ON THIS MENORAH, UNLIKE THE MENORAH IN THE TEMPLE WHICH HAD 3 LEGS.



THE RAMBAM'S ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT



A DEPICTION OF THE MENORAH BASED ON THE RAMBAM'S OWN DRAWING.

to celebrate his conquest of Judaea (*Eretz Yisroel*). On the Arch is written *Judaea Kafta* (Judaea is conquered).

In the photograph which accompanies this article, one can identify the spoils of war being carried back to Rome, including what looks like a *Menorah*, the *shulchan* and silver trumpets.

There are also many other engravings, most of them showing a curved *Menorah* though a couple of them also show a straight branched *Menorah*.

### *The Rebbe's perspective*

The Rebbe (and others) offers several explanations as to why people (wrongly) concluded that the *Menorah* had curved branches.

The Ibn Ezra in *Terumah*



says that the branches were "round, long and hollow" which may mean that the branches were straight but comprised of rounded hollow cylinders like pipes. In *Tetzaveh* the Ibn Ezra writes "the candles being about half-round", which may tell us that he holds the view that from a birds-eye view the candles formed a semi-circle. Because of this the Ibn Ezra is interpreted not as a supporter of the view for rounded branches but rather a supporter of a neutral view.

Reb Emmanuel Ricci says in *Ma'aseh Choshev* that notwithstanding the opinion of Rashi, given that the *Gemarah* and Rambam don't conclusively state that the *Menorah* had straight branches it must have been curved. However, according to the Rebbe, Rabbi Ricci never saw the Rambam's manuscript and the hand drawn illustration showing the *Menorah* with straight branches. In support, it should be noted that although Rabbi Ricci did travel to England where the Rambam's manuscript and hand drawn illustration were located (in Oxford University) it is highly unlikely that he would have been given permission to view the manuscript because practising Jews were not allowed entry into Oxford until after 1856 (long


after Rabbi Ricci passed away). Based on this, the Rebbe says that had he seen the Rambam's hand drawn illustration, Rabbi Ricci would also have concluded that the *Menorah* had straight branches.

According to the Rebbe, the *Menorah* depicted on the Arch of Titus is definitely not the original *Menorah* in the *Beis Hamikdosh*, for on the trunk of the *Menorah* shown on the Arch there is an image of a sea dragon, a Roman idol – clearly something that would not have been shown on the *Menorah*. As well as this, the *Menorah* on the Arch of Titus has a solid base while the real *Menorah*, as we know from the *Torah*, had 3 legs. So, the *Menorah* on the Arch must have been an artistic rendition, not an illustration of the actual *Menorah*. Another possibility is that the source for the concept of a curved branched *Menorah* as depicted on the Arch of Titus, is one of the 10 *Menorahs* of King Solomon, made to illuminate the Temple, and they indeed might have been curved.

### *The Rebbe concludes:*

Why would a Jewish person trust the Arch of Titus as the source for the shape of a Jewish *Menorah*, an iconic symbol of Jewish pride, when on the very Arch it says "Judaea is conquered". Instead one should follow the opinion of prominent Jewish scholars – Rashi, Rambam and the Rambam's son – that the branches of the *Menorah* were straight.

As the *Gemarah* says, the *Menorah* was a "testimony to all of the inhabitants of the world that the Divine Presence rests within Israel". And therefore, the Rebbe was adamant that its shape should be portrayed accurately.

A lesson to be learned from this is that we must follow what our Sages say. We should not be affected by archaeological findings or science, both of which may (perhaps unintentionally) confuse us. Rather, our *Yiddishkeit* should be straight, just like the branches of the *Menorah*. And by adopting this mindset we will reflect the true and everlasting function of the *Menorah* to be a shining light to ourselves and all of the nations. 

