

# מעני תורה

## חנוכה

### Who Was On Trial?

Rabbi Yaakov Blau

Talmud, Tanakh, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Advisor

The *Haftorah* for *Shabbat Chanukah* includes the famous scene of Yehoshua the *Kohen Gadol* being placed on trial. *Zechariah perek 4* describes how the *Satan* prosecutes Yehoshua because Yehoshua is wearing soiled clothing. Yehoshua is then told to take those dirty clothes off and don new, “pure” clothes. As with many prophecies from *Zechariah*, the imagery and its meaning are rather obscure and ambiguous.

The commentators approach this prophecy from one of two perspectives. The first approach is that of Rashi, who believes that Yehoshua himself is put on trial. The *Satan* prosecutes him because Yehoshua’s children married inappropriate women. Yehoshua is told to rectify the situation, and this rectification is symbolized by his removing his “dirty” clothing of sin. The other approach, that of the *Ibn Ezra*, posits that the image of Yehoshua is meant to symbolize all the Jews who returned to Israel at the beginning of *Bayit Sheni*, the Second Temple. They were persecuted by their enemies, led by the evil Sanbalat (as described in *Sefer Ezra/Nechemia*). *HaShem* tells the people that if they strengthen their *avodat HaShem*, times will get better. This understanding assumes that the *Satan* is symbolic as well, representing the Jews’ enemies.

While each *perush* is meant to stand by itself, I would suggest, somewhat homiletically, that they can work together. Everyone needs to think of him/herself both as an individual and as part of the community. Yehoshua needed to consider his own actions, but also be concerned with those of the community that he led. In general, life is a

constant balancing act of focusing on and attending one’s own needs and, at the same time, the needs of the broader community. *Chanukah*, like every *chag*, has aspects that represent both elements. While the main *mitzvah* is to light at home, it is supplemented by a communal lighting in *shul*. Even at home, the basic *mitzvah* is just one light per household, yet the *mehadrin* “best,” level has everyone in the house lighting. The basic *mitzvah* views the household as one entity, whereas *mehadrin* emphasizes the importance of each individual.



Both the individual and communal aspects of *Chanukah* deserve a longer analysis. The origin of the *minhag* to light in *shul* is somewhat murky. Rav Ovadiah Yosef *a”h* lists the various theories in his *teshuvah* in the *Yabi’a Omer Orach Chaim chelek 7 siman 57*. One commentator, the *Ittur*, goes so far as to say that one should not make a *brachah* when lighting in *shul*, since he feels that there is no clear purpose to the lighting. The *Beit Yosef (Orach Chaim siman 671)* believes that the *minhag* was originally designed for guests who slept in *shul*, very much akin to the reason that *kiddush* in

*shul* was first instituted. However, he says that even if people do not sleep in *shul*, the lighting still serves the purpose of publicizing the miracle. This latter opinion supports viewing the lighting in *shul* as a communal lighting.

In terms of *mehadrin*, and its emphasis on the individual, there is a famous dispute as to how to understand *mehadrin min ha-mehadrin*, the best of the best. *Tosafot (Shabbat 21b)* feels that when the *Gemara* says to progressively add one candle each night, this is only meant to be done by one person per household. The *Rambam* disagrees and feels that everyone in the house should be lighting and adding, in which case the *Rambam* seems to emphasize the individual’s importance more

than *Tosafot* do. However, *Tosafot's* rationale is practical, because they are concerned that if everyone lit, it would be difficult to discern which night it is. I do not think that the *machloket* undermines the assertion that the *mehadrin* fulfillment of the *mitzvah* takes into account each individual.

Finding and maintaining the proper balance between one's own needs and challenges and that of the community in which one lives is not simple. Rav Aharon Lichtenstein *shlit"ta* once famously said that both *talmud Torah* and *chesed* demand a 100% commitment of our time. At different stages of our lives, the balance of the two needs, and which one of them we prioritize, shifts. However, both are always critically important, as we progress in our personal *avodat Hashem* and as our communities progress as well.