*Why would a Jewish person trust the Arch of Titus as the source for the shape of a Jewish Menorah?*

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 Chapter 25 verse 31-37
- 2 Terumah; chapter 25 verse 32
- 3 Chapter 25 verse 32
- 4 Chapter 27 verse 21



# CHANUKAH ACROSS THE GLOBE

By Mottel Kurinsky

One of the most amazing events to occur in Chabad-Lubavitch's technological history was *Chanukah-Live*. *Chanukah* is traditionally known as a time to spend with one's family. However, the Rebbe took a completely different approach to what *Chanukah* is all about. Throughout the years, the Rebbe placed a big emphasis on *Chanukah* being a time when we as *Chassidim* should be spreading light wherever we may be.

In 1973 Rabbi Avraham

Shemtov conducted the first public menorah lighting, at the Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Ever since, public menorah lightings by the Rebbe's *shluchim* have become an annual event across the globe. In 1979 Rabbi Shemtov took public *Menorah* lightings to another level by fashioning a 32-foot *Menorah* instead of the smaller one which he had used in the past years. Through the next couple of years, he put a lot of effort into arranging grand *Menorah* displays across the world.

## ***Chanukah Live!***

As *Chanukah 5751* was fast approaching, Rabbi Shemtov came up with a brilliant idea, 'Why don't we create a global broadcast via satellite, which will show multiple *Menorah* lightings simultaneously.' However, as Rabbi Shemtov formulated this idea in his head, he realised that creating a global broadcast had only been attempted a few times... without too much success. He decided to write a letter to the Rebbe, asking for a *bracha* for the idea he was working on. He was delighted to receive a

***Rabbi Shemtov took public Menorah lightings to another level***

response from the Rebbe, that not only did the Rebbe give his *bracha*, but the Rebbe would also personally make time to join in the program!

A small group of *shluchim* and *bochurim* worked feverishly to assemble a program that would bring the Rebbe great *nachas*. At its helm, Rabbi Shemtov brought to the team Rabbi Hillel Dovid Krinsky (founder of Jewish Educational Media

and the person who pioneered the broadcasting of the Rebbe's *Farbrengens*).

In anticipation of and following each *Chanukah Live*, Rabbi Shemtov and Rabbi Krinsky would consistently write reports to the Rebbe regarding these events. On one occasion they presented the Rebbe with a 'schematic,' which described how the broadcast was transmitted. A 'schematic' is a term used for a diagram that describes the design or concept behind a sophisticated project. On another occasion, Rabbi Levi Teitelbaum designed a map with colour pins on all the locations where *Chanuka-Live* would be aired, whether on cable or local TV. The cost and labour that it would take to produce a broadcast of such proportions was tremendous. Yet this small group toiled enthusiastically to bring the idea to fruition.

The program was unique in its structure and great thought was given to each detail. Thousands of children from the New York area would gather inside 770 for a *Tzivos Hashem* rally. Simultaneously, events occurring in other locations would also commence. Scattering inside the main shul of 770 was an extensive camera crew and numerous screens. In order to broadcast, huge satellite dishes needed to be rented and brought to each location. In Crown Heights they were parked on Eastern

## **Inside the main shul of 770 was an extensive camera crew and numerous screens**

Parkway in front of 770. All the footage would be streamed via the Galaxy3 communications satellite to the control centre. There, Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman selected the best views to be shown on the screens at all the locations and for those watching on their televisions at home. Rabbi Friedman would give instructions to the cameramen and managers at each location over satellite phones and transistor radios.

In 1990 this control centre was located in a broadcasting studio in Manhattan. Its distance from 770 led to some unnecessary challenges in the smoothness of the broadcast. So in future years a mammoth control trailer was set up outside 770 on Kingston Avenue, complete with satellite poles and the studio equipment.

Two individuals would 'host' the program, offering running commentary as the event was aired. Sitting in the studio, these

moderators would often be joined by special guests including Israeli Chief Rabbi Yisroel Meir Lau and others. The team would work with studio professionals for weeks before creating video clips in tribute to the Rebbe and describing the work of Lubavitch all over the world. These clips featured throughout the broadcast. Many of these clips also included good wishes to the Rebbe by dignitaries from around the world.