### What Are We Commemorating on Chanukah?

Devorah Saffern (15)

Over two thousand years ago, Israel was under the rule of the Syrian-Greek Empire. Antiochus IV, who ruled Syria from 175-164 BCE, was extremely harsh to the Jews. Antiochus wanted his empire to practice one religion, and tried to prevent the Jews from following the *Torah* laws. At one point in his ruling, Antiochus waged war against Egypt, and was winning, until the Romans forced him to stop. The Jews, meanwhile, heard a rumor that Antiochus had suffered a defeat and had been killed, and subsequently forced the new *Kohen Gadol*, whom Antiochus had appointed, to flee.

When Antiochus heard this, he was enraged and sent his army to oppress the Jews. In this incident, thousands of Jews were killed. Following that event, Jewish texts were burned and Jewish practices were banned. People were forced to eat non-kosher meat and worship pagan idols; otherwise they would be killed.

When Antiochus's soldiers reached *Modiin*, and forced the Jews to bring sacrifices to their gods, Matityahu the *kohen* adamantly refused to obey Antiochus's orders. He and the *Chashmona'im*, or *Makkabim*, chased away Antiochus's soldiers and then fled to the hills of Judea. While Antiochus tried to defeat the *Makkabim*, he realized that he would not succeed in doing so without a powerful army. He sent forty thousand men to defeat the small number of Jewish soldiers, but by a miracle, the *Chashmona'im* were victorious in the battle. The *Makkabim* returned to Jerusalem, cleared the *Beit HaMikdash* of idols, and reconstructed where damage had been inflicted. The *Menorah* had been stolen and only a small amount of ol-

ive oil was left to light it, so the Jews lit a different *menorah* with the little oil they had. Miraculously, the oil continued to burn for eight days. This miracle served as proof that *HaShem* had been on their side. We commemorate this miracle on *Chanukah* by lighting the *menorah* for eight nights.

While the lasting oil was of course an important and memorable miracle from *HaShem*, why do we focus our celebration particularly on this sign and not on the Jews' military victory? The victory of the *Makkabim* against Antiochus's army was just as miraculous, it was clearly from *HaShem*, and it enabled the Jews to continue practicing their religion and serve in the *Beit HaMikdash*. When we light the *menorah*, we seem to be implying that the miracle of the oil was a greater or more important miracle.

An article on [greatjewishmusic.com](http://greatjewishmusic.com) suggests the following explanation: the reason that we commemorate the miracle of the oil is because it represents, or explains, the key to the *Makkabim's* military success. The reason that the *Makkabim* were able to succeed was that they fought for a cause, namely their religion. Their faith is what made them succeed, and that inextinguishable faith is represented in the light of the *menorah* that lasted for eight days.

In the *Book of Our Heritage*, Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov gives a logical explanation for focusing on each miracle at different points in Jewish history. He writes that during the time of the *Chashmona'im*, the military victory was celebrated more than the oil miracle, as the Jews were now able to follow the laws of the *Torah*, keep *Shabbat*, do *berit milah*, etc. Later on, when the *Chashmona'im* no longer ruled, however, the focus of the celebration shifted to the miracle of the lasting oil. The Jews were again controlled by other nations, and while their military victory was less relevant and not a source of celebration anymore, the miracle of the oil remained a symbol of hope and cause for rejoicing.

Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov adds that the light from the oil represents the Jewish people's remaining spark of light that existed despite their oppression. Just as only a small portion of oil remained, only a small amount of light and hope remained in their hearts and minds. *HaShem* illuminated that light inside of them to help them survive, just as He made it possible for the *menorah* to remain lit for eight days. We commemorate this miracle as it has continued to occur throughout the history of the Jewish people. When we have a small spark of hope, *HaShem* spreads that spark to create a fire that lights our way, and that helps us to survive. Only with G-d's help, as He spreads our spark of hope, as He did with the miracle of the oil, can the Jewish nation continue to survive.