### **The Moscow Broadcast**

One of the most spectacular Chanukah Live broadcasts was the 1990 Moscow-Israel-London-Paris-Australia *Chanukah* Live broadcast. The program started with a live video of the Rebbe entering 770 accompanied by the singing of *Haneiros halalu* and continued with the regular schedule of the children's rally.

The third of the twelve *Pasukim - Bechol dor-vador...* was allocated to a boy from Moscow (my personal thought is that, because the *possuk* of *Bechol dor-vador...* speaks about leaving *Mitzrayim*, it was given to a child in Moscow because the event was taking place only a short time after the fall of Communism in 1986. Since Russian Jewry was

now finally able to practice *Torah* and *Mitvos* in freedom, one can compare this to leaving *Mitzrayim*). Ultimately, there was no video connection - only the audio was transmitted. The sixth *possuk* was supposed to be recited by a girl from London, but after several failed attempts to regain connection, the crew decided to move on. The seventh *possuk* was to be recited in Paris, but unfortunately France only had audio connection. Suddenly a few people noticed that the girl from France could be seen on one the screens in the back of 770. The crew quickly lifted the screen so that it could be seen by the Rebbe. Upon seeing the girl on the screen reciting the *possuk*, the Rebbe repeated, word for word, along with the children. Suddenly, Moscow appeared on the screens. Upon seeing the celebration in Moscow for the first time, the Rebbe's face lit up. It could be seen that the Rebbe was looking intently at the screen showing a boy leading the crowd in "*Yechi Adoineinu...*" followed by "*We want Moshiach now!...*"

Following the *Pesukim*, a short film was shown of George Bush receiving a *Menorah* from a delegation of *Shluchim* and

after its conclusion, the Rebbe applauded strongly along with the crowd for a short while.

Next on the schedule was the kindling of the *Menorah* in *Eretz Yisrael*, but again, the connection from *Eretz Yisrael* failed. So the children continued with *Aleinu*. As the Sharf children recited *Kaddish Derabonon*, suddenly the face of the Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu (Chief Sephardi Rabbi) appeared on the screen, although his voice could not be heard. The Rebbe exclaimed "Eliyahu!" The historic event came to a close at 6:30 that evening.

Many people might wonder; 'We all know how much the Rebbe was against the use of a television, and he was certainly against promoting it. So the whole idea of broadcasting *Chanukah-Live*, is seemingly a major contradiction!'

From *Chanukah-Live*, we learn a powerful lesson on the use of technology. The Rebbe saw that technology is a blessing from Above, but at the same time, wherever there is good, comes the opposite. From *Chanukah-Live* we learn this idea... the Rebbe knew that even though a TV is most certainly one of the *Sholosh Klipos Hatmeios* he also knew that unaffiliated Jews, who are watching television anyway, should put the TV to better use by watching *Chanukah-Live*.

**We all know how much the Rebbe was against the use of a television, and he was certainly against promoting it. So the whole idea of broadcasting Chanukah-Live, is seemingly a major contradiction!**

Through the *Chanukah Live* initiative, the Rebbe's *chassidim* were able to provide all of us with a taste of the Rebbe's vision for global unity, which will reach its climax with the coming of *Moshiach*, immediately, now!

Have a happy, joyous, and blissful *Chanukah!* 🕎



# Interview with Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky

Public Menorah Lightings

— BY SHNEUR REICHER

Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky was secretary to the Rebbe, for a period of 40 years. As a young boy of 13, he came to New York from Boston, where he met the man who, four years later was to become the 7th Rebbe of Chabad. The Rebbe reached out to the young yeshiva student living away from home, in ways, says Rabbi Krinsky, that moved him and sustain him to this day.

In 1957, Rabbi Krinsky was recruited by the Rebbe to serve as a member of his Mazkirus.

He was interviewed by Shneur Reicher in a phone call on the 12th of November 2020.

**R**ight from the outset, the *Chachomim* were intent that *Chanukah* should not only be celebrated by Jews worldwide, but that the miracle should be publicised (i.e. that people should know about the miracle, *pirsume'i nissa*).

Prior to, during and after the Second World War, Jews who had lived in western and eastern Europe were dispersed across the globe. In many cases, Jews went to places where the local government allowed them to practise and express their religious beliefs openly.

The Rebbe, who saw the need to rebuild Judaism after the Holocaust, encouraged outreach particularly in the United States, Canada, England, France, South Africa and Australia, countries which practiced religious tolerance.

In America, starting in the early 1970s, *shluchim* (emissaries of the Rebbe) began to see *Chanukah* as the perfect opportunity to reach out to unaffiliated Jews,

through public lightings of the *Menorah*. When the lights were kindled on private property, there was broadly speaking no opposition, but when this occurred on public (government) property there was a lot of opposition.

Below we look into why these public *Menorah* lightings were opposed, and how the conflict was resolved. We were fortunate to be able to talk with Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky (who was a major part of the international *Menorah* campaign) and we have included his answers to tell the story.

## TELLING THE STORY

According to Rabbi Krinsky, public *Menorah* lightings began somewhat randomly in the early 1970's





following the Rebbe's announcement of *mitvza Chanukah* whose objective was that every Jewish person be given the opportunity to light a *Menorah*.

Starting with Rabbi Shemtov in Philadelphia, public *Menorah* lightings began to occur in centres throughout the United States, including Union Square in San Francisco and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.

In 5746, at the direction of the Rebbe, a beautiful book was put together showing *Menorah* lightings across the globe. The next year the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Krinsky to produce a sequel and through Rabbi Krinsky, the Rebbe urged *shluchim* to continue these public *Menorah* lightings.

However, opposition to these lightings soon arose especially from unaffiliated Jewish organisations who in the words of Rabbi Krinsky, were

not happy about public displays of Jewish pride. They argued that lightings on government property were unconstitutional, and they also said it would lead to non-Jews trying to impose their religious beliefs on Jews. According to Rabbi Krinsky, these opponents apparently feared the type of persecution which Jews had experienced in Europe.

Eventually a case involving a public *Menorah* lighting in Pennsylvania, went to the American Supreme Court, which decided that these lightings were lawful. According to Rabbi Krinsky, the Rebbe was very interested to receive updates about the court case. Rabbi Krinsky personally updated the Rebbe and received encouragement to keep fighting in this and other cases.

Rabbi Krinsky asked the Rebbe whether he could put out a press release about the

Opposition to these lightings soon arose especially from unaffiliated Jewish organisations who, in the words of Rabbi Krinsky, were not happy about public displays of Jewish pride.

Pennsylvania verdict. The Rebbe said yes, but "it should be done in a manner that would not drag us into further disputes" and the Rebbe made a number of changes to the proposed release for that purpose.

On one occasion, opposition was silenced by an unlikely friend of Chabad – New York Mayor, Ed Koch. When Mayor Koch went to St Louis to address the local Jewish Federation meeting, he was asked about public *Menorah* campaigns. Instead of criticising them, he said "I'm proud to say that we have one in New York City at Fifth Avenue and Central Park and on Friday afternoons we provide

the Lubavitchers with a helicopter to fly them back to Brooklyn before *Shabbos*".

According to Rabbi Krinsky, the Rebbe strongly supported this *mitvza* because, in the words of the Rebbe: "I personally know of scores of such Jewish returnees, and I have good reason to believe that in recent years, hundreds, even thousands, of Jews experience a kindling of their inner Jewish spark by the public kindling of the *Chanukah Menorah*".