### What Are We Really Celebrating?

Tamar Mendelson ('15) and Esther Alexander ('15)

When we celebrate the holiday of *Chanukah*, what are we actually celebrating? Are we celebrating the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days, or are we celebrating the Maccabees' victory against the Greeks? The miracle of the oil lasting eight days instead of one day is a defining detail of the *Chanukah* story. However, this was not the only miracle of the *Chanukah* story. When the Maccabees fought against the Greeks they were still able to win the war and save the Jewish people, even though the Maccabees were insignificant compared to the large and well-trained Greek army. How are we able to choose between these two significant miracles that *HaShem* performed for us?

Looking at the nature of both miracles helps answer these questions. The military victory was an essential step in achieving freedom for the Jewish nation. However, it is a Jewish value to try to refrain from injuring or killing other people; therefore the victorious war of the *Chanukah* story must not be the main reason that we celebrate *Chanukah*.



The miracle of the oil lasting eight days longer than it should have is an amazing miracle, but the actual action of lighting the *Menorah* was something done on a day-to-day basis in the *Beit HaMikdash*. The reason that we celebrate *Chanukah* would not be because of the oil since it was part of an average action, which does not have enough merit for its own holiday.

Neither of these miracles is great enough alone to have a holiday celebrated because of it. Rather, these two wonders are a sign of something much greater. The military victory shows the Jews were not fearful because of the persecution they faced during the *Chanukah* story. This demonstrates the strength that the Jewish nation had. The oil symbolizes religious observance, which was the purpose and goal of the Jews' strength. They may have hidden in the forests, but they decided to openly show their love for *HaShem* and the religion He created. Commemorating the Jewish people's drive to openly serve *HaShem* is the real reason that we celebrate *Chanukah*.

In addition, the Jewish people did not wait for *HaShem* to save them. They were proactive and as a result *HaShem*

performed miracles. When Matityahu yelled, "*mi laHaShem eilai*," "Whoever is with God come to me!" and formed the Maccabees, he was taking the initiative to try to stop the evil that was being done to his fellow Jews. *HaShem* awarded Matityahu's forward thinking, and the Maccabees miraculously defeated the Greeks.

We can learn many lessons from the actions of the Jews who stayed true to *HaShem* and Judaism during the *Chanukah* story. They teach us to be smart while at the same time to not disregard our values. The Jews knew that they would be killed if they practiced Judaism in public. However, they did not just give up on following the Torah; instead, they practiced the *mitzvot* in private and fought for the right to public observance. It is important to stand up for our beliefs. At the same time, we need to be smart. Thank God we have freedom of religion and freedom of speech, but we should remember that our ancestors often did not. This year Thanksgiving falls out on *Chanukah*, so what better day to be thankful for the freedoms the Maccabees lacked but we are lucky to have in this country?

Another lesson that can be gained from the *Chanukah* story is the importance of *hishtadlut*, effort. It is not enough to rely on miracles. We first must put in work and only then will *HaShem* add to our work and allow us to reap the benefits. This idea was made famous in the phrase by Thomas Edison, "Genius is one percent inspiration, and ninety-nine percent perspiration." This *Chanukah* we should all be blessed with genius.

### Menorahs in the Window: A Fire Hazard or More?

Sara-Shifra Stone ('16)

In modern times it has become customary to light the *menorah* in a publicly visible place, such as in front of our window. But why do we do this? Are we creating a fire hazard to commemorate something people did thousands of years ago?

We light the *menorah* to publicize the miracles of the Jewish people's salvation during the *Chanukah* story. When the Greeks tried to assimilate them into their culture, the Jews stood strong, and fought a war in which the Jews were heavily outnumbered. The odds were against *Bnei Yisrael*, but with the help of *HaShem* they persevered and were successful against their enemies, thereby regaining control of the *Beit HaMikdash*. However, the *Beit HaMikdash* was totally and utterly defiled, and the Jews had to decide how to proceed with making it holy once again. When they went inside, it was in shambles and it began to seem impossible to find one pure jar of olive oil with which to light their precious *Menorah*. But in the corner there sat one tiny jar, barely enough for one day. Miraculously, this little jar lasted eight days and nights until the Jews were able to get more pure oil. Therefore, eve-

ry year on the twenty-fifth of *Kislev*, we light a *menorah* to publicize the miracle of the oil and our victory against the Greeks.

But I would like to add to this idea. I feel as though we are not only lighting to publicize this miracle, but to publicize how time and time again we always overcome our oppressors. Whether during the Spanish Inquisition or the Holocaust, we as Jews have faced persecution over and over. However, we always seem to pull through and overcome the obstacles in our way. When we light the *menorah* we sing the song *Ma'oz Tzur*, Rock of Ages. It goes through the generations of Jewish history and discusses



the oppressor during each time. We sing about hardships, but we also sing about redemption – about *HaShem's* role in saving us generation after generation from our oppressors. On *Pesach* we sing *Ve-hi She'amdah*. On *Chanukah* it is *Ma'oz Tzur*. Both songs remind us of the necessity to thank *HaShem* for saving us time and time again. *Chanukah*

is also the time when we share our thanks with the entire world. This is why *Chanukah* is such a meaningful holiday for us to celebrate. It is through *Chanukah* that we show how important it is to never give up and to always fight for what we believe in.

### ***Menorah, Turkey... Menerky?***

Hannah Siegel ('16)

The *Chanukah* story is one filled with miracles, heroes and villains. The miracles range from the tiny jug of oil lasting eight days to an incredible military victory by the ultimate “underdogs.” The heroes, of course, are the *Makkabim*, the Maccabees, who stood up for the Jewish people and rose against the Syrian Greeks, the villains who tried to rob the Jews of their Judaism.

The *Makkabim* fought against many things in the story of *Chanukah*. They fought the tyranny and oppression of the Syrian Greeks, but more importantly, they fought the Hellenization of their own people. The story of Matityahu begins in the marketplace of *Modi'in*, home of the old priest and his family. The Greeks had established an altar in the center of the town for sacrifices to

their Greek gods. The Greeks demanded that Matityahu give a sacrifice to their gods, prompting Matityahu to cry out, “Let everyone who has zeal for the *Torah* and who stands by the covenant follow me!” (Septuagint, 1st Maccabees 2:27). After Matityahu's protest, a Hellenistic Jew sacrificed the animal. Matityahu proceeded to kill the Greek official who had asked him to make the sacrifice as well as the Hellenistic Jew. Following this, he was forced to take refuge in the hills of Judea with his sons and followers, known as the *Makkabim*.

Matityahu and his followers battled multiple aspects of Jewish assimilation. The Greeks had forbidden circumcision, *Torah* study, and other major tenets of the Jewish religion, and the *Makkabim* fought the Greeks to win back the right to perform these *mitzvot*. The *Makkabim* also contended with the acculturation of the Jewish people. Matityahu fought to maintain the sanctity of his people, striving to teach those who had left the ways of righteousness that Judaism was to be kept pure and whole. The Jews were facing many obstacles at that time, obstacles that posed existential threats to their religion, but instead of grappling with these challenges, many Jews became Hellenized and adapted to Greek culture.

Rabbi Shraga Simmons of Aish HaTorah, in an article about *Chanukah*, says that the Hellenized Jews were not necessarily worshipping Greek gods or even giving up integral aspects of their Judaism. Rather, they were prioritizing their Greek life over their Jewish life. The Jews were compromising their Jewish identities to blend in with the Greek society. The real danger of living in close contact with a secular, even pagan, society is that compromises will have to be made between the two identities, religious and secular, and too often, secular identity wins out. This is what the *Makkabim* were fighting against in the *Chanukah* story – the prioritization of secular life over religious life.