Rabbi Shmueli Feldman lights the Menorah with Josh Frydenberg, Australian Treasurer, and Michael Danby, former Minister of Parliament.

# Kindling Souls

IN THE

## NATION'S CAPITAL

AN INTERVIEW  
WITH RABBI  
SHMUELI  
FELDMAN

BY MENDY ABENAIM

- Every *Chanukah*, many Jewish community members attend public *Menorah* lightings. Rabbi Shmueli Feldman – Chabad’s *shliach* in Canberra – was interviewed via zoom in November 2020 and described what it’s like to arrange these events for his community. Amongst other things, Rabbi Feldman spoke about Jewish pride and how everyone has the power to change the world.

HOW DID YOU BECOME CHABAD’S SHLIACH TO CANBERRA?

When my wife and I accepted the *shlichus* in January of 2013, we went to Melbourne to meet Reb Arel Serebryanski. We accepted Reb Arel as our head *shliach* because of his

enthusiasm and his feeling that this *shlichus* was of national importance. It has been almost eight years now since we accepted the *shlichus* and *Boruch Hashem*, we have never looked back and regretted our decision whatsoever.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST GET THE IDEA

TO DO A PUBLIC MENORAH LIGHTING AND HOW DID IT WORK OUT?

For *shluchim*, public *Menorah* lightings are a fundamental part of their *shlichus*. During our first year in Canberra, we decided we would do a lighting in the Westfield Mall, and later we did them in other places. Then, we





BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T HAVE MUCH INTERACTION WITH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, THEY WELCOME MENORAH LIGHTINGS

started putting the wheels in motion to do lightings in the Federal Parliament House as well as in the ACT Parliament.

## WALK US THROUGH THE PROCESS OF HOW YOU GOT FROM A SHOPPING CENTER TO PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

One of the main things we were trying to achieve was to get as many *Yidden* as possible to see the *Menorah* lighting to enhance their sense of Jewish pride. Non-Jews have their festivals and celebrations to express their pride. Unaffiliated Jews might ask: *Why can't we celebrate the non-Jewish festivals?* But then they see a big *Menorah* and a whole public event and even though they aren't observant, they feel proud to be Jewish. After we lit a *Menorah* in the Westfield Mall, we wanted to graduate to Federal Parliament which had hosted a lighting some twenty-five to thirty years ago arranged by *shluchim* from Sydney but which hadn't hosted one since. The ACT Parliament had never had one of their own and we convinced them that they wouldn't regret letting us make a lighting. Indeed, this now happens on an annual basis and is one of the biggest events for Parliament members.

## WHAT CONNECTIONS DO YOU HAVE WITH PARLIAMENT?

As part of my *shlichus*, we foster relationships with people in Parliament because we discuss things about the Jewish community. I've established very strong connections with the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Social Services and when they want to hear the Jewish perspective on issues they'll call me. This helps the Jewish community around Australia. Because the government doesn't have much interaction with the Jewish community, they welcome events like public *Menorah* lightings. We recently had another event in Parliament; a *Siyum Sefer Torah* and it showed the members of Parliament what the Jewish community is all about. There are five Jewish members of Parliament who support and participate in the various Jewish events throughout the year.

## HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOUR SHLICHUS AFTER CHANUKAH?

The main area in which it improves our *shlichus* is the fact that people who attend the lightings feel a sense of Jewish pride. We don't expect people to become *Baalei Teshuva* overnight, but they are immediately happy to have

a sense of attachment to cultural Jewish things such as *Chanukah*. When they see a member of the government speaking so warmly about the Jewish community and about the contributions that we make, this fills them with great pride. Some of the people who attend the events - even though we wouldn't have had much affiliation with them over the years - approach us and say: "By the way, I have a child, do you maybe have a Jewish day care centre for him?" or "Could we arrange to get Kosher food?" and this is how our connection with them starts. So, the public *Menorah* lightings really open these conversations and help to bring people closer to *Yiddishkeit*.