This year, the American Jews are faced with an interesting conflict. For the first time since 1888, *Chanukah* and Thanksgiving occur simultaneously, resulting in the infamous “Thanksgivukkah.” This new holiday has resulted in a pop culture phenomenon, with websites offering everything from the “Menerky,” which is a turkey-shaped *menorah*, to a recipe for a cranberry sauce latke sandwich filled with turkey. Though this may seem totally harmless and even adorable, the theology behind Thanksgivukkah is one to be considered.

Matityahu and his sons fought against the acculturation of

the Jewish people, and tried to maintain the sanctity of Judaism, even amidst the difficulties posed by the Syrian Greek society. They fought against the Greeks, but they really concentrated on fighting the Jews who were relinquishing their Judaism to adapt to the Greek society. By accepting Thanksgiving at face value, it appears that we are committing the very crime that the *Makkabim* fought so adamantly against. We are allowing the holiness of *Chanukah* to be diminished by the quintessentially American holiday of Thanksgiving.

If one takes a deeper look at both the *Chanukah* story and "Thanksgiving," it is clear that there is a path of balance between acculturation and a harmless new idea. We have to make sure to prioritize *Chanukah* over Thanksgiving and keep them as separate entities in terms of their holiness. While Thanksgiving is a holiday that does represent ideals that we as Jews value, such as gratitude, *hakarat ha-tov*, and by approaching "Thanksgiving" from this angle it is clearly possible to blend the two, we still must recognize that *Chanukah* is the truly sanctified day.

"Thanksgiving" is a fun, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to eat a delicious latke turkey sandwich, and have a creatively-shaped *menorah*, but we must simultaneously remember to keep the holidays separate in our minds, making *Chanukah* our priority.

*This d'var Torah was adapted from the ideas of Mrs. Melissa Kapustin, Modern Jewish History teacher at Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls, and attorney for the Rothenberg Law Firm*

*in Hackensack.*



### Why Do We Have Eight Days of *Chanukah*?

Miriam Blum ('15)

Why do we celebrate *Chanukah* for eight days? The *Beit Yosef* asks a famous question: if there was enough of oil found for one day, and it miraculously lasted for seven more, why is the holiday not seven days instead?

*Chazal* ask, "mai *Chanukah*?" meaning, what is the *neis* of *Chanukah*? *Chazal* answer this question by explaining that after the Maccabees defeated Antiochus, they entered the *Beit HaMikdash* and found all the vessels made impure or entirely destroyed. After searching for oil to light the *Menorah* they found one untouched vial of oil with the seal of the *Kohen Gadol*. Although it was only enough for one day, the oil miraculously lasted for eight. *Chazal* say that this is the miracle. However, when we recite *Al HaNisim*, the addition in *Birkat HaMazon* and *Shemonah Esrei* during *Chanukah*, there is no mention of the vial of oil, only the victory of the Maccabees in battle. So which one is the miracle? Is it the victorious battle or the vial of oil?

Rabbi Motti Rosen z"l (grandson of R. Shaul, the second Rebbe of Modzitz) writes that the vial of oil is in fact the miracle. He explains, "While it may be rare for such a small group to be victorious over such a large army, it can happen. However, it is truly miraculous to find enough oil only for one day and have it last for eight." But the question remains, why are there eight days?

"*Shemoneh*" is the word for eight in Hebrew. This word is composed of the Hebrew letters, *shin*, *mem*, *vav*, *nun* and *hei*. If you rearrange the letters slightly, you can read it as "*shemen vav hei*." What is the importance of the *vav* and *hei*? These letters are in the name of *HaShem* – "*Yud-Hei-Vav-Hei*." Rabbi Rosen explains that the *Yud-Hei* signifies the aspect of the *neis nistar*, the hidden miracle, and the *Vav-Hei* signifies a *neis nigleh* – an open or visible miracle. "*Shemen vav hei*" implies that the *shemen* revealed an open miracle. Only after the Maccabees found the oil did they understand that all of *Chanukah* was miraculous, including their victory in the war against the Greeks. Until they found the oil they did not see their victory in battle as miraculous. When they found the vial of oil, and when it lasted for eight days, they realized all that had happened was miraculous. That is why we celebrate eight days of *Chanukah* instead of seven. The miracle of the military victory is added to the

celebration, since the miracle of the oil is what allowed the military victory to be seen as miraculous.

It was not until the Jews found the jar of oil that they realized the additional miracles that *HaShem* had done for them. This teaches us an important lesson. Many times, while we would be quick to label an open miracle as from G-d, we push the small things aside as coincidence or as something that we achieved ourselves. The Maccabees teach us to always remember that our all of our successes are from *HaShem*; they are simply coming in the form of a hidden miracle instead of an obvious one. Hopefully in the coming year we will all merit to experience many miracles.

### United We Stand

Leora Feder ('16)

When we light the *Chanukah* candles, one of the *brachot* we say is the *brachah* of “*le-hadlik ner shel Chanukah*,” to light the *Chanukah* **candle**. However, on almost every night of *Chanukah*, at least two **candles** are lit. Even on the first night of *Chanukah*, there is one candle to commemorate the first day and one candle to be used as the *shamash*. So why then do we refer to the *Chanukah* candles as singular rather than plural?

In the *Gemara*, there is a famous *machloket* between *Beit Shamai* and *Beit Hillel* about how to light the *Chanukah menorah*. *Beit Shamai* says that on the first night all eight candles are lit, and on every night thereafter one candle is removed, until the last night when only one candle is lit. However, *Beit Hillel* disagrees with this approach. He says that on the first day of *Chanukah*, only one candle is lit, and an additional candle is then added each night. According to him, on the last night of *Chanukah*, there is a total eight candles lit. In this *machloket*, *Beit Hillel* is followed. Why is this the case?

In the case of *Beit Shamai*, all the candles begin as one unit. As time goes on, however, they slowly separate and disconnect from one another. Night after night another candle is lost, until we reach the last night, when one candle remains. On that last night, the light from the *Chanukah menorah* is greatly diminished in comparison to the light of the first night. This is not the way the Jewish people are supposed to be. The Jewish people are not supposed to be alone. They are not supposed to get weaker as time proceeds.

On the contrary, in the opinion of *Beit Hillel*, the single candle begins alone but is not in solitude for long. The next night, another candle is added. On the last night of *Chanukah*, the light of the *Chanukah menorah* is burning

strong and brighter than the light of the first night. The Jewish people should get stronger as time proceeds. The Jews are supposed to help each other. They are supposed to join together and do the correct thing. That is exactly what happens in the case of *Hillel*. There is only one candle to begin with, but then by the last night, all the candles unite together and become one.

*Beit Hillel's* approach to lighting the candles symbolizes the character of the Jewish people. No matter what happens, the Jewish people are one nation – a nation that has to stay together to survive. During the time of the story of *Chanukah*, the Jews had begun to assimilate and adopt the Greek way of thought. However, the *Chashmona'im* realized that they had to stand up for their beliefs. They believed in the *Torah* way of life and thinking. They opposed assimilation and believed the Jews were supposed to stand strong and stick up for the *Torah*. The *Chashmonaim* fought against the Greeks even though no one thought that there would be a chance for them to be victorious. They were just simple Jews who learned all day, whereas the Greeks had a very strong and powerful army. However, the *Chashmonaim* realized that the Jewish people had to be united. They realized that the Jews would only be able to survive if everyone was dedicated to the religion. Together, they fought for Jewish survival.

When the *brachah* on lighting the candles is said, it refers to “*ner shel Chanukah*,” a single candle. Even though there may be multiple physical candles, they are all spiritually one. Each candle stands for the same thing. Jews are also supposed to stand for the same thing, to be united. The candles teach us that Jews need to join as one in order to remain strong.