## IS THERE ANY OPPOSITION FROM NON-JEWS OR EVEN JEWS?

The first year we made a public lighting, some people passing by made negative remarks about the Jewish people. Interestingly, any anti-Semitism that we've had here in Canberra only enhanced the feeling of Jewish pride. When the Jews attending heard these comments, it upset them so much that they started to consider how to answer these remarks. Instead of the community


being embarrassed, they actually strengthened their Jewish pride. About opposition from within: some members of the community thought that the publicity was undesirable. But over the years, not only did these people want to join a public lighting, but they approached us to ask how they could make their own lighting. The lightings have only made positive effects/changes in the community.

## COULD YOU SHARE ANY INTERESTING STORIES/ EXPERIENCES WITH THE PUBLIC MENORAH LIGHTINGS?

There's no specific story. The main point is there are people who don't really have much affiliation with Judaism who come to these functions and leave feeling really inspired, and then continue their connection. They might put on *tefillin* for the first time or start lighting Shabbos candles. It's really powerful that you can get a *neshama* to re-engage with its identity, just by organising a single event. As the *Gemorah* and *Medrash* say: "A person who saves one *neshama* - it's as if he saved the entire

world." Isn't that powerful?! Entire worlds have been saved again and again as a result of this initiative of the Rebbe.

## DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE FOR OUR READERS?

I can't really tell anyone how to be a *shliach* because *shlichus* is something individual based on a *shliach's* conversations with their own *mashpia*. But what I can say, is that everyone has their own *shlichus* to fulfil. Just by walking around with a *yarmulka* and *tzitzis*, you are having a tremendous impact, as if you made a public *Menorah* lighting. Don't wait for a public *Menorah* lighting to help *neshamos* who wish to call out to *Hashem*. Rather, every time you walk in public or when you meet someone, you should try to inspire them to do more *Torah* and more *Mitzvos*. We need to remember that a *chossid* is a lamplighter who kindles the light of as many *neshamos* as you can, wherever you go and whatever you do. 



# DANCING AROUND THE MENORAH

By Yossi Raskin

*This story was originally told by Rabbi Moshe Bryski, the Chabad shliach to Agoura Hills, California.*

For the High Holidays, Rabbi Bryski would hire a big hall for the Jewish community in Agoura Hills. He would also fly in some *bochurim* to help him for these special days. On the *Shabbos* between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* the *bochurim* came from *davening* to their host's house and saw a moving truck labelled with, "Nice Jewish Boys Moving Company". For *bochurim* this was an invitation too good to miss. They asked the movers if they were Jews and if they wanted to join their *Shabbos* meal. They said they were Jewish, gladly accepted the invitation and stayed for a couple of hours singing and

*farbrengen*. During this time, Rabbi Bryski came to visit his *bochurim* and joined their *farbrengen*.

During the *farbrengen*, the movers saw that the owner of the new house (Jack) had arrived and noticed that they were no longer moving his furniture. One of the *bochurim* said that he will go out and handle the situation. So he went out to greet Jack and asked if he too was a *Yid*. The new owner said that indeed he was, and not only that, but that he was the choir conductor of the Reform Temple in the Valley. On hearing that he was Jewish, the *bochurim* invited him to join their *farbrengen*.

The next day, Rabbi Bryski received a note saying, "Dear Rabbi, I want you to know that



G-d is working through you." This intrigued Rabbi Bryski, so he called the number on the note only to find himself speaking to the new house owner he had met on *Shabbos* (Jack). Jack told Rabbi Bryski that before he left for his new house, he appealed to G-d for a sign to show him that moving house was the right thing to do. Lo and behold, when he arrived at his new house there was a *bochur* asking him if he was a Jew. He knew that this was his sign from G-d.

A few months later, Jack attended a class on suffering given by Rabbi Bryski. Rabbi Bryski noticed that Jack was crying throughout the lesson.

HE APPEALED TO  
G-D TO SHOW HIM A  
SIGN THAT MOVING  
HOUSE WAS THE  
RIGHT THING TO DO

At the end of the lesson he told Rabbi Bryski his story.

*"I had three lovely children but two of them died in a car crash. I could not deal with the pain. I went to therapy but it didn't help.*

*Things went from bad to worse. I lost my job and I got divorced. My ex-wife took my only daughter with her. And now I was completely alone. Every day was harder and harder to bear so I decided to say farewell to my life and commit suicide.*

*I decided I would say one last goodbye to my daughter before I took my life. So, I called my ex-wife*

*and asked whether I could take my daughter Maegan to the movies in a certain shopping centre. When I arrived at the movie theatre, I heard Jewish music playing that I recognised. I wandered closer and saw a menorah. Before I entered the movie theatre someone grabbed my hand and started dancing with me. There I was, dancing around a menorah with its candle alight on the night I had chosen to end my life. I felt like G-d was speaking to me, telling me that there will still be light in my life and I should not end it.*

*That night I did not say a final goodbye to my daughter because I had decided to live. I went back*

*to therapy, got my job back and started to rebuild my life. I decided to move to a new community and told my real estate agent to find me a house in a new neighbourhood. He picked Agoura Hills and I asked G-d to give me a sign that it was the right thing for me."*

After Jack finished his story, Rabbi Bryski took a photo album from his shelf and showed pictures from a *Chanukah* event in a shopping mall including a picture of him dancing with Jack around the menorah. Rabbi Bryski told Jack that they were looking for a place to do a public *menorah* lighting and they randomly chose that shopping centre. The shops were closing for the night and the only place still open was the movie theatre, so they decided to light the *menorah* there. Jack was the only person who showed up for the lighting, and Rabbi Bryski went home thinking that the event was a complete failure.

After hearing Jack's story, Rabbi Bryski realised that G-d has a different way of measuring success and even things that we think didn't work are all part of G-d's bigger master plan.





A Freilichin Chanukah!

---

MY TOY BOX  
KIRSCHENBAUM FAMILY

The Dolnikov family wishes Yossel  
and Avremel,  
and the entire Cheder Family  
continued success in learning and  
growing!

אשרינו מה טוב חלקנו!  
A Freilichin Chanukah!

---

THE DOLNIKOV FAMILY





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To go M' Chayil El Chayil  
from Strength to Strength

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Love, Tamara Briskin





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Fabulous work boys.  
You are all champions!!  
We are very proud of your  
efforts.

\_\_\_\_\_

Maria Tovel





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הצלחה רבה!

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Elina & Reuven  
Kerbel.

Good job!

---

Your Melby admirers

Wishing the Cheder  
and all the students

A Very Happy  
Chanukah!

ANONYMOUS

Wishing everyone a  
Happy Chanukah!

from a happy Cheder  
family



# Tashbar

CHANUKAH 2020 – 5781 חנוכה תשפ"א

תינוקות של בית רבן

אמר ריש לקיש משום רבי יהודה נשיאה,  
Reish Lakish said in the name of R' Yehudah Nesiah:

אין העולם מתקיים אלא בשביל הבל  
תינוקות של בית רבן

The world continues to exist only in the merit of the breath that comes from the mouths of schoolchildren, i.e. the words of Torah they utter as they study.

אמר ליה רב פפא לאבוי  
Rav Pappa said to Abaye:

"דידי ודידך מאי?"  
My breath and your breath, what of them? Is our Torah study not at least as significant?

אמר לה  
Abaye said to him:

"אינו דומה הבל שיש בו חטא להבל שאין בו חטא"

Breath that contains the taint of sin cannot be compared to breath that does not contain the taint of sin...

תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת קי"ט ב'  
Talmud - Tractate Shabbat 119B