### Hilchot Chanukah

Abby Stiefel ('16)

The *Gemara* in *Shabbat* 23b discusses a comparison between the *nerot*, candles, of *Chanukah* and the *nerot* of *Shabbat*. There, the *Gemara* asks the question: if a person only has enough money to afford either the candles of *Shabbat* or the candles of *Chanukah*, which *mitzvah* should he or she choose to fulfill?

The answer presented is that the *nerot* of *Shabbat* take precedence over *nerot Chanukah* and therefore, they should be lit. Rabbi Kenny Hirschorn of Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh offers a unique perspective on this *Gemara*. He suggests that through *nerot Chanukah*, a person fulfills the *mitzvah* of *perumei nisa*, the publicizing of the miraculous victory of the *Chashmona'im* over the Greeks in

battle. Additionally, the *nerot* publicize the miracle that the single flask of pure oil lasted for eight days. Furthermore, on a larger scheme, the *mitzvah* of *persumei nisa* symbolizes the everlasting faith of the Jewish people and the continuing quest to maintain Jewish beliefs, despite attempts to prevent it. The lights of *Chanukah* symbolize the Jewish people's reaching beyond themselves to influence and educate others.

The *Gemara* states that *Nerot Shabbat*, on the other hand, represent *shalom bayit*, peace within the household. *Shalom bayit* represents an individual's need to turn inward and develop and maintain his or her inner strength. Before we can transfer our message to others, we have to strengthen ourselves. How can we do this? The time students spend studying in yeshiva is the time spent developing their own individual knowledge of *Torah*. By learning Judaic studies in school, students strengthen their knowledge and inner faith, enabling them to go out into the world and impact others. It is only once people have *shalom bayit*, personal and internal peace and strength, that they can go out and influence those around them.

The *Gemara Shabbat* 23b goes on to say that if one is consistent in the *mitzvah* of *hadlakat nerot*, his children will become *talmidei chachamim*. Rashi writes that this statement not only applies to *nerot Shabbat*, but to *nerot Chanukah* as well. Thus, we have two objectives when performing the *mitzvot* of *hadlakat nerot*. We are obligated to cultivate our own strength and knowledge before we focus on that of others, yet we also must think of the example we set for our children and peers. Upon cultivating our inner selves, we develop a message which can then be conveyed to others. We can then be successful in our goals with both sets of *nerot*. As we develop ourselves and influence others, we can instill in ourselves internal strength and cause those around us to continue in the path towards becoming *talmidei chachamim*. With G-d's help, we should all be successful in both of these objectives, and both sets of candles will burn brighter than either ever could have on its own.



### ***Hilchot Hadlakat Nerot: Illuminating the Holiday of Chanukah*** Tova Greenberg (14)

The main *mitzvah* of *Chanukah* is *hadlakat nerot*, lighting the *menorah*. Three important issues arise regarding the lighting of the candles: what work is permitted or prohibited during time the candles are lit, where should one light his or her candles, and when exactly should one light his or her candles?

The *Shulchan Aruch* says that a woman should not do work in the house while the candles are lit. This prohibition is perhaps a precaution against the scenario in which the lights would go out while she is in the middle of her work, causing her to possibly end up using the light of the candles, which is prohibited. Some say, however, that this only applies for the first half hour after the candles are lit. Additionally, the *Levush* states another reason that women should refrain from work. *Chanukah* is classified as a holiday, similar to a *yom tov*. Just as on *Shabbat* and *yom tov* we do not work, so too on *Chanukah* we should treat the day like a *yom tov* and not work. Some are of the opinion that women should refrain from doing work the entire time that the candles are lit, even until midnight, though most refrain from work only for the first half hour. There are those who say that it is a *segulah* (Kabbalistic protection) for women to refrain from doing work, even for the entire day. Others maintain that the prohibition for women to work only applies for the first and last day of *Chanukah*.

The issue of where the candles should be lit is complicated by the weather. The *Bnei Yisachar* says in the name of the *Olalot Ephraim* that in the past, the *Chachamim* lit the *menorah* outside in order to symbolize that *Torah* is spread out to all Jews. But *Chanukah* falls out during the winter, which is characterized by rain, snow, cold temperatures and wind, so we cannot light the *menorah* outside unless it is placed within a glass case. The *Rabanan* claim, however, that it is less of a "publicizing of the miracle" when the *menorah* is

placed in a glass case. We do not have to worry about this if only the people in the house, and not the people outside, see the *menorah*, and thus today the custom in America is to light inside. Furthermore, one should light the candles within a *tefach* (about 3½ inches) from the opening of the house, on the left side of the opening.

There are two different opinions as to when one should light the *menorah*. The *Gemara* states that *Chanukah* candles should be lit at sunset. *Rabbenu Tam* claims that there are two "sunset." The first one commences when the sun disappears from our sight, and ends 58½ minutes later. The second sunset starts at the end of the first sunset and lasts for 13½ minutes, thereby resulting in a total of 72 minutes from when the sun disappears until night officially falls. (The exact numbers, however, can change according to season and location.) According to *Rabbenu Tam*, one would light at the beginning of the second sunset. The *shitah ha-Geonim*, which is brought down in the *Mishnah Berurah*, states that there is only one sunset, which is when the sun disappears from our eyes, and candles are lit at that point. Eighteen minutes after that point is *tzeit ha-kochavim*, the emergence of three stars. If one is davening *Ma'ariv* immediately after sunset, one should light candles before he davens *Ma'ariv*.

The candles should remain lit for at least a half an hour after *tzeit ha-kochavim*, since they should remain lit until people come home from work. In our times, since people come home from work later, they usually rely on someone else to light at an earlier time, since the goal is to light when people are still awake and out on the street. Some say that in certain large cities, one may light even until *chatzot* if he was unable to light earlier. The *Pitchei Teshuvah* states that when the *Shulchan Aruch* writes that one can blow out the candles after half an hour, it is only because that is how long it took for people to return from work. Since, in our days, people tend to come home even later, the candles should burn for a longer amount of time, and one should not touch them until the extended time passes. Therefore, one should place enough oil in the *menorah* for it to last the correct amount of time.

Understanding these laws enables us to light the *menorah* properly. The celebration of the miracle of *Chanukah* is most meaningful when we light the candles in accordance with the guidelines of religious law.

Editor-in-Chief:	<b>Adina Cohen</b>
Associate Editor:	<b>Liat Clark</b>
Staff Editors:	<b>Tova Greenberg Sarah Hiller Nina Miller Tamar Schwartz Shira Sohn</b>
Managing Editors:	<b>Margalit Silver Miri Wagner</b>
Layout Editors:	<b>Yakira Escott Kira Paley</b>
Production Editors:	<b>Michal Laub Goldi Weiser</b>
Distribution Editors:	<b>Tamar Mendelson Keren Neugroschl</b>
Staff Writers :	<b>Miriam Blum, Naima Hirsch, Temima Kanarfogel, Devorah Saffern, Hannah Siegel</b>
Faculty Advisor:	<b>Mrs. Shifra Schapiro</b>

Thank you to Mrs. Orly Nadler, Mrs. Fran Rochwarger, Mrs. Madeline Schmuckler and Mrs. Andrea Winkler for their technical assistance.

If your shul would like to receive *Ma'ayanei Torah*, or to sponsor an issue, please contact:

Ma'ayanot  
1650 Palisade Ave.  
Teaneck, NJ 07666  
201-833-4307  
Maayaneitorah@maayanot.org

Mrs. Rivka Kahan, *Principal*  
Mrs. Tamar Kaplan Appel, Ms. Elana Flaumenhaft  
*Assistant Principals*  
Mrs. Rachel Feldman, *Administrator*